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SIDNEY AND 'ENERGIA'

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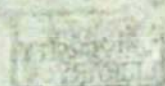
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SUMMARY

This study of Sidney moves from a consideration of the intellectual background behind the formulation of Sidney's poetic theory and the poetic concepts dealt with in the Apology for Poetry to an examination of the sonnets of Astrophil and Stella, on which rests Sidney's chief claim to fame as one of the finest and most fascinating poets of the English Renaissance. As the headings of the ensuing chapters indicate, the way in which Sidney put his poetic ideas into practice in Astrophil and Stella constitutes the main object of study.

Starting from the contemplation of the ironical, self-deprecating manner in which Sidney persistently talked about poetry and the apparent contradiction with the high claims as the mistress of all the arts and sciences that he made for poetry in the Apology, the Introduction outlines in broad brush the fundamentally ethical and religious character of the humanistic culture of the Renaissance, being the inescapable framework against which Sidney developed his poetic ideas. Chapter One sets out to examine Sidney's theory of poetry as embodied in the Apology for Poetry, and scrutinizes the various critical terms Sidney refers to in the Apology, notably 'imitation', 'genius', 'wit', 'invention', 'speaking picture', 'Idea' or 'fore-conceit' and above all 'energia'. Contrast is seen to exist between the meaning of art as known to Sidney and his contemporaries and that perceived by us in the twentieth century. Making use of the intellectual tools available to him, both in terms of ideas and terminology, through the Classical and humanistic critical heritage of the Renaissance, Sidney took it upon himself to explore some of the problems and paradoxes that have perplexed artists through all ages,

namely, what is the nature of artistic creation and whence its source; how does the artist's mind stand in relation to nature in the process of artistic creation; and how is artistic truth different from and reconcilable to the truth of everyday practical reality. More directly relevant to the student of English poetry, Sidney set upon himself in the Apology the task of creating a truly forceful or 'energetic' mode of poetic expression in order to better achieve the noble end of poetry of moving towards virtuous action. In the words of Sidney, the ideal poetic medium is one which, in contrast to mere bald statement, is able to 'strike, pierce, ... possess the sight of the soul' and achieves the twofold aim of poetry, namely, 'to teach and delight'. However, in the Apology Sidney did not go on to elaborate how to go about fabricating the 'energetic' style, or what exactly he meant by it, although he left significant clues here and there in his other writings - the prose romance Arcadia and the sonnet cycle Astrophil and Stella - of what comprises the 'energetic' style and how one might best achieve this.

Chapter Two focuses on the idea of 'energia' which Sidney put forward in the Apology as the stylistic ideal which poets should seek to achieve and examines it from various angles. The historical origins of the concept of 'energia', as rendered by Sidney - in particular the Classical and Renaissance interpretations of the idea - are traced briefly. But, for an understanding of what exactly Sidney had in mind by the term 'energia', places in Astrophil and Stella and in the Arcadia where Sidney described the painstaking way in which the protagonists strove to achieve an eloquent, piercing mode of expressing their emotions are turned to and discussed in detail. The especial emphasis Sidney placed on the 'lively' manner and 'feeling' quality of expression is seen in context -

against the aesthetic ideals prevalent in the Renaissance as exemplified by the magnificent achievement of the Italian painters since the awakening of the 'new' art of painting in the hands of Giotto. The profound influence of the plastic arts on Sidney is illustrated by the plethora of passages in the Arcadia where Sidney described in detail the powerful impact that visual images, whether real or artificial, make on the beholder. The pictorial conception of poetry of Sidney, as shown in his definition of poetry as 'a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture——' in the Apology, was traced to the predominance of the visual arts in the Renaissance and the high importance attached to the visual image in Neo-Platonic thinking. The 'pictorialism' of Sidney is described as an attempt to produce by way of verbal description effects analogous to those produced by the visual arts.

Chapter Three outlines the literary background against which Sidney commenced his poetic career, in particular the rise of the vernacular in the sixteenth century, the tendency towards the cultivation of 'eloquence' by way of the 'exornation' of the language, and the close affiliation between rhetoric and poetry. In the Arcadia, Sidney is regarded as experimenting with diverse metrical forms, including Classical quantitative hexameters, in the quest for the truly forceful and 'energetic' forms of poetry. Especial attention is paid to the rhetorical shaping of the materials, the highly balanced and symmetrical pattern of the poems scattered in the Arcadia. An account is also given of the controversy between Dicus and Lalus in the Arcadia over the relative merits of the 'measured' and the 'rhyming' modes of poetry, as being indicative of the gropings towards the founding of the English metre in the sixteenth century.

Instead of approaching Astrophil and Stella in the traditional way as an autobiographical account of Sidney's ill-fated love for Lady Penelope Rich, or as one of the finest of the Petrarchan love sequences of the Elizabethan age, Chapter Four proposes to examine Astrophil and Stella as a manifestation of Sidney's poetic inner search for the 'energetic' mode of writing poetry. The poetic concern of Astrophil and Stella is evidenced by the presence in the sequence of the 'literary sonnets', in which Sidney declared openly his profession of the 'art of plainness', and proclaimed the 'plain style', shorn of all rhetorical ornaments, as the only idiom fit for the portrayal of his all sufficient love for his mistress Stella. However, a discrepancy is found to exist between the actual poetic style adopted by Sidney in the sequence, which is a highly studied style, and his avowed apostleship in the unadorned art of plainness. This apparent inconsistency forms the subject of the main critical enquiry in Chapter Four, and the sonnets of Astrophil and Stella are closely studied in an attempt to understand the poetic art adopted by Sidney in the sequence. The 'naturalistic' mode of writing poetry, comparable to the doctrine of the naturalistic imitation of Nature in painting which was prevalent in the Renaissance - 'right artificiality' - is established as the guiding principle in the fashioning of the appropriate poetic style in Astrophil and Stella. A detailed account is given, based on examples drawn from the sequence, of the stylistic qualities of Sidney's poetry in which may be seen the poetic 'energy', the 'energia' or 'forcibleness' which he celebrated and singled out as an aesthetic ideal to be followed in the Apology. In particular, attention is drawn to Sidney as a precursor of Shakespeare and Donne and the later lyrical and dramatic poets of the sixteenth century in the conceited style of writing poetry, as shown in the

diverse 'categories' of conceits - verbal, imaginative, dramatic, logical or intellectual - present in the sequence. Sidney's keen awareness of the metaphoric use of language as a source of poetic energy is also touched on in this chapter, bearing in mind the close affiliation the Renaissance mind perceived between the pictorial emblem and the metaphor as a figure of rhetoric, as pointed out by Rosemary Freeman in her work English Emblem Books (London, 1948), 'In books on eloquence an emblem was treated as a distinctive figure of rhetoric: in Hoskins' Directions for Speech and Style, for example, it is classified as a kind of similitude ... Puttenham too classed it among literary devices, and what was suggested in theory was undoubtedly put into practice.' Rhetorical devices are indeed used abundantly in the sequence, but these are integrated into the texture of the poems rather than standing as dispensable adjuncts.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of English poetry, countless poets have bequeathed to posterity declarations on poetry in prose complementing the main corpus of their poetical writings. The artist frequently makes explicit references to his works in his critical asides; and very often his sayings furnish the best clues to the understanding of his works. Yet few writers are as exasperating and intriguing in this respect as Sir Philip Sidney. His remarks are full of self-deprecation, which often seems more than necessary or justified. Upon scrutiny of one of them, a critic of Sidney was led to say that the comment in question 'strikes a reader as modesty to the point of disingenuousness.'¹ The lengthy and complex prose romance, the Arcadia, which Sidney wrote manifestly for the delectation of his sister the Countess of Pembroke, he referred to as 'this idle work of mine ... this child which I am loath to father' and 'a trifle, and that triflingly handled.' The Apology for Poetry, which is the first full-fledged defence of poetry in the history of English criticism, Sidney we find began in a casual and nonchalant way, probably in accordance with the spirit of 'sprezzatura' of Castiglione's 'Cortegiano', and in disparaging terms gave the following account of his poetic career,

... I will give you a nearer example of myself, who (I know not by what mischance) in these my not old years and idlest times slipped into the title of a poet, am provoked to say something unto you in

¹ Geoffrey Shepherd, in Notes to his edition of the Apology (Edinburgh, 1965), hereafter cited as Apology; p. 216.

defence of this my unelected vocation.

It is curious that although Sidney defended poetry against the puritan and the philistine, and all the 'poet-haters' and 'poet-whippers' of his age in the Apology, and elevated poetry to the position of supremacy among all the branches of human learning, he repeatedly alluded to his own interest in poetry, and to himself as poet, in negative terms and in a slighting manner. Sidney spoke as if he became a poet - 'admitted into the company of the paper-blurrers' by accident, and not by conscious effort and cultivation. Sidney even declared, in the midst of writing what is properly the first English treatise on poetry, that 'but I, as I never desired the title, so have I neglected the means to come by it.' Even in Astrophil and Stella, a fictional work, Sidney carried the vein of modesty or self-mockery into the open confessions of Astrophil,

Nor so ambitious am I, as to frame
A nest for my yong praise in Lawrell tree:
In truth I sweare, I wish not there should be
Graved in mine Epitaph a Poet's name:

(Sonnet 90)

The speaker here is not just being disproportionately modest, but in fact ironical; and this may well be a part of the poetic reality of the character of Astrophil. But the question remains that either Sidney was insincere, or his attitude towards poetry was a divided and self-contradictory one, in spite of all the grandiose claims he had made for poetry.

The problem, then, is to decide how far Sidney's modest disclaimers are just conventional formulas, and how far they are part of Sidney's total view of poetry. But before we go into that, we have to remember that as far as poetic theory goes,

whereas the Romantic poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, examined poetry in relation to the creative faculty designated by 'Imagination', to what goes on within the poet's soul, Sidney and his contemporaries examined poetry in relation to 'Imitation', to the objective reality which lies outside the poet's mind, to the underlying order and harmony inherent in the universe, of which poetry is reputedly a 'Copy'. Sidney was in the tradition of the didactic view of poetry. The 'ending end of all earthly learning being virtuous action', as Sidney believed, and that 'it is not 'gnosis' but 'praxis' must be the fruit' - in other words, not just 'well-knowing' but 'well-doing'. Sidney enthroned the poet the monarch of all sciences because 'as virtue is the most excellent resting place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so Poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman.' In the Apology, poetry is not justified as something that is valuable per se, but with reference to standards and values that are ethical and extraneous ones. The yardstick Sidney adopted to gauge human learning and poetry was the moralistic, and not strictly aesthetic, one.

For a fuller understanding of Sidney's view of poetry, an appreciation of the humanistic culture of the late Renaissance inherited by the poet is necessary. In his moralistic theory of poetry, one central tenet put forward by Sidney is the idea of the 'architectonic' art, or that 'mistress-knowledge' with reference to which all human arts and sciences are 'serving sciences', and 'which stands ... in the knowledge of one's self, in the ethic and politic consideration, with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only: even as the saddler's next end is to make a good saddle, but his farther end to serve a noble faculty, which is horsemanship; so the

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horseman's to soldiery, and the soldier not only to have the skill, but to perform the practice of a soldier.' The argument is borrowed directly from Aristotle's Ethics, I, 1-2, where the doctrine is set out of 'the chief and master science of all (the architectonic art); and this seems to be the political science, for it directs what arts should be cultivated by states, what individual people should learn ... this end must be the highest good of man.'² In Fulke Greville's Life of Sir Philip Sidney³, there are echoes of Sidney elucidating further Sidney's cultural ideals, the notion of the place of poetry in the sum-total of human knowledge accumulated in the humanistic disciplines. Greville confirmed that the Arcadia, along with others of Sidney's works, 'howsoever he could not choose but give them aspersions of spirit, and learning from the Father; yet that they were scribled rather as pamphlets, for entertainment of time, and friends, than any accompt of himself to the world' (Life, p. 17). Greville told us further that literary and intellectual commitments were indeed the last of Sidney's pursuits, because 'his end was not writing, even while he wrote; but both his wit, and understanding bent upon his heart, to make himself and others, not only in words and opinion, but in life and action, good and great. In which Architectonical art he was such a Master, with so commanding, and yet equall waies amongst men, that wheresoever he went, he was beloved and obeyed' (Life, p. 18).

² Ibid., p. 168.

³ Ed. with introd. by Nowell Smith (Oxford, 1907).

In this notion of the 'architectonic' art, which is endorsed by many other humanists, can be shown the 'universalism' and the great unity of the Renaissance culture, for all the arts and sciences were bound together by one common ulterior aim, which is leading man to the perception of immutable and universal essences, and the ultimate truth of the Christian God. In the Renaissance nature, the created universe, was regarded as the divine artifact of a marvellous and omnipotent God. Nothing in the universe was random or arbitrary, but purposeful and imbued with harmony and order; so that the 'final end' of all learning, as Sidney affirmed, was 'to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of' and 'to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying his own essence.' Thus poetry was not valued for its own sake, but in so far as it was conducive to the good of man. Sidney, Greville told us, was considerably interested in literary pursuits in his youth, but these had to give place to higher and more engrossing enterprises as he grew older, because 'when his body declined, and his piercing inward powers were lifted up to a purer Horizon, he then discovered, not onely the imperfection, but the vanitie of these shadowes, how daintily soever limned: as seeing that even beauty itself, in all earthly complexions, was more apt to allure men to evill, than to fashion any goodness in them' (Life, p. 16). The criterion Sidney and Greville applied to poetry was not only moralistic, but the metaphysical one of what constitutes the ultimate reality. Sidney and his contemporaries were not interested in the beautiful in itself, but as a part of the divine triad of the good, the beautiful and the true inherited from antiquity. We recall that in Timaeus 'the good is always

beautiful and the beautiful never disproportionate' (87C). The beautiful is seen to be an attribute of the true, which is equivalent to the good. Thus poetry was constantly held up against what men considered to be the 'final truths'. It is not surprising, then, that like Sidney, Tasso, writing in the late Renaissance, put forward also the notion of the 'architectonic' art, and a similar moralistic view of poetry: 'poetry deters us from many crimes ... Its usefulness, however, is rather to be judged by the art which is the artifact of the others: the statesman is the one who ought to decide what poetry and what delight to forbid so that pleasure, which should be like the honey smeared on a cup when one gives medicine to a child, may not affect us like deadly poison or keep our mind idle ... because poetry ... is a first philosophy which instructs us from our early years in moral habits and the principles of life ... and the end of poetry is not just any enjoyment but only that which is coupled with virtue, since it is utterly unworthy of a good poet to give the pleasure of reading about base and dishonest deeds, but proper to give the pleasure of learning together with virtue.'⁴

It is clear then that there is more than a germ of truth in Sidney's apparent disparagement of his writing of poetry. The humanistic culture of the Renaissance was characterized by the quality of 'homogeneity', and the student of the history of the arts will know that poetry gained general recognition as an autonomous sphere of human activity with a body of postulates and laws of its own only after the disintegration of the unity

⁴ Torquato Tasso, Discourses on the Heroic Poem (Oxford, 1973), trans. with notes by Mariella Cavalchini and Irene Samuel, pp. 10-11.

of the liberal arts in the Renaissance⁵. Art and poetry were considered to be of secondary importance to the upholding of the Christian religion, or the furthering of the 'commonweale', and while the artist was engaged in the creation of the beautiful, he conceived of himself as being bound by the unaesthetic ties of religion, morality and reality.

The situation could hardly be described as an unfamiliar one. The Greeks have produced great works of art. Yet Plato banished the poets from the Republic, and Greek thought, early Hellenistic thought in particular, was far from sympathetic to artistic representation. Art is undoubtedly as old as humanity. Yet Aesthetics, the study of the beautiful, became a separate and distinguishable branch of philosophy in as late as the eighteenth century, the 'classical' century in the history of aesthetics⁶. Painters and sculptors, whom we would look upon today as 'artists', as belonging to a professional category, were thought of as 'artisans' or mere craftsmen. In the Apology, whenever Sidney has the artist in the modern sense in mind, the word he uses invariably is 'artificer'. The idea of art and artist, as forming a legitimate province of their own, corresponding to nature but independent of it, and at times even in antithesis to it, was thoroughly unknown to the sixteenth century. It is true that the dominating concepts of modern aesthetics, Beauty and Genius, taste and sentiment, convention and original creation, became topics for investigation only in the last few centuries. Yet in Sidney, as

⁵ See Rudolf Wittkower, The Artist and the Liberal Arts (London, 1952).

⁶ See Paul O. Kristeller's article, 'The Modern System of the Arts', Part I, JHI, XII (1951), 496-527; Part II, XIII (1952), 17-46.

in antiquity, we can see probings into the problems of artistic creation with which later ages were preoccupied, such as the rights of the thinking 'subject' as opposed to the artistic 'object', the role played by the imagination, the 'contents' of a work of art, the powers of language as a sensuous phenomenon, and the psychological effects of a work of art on the audience. These artistic concerns, in fact, run throughout the writings of Sidney. The sonnet sequence, Astrophil and Stella, above all, may be regarded as an anatomy of the poetic mind in the act of creation. In the sonnets of Astrophil and Stella are adumbrated the problems of artistic creation that the poet confronts, such as the necessity of 'feigning', the problem of 'Invention', the dilemma between imitation of Nature and imitation of other works of art (as discussed in Sonnet 1), and the craving for a freer and more passionate form of expression. In Astrophil and Stella we see therefore the artist at work, re-interpreting and re-defining reality for us every time art is created; in other words, the eternal 'now' of imaginative reproduction.

It is the proposal of the present study to examine the poetic art of Sidney, his theory of poetry and his subsequent poetic practice. I wish to examine in particular the central tenets of Sidney's poetic theory against the background of European aesthetic thought; namely the concept of the artistic 'Idea' or 'fore-conceit', the idea of 'imitation' and 'invention', and of poetry as a 'speaking picture'. I wish to investigate also Sidney's idea of 'energeia', through which we see in Sidney's exploration of the possibilities of the English language. Seen in this light, Sidney's stylistic development, from his conscious use of formal rhetoric and intricate verse forms in the Arcadia to the art of plainness in the Psalms and the open rejection of the ornate style in Astrophil and Stella, may be interpreted as part of the efforts

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towards the making of an adequate language of imitation. However, to say this is not to suggest that there are any complete break or radical changes of style in Sidney's poetic career. In fact, as will be shown later in this study, one of the prominent features of Sidney's poetry is its close affiliation with rhetoric - Sidney worked on and made poetic use of the formal rhetoric of his age at all stages of his poetic career. Style in Sidney should be seen as the continuum in which he endeavoured to create a more 'truthful' and more 'energetic' means of expression. In so doing, it is hoped that we may come closer to the poet's mind, and have a more intimate knowledge of the nature of artistic creation.

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CHAPTER ONE THE THEORY OF POETRY

The 'ars poetica' of Sidney is embodied in the Apology, and found also in critical comments scattered in the Arcadia, and Astrophil and Stella. By the late Renaissance, certain artistic problems which had been fermenting in European thought since antiquity had become ripe for clarification and definition; and we find Sidney attempting to answer them in the Apology. In spite of Sidney's own derogation of it as 'this ink-wasting toy of mine', the Apology is a highly carefully constructed piece of work. Formally, it is an artistically wrought classical oration with a sevenfold division¹. It partakes also of the 'paragone' literature prevalent in the Renaissance, in which the claims of one art are set up against another or several others in the struggle for hegemony². Sidney's palpable design is 'to make a pitiful defence of poor Poetry, which from the highest estimation of learning is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children, so have I need to bring some available proofs, since the former is by no man barred of his deserved credit, the silly latter hath had even the names of philosophers used to the defacing of it, with great danger of civil war among the Muses.' The 'defence' may be better regarded as an explanation and justification; and Sidney declared poetry supreme in the

¹ See K. O. Myrick's chapter on the Apology as a classical oration in Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman (Camb., Mass., 1935), pp. 46-83; and also Geoffrey Shepherd's analysis of the form in the Introduction to his edition of the Apology.

² For an account of the 'paragone' literature in antiquity and in the Renaissance, see E. Panofsky's Galileo as a Critic of the Arts (The Hague, 1954), pp. 1-4.

pantheon of human arts and sciences, which include the 'trivium' and 'quadrivium' of the medieval curriculum, law and history, physic (medicine) and metaphysics. In so doing, Sidney formulated a full-blown theory of poetry. Ostensibly, the Apology was born out of a particular moment, occasioned by the aspersions cast upon poetry by contemporary writers. Yet in it Sidney put forward his interpretations of some of the recurrent artistic problems and basic concepts which had been fomenting in European art-theoretical thought since the Quattrocento. While the Apology is undeniably polemical by nature, Sidney doubtlessly wrote from his own experience as an artist. One may wish to dispute whether it is profitable to apply the epithet 'mannerist' to Sidney's poetry³, yet there is no question that in the Apology we have the first English art-theory in the full sense of the word, which may be regarded as the crystallization of a particular phase in the history of European aesthetic thought.

BACKGROUND

In his theory of poetry, Sidney made use of the terms and vocabulary current in contemporary artistic thought. As a critical prolegomenon to a closer analysis of the ideas presented in the Apology, it is fruitful to examine first the meaning of these terms, and to review also the contemporary artistic situation.

Sidney worked primarily within the ethical framework, and he did not conceive of himself as being concerned with the beautiful. His remarks on the beautiful in art, when they do occur, are incidental.

As has been pointed out earlier, whenever Sidney wishes to talk about the artist in the modern sense, the word he uses is

³ Geoffrey Shepherd, Apology, p. 66.

'artificer' - 'for any understanding knoweth the skill of the artificer standeth in that Idea or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself' (p. 101), 'yet say I and say again, I speak of the art, and not of the artificer' (p. 111), and in the latter quotation he expressly denies any interest in the 'artificer' as such. The word 'artist' occurs only once in the Apology - 'for, as I take it, to lie is to affirm that to be true which is false; so as the other artists, and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies' (pp. 123-24). The word 'artist' is used in the broad sense to include not only the poet, but also the other 'competitors' and 'principal challengers' to the title of supremacy among the arts, such as philosophy and history. In other words, all representatives of the humanistic disciplines⁴.

A brief excursus into the meaning of the word 'art' at this point is timely. As P.O. Kristeller has pointed out (op. cit.) the modern system of the arts, with the five major arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry constituting the 'irreducible nucleus' and in firm contradistinction from the crafts, the sciences, and other human activities, is of comparatively recent origin. The idea of 'Art' in the narrower sense, with the capital 'A', as 'Fine Art' or the 'Beaux Arts',

⁴ It is interesting to compare the corresponding use of the term 'artificer' by Fracastoro, in his treatise on poetry Nauzerius, trans. Ruth Kelso, introd. M.W. Bundy, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, IX, 3 (Urbana, Ill., 1924). Fracastoro praises the poet as 'the inventor of all the fine arts' (p. 54), but as in Sidney the general category of 'fine arts' includes the whole of human learning, and not just 'fine arts' in the modern sense. The Latin original is revealing: 'bonarum omnium artium inuectores', and 'bonum', significantly, rather than 'pulchrum', as expected, is mentioned. Fracastoro also contrasts the poet with the 'common artificers' (p. 57), which is based on the Latin 'communes artifices'. In Fracastoro 'artificer' has the meaning of 'artisans' rather than 'artist' as in Sidney.

which are generally identified with the visual arts, was not known to the sixteenth century either. In the sixteenth century, Vasari, in his celebrated Vite dei Piu Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori ed Archittetori, first published in Florence in 1550, was the first person to group painting, sculpture and architecture together as the 'arti del disegno', on the ground that 'Design ... is the foundation'. Vasari founded also the first of the new academies of art - the 'Accademia del Disegno' in Florence in 1563. In so doing he strengthened the ties between the three 'arti del disegno', institutionalized the professional and academic status of the artists of his times, and came closer to legislating the modern system of the arts. Yet outside the artistic circles in Italy, the meaning of 'art' as it was traditionally understood was the original, classical one. It was not until the eighteenth century that with the publication of Abbe Batteux's Les Beaux Arts Reduits auMeme Principe (1746), that the notion of 'Fine Art' officially came into existence.

In Sidney, despite the recent investiture of the term 'art' by Renaissance artists with new meanings, his idea of 'art' was that inherited from classical antiquity. The Greek word for 'art', 'techne', means originally 'organized knowledge and procedure applied for the purpose of a specific preconceived result' or simply 'rational reproduction'⁵. Thus its meaning is wider and much more comprehensive than the presentday one, and includes all of man's productive activities, as can be seen from Sidney's panoramic survey of all the human arts and

⁵ From J.J. Pollitt's section on 'Conception of Art, the Arts, and Imitation,' in The Ancient View of Greek Art (Yale, 1974), pp. 32-37.

sciences in the Apology, and especially from the initial declaration that 'There is no art delivered to mankind that hath not the works of Nature for the principal objects, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what Nature will have set forth' (pp. 99-100). Secondly, the Greek term 'techne' has also the meaning of something that can be 'systematized, taught, and passes on from generation to generation by competent instructors'⁶, as shown in the fact that the simplest translation for 'techne' is 'technique'. In Greek thought human culture was viewed as the product of all of man's various 'technai'. The Latin equivalent for 'techne', 'ars', likewise means 'theoretical knowledge'. Thus whereas today we think of 'art' as something that cannot be learned, as a type of human activity in which 'genius' or the natural gift for it plays a decisive part, and which has more to do with our experiences - emotional, intuition, and intellectual, than action, it was regarded in antiquity as something that is teachable, and can be cultivated and acquired by human efforts.

It is interesting to note that all these different layers of meaning of 'art' in the Hellenistic sense are embodied in Francis Bacon's use of the word, discoursing in the seventeenth century on the 'Division of History into Natural and Civil. Division of Natural History into History of Generations, Pretergenerations, and Arts, according to the three states of Nature, namely Nature Free, Nature Erring, and Nature Contrained', in Descriptio Intellectualis (The Works of Francis Bacon, ed. Spedding et al., (London, 1858); V, p. 505 ff.). The history of the 'arts' to Bacon is equivalent to 'mechanical and experimental

⁶ J.J. Pollitt, loc. cit.

history', Bacon's system of human knowledge, we recollect, was based on Aristotle's; and he used the term 'art' in the strong Aristotelian sense of 'a purposive process that produces a final form out of pre-existing matter' (Physica 194b24 ff.)⁷. For nature, Bacon declared, is 'constrained, moulded, translated, and made as it were new by art and the hand of man; as in things artificial. For in things artificial nature seems as it were made, whereby a new array of bodies presents itself, and a kind of second world.'

Returning to the sixteenth century, abundant examples may be found of a similar use of the term 'art'. For instance, in Richard Rainolde, a contemporary of Sidney's, 'art' was also juxtaposed with 'science', and was viewed as the general means whereby 'Nature' may be 'tutored',

... therefore Nature itself being well framed,
and afterward by arte and order of science,
instructed and adorned, must be singularlie
furthered, helped, and aided to all excellencie,
to wzsquisite invencion, and profound knowledge,
both in Logik and Rhetorike.

In the Apology 'art' is likewise opposed to 'nature', and Sidney conceived of 'art', as his contemporaries and Bacon, writing later, did, as something 'artificial' or 'man-made', as in the following examples,

⁷ J.J. Pollitt, loc. cit.

⁸ Rainolde, A Book Called the Foundacioun of Rhetorike, fol. 1^r (Fascimile edition, ed. F.R. Johnson, 'Scholars' Fascimiles and Reprints.' (New York, 1945)).

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... and the rhetorician and logician,
considering what in Nature will soonest prove
and persuade, thereon will give artificial
rules.

(p. 100)

... he would have his words (as it were)
double out of his mouth, and so do that
artificially which we see men do in choler
naturally.

(p. 138)

... the courtier, following that which by
practice he findeth fittest to nature, therein
(though he knew it not) doth according to art,
though not by art: where the other, using art
to show art, and not to hide art (as in these
cases he should do) flieth from nature, and
abuseth art.

(p. 139)

'Art' is recognized to be prarallel to 'nature' ('and do
that artificially which we see men do in choler naturally');
but also independent of nature, and has the power to rise above
it, just as Bacon said that arts might be called the 'bonds of
nature', as well as their 'deliverers' and 'champions'.

This notion of the potency of art plays an important part
in Sidney's poetic theory, and throughout the 'skill of the
artificer' is emphasized. To illustrate his idea of the artist,
Sidney cited Daedalus, 'the great artificer and originator of
the arts in classical mythology': 'Daedalus, they say, both in
this and in other, hath three wings to bear itself up into
the air of due commendation: that is, Art, Imitation, and
Exercise.' In examining this aspect of Sidney's theory of
poetry, it is worth remembering that in the Renaissance, as in
Puttenham, writing in 1589, the epithet 'artificial' is used
very often practically as a word of praise,

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Man also in all his actions that be not altogether naturall, but are gotten by study & discipline or exercise, as to daunce by measure, to sing by note, to play on the lute, and such like, it is a praise to be said an artificial dauncer, singer, & player on instrument, because they be not exactly knowne or done, but by rules or precepts or teaching of schoolmasters.⁹

The Renaissance writers thought of literary composition as essentially grounded in rules and precepts and reducible to a logical theory, and poetic 'art' as something that can be acquired by systematic application and assiduous study. This is shown in the fact that Jonson cited 'exercitatio', 'imitatio' and 'lectio', along with 'ingenium' as the basic requirements of a poet¹⁰, and 'ars' is used in the sense of something that can be mastered through study.

However, Sidney also perceived something in the writing of poetry that goes beyond the scope of art, and has to do with our natural 'inclination' and ability. Thus, in a passage where he talks about his own experience of writing poetry in customary derogatory terms, and just before he goes on to enumerate 'Art, Imitation, and Exercise' as the three ingredients of the poetic craft, he draws our attention to this innate quality. Sidney even goes so far as introducing the term 'genius' itself,

⁹ Puttenham, in The Arte of English Poesie, ed. G. Wilcock and A. Walker (Camb., 1936), p. 305.

¹⁰ See the article by D.L. Clark, 'The Requirement of a Poet - A Note on the Sources of Ben Jonson's 'Timber', Paragraph 130,' MP, XVI (1918), 413-29.

Marry, they that delight in Poesy itself should seek to know what they do, and how they do so; and especially look themselves in an unflattering glass of reason, if they be inclinable into it. For Poesy must not be drawn by the ears; it must be gently led, or rather it must lead; which was partly the cause that made the ancient-learned affirm it was a divine gift, and no human skill: since all other knowledges ;is ready for any that hath strength of wit; a poet no industry can make, if his own genius be not carried into it; and therefore it is an old proverb, 'orator fit, poeta nascitur'.

(p. 132)

In classical antiquity, the idea that the artistic process is more than rational had existed side by side the idea of 'art' as 'techne'. As early as the eighth century B.C., Homer and Hesiod had invoked the aid of the Muses; and Plato had written of poetry as being inspired by divine frenzy, even though this is to detract merit from the writing of poetry as a trustworthy and rational activity¹¹. Sidney himself has pointed out that the poet was understood by the Romans to be 'vates', which is as much as a diviner, forseer, or a prophet, as by his conjoined words "vatininium" and "vaticinari" is manifest'; just as the Greeks held him to be a 'maker', from the Greek word 'poiein', which means 'to make'. These two opposite views, which are two poles of the same problem rather than irreconcilable antinomies, in a sense are implicit in Aristotle's 'naturalistic' interpretation of art, the idea that art both 'imitates' and 'completes' nature¹². Art can be said to 'imitate' nature in that it

¹¹ For Plato on inspiration, see Apology 22C: poets said 'to do what they do, not by wisdom but by a certain natural gift and because they are inspired'; Phaedrus 245A., Ion 533D ff.

¹² J.J. Pollitt, op. cit., p. 32.

process is analogous to nature's; but also to 'complete' nature in that it brings about forms inherent in nature's material but which nature itself does not produce. And this bringing into existence of an object or an action in some pre-existing material presupposes 'a double and not a single element—not merely a consideration of the object to be represented, but a consideration of the act of imaginative reproduction by which it is born again under new conditions imposed by another medium'.¹³ Thus a suggestion of the role that the 'genius' of the artist is likely to play in the artistic process is present in the ancient Aristotelian definition. In Sidney's theory of poetry, we can see that tension is set up between the idea of poetry as a 'divine gift' and as a 'human skill'; in other words, between 'genius' and 'rule', between the autocratic rights of the artists and the universally valid laws by which the artistic object is governed. In spelling out this antithesis, the modern idea of the artist is foreshadowed in the Renaissance notion, adopted by Sidney, of the poet as 'artificer'.

POETRY AS IMITATION

The idea of poetry as 'imitation', which is a commonplace in Renaissance literary criticism, underlies Sidney's theory of poetry, and throws light on the Renaissance conception of poetry more than any other single idea in the Apology.

¹³ Bernard Bosanquet, A History of Aesthetics (London, 1892), Part One, chap. II, 'The Creation of a Poetic World, and its First Encounter with Reflection,'.

Aristotle was cited as the chief source of the imitative view of poetry in the Apology, especially in the much-quoted definition of 'Poesy, therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word 'mimesis', that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture—with this end, to teach and delight.' The Poetics was not actually mentioned; but Sidney undoubtedly had it in mind, for he did refer to the fact that 'Aristotle writes the Art of Poesy' (p. 130).

Sidney drew on also other approaches to 'imitation' in ancient Greek art-theoretical thought, notably those of Plato; so that the Apology in this respect may be described as a culmination and a re-statement of the classical tradition.

In the Poetics, the mimetic arts are grouped together as a special class because although they differed in the media of representation, they made use of a special type of raw material — the characters, passions, and actions of man (1447a8). Yet the meaning of 'mimesis' in Aristotle, which has both a 'practical' and a 'cosmological' significance, had already been greatly expanded by Plato, and had moved a long way from its earliest meaning¹⁴. G.F. Else, in his admirable study ' "Imitation" in the Fifth Century' (CP, LIII (1958), 73-90), tells us that in the earliest occurrences of 'mimesis' and 'mimeisthai' which is a demonstrative verb based on 'mimos', there is an implication of deliberate deception. In Euripides' Bacchae, the idea of trickery, faking, pretense constantly recurs in the mouth of Pentheus in the early scenes and the king is in fact obsessed by the conviction that the whole Dionysiac cult is an imposture. In the most

¹⁴ J.J. Pollitt, op. cit., p. 39.

basic idea of 'miming' as 'impersonation', which Else defines as 'direct representation of the looks, actions, and/or utterances of animals or men through speech, song, and/or dancing', the meaning of falsehood is automatically involved.

This shade of meaning is ominously present in Plato's use of the word, although he carried it to an abstract level of meaning to form an important element of his epistemological and metaphysical system. This tendency to regard art in its earliest mimetic form as something that is not genuine and hence can be relegated to secondary or even tertiary importance, is indicative of the unsympathetic and in a sense also 'untutored' way ancient thought dealt with and understood art. Indeed, in Plato, the arts that we call 'fine arts' were gathered up under the name of 'imitative' or 'image-making', as opposed to the 'thing-making' (Sophist 266D); and both are subsumed under the heading of the 'productive' as distinguished from the 'acquisitive' arts (219). Thus the imitative arts were credited with producing 'images' and 'likenesses' only, in fact 'phantasms' and not the real thing-in-itself. In Book Ten of the Republic Plato hurled his famous condemnation of the poets and declared poetry to be at the furthest remove from reality precisely because their products are 'appearances' and 'images' of the 'Forms' and 'Ideas' that constitute the immutable metaphysical substances, and belong to the world of 'opinion' rather than the world of 'truth'. Thus art was dismissed by Plato as spurious, because he measured it against the absolute and theoretic truth, such as mathematical truth; and artists were spurned because they were inferior to the philosopher or the metaphysician in furnishing us with insight into the real nature of things.

22

In the Renaissance, the poet was often regarded as a 'maker'. But 'making' was not thought of as original creation, but rather in imitative relation to the pre-existing order, as Puttenham asserts in The Arte of English Poesie (1589)¹⁵,

A poet is as much to say a maker. And our English name well conforms with the Greeke word: for of 'poiein' to make, they call a maker Poeta ... And neuerthelesse without any repugnancie at all, a Poet may in some sort be said a follower or imitator, because he can expresse the true and liuely of euery thing is set before him, and which he taketh in hand to describe: and so in that respect is both a maker and a counterfeitor: and Poesie an art not only of making, but also of imitation.

In using the words 'counterfeitor' and 'imitation', the Platonic idea of the poet's products as shadows, copies of what actually exists is implied. In the same way Sidney defined poetry as 'representing, counterfeiting', and singled out 'feigning' or fiction as the distinguishing characteristic of poetry,

Neither let it be jestingly conceived, because the works of the one be essential, the other in imitation or fiction;

(p. 101)

But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right note to know a poet by,

(p. 103)

... the poet doth so far exceed him (the historian) as he is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable ... For that a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example (for as to

¹⁵ ed. cit., p. 3

move, it is clear, since the feigned may be tuned to the highest key of passion),

(p. 110)

And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of Poesy, and not of History: not bound to follow the story, but, having liberty, either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency?

(p. 135)

In Astrophil and Stella, the poet-lover also publishes his intention of 'feigning' in poetry the lover's state in the 'feign-fain' pun in the very first line,

Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show,

where a particularly interesting relation is set up between 'faine' and the word 'truth' directly preceding it. Thus poetic creation is thought of as a fictional activity; and as Shepherd has pointed out, as 'effingere' rather than 'creare'. The poet's task is to 'imitate' in the sense of to 'copy' and to 'represent'. He is not concerned with truth as it is, as the philosopher and historian are, but with 'making' something that is the 'simulacrum' of truth. Sidney is aware that as the very meaning of 'feigning' suggests, the artistic object is as capable of 'simulating' as 'dissimulating' our experience of the actual world, as revealed in the following passage,

Much like matter doth Livy record of Tarquinius and his son. Xenophon excellently feigneth such another strategem performed by Abdradatas in Cyrus' behalf. Now would I fain know, if occasion be presented unto you to serve your prince by such an honest dissimulation, why do you not as well

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learn it of Xenophon's fiction as of the other's
verity? And truly so much the better, as you shall
save your nose by the bargain; for Abradatas did
not counterfeit so far.

(p. 100)

We recall that in The Republic, Book Ten, Plato censured
the imitative arts also for their power to deceive (598 ff.).
He singled out for condemnation in particular the technique
in painting known as 'skiagraphia', meaning literally
'shadow painting', developed by the Athenian painter
Apollodorus to represent relief on the two-dimensional plane.
Plato attacked this technique (602C-D) on the ground that it
took advantage of 'a weakness in our nature, being not much
different from sorcery and sleight-of-hand tricks'. We are
reminded that Homer was often rated for telling lies about
the gods, and this idea, as Chaucer testifies, was carried
into the Middle Ages,

Con sayde that Omer made lyes,
Feynyng in hys poetries,
And was to Grekes favorable;
Therefor held he hyt but fable.

(The House of Fame,
lines 1477-1486)

In the depiction of the arras in the house of Busyrane in
Faerie Queen. Book Three, Canto XI, an element of corruption
is suggested to be present in the work of art, especially in
stanza 28. In the Arcadia, Miso, in her diatribe of Cupid,
also regarded the painter and the poet as agents of
corruption and prone to lead people astray,

Poore Painters oft with silly Poets joine,
To fill the world with strange but vaine conceits:
One brings the stuff, the other stamps the coins,

Which breeds nought else but gloses of deceits.¹⁶

In the Renaissance Leonardo da Vinci was fascinated by the deceptive power of art, and Vasari narrates many an amusing anecdote of Leonardo contriving fantastic artistic objects, such as the peasant's buckler¹⁷, which he devised to practise as a practical joke on others. Sidney was aware of such scornful opinions of poetry as voiced by Miso, so he defended the free creative capacity of the poets against charges of falsehood and worthlessness by putting forward a further elaboration of the imitative theory of poetry in a passage which has not received as much critical attention as it merits,

For I will not deny but that man's wit may make Poesy, which should be 'eikastike', which some have defined 'figuring forth good things', to be 'phantastike', which doth contrariwise infect the fancy with unworthy objects; as the painter, that should give to the eye either some excellent perspective, or some fine picture, fit for building or fortification, or containing in it some notable example, as Abraham sacrificing his son Issac, Judith killing Holofernes, David fighting with Goliath, may leave those, and please an ill-pleased eye with wanton shows of better hidden matters.

(p. 125)

The distinction between 'eikastike' and 'phantastike', that is to say, between 'likeness-making' and 'appearance-

¹⁶ See The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat, 4 vols. (Camb., 1939), I, p. 239. Hereafter cited as Works.

¹⁷ See Vasari, Lives of the Artists (Harmonsworth, 1975), trans. George Bull, pp. 258-60.

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making' or 'fantastic' art is based on Plato, the Sophist (235 ff.) and seized on by Mazzoni in his discourse On the Defence of the 'Comedy' of Dante, the first three books of which were published in 1587. It is doubtful whether Sidney was acquainted with the ideas of Mazzoni. Yet it is evident that the question of what should constitute the proper object of imitation was a common concern among art-theorists writing in late Cinquecento. What is interesting is that in the above passage Sidney has presented a theory of poetry comparable to the 'heuristic' or 'poietic' view of poetry, as distinguished from the 'mimetic' view, in antiquity¹⁸. It is noteworthy that Plato, in spite of his hostility towards the imitative arts, did reserve some room for a certain type of 'poietic' artists, 'whose labours may serve as a paradigm for the law-givers', in The Republic, Book Six (501 ff.),

When they finally commence the question of their work (that is, after having carefully prepared the panel and sketched the principal lines), they let the eye, frequently alternating, dwell now on this side, now on that side, once on that which is truly beautiful, just, rational, and otherwise pertinent in that context, and then again on that which merely passes for all this among men; and by blending and mixing they produce from their materials that human image in the conception of which they let themselves be guided by what Homer defined as divine and godlike when met with among mankind.

These painters were commended and their works were allowed to have a limited metaphysical significance because whereas the common practitioners merely represented the sense-percept-

¹⁸ See E. Panofsky's Idea, trans. J.S. Peake (Columbia, 1968), pp. 3-4, 29 ff., 189-90n.

ible appearance of the material world, these artists tried to capture the unalterable and eternally valid essences and forms. Similarly, Sidney made a distinction between the 'phantastike' poets who 'infect the fancy with unworthy objects' and 'please an ill-pleased eye with wanton show of better hidden matters', and 'eikastike' poets who are concerned with 'figuring forth good things'. In so doing Sidney answered the accusation that poetry is liable to be subjective and arbitrary, disseminating immorality and deceit by firmly establishing the 'bonum' as the proper object of representation; just as Plato granted that the 'poietic' painters had as object of imitation the 'Ideas' - the 'truly beautiful, just, rational' and not 'that which merely passes for all this among men'. The 'contents' of poetry should be 'some notable example' that is conducive to man's moral good. Characteristically, Sidney made no mention whatever of the 'pulchrum' in art. In circumscribing the subject matter of poetry in this way, Sidney apparently greatly curtailed the liberty of the artist. Yet in a sense this is indicative of the world-view of the Renaissance. We have to bear in mind that as shown in the universal diagram of Robert Fludd of 'The Mirror of Nature and the Image of Art', in his work Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris metaphysica, physica atque technica historia (Openheim, 1607), Nature was regarded in the Renaissance as the art of God, and the business of Art was to 'ape' the handiwork of God and nature¹⁹. For the universe in the Renaissance was thought of as an organic whole, animated by the divine purpose of God,

¹⁹ See the discussion by E.W. Taylor in Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature (New York, 1966), p. 2 ff.

who is the final Cause of all things. Thus Sidney demanded of poetry that it should form a part of this harmonious structure by administering to man's further understanding of the divine plan. Sidney had to wrest a place for poetry in this universal scheme by emphasizing its moral function. Thus the modern artist's overriding concerns, the insistence on individuality and original creation, were renounced by Sidney in the interest of this ulterior aim of art.

THE POET

As we have seen, Sidney was manifestly not concerned with the poet, but with the art of poetry ('I speak of the art, and not of the artificer'). To him, the artist was hardly distinguishable from the art, and he made no attempt in the Apology to present an account of the artist's mental state.

For the first 'portrait of the artist' in Renaissance England, and a psychological account of the creative process, we have to turn for more pregnant suggestions to Nicholas Hilliard's The Arte of Limning, written probably towards the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In this treatise, as Leonardo had done in his literary works, Hilliard talked about the 'naturall aptnes' for the 'calling' of painting, the motive powers of the creative process, and the aesthetic satisfaction of the artist after the completion of the work of art²⁰,

Heer is a kind of true gentility when God calleth,
and doubtles though gentlemen be the metest for
this gentill calling or practize, yet not all, but
natural aptnes is to be chosen and preferred, for
not euery gentleman is so gentel sperited as some
others are. Let vs therefore honore and preferre

²⁰ Ed. Philip Norman (Walpole Society Annual, I (1911-12), p. 17.)

the election of God in all vocations and degrees; and suerly he is a very wisse man that can find out the naturall inclination of his children in due time, and see applie him that waye which nature most inclineth him, if it be good or may be made good, as it may be vsed, though in childhood abused; and as for naturall aptnes of or to painting after the liffe, those surly which haue such a giift of God ought to reioyce with humble thankfulnes; and to be very wary and temperat in diet and other govertment, least it be some taken from them againe by some sudaine mischance, or by their cruell coustomes their sight or stedines of hand decay.

... For it cannot be sayd that a man, be he neuer so cunning by teaching or naturall inclination, yet it will growe out of him as haire out of the head, or fall from him, whether he will or no, but with great labour, and this comfort shall he haue then aboue others, even an heauen of joy in his hart to behould his own well doings remaining to his credit for euer. Yea if men of worth did know what delight it (fo. 2) breedeth, how it remoueth mallancoly, auodeth euell occasions, putteth passions of sorrowe or greefe awaye, cureth rage, and shortneth the times, they would neuer lesue till they had attained in some good meassur a more than comfort.

The artist, however, receives ample attention in Sidney through his idea of the poet as 'maker'²¹. Where all the other disciplines have 'the works of Nature' as the

²¹ Which invites comparison with a similar view in Puttenham, 'A poet is as much to say a maker. And our English name well conformes with the Greeke word: for of 'poiein' to make, they call a maker Poeta. Such as (by way of resemblance and reuerently) we may say of God: who without any trauell to his diuine imagination, made all the world of nought' (The Arte of English Poesie, ed. cit., p. 3).

'principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend, as they become actors and players, as it were, of what Nature will have set forth',

Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms such as were never in Nature, such as Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like: so he goeth hand in hand with Nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the
zodiac of his own wit.

(p. 100)

In this new definition of the relationship between 'mind' and 'nature', the poet's mind is set in sharp antithesis against nature; not only as a competitor, but as an independent agent of creation that surpasses nature - 'doth grow in effect into another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms such as never were in Nature'. The poet is a 'maker' in the eyes of Sidney because he is endowed with the capacity for 'imagination', for 'making' freely whatever subject matter in his poetry that his mind conceives,

... indeed the name of 'making' is fit for him, considering that whereas other arts retain themselves within their subject, and receive, as it were, their being from it, the poet only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceit;

(p. 120)

Musidorus in the Arcadia likewise refers to 'the conceites of the Poets, whose liberall penmes can as easilie travaille

over mountaines, as molehills' and that 'the Poet (the freedome of whose penne canne exercise it selfe in any thing'²². In such a way, the poet's mind is endowed with an unrivalled freedom and creativity and fecundity, and the province of art is greatly expanded and raised over and above the realm of nature. This doctrine is spelt out in the famous distinction between the poet's world as 'golden' and that of nature as 'brazen',

Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as diverse poets have done; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brasen, the poets only deliver a golden.

(p. 100)

The poet is honoured and regarded as superior to all other 'artificers' because 'the heavenly Maker of that maker, who having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature: which in nothing he sheweth as in Poetry, when with the force of a divine breath he bringeth things forth far surpassing her doings' (p. 101). It is interesting to compare Sidney's pronouncements on the poet with Leonardo's observations on the painter, in explaining why he is 'Lord of all types of people and of all things' ('Come il pittore e signore d'ogni sorte di gente e di tutti cose')²³,

²² Works, I, pp. 58. 59.

²³ In Paragone-A Comparison of the Arts (London, 1959), ed. L. A. Richter, pp. 51-52.

If the painter wishes to see beauties that charm him it lies in his power to create them, and if he wishes to see monstrosities that are frightful, buffoonish, or ridiculous, or pitiable, he can be lord and God (creator) thereof; and if he wishes to produce inhabited regions or deserts, or dark and shady (cool) retreats from the heat, or warm places for cold weather, he can do so. If he wants valleys (likewise) if he wants from high mountain tops to unfold a great plain extending down to the sea's horizon he is lord to do so, and likewise if from low plains he wishes to see high mountains, or from high mountains low plains and sea shore. In fact, whatever exists in the universe, in essence, appearance, in the imagination, the painter has first in his mind and then in his hands; and these are of such excellence that they are able to present a proportioned and harmonious view of the whole that can be seen simultaneously, at one glance, just as things in nature.

The literary works of Leonardo - both theoretical writings and practical guides, which are such a fine expression of the artistic achievements of the High Renaissance, are resonant with the sense of the discovery of the potency and creative power of the artist. In trying to elevate painting to the status of the Liberal Arts, Leonardo proclaimed that 'It was wrong, oh writers, to leave her from the number of Liberal Arts, because she deals not only with the works of nature but extends over an infinite number of things which nature never created'²⁴. Painting is superior to sculpture because it is 'covered with various and lovely colours in infinite variety' and also 'more beautiful and more imaginative and the more copious, while sculpture is

²⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

the more durable, but it has nothing else'. It is not likely that Sidney could have known the ideas of Leonardo, which were known to very restricted circles of fellow artists, and whose writings were not published until 1605 in Paris. Yet a juxtaposition of the writings of Sidney and Leonardo shows a common awareness of the artistic problem presented by the relationship of the artist's mind with nature, how the artist should come to terms with nature, and in what ways the artist's subjective powers should be defined. Sidney's doctrine of the poet as 'secondary creator', which is a considerable elaboration of Scaliger's idea (Poetics, I, 1), was formulated at a time in European thought when the gaze of man was turned inwards by the Platonic appeal to contemplation and inner experience, as a result of which the dignity and independence of the human mind, and the ability of man to create his own nature became more than ever emphasized. To Pico della Mirandola, the 'dignity of man' resides precisely in his medial position in the chain of creation, and in his freedom to create his nature which partakes of both the angelic and the bestial²⁵. The writings of the Neo-platonic philosophers were full of fruitful suggestions for the art-theorists, as in the following remarks of Giordano Bruno²⁶,

... Homer in his genre was not a poet who depended upon rules, but he is the cause of the rules which serve others who are more

25 In his dissertation 'On the Dignity of Man', trans. Elizabeth L. Forbes, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man (Chicago, 1945), ed. Cassirer et al.

26 In The Heroic Frenzies (Chapel Hill, 1964), trans. Paul Eugene Menno.

adept at imitating than inventing.

(p. 32)

Bruno gives also in his picture of the 'frenzied lover' a powerful philosophical justification of the conceptual freedom and imaginative capacity of man,

You are to understand that the nude boy represents the frenzied lover, simple, pure, and exposed to all the accidents of nature and fortune, who with his powerful imagination builds castles in the air and, among other things, a tower, whose architect is love, whose walls are the amorous fires and whose builder is himself who says, 'Mutuo fulcimur'.

(pp. 147-48)

Bruno's De Gli Eroici Furori was dedicated to Sidney in 1585, and although he made his acquaintance with Sidney only after he came to England in 1583, there is little doubt that Sidney was familiar with Neo-platonic ideas independent of his later patronage of Bruno. For Neo-platonic ideas were accessible to the Renaissance not only in the more esoteric philosophic writings of Ficino and Pico, but also in the songs and sonnets of Michaelangelo and Lorenzo de Medici, the poetry of Poliziano, the dialogues of Bruno, and Castiglione's very popular work Il Cortegiano.

By the late Renaissance, the idea of artistic creation as a 'divine' activity, comparable to the creation of God, had become well established in artistic speculation. It was in this light that Vasari looked upon artistic creation²⁷

... the origin of the arts we are discussing was nature itself, and that the first image or

²⁷ In Lives of the Artists, ed. cit., 'Preface' to Part I, p. 31.

model was the beautiful fabric of the world, and that the master who taught us was that divine light infused in us by divine grace, which has made us not only superior to the animal creation but even, if one may say, like God Himself.

Lomazzo, in his Trattato dell'Arte della Pittura (1585), though on a different premise, also reached a similar conclusion²⁸,

For indeed if we shall consider Painting as it maketh vse of the Perspective, by orderly representing of lengthnings and shortnings, the umbers and eminences of the lims, ... in beholding a thing so drawen vppon a paper or walls; as it were naturall. Wherefor, in my smal judgment this is the most divine and excellent arte in the world, insemuch as it maketh the workman seeme a Demi-God.

Thus in the Apology Sidney removed the origins of artistic creation from external nature and located them firmly within the human consciousness, in the statement that

... any understanding knoweth the skill of the artificer standeth in the Idea or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poet hath the idea is manifest, by delivering them forth in such excellency as he hath imagined them.

(p. 101)

The Platonic concept of 'Idea', by which was meant the imperceptible forms and archtypes behind the external, per-

²⁸ In A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge, Carvinge & Buildinge, written first in Italian by Jo. Paul Lomatius, painter of Milan (Oxford, 1598), trans. Richard Haydocke, Book II, chap. 2, p. 61.

ceptible reality, became transformed in Sidney's poetic theory into the artistic notions inherent in the poet's mind²⁹. In making the above claim for the poet, Sidney was matched by the Italian poet Tasso who similarly declared that

... the great poet (who is called divine for no other reason than that as he resembles the supreme Artificer in his workings he comes to participate in his divinity)³⁰

With his insight as a creative artist, Tasso had said of the creative process that

... even if sometimes we look to things verisimilar, the only notion we can have of them is what our knowledge of truth gives. That is how we go about forming ideas of artificial things; a work almost godlike that seems to imitate the First Maker.³¹

In the formulation of the doctrine of 'Idea' as the source of artistic production, Sidney was treading on the ground prepared by the Italian critics, notably Pontano and Fracastoro, both cited in the Apology, who were about the foremost among Cinquecento art-theorists to recognize in the

²⁹ For a detailed treatment of 'Idea' as a concept in art-theory and the history of its transformation, see E. Panofsky's Idea, already cited.

³⁰ Discourses on the Heroic Poem, ed. cit., p. 78.

³¹ Ibid., p. 57.

internal notions and 'vision' of the artist a validity and reality more trustworthy than the truth of the external world. Fracastoro, especially, was about the first literary critic to credit the artist with the task of creating according to the subjective laws of artistic production, and hence delivered him from a mere imitation of reality³²,

... the poet is like the painter who does not wish to represent this or that particular man as he is with many defects, but having contemplated the universal and supremely beautiful idea of his Creator, makes things as they ought to be.

(p. 60)

and that

But the poet as poet is inspired by no other aim than simply to express himself well about anything that proposes itself to him. He indeed wishes also to teach and persuade and speak of other things, but, restricted as it were by his aim, he does not develop the matter enough to explain it, but making a different idea for himself, of untrammelled and universal beauty, seeks all the adornments of speech, all the beauties that can be given to it.

(p. 60)

Pontano likewise declared that the aim of poetry was 'to arouse admiration'. Commenting on Pontano, Fracastoro remarked that 'Pontano ... should have added, simply and in accordance with the universal idea of eloquence, so that we should know in what that the poet differs from all the others who strive for eloquence.' Elsewhere where he gave his definition of the poet, Fracastoro concluded that 'Those are

³² Naugerius, ed. cit.

true poets, who contemplating the Idea of their own art, strives to omit no beauty' (Naugerius, p. 71). By this doctrine of 'Idea', Fracastoro safeguarded the mind's independence of nature, and the inexhaustibility and originality of artistic creations. There is also a strong tendency for the 'Idea' as the mental image in the poet's mind to become merged with the 'ideal'. Sidney was probably influenced not only by the dialogue on poetry of Fracastoro, whom he named as one of the 'learned philosophers', but also by the companion piece, Turrius, the dialogue on psychology. There Fracastoro brought forth redefinitions of the powers which were responsible for the apprehension, reproduction and recombination of images from sensory experience, and he described 'imagination' as 'a state of mind more conscious of its own process and made it an essentially active agent'³³. This concept of 'imagination' could not but have repercussions on poetic theory. The time seemed ripe for the formulation of a theory of the poetic mind, and we see Sidney casting about for the right terms in which to discuss the nature of poetic creation in the Apology.

'WIT' AND 'INVENTION'

'Imagination', commonly interchangeable with 'fancy' or 'fantasy', was far from accorded the same pre-eminence in artistic thinking in the sixteenth century as it was in the Romantic period. In fact, it was generally held in disrepute³⁴.

³³ M.W. Bundy, 'Fracastoro and Imagination,' in Renaissance Studies in Honour of Herdin Craig, ed. Baldwin Maxwell et al., PQ (1941), 236-49.

³⁴ See William Rossky, 'Imagination in the English Renaissance: Psychology and Poetic,' Studies in Renaissance, V (1958) 49-73.

in close association with what is 'fantastical' in the pejorative sense, that is, totally lacking in probability and correspondence to life. Its products were often described as 'castles in the air', a phrase actually used by Sidney. This is how Thomas Nashe viewed it, writing of The Terrors of the Night or A Discourse of Apparitions³⁵,

A dreame is nothing else but a bubling scum or froath of the fancie, which the day hath left undigested, or an after feast made of the fragments of idle imaginations.

(p. 234)

The productive power of 'imagination' was regarded as an unhealthy one,

... so this simple melancholy humour still still thickning as it stands till, engendreth many misshapen objects in our imagination.

(p. 232)

George Puttenham made the famous distinction between the 'good' and 'bad' imaginations in The Arte of English Poesie³⁶, and said that

For as the euill and vicious disposition of the braine hinders the sounde iudgement and discourse of man with busie and disordered phantasies, for which cause the Greeks call him 'phantastikos', so is that part well affected, not onely nothing disorderly or confused with any monstrous

³⁵ From The Complete Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. Rev. A.B. Grosart (London and Aylesbury, 1882-83), III.

³⁶ Ed. cit.

imaginations or conceits, but very formall,
and in his much multiformitie vniforme, that
is well proportioned, and so passing cleare,
that by it as by a glasse or mirrour, are
represented vnto the soule all maner of
bewtifull visions, whereby the inuentiue
part of the mind is so much holpen, as
without it no man could deuise any new or
rare thing:

(p. 34)

and that

Euen so is the phantasticall part of man (if
it be not disordered) a representer of the best,
most comely and bewtifull images or apparances
of things to the soule and according to their very
truth.

(p. 35)

The poet's 'good' imagination, which is 'imagination' in
its original, uncorrupted state, echoes Leonardo's 'mente',
which the painter must keep 'as clear as the surface of a
mirror, which assumes colours as various as those of the
different objects'³⁷. Yet though Sidney set high store by
the poet's capacity for artistic imagination, by his
'imagining of matters ... so fit for the imagination' and his
furnishing 'an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable
invention', 'imagination' in Sidney retained much of its
traditional associations with what is 'insubstantial' and
unreliable,

³⁷ From The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci, ed. Jean Paul
Richter (London, 1883), Book IX, Nr. 493.

... then must the historian needs surpass, who brings you images of true matters, such as indeed were done, and not such as fantastically or falsely may be suggested to have been done.

(p. 109)

In this passage we can see that the 'fantastical' was equated with the 'false'. Mazzoni, in his defence of Dante, connected the poetic lie, the dream, with the imagination in his concept of 'The Phantasy or Fancy'³⁸, yet Sidney did not appear to have known this work. In the absence of a theory of the creative imagination, Sidney attempted to formulate a concept of the faculty of mind responsible for poetic creation by means of the terms 'wit' and 'invention'. 'For I will not deny but that man's wit may make Poesy' (p. 125), Sidney affirmed, and that is a reiteration of the earlier statement that '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 wit' (p. 100). 'Wit' in Sidney is used in the original, Anglo-Saxon sense of 'wit' or 'gewit', meaning 'mind, reason, and intelligence' and 'Rational creatures are those to whom God has given "wit" '³⁹. It denotes the 'reasonable parte of our soule', and is often found opposed to 'will', by which Sidney refers to the 'sensuall weaknes' of man - in the Apology, 'since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it' (p. 101); and the wit-

³⁸ See Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden, ed. A.H. Gilbert (New York, 1940), p. 386 ff.

³⁹ See C.S. Lewis, Studies in Words (Cambridge, 1967), chapter 4, 'Wit (with "ingenium")',.

will antithesis, which is equivalent to the struggle between Reason and Passion, recurs in Astrophil and Stella,

Thou setst a bate betweene my will and wit,
(Sonnet 4)

My wit doth strive those passions to defend,
(Sonnet 18)

For though full of desire, emptie of wit,
(Sonnet 81)

For nothing from my wit or will doth flow,
(Sonnet 90)

'Wit' not only distinguishes man from the rest of the creation, as expressed by the playful remark that 'Alas, if you graunt only such delight/To witlesse things, then Love I hope (since wit/Becomes a clog) will soone ease me of it' (Sonnet 59), but elevates him to the status of a demi-god by virtue of this free, creative power. This doctrine was given unequivocal expression in the saying that 'Neither let it be too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's with with the efficacy of Nature' (p. 101).

When Sidney came to a description of the process of poetic composition, as he did in describing Zelmane composing a panegyric of Philoclea's beauty⁴⁰, the term 'invention', which is borrowed from classical rhetoric, was introduced,

And so together went the utterance and the invention, that one might judge, it was Philoclea's

⁴⁰ Works, I, p. 218.

beautie which did speedily write it in her eyes;
or the sense thereof, which did word by word endite
it in her minde, whereto (but as an organ) did
onely lend utterance.

In the late Greek rhetoricians 'invention' is the first of the fivefold divisions, by which is meant 'the art of exploring material to discover arguments in support of one's case or refutation of the opponents'. Treatises were written, such as Cicero's De Inventione and Topica, to assist the orator in the finding out of the appropriate materials. In the Renaissance, following the important finds of classical rhetorical texts in Italy in the opening decades of the fifteenth century⁴¹, and the restoration of the rounded conception of rhetoric in the best of the classical tradition, 'invention' became an increasingly important concept in critical theories of literary composition. Erasmus' De duplici copia verborum ac rerum (1511), inspired by a passage in Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria, Book X, echoing a similar passage in Cicero's De Oratore, was a product of this rhetorical tradition; and 'invention' became firmly established as an indispensable procedure in creative writing. Thus in Sidney 'invention' is used often in this original, Latin sense of 'invenire', meaning 'to find', to designate the finding out or generating of new ideas, as in the following examples taken from the Old Arcadia⁴².

Till at length love, the refiner of invention,
put in his head a way how to come to the sight of

⁴¹ See John R. Spencer, 'Ut Rhetorica Pictura,' JWCI, XX (1957), 26-44.

⁴² From The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. with introd. and commentary by Jean Robertson (Oxford, 1973).

his Philoclea;

(p. 12)

But as love, though it be a passion, hath in itself a very active manner of working, so had she in her brain all sorts of invention by which she might come to some closer satisfaction of it.

(p. 113)

But Cleophila ... began to throw her thoughts into each corner of her invention, how she might achieve her life's enterprise.

(p. 206)

and that 'With that with hasty hands she gat herself up, turning her sight to everything, as if change of object might help her invention' (p. 215). But 'invention' also made its appearance prominently in Sidney's writings in the sense that is connected with literary composition, as in the following complaint of Musidorus,

But ah, my muse, I would thou hadst facility
To work my goddess so by thy invention
On me to cast those eyes, where shine nobility:
Seen and unknown; heard, but without attention.

(p. 64)

and in Philoclea's exclamation that 'Shall I seek far-fetched inventions? Shall I seek to lay colours over my decayed thoughts?'. In the latter its rhetorical provenance is evident from the reference to 'colours', meaning the 'colours of rhetoric' by which discourse is adorned. In the humanistic

theory of painting put forward by Leon Battista Alberti in his treatise De Pictura, first written in Latin in Florence in 1435 and translated into Italian for Fillipo

Brunelleschi in the following year, the concept 'inventione' was also directly taken over from rhetoric to denote the 'subject matter found out in the artist's mind', which precedes the actual depiction⁴³,

Literary men, who are full of information, about many subjects, will be of great assistance in preparing the composition of a 'historia', and the great virtue of this consists primarily in its invention. Indeed, invention is such that even by itself and without presentation it can give pleasure.

(p. 53)

and that

I therefore advise the studious painter to make himself familiar with poets and orators and other men of letters, for he will not only obtain excellent ornaments from learned minds, but he will also be assisted in those very inventions which in painting can gain him the greatest praise.

(p. 97)

'Istoria' in Alberti, which can be translated simply as 'story', was presented in his theory as parallel to 'plot' in poetry, and 'inventione' took on a meaning which is equivalent to the 'theme' in a literary composition. In Leonardo 'inventione' meant 'an idea originally formed in your imagination ("la imaginativa")', and he talked about different ways of 'developing and arousing the mind to various inventions'⁴⁴. This was also the meaning Vasari had in mind

⁴³ Leon Battista Alberti, On Painting and Sculpture, trans. Cecil Grayson (London, 1972).

⁴⁴ Literary Works, Book IX, Nrs. 502 and 508.

when he credited Leonardo in his Vite with the saying that 'men of genius sometimes accomplish most when they work least; for, he added, they are thinking out inventions and forming in their minds the perfect ideas which they subsequently express and reproduce with their hands.' But Vasari was also responsible for establishing firmly the meaning of 'invention' as 'theme' or 'motif' when he listed 'invenzione' as an important criterion of judgement in his account of the progress of art in the Italian Renaissance. In the 'preface' to 'Part Two' of his Vite, the artists of the second period were praised because 'Nella seconda poi si veggono manifesto esser le cose migliorate e nell'invenzione e nell'condurle con piu disegno e con miglior maniera e con maggior diligenza'. Massaccio was praised, for instance, for bringing into existence the 'maniera moderna che ... e di tempo in tempo con miglior grazia, invenzione, ornamenti, arricchita ed abbellita'. In these two examples, 'invenzione' has the meaning not only of 'ideas conceived in the artist's mind', equivalent to 'pensiero' and 'concetto', but also the sense of what we would today call the 'themes' in a work of art, or 'motifs' for composition. As has been noted earlier, this meaning of 'invention' was an integral part of Alberti's theory of painting; but it was in Vasari that 'invention' as an artistic quality was singled out for consideration. It is with all these Renaissance uses of 'invention' in mind that we can have a full understanding of the threefold repetition of 'invention' in Sonnet I of Astrophil and Stella,

Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show,
That the deare She might take some pleasure of my
Pleasure might cause her reade, reading might make
Knowledge might pitie winne, and pitie grace obtaine,

in nature, we wish and indeed ought - to have recourse to her rather than to masters who have learned from her. I say this not for those who wish to become wealthy through art, but for those who desire fame and honour from it.

To Alberti and Leonardo, 'Nature' furnishes the chief source of artistic creation; whereas Sidney came to the conclusion, after intense and prolonged introspection, at the end of the sonnet that the only laws that he should obey are the laws of the imagination, and that the proper materials for poetic creation are the amorphous heaps of materials inside the poet's heart. Thus in this context 'Invention' in line 9 - 'But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay' comes to stand for not just the 'materials invented', but the artist's creative intelligence, or the very faculty or function of mind for free imaginative creation. In line 6 - 'Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertaine:', 'inventions' retains the sense of 'motifs' or 'themes' for composition. But it is not difficult to see how 'invention' as 'materials invented' can come to denote also 'the agent or faculty for invention', that is, the artistic intellect. In the Arcadia, in the description of the portrait of Philoclea (Works, I, p.18), 'invention' is used in the sense of 'imaginative creation' as in the above-discussed example,

Though he thought inquisitiveness an uncomely guest, he could not choose but ask who she was, that bearing shew of one being in deed, could with natural gifts go beyond the reach of invention.

'Invention' as the artist's creation is seen opposed to Philoclea's 'natural gifts', which are the given materials. 'Invention' in this sense was given most eloquent expression

in the Renaissance by Ronsard, in his L'Abbrege de l'Art Poetique Francoys (1565)⁴⁶,

L'invention n'est autre chose que le bon naturel d'une imagination concevant les Idees & formes de toutes choses qui se peuvent imaginer tant celestes que terrestres, animees ou inanimees (sic), pour apres les représenter, descrire & imiter.

where 'invention', as the faculty responsible for bringing forth 'les conceptions hautes, grands, belles & non trainants a terre', became synonymous with 'imagination'. Ronsard was not mentioned in the Apology; yet Boccaccio, whose works Sidney appeared to be familiar with, was the first modern poet to apply the concept 'invention' to poetry, in his definition that 'poetry ... is a sort of fervid and exquisite invention, with fervid expression, in speech or writing, of that which the mind has invented'.⁴⁷ In this definition, we can see Boccaccio's perception into the subjective and imaginative character of poetic creation. In citing 'Studie' as a requirement of the poet, which is equivalent to the classical precept of 'imitatio' or 'imitation' of model authors', Sidney was following the rhetorical tradition of composition prevalent in the Renaissance. Yet the power of 'invention', or 'imaginative creation', Sidney regarded as unique to the poet - 'Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature' (p. 100).

⁴⁶ In Oeuvres Completes, ed. Paul Laumonier (Paris, 1949), XIV, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁷ See Boccaccio on Poetry, being the Preface and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Books of Boccaccio's Genealogia Deorum Gentilium, edited & trans. Charles G. Osgood (Princeton, 1930), p. 39.

The philosophical and historical poets are spurned because 'this second sort is wrapped within the fold of the proposed subject, and takes not the course of his own invention' (p. 120). Thus Sidney's 'right poet' is distinguished by his capacity for fiction. In introducing this concept of 'invention' to his theory of poetry, Sidney was affirming that the origin of art was to be looked for in a mode of vision or subjective intuition which renews itself every time that art is created. Sidney thus placed the origin of art in the psychology of the artist and not in external models.

REALISM AND IDEALISM

The idea that art is a business of 'copying' gives rise to two rival doctrines of imitation - 'realism' and 'idealism'. They are germane to the question whether 'nature' should be represented as it is, or better than it is; in other words, to what extent the insight of the artist, the way he sees reality to be, can influence artistic representation.

The demand that art should be 'lifelike' and 'realistic' is traceable to as early as the eighth century B.C., in Homer's description of Achilles' shield (The Iliad, XVIII, 478 ff.); the soldiers represented on the shield struggled 'as if they were living men', and that 'the earth looked dark behind the plough and like to the ground that had been ploughed, although it was made of gold; that was a marvellous piece of work.' Throughout antiquity, artistic speculation was dominated by the concept of art as imitation of nature, or as indistinguishable from nature. Accounts of artists and works of art, as found in Pliny's Historia Naturalis (Books 33-36), Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria (XII, x, 1 ff.) and Cicero's Brutus and Orator, record many an anecdote of sculpted cows that appeared as real ones, painted grapes that attracted birds, and painted horses that

real horses neighed at.

However, as Panofsky has pointed out in his Idea (p. 14ff.), side by side this motif of art striving to be like nature, there existed also in antiquity the opposing doctrines of art as superior to nature, by representing nature as it ideally is, by improving on nature's imperfections. Lysippus was praised for making the human figure more slender and elegant, so as to present man not as he is, but as he appears; while Demetrius was censured for being 'fonder of similitude than beauty' - 'similitudinis quam pulchritudinis amantior' (Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, XII, x, 9). The idea of 'imitatio' was offset by that of 'selectio'; and the same painter Zeuxis, who had painted the grapes that attracted birds, was famed for painting the picture of Helen by using as models the five most beautiful virgins of Crotona (Cicero, De Inventione, II, 1, 1-3), an instance referred to by Alberti. But the most vivid account of the 'spiritual' imitation of art was found in descriptions of the supreme achievement of Phidias in his statues of Zeus and Minerva, in Cicero's Orator 9 and Philostratus's Life of Apollonius of Tyana (6.19). Phidias was praised for his marvellous and 'divinely inspired' intuition; and Philostratus put forward the notion of 'phantasia' to explain this amazing capacity for creating images in art far surpassing reality.

In the Renaissance, the rising awareness that artistic representation had to be treated as different in kind and purpose from the reality of everyday life gave birth to two important concepts that furnished new alternatives to either 'imitatio' or 'selectio' of the ancients. 'Beauty' and 'delight' came to be recognized as the compelling qualities. Pontano was the first to emphasize that the poet was bound by laws other than 'truth to nature', in his injunction that 'the

purpose of the poet, which Syncerus in the beginning said was this ... to speak well and appropriately in order to arouse wonder' and that 'It is the poet's peculiar business ... to speak so (sublimely and supremely well) always, even when he treats very small and humble matters' (Actius)⁴⁸.

Fracastoro took it upon himself to investigate the 'pulchritudo' in art⁴⁹, the importance of which is stressed time and again in Naugerius - 'but the poet is like the painter who does not wish to represent this or that particular man as he is with many defects, but having contemplated the universal and supremely beautiful idea of his Creator, makes things as they ought to be'; 'the poet as poet is inspired by no other aim than simply to express himself well about anything that proposes itself to him ... but making a different idea for himself, of untrammelled and universal beauty, seeks all the adornments of speech, all the beauties which can be given to it'; and that 'surely he is a poet whose office and end is to neglect none of those things which make simply beautiful and perfect speech'. In seeing the artist as being governed by the laws of 'beauty' above all others, Pontano and Fracastoro liberated art from mere slavish, 'naturalistic', imitation.

The influence of these two writers on Sidney cannot be over-emphasized; for Sidney showed awareness of the rival claims of the 'beautiful' and the 'true' on the poet, and he decided in favour of the former.

48 From Naugerius, p. 81 ff.

49 See the revealing remark of Tasso that 'although at my age and in my circumstances contemplating the idea of the good might be a more appropriate study, ... I none the less trust that it may not be burdensome to you to read what may reasonably be said of the beautiful, ... For that reason, some, Fracastoro among them, have held that this alone is the mark, almost the goal of all poets.' (Discourses, p. 171).

Betwixt whom and these second is such a kind of difference as betwixt the meaner sort of painters, who counterfeit only such faces as are set before them, and the more excellent, who having no law but wit, bestow that in colours upon you which is fittest for the eye to see: as the constant though lamenting look of Lucretia, when she punished in herself another's fault; wherein he painteth not Lucretia whom he never saw, but painteth the outward beauty of such a virtue.

(p. 102)

The true artist is concerned with that 'which is fittest for the eye to see' and not just with counterfeiting what meets the eye. The artist has 'no law but wit'; and although Sidney did not introduce the term 'phantasia', he had in mind as well the ability described by Philostratus of actually 'seeing' something that is not perceptible to the senses - 'wherein he painteth not Lucretia whom he never saw; but painteth the outward beauty of such a virtue'. It is very likely that Sidney had in mind Veronese's Lucretia while he was writing. The doctrine that the artist has to confront reality independently with his own created image of beauty is spelt out unequivocally in the following passage,

For indeed, if the question were whether it were better to have a particular act truly or falsely set down, there is no doubt which is to be chosen, no more than whether you had rather have Vespasian's picture right as he was, or at the painter's pleasure, nothing resembling. But if the question be for your own use and learning, whether it be better to have it set down as it should be, or as it was, then certainly is more doctrinable the feigned Cyrus of Xenophon than the true Cyrus in Justin, and the feigned Aeneas in Virgill than the right Aeneas in Dares Phrygius: as to a lady that desired to fashion her countenance to the best grace, a painter should more benefit her to portray a most sweet face, writing Candida upon it, than to

paint Candida as she was, who, Horace sweareth,
was foul and ill favoured.

(pp. 109-10)

Sidney, however, did not conceive of art as serving a different purpose from morality. He arrogated a large measure of freedom to the artist; but on account of this, the emancipation was an incomplete one. As the 'beautiful' to Sidney was inseparable from the 'good', the feigned image of Cyrus and Aeneas were welcome because they were more 'doctrinable'; that is, more serviceable for 'your own use and learning'. The beautiful image became submerged in the overall purpose to 'teach'; in other words, subordinate to the moral function. The outstanding feature of Sidney's poetic is the conception of the twin functions of 'teaching' and 'delighting'. As Pontano has pointed out, the purpose of the poet is to 'arouse wonder at himself in his hearer and reader' and that 'not only in sublime words, but in subject matter too, both skilfully invented and the real, poets seek wonder.' Sidney likewise dwelt on the primacy of the 'delightful',

So then the best of the historian is subject to the poet; for whatsoever action, or faction, whatsoever council, policy, or war stratagem the historian is bound to recite, that may the poet (if he list) make his own, beautifying it both for further teaching, and more delighting, as it pleaseth him: having all, from Dante's heaven to his hell, under the authority of his pen.

(p. 111)

The sense of the delightful stems from the awareness of the difference between the beautiful in nature and the beautiful in art, as shown in the passage that follows,

The imitation whereof Poesy is, hath the most conveniency to Nature of all other, insomuch that, as Aristotle saith, those things which in themselves

are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters,
are made in poetical imitation delightful.
(p. 114)

Sidney's concept of 'delight' anticipates the modern analysis of aesthetic enjoyment, such as the description of the 'Pleasures of the Imagination' of Joseph Addison⁵⁰. In recognizing that art is 'delightful' or 'pleasurable', Sidney removed art from the realm of the practical. 'Delight' was affirmed to be the distinguishing quality of poetry - the philosophers make a 'school-art of that which the poets did only teach by a divine delightfulness' (p. 128); and that 'the ever-praiseworthy Poesy is full of virtue-breeding delightfulness' (p. 141). In this notion of 'delight', Sidney touched on the important fact that art terminates in sensory experience, and that the response of the audience is necessary for the purpose of art to be complete.

MIND AND NATURE

The Renaissance is a period in which the ancient belief that art should imitate nature appeared to have carried the day. The injunction 'Follow Nature' pervaded contemporary art criticism. It is present not only in the grandiose concept of artistic progress erected by Vasari, but occurs in earlier writers. Giotto was praised by Boccaccio for the 'truthfulness' of his representation, and for that 'he restored to light this art which for many centuries had been buried under the errors of some who painted in order to please the eye of the ignorant

⁵⁰ See the section on 'Taste and the Pleasure of the Imagination,' in Critical Essays from The Spectator by Joseph Addison, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford, 1970).

rather than to satisfy the intelligence of the experts, and he may rightly be called one of the lights in the glory of Florence' (Decameron, Day Six, fifth story)⁵¹. Cennino Cennini, in his Libro dell'Arte, was among the first to discard medieval methods of painting, especially the use of gold in colouring, in favour of a more realistic rendering of nature. The same point was urged by Ghiberti, and by Alberti who said that 'painting should arise from roots within nature'. For the same reason Leonardo had exhorted painters to follow Nature rather than the works of other painters⁵²,

I say to painters that nobody should ever imitate another's manner, because as far as art is concerned, he will be called a grandson rather than a son of Nature. Since things exist in such great abundance in nature, we wish - and indeed ought - to have recourse to her rather than to masters who have learned from her.

These artists who upheld this naively confident 'creed' of nature were not conscious of the problematic nature of the approach which treated artistic works as natural objects. They were aware that mere naturalistic representation was inadequate, and that ideal beauty had to be added; but the gap between 'mind' and 'nature', or between 'subject' and 'object', was not immediately apparent to them.

Ghiberti, following the example of Lysippus as recorded in Pliny, strove to imitate 'men not as they are but as they appear to be' - 'Ingegnai cercare imitare la natura quanto a

⁵¹ See Peter Burke's The Renaissance (London, 1971), chapter 1, 'The Idea of the Renaissance,' p. 3.

⁵² Leonardo on Painting - a lost book (Libro A), ed. cit., Nr. 3.

me fu possibile' (Commentarii)⁵³; and sought to produce the additional qualities of 'appearance' and 'symmetria'. Alberti likewise insisted on the representation of the 'ideal', and he advocated a form of the rhetorical precept 'acumen' (Cicero, De Oratoria, XXXV, 147 ff.), a Zeuxis-like 'selectio', to create a composite image of beauty that transcends reality⁵⁴. Yet the method adopted, the attempt to reproduce reality by means of studying mathematical and perspectival laws and using refined techniques of 'chiaroscuro', were scientific and empirical. In De Pictura, which a critic regards as the 'Magna Charta of the Italian Renaissance'⁵⁵, Alberti put forward a scientific theory of art. There was a great sense of the discovery of the universe and the 'empirical' truth of art; and in this new ideal of art 'reality' in art became at once both 'natural' and 'more than natural', that is, 'ideal'. In Alberti's De Re Aedificatoria, the proportionally arranged parts of the buildings were supposed to symbolise the imperceptible 'reasons' of nature. To Leonardo, in being truthful to nature, art served to reflect the invisible harmonies of the universe. Thus instead of being subjective and arbitrary, the artist's

⁵³ Cited by E.H. Gombrich, in 'The Renaissance Concept of Artistic Progress and its Consequences,' Actes du XVII^{me} Congres International d'Histoire de l'Art, Amsterdam, 23-31 Juillet, 1952, 260-62.

⁵⁴ See John R. Spencer, 'Ut Rhetorica Pictura,' JWCI, XX (1957), 26-44.

⁵⁵ Lionello Venturi, in A History of Art Criticism, trans. Charles Marriot (New York, 1964), chapter 4, 'The Renaissance'.

mind was brought into a beautiful harmonious relation with nature⁵⁶,

Painting requires more thought and skill and is a more marvellous art than sculpture, because the painter's mind must of necessity enter into nature's mind in order to act as an interpreter between nature and art; it must be able to expound the causes of the manifestations of her laws,

Instead of seeing the 'natural' in art as a direct embodiment of the unalterable laws of the universe, Sidney resolved the conflict between 'mind' and 'nature' by postulating the Aristotelian principle of the 'universal', as Fracastoro did in Naugerius,

Now doth the peerless poet performs both:
for whatsoever the philosopher saith should be
done, he giveth a perfect picture of it in some
one by whom he coupleth the general notion with
the particular example.

(p. 107)

and that

Truly, Aristotle himself, in his discourse of poesy, plainly determineth this question, saying that Poetry is 'philosophoteron' and 'spoudaioteron', that is to say, it is more philosophical and more studiously serious than history. His reason is, because poesy dealeth with 'kathelou', that is to say, with the universal consideration, and the history with 'kathekaston', the particular: 'now', saith he, 'the universal weighs what is fit to be said or done, either in likelihood or necessity (which the poesy considereth in his imposed names), and the particular only marks whether Alcibiades did, or suffered, this or that.'

⁵⁶ Paragone—A Comparison of the Arts, ed. cit., Nr. 41.

(p. 109)

Fracastoro has attempted to reconcile the discrepancy between 'mind' and 'nature' by identifying the poet's image of beauty with 'the universal and supremely beautiful idea of his Creator', as distinguished from 'this or that particular man as he is with many defects'. There is a tendency to synthesize the Platonic, or rather the Neoplatonic, with the Aristotelian. First, Fracastoro transferred Plato's 'idea', which designates the metaphysical essences behind the phenomenal world to the mind of a personal God. 'Idea' in Fracastoro came to be endowed with a theological significance. But he further linked the Platonic 'idea' with the Aristotelian doctrine of the 'universal' - 'Pontano ... should have added, simply and in accordance with the universal idea of eloquence, so that we should know in what the poet differs from all the others who strive for eloquence' and that 'The poet imitates not the particular but the simple idea clothed in its own beauties, which Aristotle calls the universal'. The Platonic dualism between 'appearance' and 'idea' became fused with the Aristotelian antithesis between the 'general' or the 'universal' and the 'particular'. The poet's creation is regarded as impregnated with 'reality' of a superior order because he makes the 'universal' - things as they ought to be, the absolute essence of things - the object of artistic representation.

In Sidney, the doctrine of the universal is a corollary of his 'idealistic' conception of poetry - 'For indeed Poetry ever setteth virtue so out in her best colours, making Fortune her well-waiting handmaid, that one must needs be enamoured of her.' It is not surprising then that the Aristotelian notion of the 'universal' was clinched enthusiastically by Sidney; for

representing the universal implies representing, in Babbitt's terms, 'nature raised above all that is local and accidental, so as to be in the highest sense representative'.⁵⁷ By following Aristotle, Sidney circumvented the clash between 'mind' and 'nature'. That is because instead of seeing 'mind' and 'nature' as two opposing realms, poetic creation was to him an act of extricating the universally valid 'form' from its local manifestation in 'matter'. It is the business of poetry to represent the state of things as they should be, reality in the absolute sense. Thus in the Arcadia, the portrait of Gynecia is as much a study in passion as the painting of Lucretia is an embodiment of 'the outward beauty of such a virtue'. The 'universal' is not the same thing as the 'ideal'. But the 'universal' provides us with knowledge of the 'ultimate truths' regarding the fundamental law and order of the universe. The doctrine of the 'universal' reinforces the 'truthfulness' of the poet's rendition of reality. In this way Sidney bestowed the same metaphysical and moral value on poetry as Plato did on philosophy.

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

The question of 'truth and falsehood' in poetry received but brief treatment in Sidney, compared to other Renaissance writers. The question was mooted by charges that the poets were 'the principal liars', and Sidney gave a short but to-the-point answer to these accusations,

Now for the poet, he nothing affirms, and
therefore never lieth. For, as I take it, to lie

⁵⁷ In his work The New Laokoon (New York, 1910); cited by Rensselaer W. Lee, in his article 'Ut Pictura Poesis - The Humanistic Theory of Painting,' Art Bulletin, XXII (1940), 197-269.

is to affirm that to be true which is false; so as the other artists, and especially the historian, affirming many things, can, in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lies. But the poet (as I said before) never affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes. He citeth not authorities of other histories, but even for his entry calleth the Muses to inspire into him a good invention; in truth, not labouring to tell you what is or not, but what should or should not be.

(pp. 123-24)

Sidney's main contention is that 'though he recount things not true, yet because he telleth them not for true, he lieth not'. Sidney re-emphasized the basic nature of poetry as 'invention' and 'fiction' - 'but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into him a good invention'; and that 'as in History looking for truth, they go away fraught with falsehood, so in Poesy looking but for fiction, they shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention'. This allegorical interpretation of poetry 'that the poets' persons and doings are but pictures of what should be, and not stories what have been, they will never give the lie to things not affirmatively but allegorically and figuratively written', which is part of Sidney's medieval inheritance⁵⁸, insulated poetry from charges of falsehood and irreverence by making poetic 'fiction' a means of divulging moral and theological truths.

⁵⁸ Compare Boccaccio's saying that 'Yes, in truth among the disguises of fiction rhetoric has no part, for whatever is composed as under a veil, and thus exquisitely wrought, is poetry and poetry alone' and that 'they (the poets) enclosed the high mysteries of things divine in a covering of words' (Boccaccio on Poetry, p. 40) and Fracastoro's pronouncement that 'everything which may be allowed to invention is true either because it has the appearance of truth, or because it has allegorical significance' (Nauferius, p. 70).

Curiously, though Sidney followed Aristotle on many points, the Aristotelian concept of 'verisimilitude' or 'probability' was not referred to in the Apology. But a form of this doctrine is included in Sidney's explanation that 'poets give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of actual truth, and so, not being true, proves a falsehood' in order to 'make their pictures more lively, and not to build any history: painting men, they cannot leave them nameless'. This amounts to insisting that the poet's 'fictions' should be 'verisimilar', and as true to life as possible.

However, in his lapidary dictum that the poet 'nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth', Sidney touched on the important distinction between 'imaginative' and 'actual' truths, the precise nature of which was scanned more thoroughly by Fracastoro and Tasso. That the 'verum' of poetry is of altogether a different order from everyday life constituted a favourite theme of discussion in Renaissance criticism, as a result of the controversy over the poet's right to free, fictitious fabrication provoked by Dante's Divine Comedy. The concept of 'poetic licence' was actually mentioned in passing in Tasso's Discourses on the Heroic Poem. Tasso contributed vitally to Renaissance poetic in promulgating the idea of 'poetic lie', which liberated the poet once and for all from the last vestiges of the poet's obligations to create according to the truths of everyday reality.

... the poet, who is to deceive the reader with the semblance of truth, commonly delights him with the variety of his lies ... as the pleasure of the lie varies the aspect of truth, painting it, so to deceive.

(p. 26)

Tasso stressed the fact that 'the poet considers the verisimilar only as it is universal' and that 'imitation is by

its nature not linked with truth, but with verisimilitude' (p. 19). In other words, Tasso perceived that though fictitious persons and actions should 'resemble' their counterparts in real life, they are nevertheless a part of the poet's 'feigning'. He grasped also the fact that there is a real distinction between 'truth' as it is, and the 'semblance' of truth. Thus Tasso was able to move further, in a way that Sidney was not prepared to, towards detaching the aesthetic 'semblance' from its practical, moral, and intellectual context.

CHAPTER TWO POETRY AND 'ENERGIA'

Having resolved the question of truth and falsehood, and enthroned poetry as the 'paragon' in Renaissance culture by virtue of its unique equipment of 'delight', whereby 'doctrine' becomes 'moving', Sidney found himself necessarily engrossed by the question of how language can be impregnated with the power of 'moving', or how 'sense' may be united with 'the sensual'. Since the 'ending end of all earthly learning' is 'virtuous action', 'moving' is indeed the supreme requisite of poetry,

And that moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well nigh the cause and effect of teaching. For who will be taught, if he be not moved with desire to be taught? and what so much good doth that teaching bring forth (I speak still of moral doctrines) as that it moveth one to do that which it doth teach? For, as Aristotle saith, it is not 'gnosis' but 'praxis' must be the fruit. And how 'praxis' cannot be, without being moved to practise, it is no hard matter to consider.
(p. 112)

which is a direct adaptation to poetry of the classical rhetorical doctrine of 'docendi, movendi, delectandi' - 'instructing, moving and delighting the hearers' (Quintilian, Inst. Orat., VIII, Pr. 6). The sixteenth century was a period in which the spoken or written word was held to have an irresistible force through the power of persuasion, as shown in the apotheosis of eloquence in Daniel's Musophilus¹,

¹ See The Complete Works of Samuel Daniel, ed. A.B. Grosart (London and Aylesbury, 1885), p. 245.

Power above powers, O heavenly eloquence,
 That with the strong rein of commanding words
 Dost manage, guide, and master th'eminence
 Of men's affections more than all their swords, —
 Shall we not offer to thy excellence
 The richest treasure that our wit affords?

which may be regarded as the Renaissance continuation of the celebration of the powers of 'Rhetoryke' in Stephen Hawes' The Pastime of Pleasure. Language in the sixteenth century was considered to be endowed with a magical power for creative good, as indicated by the cult of Orpheus which was enthusiastically embraced by the humanist educators — Puttenham, Thomas Wilson, Peacham, William Kemp and John Rainolde; philosophers such as Ficino, and musical thinkers such as Mersenne². Sidney's belief in this is attested by his saying that ' "oratio" next to "ratio", speech next to reason, be the greatest gift bestowed upon mortality'³. The Renaissance, we recall, was a great age of public oratory in which the classical ideals of the perfect orator were invested in the figure of the lawyer as described by Sir Thomas Elyot⁴, and exemplified in public by such eminent figures as Sir Thomas More, Sir Thomas Smith, and Thomas Wilson. The union of 'wisdom' and 'eloquence'

² See Kirsty Cochrane's article, 'Orpheus Applied: Some Instances of his Importance in the Humanist View of Language,' RES, XIX (1968), 1-13.

³ Cf. a similar statement by Tasso, 'Among God's dearest and most precious gifts to human nature has been that of speech which almost equals reason in dignity and excellence ... Speech, also called elocution, is then the noblest gift of the first giver, the most powerful servant of our intellect, and the truest interpreter of our spirit.' (Discourses, p. 139).

⁴ See The Governor (London, 1962), pp. 54-55.

was proverbial, and there was general consensus over the ethical function of language.

Sidney's assertion of the incomparable power of persuasion of the poetic example is very similar to Plato and Aristotle's conceptions of rhetoric as an instrument in the service of reason for the moving of the affections. But as Addison had confessed pondering over the mysterious workings of the imagination, 'Final cause lie more bare and open to our observations' and 'though in yesterday's paper we considered how everything that is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination with pleasure, we must own that it is impossible for us to assign the necessary causes of this pleasure' and that 'the several necessary and efficient causes whence the pleasure or displeasure arises' remain unknown (The Spectator, 1712, No. 413). Just as Addison was at a loss to 'the nature of an idea', or 'the substance of a human soule', to Sidney the precise nature of how language may be manipulated so as to 'redresse/And calm, and sway the affections it commands:/ Which as it stirres, it doth againe repress/And brings in th'out-gone malice that withstands' presents the challenging problem. Indeed, the concern with effective 'persuasion', with charging language with feeling and 'moving' to action runs through all of Sidney's writings. In the Apology, the contemporary love lyrics were censured for their very want of this power of persuasion - 'But truly many of such writings as come under the banner of irresistible love, if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love'. 'Persuasion' to compassion appropriately constitutes the overt theme and motive for composition for Astrophil, as shown in the very first line of Astrophil and Stella,

67

Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show,
That the deare She might take some pleasure of my
Pleasure might cause her reade, reading might make ^{paine:}
Knowledge might pitie winne, and pitie ^{her know,} grace obtaine,

That Sidney was fascinated by the problem of wedding the abstract to the concrete, the spiritual to the material in the idiom of the grammatical language is evidenced by the fact that his created world of fiction is inhabited by characters striving after more 'persuasive' forms of expression. In the Arcadia as in Astrophil and Stella, 'moving' to deeds or understanding furnishes the desideratum of the actions and utterances of the central figures. It is the crucial element in the gaining of the mistress' favour. Amphialus, for example, undertakes to woo Helen, Queen of Corinth, for his friend Philoxenus, and the moving effects of his speeches are described by Helen, his vanquished auditor, in the following manner,

O lord, how did my soule hang at his lippes while
he spake! O when he in feeling manner would describe
the love of his frend, how well (thought I) dooth
love betweene those lips! when he would with
daintiest eloquence stirre pitie in me toward
Philoxenus, why sure (said I to my selfe) Helen, be
not afraid, his hart cannot want pitie:

(Works, I, p. 69)

Musidorus, disguised as Dorus, narrates a tale of his life on purpose to win the regard of Pamela, 'And therewith, thinking her silent imaginations began to worke somewhat, to mollifie them (as the nature of Musick is to do) and withal, to shew what kind of shepheard I was, I took up my Harpe, and sang these few verses' (Works, I, p. 163). Amphialus, to lay fresh siege to the heart of Philoclea, likewise 'presuming to

cause his dreame to be song unto her (which he had seen the night before he fell in love with her) making a fine boy he had, accord a prettie dolefulnes unto it ... laying not onely the conquests, but the hart of the conqueror at her feet' (Works, I, pp. 394-99). With this purpose of 'persuasion' in mind, Sidney set up the concept pf 'energia' as the stylistic ideal of eloquent communication which is the aim of all writers,

... so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings (and so caught up some certain swelling phrases which hang together like a man which once told me the wind was at north-west and by south, because he would be sure to name winds enough), than that in truth they feel those passions, which easily (as I think) may be betrayed by that same forcibleness or 'energia' (as the Greeks call it) of the writer.
(pp. 137-38)

The word 'energia', as Shepherd points out, marks the 'first appearance in English of a form of the word "energy" '. In equating 'energia' with 'forcibleness', Sidney amalgamated into his poetic the rhetorical concept of 'energia', as other Renaissance writers had done before him, notably Du Bellay, in his Deffence et Illustration (1549), livre I, chap. 5; and Scaliger, in Poeticae Libri Septem (1561), III, 26⁵. As Jean Hagstrum tells us, in the classics two meanings of the term 'energeia' and the homonymous one 'enargeia' may be

⁵ For a detailed account of the classical sources of 'energeia' and its Renaissance occurrences, and discussions of it in modern criticisms, see J.B. Bender, Spenser and Literary Pictorialism (Princeton, 1972), p. 8 ff., and Forrest G. Robinson, The Shapes of Things Unknown (Camb., Mass., 1972), pp. 128-35.

distinguished⁶. 'Energeia' as it exists in Aristotle (Rhetoric, III, xl, 2-4) means originally 'actuality', which effect is produced when 'the inanimate becomes animate' and charged with 'movement and life'. 'Energeia' in Aristotle is therefore a special term signifying 'the actualization of potency, the realization of capacity or capability, the achievement in art and rhetoric of the dynamic and purposive life of nature'⁷. Quintilian also makes the distinction between 'energeia' and 'enargeia'; and the former he translates as 'vigour' (Inst. Orat., VIII, lll, 89), which he uses in a sense akin to the Aristotelian one - 'which derives its name from action and finds its peculiar function in securing that nothing that is said is tame.' The word 'enargeia', which Tasso fused and confused with the Aristotelian 'energeia' in the late Renaissance⁸, however, in other classical writers - in Plutarch's comment on Thucydides' description of an expedition (Moralia 347a, 347c), in Longinus (On the Sublime, xv, 2), in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in Demetrius, and above all in Quintilian (Inst. Orat., IV, ll, 63; VI, ll, 32, 36; VIII, lll, 61-62), has a substantially narrower meaning of 'pictorial vividness' and a much stronger sense of commitment to 'verisimilitude'⁹. The pictorial element is hinted in Aristotle in his saying that 'smart sayings are derived from

⁶ In The Sister Arts (Chicago, 1958), p. 10 ff.

⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸ See his Discourses, p. 189.

⁹ See Hagstrum, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

proportional metaphor and expressions which set things before the eyes ... I mean that things are set before the eyes by words that signify actuality.' But it is the Latin rhetoricians who codified the word to give it a decisive, 'pictorial' turn in their theories of style and figurative writing. 'Enargeia' as 'Verisimilitude and Vividness' came to be materially different from 'Energeia' as 'Animation'; and Quintilian made a definitive treatment of 'enargeia' in Institutio Oratoria as the creation in verbal discourse of 'vivid illustration' or presentation' of 'visions', 'images', and 'word-picture' of scenes and characters (VI, 11, 32, 36; VIII, 111, 61-62). Elsewhere, 'enargeia' in Quintilian is equated with 'palpability' (IV, 11, 63), which is 'clearness' in the 'statement of facts'. The important contribution of Quintilian, who constantly acknowledges his debt to his republican predecessor Cicero, lies in his exploration of the visual qualities of language as a means of achieving 'lifelikeness' or 'naturalism'.

In the Renaissance, Richard Sherry's gloss of 'enargeia' as 'evidence or perspicuitie called also description rethoricall, is when a thyng is so described that it semeth to the reader or hearer y^t he beholdeth it as it were in doying' (A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes, 1550, sig. E 1^v)⁹ is a straightforward transcription of the Latin rhetorical definition¹⁰. Yet in other places, 'enargeia' takes on new shades of meaning in the hands of different writers. Puttenham made an uncommon distinction between 'enargeia' and 'energeia', but both he denominated under the heading of figured speech - 'that first qualitie the Greeks call "Enargia",

¹⁰ Cited by Rosemond Tuve, in Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947), p. 32n.

of this word "argos", because it geueth a glorious lustre and light. This latter they called "Energia" of "ergon", because it wrought with a strong and vigorous operation; and figure breedeth them both, some seruing to giue glosse onely to a language, some to geue it efficacie by sence, and so by that means some of them serue th'eare onely, some serue the conceit and not the 'eare' (The Arte of English Poesie, III, 111). Chapman, in his dedicatory epistle to Mathew Royden prefacing his Ovids Banquet of Sence (1595)¹¹,

That, 'Enargia', or cleernes of representation, requird in absolute Poems is not the perspicuous deliuey of a lowe inuention; but high, and harty inuention exprest in some significant, an vnaffected phrase; it serues not a skilfull Painters turne, to draw the figure of a face onely to make knowne who it represents; but he must lym, giue luster, shaddow, and heightening; which though ignorants will esteeme spic'd, and too curious, yet such as haue the iudiciall perspective, will see it hath, motion, spirit and life.

retained the sense of 'enargia' as 'cleernes of representation', but with a considerably enlarged meaning to denote not just 'vividness' of imagery, but in fact the highly 'artificial' rendering of reality presented in works of art. Tasso practically saw no difference between 'energeia' and 'enargeia' in his Discourses on the Heroic Poem,

What the lowly style requires above all else is likelihood and what the Latins called 'evidentia', the Greeks 'energy', which we might no less properly call clarity or expressiveness. This is the power which makes us almost behold the things narrated; it

¹¹ See The Poems of George Chapman (New York and London, 1941) ed. Phyllis Brook Bartlett, p. 49.

comes from a minutely attentive narration that omits nothing, as witness the tale of Count Ugolino: 'that sinner lifted his mouth from the savage meal, wiping it on the hair of the head he had wasted behind';

But Tasso, like the other Renaissance writers quoted, was concerned with forging a poetic language more forceful and expressive than the ordinary language of plain statement, that has the power to compel our attention, or, in Quintilian's words, that 'thrusts itself upon our notice', Scaliger listed 'efficacia', his term for the Greek 'energeia', which he associated with 'vivid dramatic action',¹² as one of the four poetic virtues; while Du Bellay, in citing 'energies' along with other rhetorical devices, was patently questing after 'eloquution (dy je) par la quelle principalement un orateur est jugé plus excellent, & un genre de dire mailleur que l'autre: comme celle dont est apellée la mesme eloquence: & dont la vertu gist aux motz propres, usitez, & non alienes du commun usaige de parler, aux methaphores, alegories, comparaisons, similitudes, energies, & tant d'autres figures & ornements, sans les quelz tout oraison & poeme sont nudz, manqués & debilés' (La Déffence et Illustration (Paris, 1948), ed. Chamard, pp. 35-36). As Ernest Cassirer says¹³, it is

¹² See the selected translations from Scaliger's Poetics, Book III, illustrating this point, furnished by Neil L. Rudinow's Sidney's Poetic Development (Camb., Mass., 1967), p. 54 ff. Other critics, namely Shepherd and Robinson (op. cit.), maintain that 'energy' in Scaliger 'refers not to the words used in presenting the subject but to the vivid mental apprehension of things themselves', that is 'conceptual clarity'.

¹³ See the discussion of Euphuism and the 'changed attitude towards the world of speech generally' in The Platonic Renaissance in England (Nelson, 1953), pp. 173-73.

important to note that in borrowing from the ancients, 'the Renaissance does not look upon speech through the medium of the great models of antiquity, only as crystallized form, but rather it perceives the forming energy, the plastic power, which is embodied in language as such.' Tasso, like Sidney, was preoccupied with investigating and expanding the possibilities of the language to make it a fit medium for the expression of 'truth', as he affirmed that

... poetry is an art subordinate to logic, indeed a part of it, not just because it is the part of speaking which seeks delight, just as grammar seeks regularity and rhetoric persuasion, but because poetic speech, which does not exist without imitation, constitutes tacit and most effective proof.

(Discourses, p. 140)

To him, poetry does not serve just a purely 'hedonistic' function. The criterion Tasso consistently applies is that of 'usefulness', as he insists that 'poetry surely belongs under dialectic along with rhetoric, which, as Aristotle says, is the other child of the dialectical faculty, its function being to consider not the false but the probable' (p. 29). 'Imitation' is the particular weapon of poetry providing 'proof', like syllogism in logic and the example and enthymeme in rhetoric, for the teaching of 'truth'. Working within the framework of medieval scholastic thinking, the cultivation of linguistic forms became to Tasso a matter of the utmost urgency because the persuasive force of poetry rests not only in 'marvellous' inventions that excite wonder, but also in 'that grace and comeliness of the poets',

... as Pindar says in the same passage: 'But the

Grace of song, that maketh for man all things that soothe him, by adding her spell, full often causeth even what is past belief to be indeed believed.'

... I mean the grace obtained from the metre and rhythm of the verse, which would vanish if that vanished. We want a persuasive force that would produce the same effect in prose and give a delight like that which, to my mind, those wonders give that move not only the unlearned but the judicious as well:

(Discourses, p. 35)

Where Sidney is concerned, the Arcadia affords numerous instances of the marvellous, 'moving' power of works of art upon the beholder or hearer. Pyrocles fell in love with Philoclea through admiring her picture: 'Cousin (said hee) then began the fatall overthrowe of all my libertie, when walking among the pictures in Kalanders house, you your selfe delivered unto mee what you had understood of Philoclea, who muche resembling (though I must say much surpassing) the Ladie Zelmane, whom too well I loved: there were mine eyes infected, & at your mouth did I drinke my poison' (Works, I, pp. 85-86). The effects music exerts upon the listener are such as Musidorus experienced on hearing Cleophila's song - 'Musidorus himself (that lay so as he might see and hear these things) was yet more moved to pity by the manner of Cleophila's singing than with anything he had ever seen—so lively an action doth the mind, truly touched, bring forth' (The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. Robertson, p. 29). The pitiful complaint of Flangus led not only Boulon to declare that

Thy wailing words do much my spirits move,
 They uttered are in such a feeling fashion
 That sorrow's work against my will I prove.
 Methinks I am partaker of thy passion,
 And in thy case do glass mine own debility—
 Selfe-guilty folk most prone to feel compassion.
 (Ibid., p. 150)

but all those who came within hearing were converted to sympathy - 'So well did Histor's voice express the passion of Plangus that all the princely beholders were stricken into a silent consideration of it; indeed everyone making that he heard of another the balance of his own troubles' (Ibid., p. 152). Perhaps the best example of the wonderful effects artificially wrought 'images' symbolizing the human condition have on the beholder is the account of the reactions of Amphialus to the furniture of the Forsaken Knight,

Which alliance of passions so moved Amphialus
(already tender-minded by the afflictions of love)
that without staffe or sword drawne, he trotted
fairely to the forsaken knight, willing to have
put off his combat, to which his melancholy hart
did (more than ever in like occasion) misgive him:
(Works, I, p. 455)

In fact, Sidney we find has such a keen interest in the human psychology and what happens when the mind is assaulted by ravishing images that in the Arcadia we encounter more than one instances of detailed depiction of the powerful impact that visual images, real or artificial, make on the beholder. In confessing his love for Philoclea to Musidorus, Pyrocles tells us that 'it was the fatal overthrow of all my liberty to see in the gallery of Mantinea the only Philoclea's picture, that beauty did pierce so through mine eyes to my heart that the impression of it doth not lie but live there' (The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. cit., p. 17). The phrase 'fatal overthrow', adhered to in both versions of the same passage in the old and the new Arcadia, illustrates Sidney's preoccupation with the overwhelming effect powerful images have on the human psyche. In the scene where Pyrocles, disguised as Cleophila, meets Philoclea in person for the

first time, we are told that

At least, the clouds of Cleophila's thoughts quite vanished, and so was her brain fixed withal that her sight seemed more forcible and clear than ever before or since she found it, with such strange delight unto her ... that she stood like a well-wrought image, with show of life, but without all exercises of life, so forcibly had love transferred all her spirits into the present contemplation of the lovely Philoclea.
(Ibid., pp. 37-38)

The sight of Pamela asleep yields a similar effect on Musidorus. It resembles to him 'the picture of some excellent artificer', and 'did so tyrannize over Musidorus's affects that he was compelled to put his face as low to her as he could, sucking the breath with such joy that he did determine in himself there had been no life to a chameleon's, if he might be suffered to enjoy that food. But each of these having a mighty working in his heart, all joined together did so draw his will into the nature of their confederacy that now his promise began but to have a fainting force, and each thought that rose against those desires was received but as a stranger to his counsel, well-experiencing in himself that no vow is so strong as the avoiding of occasions; so that rising softly from her, overmastered with the fury of delight, having all his senses partial against himself' (ibid., pp. 201-02). In these terms Sidney describes the rebellion of the senses, stimulated by the ravishing sight of Pamela, and the sweet overthrow of Reason. In another place, where Pyrocles espies Philoclea in her chamber lying in bed, we have another illustration of the incredible way visions of beauty assault the senses, which is narrated as follows,

... she at that time lay (as the heat of that

country did well suffer) upon the top of her bed, having her beauties eclipsed with nothing but a fair smock (wrought all in flames of ash-colour silk and gold), lying so upon her right side that the left thigh down to the foot yielded his delightful proportion to the full view, which was seen by the help of a rich lamp which, through the curtains a little drawn, cast such a light upon her as the moon doth when it shines into a thin wood—Pyrocles, I say, was stopped with the violence of so many darts cast by Cupid altogether with him that, quite forgetting himself, and thinking therein already he was in the best degree of felicity, I think he would have lost much of his time, and with too much love omitted great fruit of his love, had not Philoclea's pitiful accusing of him forced him to bring his spirits again to a new bias.

(*ibid.*, pp. 230-31)

And when Pyrocles catches sight of Philoclea again upon waking up, '(who then soundly sleeping was the natural image of exact beauty) received into his sense a full proportion of the greatest he could imagine under the moon' (*ibid.*, p. 289).

The fascination of the Renaissance mind with the impact of visual images is reflected in the interest in the 'art of memory', supposedly invented by Simonides, which Sidney referred to in the *Apology* (p. 122), and which Wilson discussed in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (ed. cit., pp. 213-18). In *Astrophil and Stella*, the question is repeatedly asked what is the best mode of persuasion - 'What words so ere she speakes perswades for thee'. Astrophil, the despondent lover, in Sonnet 45 pins his hope of rousing his reluctant mistress to pity on dramatizing his miseries, and setting them mimetically in the framework of 'fable' and 'fiction'. In other words, Astrophil resorts to artistic distancing or detachment as paradoxically the means of heightening reality,

Stella oft sees the verie face of wo
Painted in my beclouded stormie face:

But cannot skill to pitie my disgrace,
 Not though thereof the cause her selfe she know:
 Yet hearing late a fable, which did show
 Of Lovers never knowne, a grievous case,
 Pitie thereof gate in her breast such place
 That, from that sea deriv'd, teares' spring did
 flow.

Alas, if Fancy drawne by imag'd things,
 Though false, yet with free scope more grace doth
 breed
 Then servant's wracke, where new doubts honor brings;
 Of Lover's ruine some sad Tragedie:
 I am not I, pitie the tale of me.

The painterly vocabulary Sidney uses throughout also testifies to this concern - to 'paint thee to men's eyes', 'what inke is black enough to paint my woe?', 'I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe', 'while with a feeling skill I paint my hell', 'Till that in words thy figure be exprest'. Similarly in The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, the 'how' of expressing emotions, whether by abstract words on the page or by physical gesticulations, constitutes the central motif of Sidney's writings, as in the following protracted description of the way Pyrocles figures forth his agonies,

But in both these he perceived such strange diversities that they rather increased new doubts than gave him ground to settle any judgement; for, besides his eyes sometimes even great with tears, the oft changing of his colour, with a kind of shaking unsteadiness over all his body, he might see in his countenance some great determination mixed with fear, and might perceive in him stores of thought rather stirred than digested, his words interrupted continually with sighs which served as a burden to each sentence, and the tenor of his speech (though of his wonted phrase) not knit together to one constant end but rather dissolved in itself, as the vehemency of the inward passion prevailed:
 (pp. 16-17)

A reading of The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, in fact, discloses countless allusions to feeling and expression of the same order - 'each thing he saw seemed to figure out some part of his passions', 'Even the countenance and behaviour of such a man doth show forth images of the same constancy', 'they rested with their eyes placed one upon another, in such sort as might well paint out the true passion of unkindness', 'There might one have seen at one instant all sorts of passions lively painted out in the young lovers' faces', 'The ending of the song served but oft a beginning of new complaints; as if the mind, oppressed with too heavy a burden of cares, was fain to discharge itself in all manners, and as it were paint out the hideousness of the pain in all sorts of colours', 'from whence he shall be sure to receive a sweet reflection of the same joy, and (as in a clear mirror of sincere goodwill) see a lively picture of his own gladness' and the question asked by Cleophila that 'Who is this so well acquainted with me, that can make so lively a portraiture of my miseries?'. Sidney's writings abound with such a wealth of close observations on the outward embodiments of inward emotions that illustrations can go on indefinitely. Against this background of the profound interest in the expression of emotions the all-important point to note is Sidney's perpetual search to produce through verbal expressions effects analogous to those wrought on the beholder or the listener by visual objects, paintings or ravishing music. Probing into the way language may be turned into an effective vehicle of human thoughts and emotions recur in the Arcadia. They are the favourite pursuits of the Arcadian shepherds, whose 'last sport was one of them to provoke another to a more large expressing of his passions' (Works, I, p. 127). Sidney himself was constantly preoccupied with matching the emotions with the right mode of expression,

as exhibited by such intrusion of the story-teller into the narrative proper as follows,

But so wonderful and in effect incredible was the passion which reigned as well in Gynecia as Basilus (and all for the poor Cleophila, dedicated another way) that it seems to me I use not words enough to make you see how they could in one moment be so overtaken. But you, worthy ladies, that have at any time feelingly known what it means, will easily believe the possibility of it.

(*ibid.*, p. 49)

and that

To describe unto you the miserable fear Cleophila's lovers lived in while she stood at the discretion of those indiscreet rebels, how at every angry countenance any of them made they thought a knife was laid upon their own throat, would require as many words as to make you know how full they were now of the unspeakable joy that they saw, besides the safety of their own estates, the same wrought (and safely wrought) by her mean in whom they had placed all their delight.

(p. 120)

Pyrocles, in divulging his real identity to Philoclea and in struggling after the right words to express his overwhelming feelings, remarked that 'Your fair face hath many marks in it of amazement at my words; think then what his amazement is from whence they come, since no words can carry with them the life of the inward feeling' (p. 120). The 'energetic' style that Sidney put forward as the norm of all good writing is precisely that in which language takes on the maximum affective power, and words are so arranged as to 'carry with them the life of the inward feeling'. It is the stylistic goal that all

writers labour to reach. In Astrophil and Stella the poet-lover, as has been noted earlier, from the onset proclaims his intention that 'I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe' and that

And now employ the remnant of my wit,
To make my selfe believe, that all is well,
While with a feeling skill I paint my hell.
(Sonnet 2)

The narrator in the Arcadie apologizes for falling short of this artistic ideal - 'But, Musidorus, looking dolefully upon her, wringing his hands, and pouring out abundance of tears, began to recount unto her all this I have already told you, but with such compassionate dilating of it that, for my part, I have not a feeling insight enough into the matter to express it' (p. 42). But everywhere the 'energetic' expression of emotions is delineated as working marvellous results, as in the passage that follows,

Musidorus did so lively deliver out his inward griefs that Cleophila's friendly heart felt a great impression of pity; withal—as certainly all persons that find themselves afflicted easily fall to compassion of them who taste of like misery, partly led by the common course of humanity, but principally because, under the image of them, they lament their own mishaps; and so the complaints the others make seem to touch the right tune of their own woes.

(pp. 42-43)

At the end of the song-contest between Dorus and Lalus, the former is praised for that 'A feeling declaration/Thy tongue hath made of Cupid's deep incision' (p. 63). 'Energetic' expression was also exploited by Amphialus to launch renewed

assaults on Philoclea's emotions: 'Whatsoever could be imagined likely to please her, was with liberal diligence performed: Musickes at her windowe, & especially such Musickes, as might (with dolefull embassage) call the mind to thinke of sorrow, and thinke of it with sweetness; with ditties so sensible expressing Amphialus case, that everie worde seemed to be but a diversifying of the name of Amphialus' (Works, I, p. 381). The ubiquitous emphasis on the 'lively' manner and 'feeling' quality of expression is in a sense a perfect manifestation of the aesthetic beliefs prevalent in the Renaissance - the universally held idea of art as the 'ape' of nature. For the Renaissance marks the culmination of the cult of 'illusionism' in art which had existed as early as the times of Homer, while it also believed that art is capable of overgoing nature. Whether or not a work of art can successfully produce the 'illusion' of life, to the point of deception, became the systematically applied criterion. It is the touchstone Shakespeare relied on in many a passage from his plays, such as in the well-known description of 'Fair Portia's counterfeit' in The Merchant of Venice.

What find I here?

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
 Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
 Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
 Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar
 Should sunder such sweet friends. Here, in her hairs
 The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
 Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes! —
 How could he see to do them? Having made one,
 Methinks ti should have power to steal both his
 And leave itself unfinished: yet look, how far
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance ...

(Act III, scene 11)

or in the poet's encomia of the painting which is a
'pretty mocking of the life' in Timon of Athens,

Admirable: How this grace
Speaks his own standing! what a mental power
This eye shoots forth! how big imagination
Moves in this lip! to the dumbness of the gesture
One might interpret.

(Act I, scene 1)

'Representation' in the Renaissance, as in antiquity, was thought of as 'likeness' rather than as 'allegory', as in the Middle Ages, or as 'symbol'. Works of art were praised for their ability to represent nature as it really is, or at least to simulate our optical experience of it, rather than to represent it by some schematic formula. The same feeling of amazement and awesome admiration Callistratus expressed towards the finished statue of a Bacchante in his Descriptions might well have served as the guiding light to the Renaissance artist engaged in the task of artistic creation¹⁴,

A statue of a Bacchante, wrought from Parian marble, has been transformed into a real Bacchante, For the stone, while retaining its own nature, yet seemd to depart from the law which governs stone; what one saw was really an image, but art carried imitation over into actual reality. You might have seen that, hard though it was, it became soft to the semblance of the feminine, its vigour, however, correcting the femininity, and that, though it had no power to move, it knew how to leap in Bacchic dance and would respond to the god when he entered into its inner being ...

Painting became a 'science' in the hands of such artists as Alberti, Durer, Paolo Uccello, or Piero della Francesca,

¹⁴ See Philostratus, 'Imagines'/Callistratus, 'Descriptions' (London and New York, 1931), trans. Arthur Fairbanks, p. 381.

and Leonardo, who undertook patient studies of perspective and anatomy to develop the pictorial style as a means of conquering the whole of reality. 'Lifelike' production of reality was virtually erected into a thorough artistic programme in the Renaissance, and Leonardo's verdict that 'figures not expressive of the mind are twice dead',¹⁵ -

If figures do not make lifelike gestures with their limbs which express what is passing through in their minds, these figures are twice dead - dead principally because painting is not alive, but only expressive of living things without having life in itself, and if you do not add liveliness of action, it remains a second time dead.

may well have been adapted by Sidney as his literary manifesto. The demand for the 'energetic' style in writing stems from the same artistic impulse as the endeavour to achieve qualities of 'vivacita' and 'prontezza' in art, as in Donatello's 'St. George', in the words of Giorgio Vasari. It was as if the attempts to produce the illusion of 'plasticity' in paintings were carried over into the realm of poetry. The cultivation of the 'energetic' style in Sidney was indissolubly linked with the new pictorial ideals of Renaissance Italy, and the close affiliation between poetry and painting is testified by the wide application of the classical doctrine of 'ut pictura poesis' in the treatises of Cennino Cennini, Alberti, Lodovico Dolce (in his Aretino, 1557) and Lomazzo¹⁶.

¹⁵ See Leonardo on Painting - a Lost Book (Libro A), ed. Carlo Pedretti (London, 1965), Nr. 33.

¹⁶ For a full list of the Renaissance writers who made use of this doctrine, see William Guild Howrad's article, 'Ut Pictura Poesis,' PMLA, XLIV (1909), 40-123.

The saying attributed to Simonides of Ceos by Plutarch in De Gloria Atheniensium (III, 342f-347c) that 'painting is mute poetry, and poetry is speaking picture' came to England in E. Hoby's translation of Coignet's Politique Discourses in 1586. But before that E.K. had exhibited his familiarity with this doctrine in his eulogy of the old man's tale in the Argument to 'Februarie' in the Shepheardes Calender: 'the olde man telleth a tale of the Oake and the Bryer, so liuely and so feelingly, as if the thing were set forth in some Picture before your eyes, more plainly could not appeare.' John Harrington in 1591 also announced in 'An Advertisement to the Reader' prefatory to his illustrated translation of the Orlando Furioso, that 'the use of the picture is euident, which is, that (hauing read ouer the booke) you may reade it (as it were againe) in the very picture.'¹⁷ Roger Ascham referred to the concept of 'energeia' in his discussion of 'imitation' in The Scholemaster, that 'Imitation, is a facultie to express liuelie and perfitey that example',¹⁸; and his pictorial conception of poetry is apparent from his definition that poetry is 'a fair liuely painted picture of the life of every degree of man',¹⁹. The enormous influence Renaissance paintings exerted on English writers of the period is warranted by the fact that frequent references to techniques and styles of painting may be found in English

¹⁷ Both are cited by J.B. Bender (op. cit.), p. 11

¹⁸ See English Works of Roger Ascham (Cambridge, 1904), ed. W. A. Wright, p. 264.

¹⁹ Quoted by Jean Hagstrum (op. cit.), p. 63. See especially Note 24.

critical writings for the purposes of illustration. E.K., in defending 'the new Poete's' use of 'rough and harsh termes' to 'enlumine and make more clearly to appeare the brightnesse of braue and glorious words', adduced the example of painting²⁰,

But all as in most exquisite pictures they vse to blaze and portraict not onely the daintie lineaments of beautye, but also rounde about it to shadow the rude thickets and craggy clifts, that by the baseness of such parts, more excellency may accrew to the principall;

George Chapman, in the extract already quoted from his dedicatory epistle prefacing his Ovide Banquet of Sence, also revealed abundant knowledge of the art of painting,

... it seems not a skilfull Painters turne, to draw the figure of a face onely to make knowne who it represents; but he must lynn, giue luster, shaddow, and heightening; which though ignorants will esteeme spic'd, and too curious, yet such as haue the iudiciall perspective, will see it hath, motion, spirit and life.

The influence of the plastic arts on Sidney cannot be over-emphasized, for Sidney indisputably had most knowledge of painting and the other figurative arts of Europe, including the emblem and the impresa, among English writers. The only painter mentioned by Shakespeare is Giulio Romano; and Spenser's experience of continental paintings was

²⁰ In his dedicatory epistle to Gabriel Harvey prefatory to Spenser's Shepheardes Calender, in Spenser-Poetical Works (Oxford, 1970), ed. J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, p. 417.

confined to those copies and specimens as were accessible in England. It is fruitful to remember that Leonardo died in 1519, Raphael in 1520, Michaelangelo lived on until 1564, and Titian, whom Sidney was very likely to have visited in Venice in 1573, till 1576. Sidney's contact with the visual arts was an uncommonly wide one for various reasons. His uncle, the Earl of Leicester, was a famous patron of the artists, and his castles at Kenilworth and Wanstead as well as his London residence housed impressive collections of paintings, including many of biblical and mythological themes. Sidney further increased his knowledge of the figurative arts, such as book illustration and engraving, through his continental travels. He became acquainted with such scholar-painters as Henri Estienne of Heidelberg, and Plantin of Antwerp, and humanists like the Camerarii, who were interested in the new plastic arts²¹. Sidney had admired the paintings of Venice, and had his portrait, now lost, done by Paolo Veronese, as recorded by his correspondence with Hubert Languet. In his letter to Languet from Padua of February 4, he was still uncertain whether he should commission Paolo Veronese or Tintoretto, 'I am both very glad and sorry that you ask me so urgently for my portrait ... As soon as ever I return to Venice, I will have it done either by Paolo Veronese, or by Tintoretto, who hold by far the highest place in art'; but on February 26, 1574, he wrote to tell Languet that 'This day Paolo Veronese had begun my portrait, for which I must stay here

²¹ Joachim Camerarius was responsible for the Latin translation of Durer's posthumous works and wrote an essay on the artist, see Philip McMahon's article, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Letter to the Camerarii,' *PMLA*, LXII (1947), 83-95.

two or three days longer,²².

Sidney witnessed also the rise of miniature and portrait painting in England. Like his uncle, he was the patron of and sat for many artists, including Tssac Oliver and Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger. From the account given in Nicholas Hilliard's A Treatise concerning the Arte of Limning, we can see that Sidney approached painting with the eye of a connoisseur²³,

I would willingly give many observations touching proportions fit to be knowne, but the bouck is great already, wherfor I omit them purposely, yet one wourd more in remembrance of an excelent man, namely Sir Philip Sidney, that noble and most valiant knight, that great scoller and excelent poet, great lover of all vertue and cuninge: he once demanded of me the question, whether it weare possible in one scantling, as in the length of six inches of a little or short man, and also of a mighty bige and taulle man in the same scantling, and that one might apparently see which was lought. I showed him that it was easely decerned if it were cuningly drawne with true observations, for ower eye is cuninge, and is learned without rule by long usse, as littel lads speake their vulgar tonge without gramour rulls. But I gave him rules and sufficient reasons to noet and observe.

Sidney's highly sophisticated knowledge of painting is indicated by several passages from the Arcadia. In the description of the painter in the Arcadian riot, an oblique reference is made to the prevailing themes and trends in contemporary painting.

²² See The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet (London, 1845), trans. S.A. Pears, p. 29 ff.

²³ Walpole Society Annual, I (1911-12), p. 27.

But that blow astonished quite a poore painter, who stood by with a pike in his handes. This painter was to counterfette the skirmishing betwene the Centaurs and Lapithes, and had bene very desirous to see some notable wounds, to be able the more lively to express them; and this morning (being carried by the streame of his companie) the foolish fellow was even delighted to see the effect of blowes.

(Works, I, p. 213)

Sidney alluded to the effect of 'sfumato' in the depiction of Erona in distress²⁴,

Plangus ... was nowe present at Eronas taking, to perceyve the shape of loveliness more perfectly in wo, then in joyfulness (as in a picture which receives greater life by the darknesse of shadowes, then by glittering colours)

(Ibid., p. 333)

Sidney's first-hand acquaintance with the artist at work is revealed also by the analogy with painting that 'but as a painter at the first but show a rude proportion of the thing he imitates, which after with more curious hand he draws to the representing each lineament, so had her thoughts ...' (The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, p. 215). Sidney's writings are full of pictorial descriptions and mythological allusions which may be based on reminiscences of actual paintings - '(As Apollo is painted when he saw Daphne sodainely changed into Laurell)', in the 1590 Arcadia the portrait of Philoclea in her chamber 'sitting of that side of her bedde which was from the windowe; which did cast such a shadow upon her, as a good Painter coulde bestowe uppon Venus, when under the trees

²⁴ which is pointed out by Michael Levey, in High Renaissance (Aylesbury, 1975), p. 99.

she bewayled the murder of Adonis', in the Old Arcadia the unforgettable description of Philoclea 'starting out of her bed like Venus rising from her mother the sea' where Sidney might have Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus' in mind, 'Philoclea, ... kept on her course, as Arethusa when she ran from Alpheus, her nymphlike apparel being carried up with the wind', or 'But when the fire of spite had fully caught hold of all her inward parts, then whosoever would have seen the picture of Alecto, or with what manner of countenance Medea killed her own children, needed but take Miso for the full satisfaction of that point of his knowledge.' The reference to Hercules and Omphale in the Apology (p. 136) - 'so in Hercules, painted with his great beard and furious countenance, in woman's attire, spinning at Omphale's commandment, it breedeth both laughter and delight' invites comparison with Lucas Cranach's humorous treatment of the subject (1537)²⁵. In the reference to Danae, 'Basilus ... presented himself unto her, falling upon both with his knees, and holding up his hands, as the old governess of Danae is painted, when she sodainely saw the golden shoure'²⁶, and Leda, 'But back unto her back, my Muse/Where Leda's swanne his feathers mowes,/Along whose ridge such bones are met,/Like comfits round in marchpane set', Sidney could very probably be trans-

²⁵ See the reproduction of Cranach's painting opposite Levey's discussion of Sidney's 'pictorialism' in High Renaissance, p. 98.

²⁶ This allusion is retained in both versions of the Arcadia: the Old Arcadia (The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, p. 114) and the 1590 Arcadia (Works, I, p. 254), which is a testimony that the description may be based on an actual painting.

literating specific paintings he had seen by Titian, Veronese, or Tintoretto²⁷. The triumphant achievement of the visual arts of the Renaissance doubtless made a powerful impression on the imagination of Sidney. But the influence of Renaissance painting goes beyond mere acquaintance with individual paintings. What counts above all is the awareness of painting as a new art replete with suggestions and fresh possibilities and analogies for the literary artist, as shown in the repeated references to the 'painter's cunning' - 'Whose bought incay'd doth yeeld such sight,/Like cunning Painter shadowing white', 'Awanton womans face, and with curld knots had twinde/Her haire, which by the helpe of painters cunning, shinde', and '... the flowers she had wrought, caried such life in them, that the cuningst painter might have learned of her heedle'.

Sidney's interest in literary pictorialism is seen from his insertion of numerous descriptive and 'ecphrastic' passages into the narrative in the unfinished but considerably amplified version of the Arcadia - the 1590 Arcadia. Among the additions are the account of Malander's picture-gallery and the much enlarged description of Philoclea's portrait, the challenge to arms of Phalantus 'in paragon of Artexias beautie' in Book I, the Iberian jousts in Book II and the final tournaments in Book III between Amphialus and the various challengers, which give occasion to the description of emblems, 'imprese', portraits (as in the Arcadian tourney), the furniture of countless

27 For the attempt to trace the pictorial sources of Sidney's descriptions, especially in Titian, see Patrick G. Hogan's article, 'Sidney and Titian: Painting in the "Arcadia" and the "Defence"', South Central Review, XXVII (1967), 9-15.

knights - in short, the entire panoply of heroic pageantry and numerous combats and feats of arms. As a critic has pointed out, 'Sidney is at his best when he minutely describes stuffs, garments, jewels—their folds or changing hues' and 'constantly vies with the painter'²⁸, such as the rich costume of Amphialus when he was about to visit Philoclea (Works, I, p. 367). Sidney 'play'd the painter', and attempts to imitate our experience of encountering the visual world, real or imagined, as in painting, in the description of Kalander's picture-gallery (pp. 17-18),

A naked Venus of white marble, wherein the graver had used such cunning, that the naturall blew veines of the marble were framed in fitte places, to set forth the beautifull veines of her bodie. At her brest she had her babe Aeneas, who seemed (having begun to sucke) to leave that, to looke upon her fayre eyes, which smiled at the babes follie, the meane while the breast running ... There was Diana when Acteon saw her bathing, in whose cheeks the painter hd set such a colour, as was mixt between shame & disdain: & one of her foolish Nymphes, who weeping, and withal lowring, one might see the workman meant to set forth teares of anger. In another table was Atalanta; the posture of whose lims was so livelie expressed, that if the eyes were the only judges, as they were the onely seers, one would have sworne the very picture had runne.

In this description, which is the only place in the Arcadia where works of art are described for their own sake, Sidney connects with the classical, 'ecphrastic'

²⁸ Emile Legouis, in Spenser. See The Works of Edmund Spenser (A Variorum Edition) ed. Greenlaw, Osgood and Padelford (Baltimore, 1934), The Faerie Queen, Book III, Appendix VIII, 'Spenser's Use of the Plastic Arts', p. 393.

tradition, the indisputable 'locus' of which is Homer's description of Achilles' shield in the Iliad, which is emulated by Philostratus, Callistratus, and Lucian. Here, as in similar descriptions in Spenser, as in the Faerie Queen (II, xii, 45),

Ye might haue seene the frothy billowes fry
Vnder the ship, as thorough them she went,
That seemd the waues were into yuory
Or yuory into the waues were sent;

and in Mulioptomos (II, 277-80),

Arachne figur'd how Ioue did abuse
Europe like a Bull, and on his backe
Her through the sea did beare; so livelie seene,
That it true Sea, and true Bull ye would weene.

asin the elaborate depiction of the tapestry or tapestries showing 'a piece/Of skilfull painting, made for Priam's Troy' in Shakespeare's Lucrece, the emphasis is constantly thrown on the lifelike and naturalistic rendering of the pictorial subject - 'her babe Aeneas, who seemd (having begun to sucke) to leave that, to looke upon her fayre eyes, which smiled at the babes follie, the meane while the breast running', 'her foolish Nymphes, who weeping and withal lowring, one might see the workman meant to set forth teares of anger' and Atalanta, 'the posture of whose lims was so livelie expressed, that if the eyes were the only judges, as they be the only seers, one would have sworne the very picture had runne.' This 'life-copied-by art' idea, which is an inheritance from antiquity, underscores Sidney's depiction of the chivalric furniture of the knights which serves as prologues to the description

of the actual passage-at-arms²⁹, as in that of Phalantus in the Arcadian challenge (p. 105), and of Phalantus, Amphialus, Argalus and the Forsaken Knight in the climactic struggle in Book III (pp. 414-15, 422-23, and 455). Like the grapes of Zeuxis, Phalantus 'had caused his mane and taile to be died in carnation; his reines were vine branches, which ingendering one with the other, at the end, when it came to the bitte, there, for the bosse, brought forth a cluster of grapes, by the workman made so lively, that it seemed, as the horse champed on the bitte, he chopped for them, and that it did make his mouth water, to see the grapes so neere him'; and the furniture of Amphialus 'was made into the fashion of the branches of a tree, from which the leaves were falling: and so artificiallie were the leaves made, that as the horse moved, it seemed indeed that the leaves wagged, as when the wind plaies with them'; and the furniture of Argalus 'was cut into the fashion of an Eagle, whereof the beake (made into a rich jewell) was fastened to the saddle, the taile covered the crooper of the horse, and the wings served for trappers; which falling of ech side, as the horse stirred, the bird seemed to flie' - thus 'constituting the well-known case of the artist imitating or repeating himself'³⁰. The last words 'the bird seemed to flie' clinch the central idea of the naturalistic orientation of the graphic arts. The ability of the 'well-wrought image', whether in the plastic arts or in verbal composition, to give the 'show of life, but without all

²⁹ See the article by Werner von Koppenfels, 'Two Notes on "Imprese" in Elizabethan Literature: Daniel's Additions to "The Worthy Tract of Paulus Iovius"; Sidney's "Arcadia" and Tournament Scene in "The Unfortunate Traveller" ', Ren. Quarterly, XXIV (1971), 13-25.

³⁰ Werner von Koppenfels, in the article quoted above.

exercise of life' remains the greatest marvel of art for Sidney.

Sidney as a writer is remarkable for the rich abundance of visual references in his writings, and his frequent use of 'painterly' vocabulary and phraseology to compel the reader to participate actively in the imagination of the vision which he is trying to evoke, as in the Arcadia.

The action Zelmae used, being beautified by nature and apparelled with skill, her gestures beying such, that as her words did paint out her minde, so they served as a shadow, to make the peiture more lively and sensible, with the sweet cleernesse of her voice, ... (Works, I, p. 318)

... the shapen of lovelinesse more perfectly in wo, then in joyfulness (as in a picture which receives greater life by the darknesse of shadowes, then by more glittering colours) (Ibid., p. 333)

and in the rhetorical question that 'But who would lively describe the manner of these speeches, should paint out the lightsome colours of affections, shades with the deepest shadowes of sorrow' (p. 490). In Astrophil and Stella, we find Sidney engaged in verbal 'painting' in a similar manner,

When Nature made her chiefe worke, Stella's eyes,
In colour blacke, why wrapt she beames so bright?
Would she in beemie blacke, like painter wise,
Frame daintiest lustre, mixt of shades and light?
Or did she else that sober hue devise,
In object best to knit and strength our sight,
Least if no vaile those brave gleames did disguise,
They sun-like should more dazle then delight?
(Sonnet 7)

and in Sonnet 50,

Stella, the fulnesse of my thoughts of thee
Cannot be staid within my panting breast,
But they do swell and struggle forth of me,
Till that in words thy figure be exprest.
And yet as soone as they so formed be,
According to my Lord Love's owne behest:
With sad eyes I their weake proportion see,
To portraitt that which in this world is best.

The 'painterly' preoccupation of Sidney is indicated by such repeated proclamations as 'I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe', 'my pen the best it may/Shall paint out joy, though but in black and white', 'How faine would I painte thee to all men's eyes/Or of thy gifts at least shade out some part', or 'What inke is blacke enough to paint my wo', and 'While the blacke horrors of the silent night,/Paint wo's blacke face so lively to my sight'. It is necessary to emphasize, however, that 'pictorial' writing is not equivalent to a straightforward transliteration of the formal arrangement of the visible world as it exists in paintings, nor a simple descriptive listing of things and objects which meet the eye. As Bender has pointed out³¹, 'poetry is pictorial not when its formal organization reminds us of a painting or drawing, but when its relationship to our experience of the visual world is analogous to the relationship of the visual arts to the world.' A formal exercise as that one encounters in Sonnet 9, which is a mosaic of outworn Petrarchan 'concetti' and conventions, is strictly more 'iconic' in the sense that Puttenham has

³¹ In Spenser and Literary Pictorialism, p. 24.

defined an 'icon' to be³², than 'pictorial',

Queene Vertue's court, which some call Stella's
face,
Prepar'd by Nature's chiefest furniture,
Hath his front built of Alabaster pure,
Gold is the covering of that stately place.
The doore by which sometimes come forth her Grace,
Red Porphir is, which locke of pearle makes her
Grace;
Whose porches rich (which name of cheeks endure)
Marble mixt red and white do enterlace.
The windowes now through which this heav'nly
guest
Looks over the world, and can find nothing such,
Which dare claime from those lights the name of
best,
Of touch they are that without touch doth touch,
Which Cupid's selfe from Beautie's myne did draw:
Of touch they are, and poore I am their straw.

Sidney goes on to enumerate the 'beauties' of Stella, item by item, and the imagery, in a peculiarly stilted and artificial way, works on the basis of a one-to-one correspondence. The poem consists of a series of disconnected visual analogies drawn between one physical object and another, rather than a multiplicity of visual details compiled together and unified to give a single, engaging experience. The visual materials have yet to be moulded and recast in an 'energetic' manner to create a living sense of

32 'But when we liken an humane person to another in countenance, stature, speach or other qualitie, it is not called bare resemblance by imagerie or pourtrait, alluding to the painters terme, who yeldeth to th'eye a visible representation of the thing he describes and painteth in his table.' Coincidentally, the example cited by Puttenham is from Sidney's 'Archadia ... in a Patheniade written of our soueraigne Lady, wherein we resemble euery part of her body to some naturall thing of excellent perfection in his kind, as her forehead, browes and hair' (The Arte of English Poesie, pp. 250-51.)

Stella's presence, as Sidney succeeds in doing elsewhere.

That Sidney relies on the art of painting as the chief source of inspiration in the formulation of his poetic theory is seen from the terms he employs to define poetry, as 'a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture'. It is not surprising that Sidney should turn to the example of painting for the sensible duplication in words of sensible appearance, for poetry and painting, 'the sister arts', have long been linked together by their common task of imitating reality. 'The poet resembles a painter,' Plato asserts in The Republic, Book Ten (605), although the comparison with painting is to the detriment of poetry as a faithful representation of ideal, super-sensible reality. In the Poetics, several references to painting may be identified, among which the more important ones are the differentiation of the means of imitation, that painting imitates by form and colour, while poetry by language, harmony and rhythm (1447a15-25); the idea that the origins of 'mimesis' rest in human instincts, as shown in the fact that we can find pleasure in a repulsive subject represented in a picture (1448a17-20); the analogy with painting that just as 'plot' is the very soul of art, so the portrayal of character in painting pleases much more than resplendent colours laid on without order (1450b1-3); that characters may be represented as better in epic as in Polygnotus, as worse in comedy or in satire as in Pauson, or as they really are in Dionysius (1448a5-6); the doctrine of ideal representation is reiterated in a later passage, where the poet is compared again to the good portrait-painter (1454b10-11); and the idea that tragedy can emphasize the delineation of character, as in the paintings of Polygnotus, or it can ignore them, as

do those of Zeuxis (1450a25-28). All the allusions to paintings in Aristotle are for illustration and comparison, but later theorists of literary pictorialism are indebted to this treatise for working out in greater detail the formal parallels, the similarities and difference in means and objects of imitation. From Horace we derive the famous text for the doctrine of literary pictorialism - 'ut pictura poesis' (Ars Poetica 361); and in the Renaissance it became customary for the literary critic to think of the poet as a 'maker of images or idols', as Mazzoni did in his defence of Dante. For, as Tasso concedes, '... words are images of concepts that exist in the mind, as Aristotle says, and concepts are images of things that exist outside the mind. Words are therefore images of images and should resemble them' (Discourses, p. 131). In other words, words, like pictures, are essentially 'images of appearance', and the 'form' of words, pictures and statues alike are the natural and terrestrial objects. We find that the visual arts in the Renaissance found a particularly eloquent exponent in Leonardo who crowned painting the incomparable among the arts on the ground that painting gives the 'actual likeness of things'. Painting is superior to poetry because 'poetry puts down her subjects in imaginary written characters, while painting puts down the identical reflections that the eye receives, as if they were real' (Paragone-A Comparison of the Arts, No. 17) and that 'Painting serves a nobler sense than poetry and represents the works of nature with more truth than poetry', '... it is a nobler profession to imitate the things of nature which are the true and actual likenesses than to imitate in words the actions and speeches of man' (Ibid., No. 22). 'Words',

according to Leonardo, are 'accidental designations created by man, who is inferior to the creator of the works of nature which the painter imitates' and that 'nature is enclosed within the surface of shapes'. In other words, Leonardo is claiming that painting is superior to poetry because the visible forms and shapes and colours laid on the canvas are a more truthful medium of representation than the abstract words in black and white on the page because they are more 'natural'. The verbal symbols the poet employs are artificial contrivances devised by men, and their relation to physical objects is a conventional and arbitrary one; while that of 'the surfaces of shapes' to the natural world is necessarily a more palpable and 'intrinsic' one. The impressive achievements of the visual arts in the Renaissance set the example for the literary artist of the possibility of expressing meaning through 'visibilia' alone. It is not hard, then, to understand why both Sidney and Tasso saw 'pictorialism' as a source of poetic energies, and a means of reproducing in verbal form the whole of the vivacious reality of life and nature. 'The poet', Tasso says, is a 'maker of images in the fashion of a speaking painter, and in that is like the divine theologian who forms images and commands them to be' (op. cit., p. 31). The Aristotelian comparison of the representation of 'moral habit' in poetry with the paintings of Polygnotus, Pauson, and Dionysius (Poetics, 1448a5-6) is cited in Tasso (p. 86); and 'energetic', vigorous writing in Virgil is praised in Tasso in pictorial terms: 'We see the image of the moral habit of a young man presented in Turnus', 'And the moral habits of men old and young, and of women, too, amid the dangers

of war are virtually made into a picture', 'We see the image of the young lover painted in these other lines' and 'The character of the generous boy is figured in Ascanius'. The Discourses in fact abounds in references to painters and pictorial analogies. We have to remember that Tasso is one of the most painterly of the Renaissance poets, and as E.K. Waterhouse has said, 'Tasso literally "painted in words" the heart of man and thought of himself as so doing'.³³

Another factor accounting for the high importance attached to the visual image in the Renaissance lies in the pervasive influence of the Neo-platonic doctrine of revelation through symbolism, such as propounded by Pico della Mirandola in his commentary on the opening chapters of the Bible, Heptaplus. Tasso, for example, shows knowledge of the writings of the chief spokesman of the doctrine of 'icones symbolicae', namely the works of Dionysius the Aeropagite, Mystical Theology in his Discourses (p. 32), and Iamblichus's On The Egyptian Mysteries (p. 72). The Neo-platonic doctrine of the symbolic image has vast implications for the poet, which we shall see later. The allegorical image in Neo-platonic thought is not, as E.H. Gombrich puts it³⁴, 'a kind of picture writing in which a conceptual language is

³³ In his article, 'Tasso and the Visual Arts,' Italian Studies, III (1946-48), 496-527.

³⁴ In his article, 'Icones Symbolicae - the Visual Image in Neo-platonic Thought,' JWCI, XI (1948), 163-192 and the revised version of this article in Symbolic Images - Studies in Renaissance Art (London, 1972).

translated into conventional images', but the veritable representation of some suprasensible reality. This is because of the Neo-platonic conception of a fundamental and inherent symbolism pervading the universe, as shown in the idea of 'Nature as a Book of Symbols', as a result of which an essential, not conventional, relation is seen to obtain between the symbol and the spiritual reality it signifies, such as between 'fire' and 'celestial love'. This was reinforced in the Renaissance by the doctrine of the esoteric tradition, according to which the ancient sages had their intuition into the structure of the universe in enigmatic image-symbols, which are 'sacred signs' with an occult meaning, or 'arcanum'. The Egyptian priests devised hieroglyphics, Plato employed myths, Dionysius the Aeropagite constructed numerical symbols, the Hebrew sages spoke through the figures and symbols of the 'Cabala', and even Christ used parables. The immense esteem in which this doctrine was held is manifested by the fact that the Egyptian hieroglyphics became an object of intense study by the humanists in the Renaissance. As George Boas records³⁵, the Hieroglyphica of Horapollo, which is the only complete text the Renaissance possessed about the hieroglyphics, enjoyed wide popularity - 'The first edition of the Hieroglyphics dates from 1505, when it was printed with Aesop's fables. Within the next hundred years there had appeared no less than thirty editions, translations, and reprints of the work, to say nothing of the elaborations and commentaries, such as that of Valeriano, which appeared in 1556.' The Hieroglyphica

³⁵ In the Introduction to his edition of the Hieroglyphica of Horapollo (New York, 1950), p. 29.

of Pieno Valeriano, in fact, marked the climax of the movement. Marsilio Ficino, the translator of Plotinus and famous expositor of Plato, knew the Egyptian hieroglyphics well, and alluded to 'Horus' in his works. In glossing the hieroglyphics as image-symbols whereby the Egyptian priests expressed their primeval wisdom³⁶,

The Egyptian Priests did not use individual letters to signify mysteries but whole images of plants, trees or animals; because God has knowledge of things not through a multiplicity of thought processes but rather as a simple and firm form of the thing.

and that 'the Egyptians presented the whole of the discursive argument as it were in one complete image'. In so doing, the esoteric tradition joined hands with Neo-platonic philosophy. For the visual image was regarded by the Neo-platonic philosopher as the means whereby the 'Ideas' that dwell in the mind of God became visible; the 'language of accomodation', as explained by the Barnabite priest, Christeforo Giarda, in the Introduction to his Bibliotheca Alexandrinae Icones Symbolicae, Milan, 1626³⁷,

As nothing can be apprehended by the senses that is not somewhat corporeal, nothing can be understood by our mind in its depressed

³⁶ See Marsilio Ficino, Opera Omnia (Basle, 1576), pp. 1768 ff. Quoted by E.H. Gombrich in his article 'Icones Symbolicae,'.

³⁷ See extracts from the work of Giarda in the Appendix to E.H. Gombrich's article, 'Icones Symbolicae,' JWCI, XI (1948), 188-92.

condition that has not the appearance of a body.

This visual image thus became a form of revelation of divine truths and essence which are not normally comprehensible by the human mind, as Giarda ascertained that

... thanks to this boon the mind which is banished from heaven into the dark cave of the body, its actions held in bondage by the senses, can behold the beauty and form of the Virtues and Sciences divorced from all matter and yet adumbrated if not perfectly expressed in colours, and is thus roused to an even more fervent love and desire for them.

The symbolic image occupies a special position in Neo-platonic philosophy on account of the belief in the superiority of ecstatic visions over discursive reasoning as a means of comprehending truth. There are three modes of knowledge, according to the Neo-platonist. First is 'opinion', knowledge derived from ordinary sense-perception, which is delusory and leads away from truth. Second is derived from discursive reasoning, proceeding step by step in a dialectical process. Third and highest is intellectual intuition of ideas and essences in moments of 'ek-stasis', or in divine frenzy, such as the disembodied spirit experiences when vis-a-vis the Supreme One. 'The negative theology of Pythagoras and Dionysius is so highly renowned above the demonstrative theology of Aristotle and the schoolmen', according to Bruno, for the precise reason that 'the divine truth, in the mode of the supernatural, called metaphysics, is revealed to the rare spirits whom it favors, and does not permit its arrival to

measurements of movement and of time, as is the case in the physical sciences (those acquired by the light of nature which proceed from a thing known by sense and reason to a thing still unknown, in the discursive mode one calls argumentation), but, on the contrary, arrives suddenly and unexpectedly according to the mode appropriate to its activity ... it allows itself to be absorbed as promptly as the light of the sun renders itself present to him who turns and opens himself to it.³⁸ The visual symbol is believed to have a special efficacy because it bodies forth the whole of the proposition in a flash, which prefigures and mirrors the process of direct, intellectual intuition, as is confirmed by Giarda,

The Symbolic Images, however, present themselves to contemplation, they leap to the eyes of their beholders, and through the eyes they penetrate into the mind, declaring their nature before they are scrutinized, and so prudently temper their humanity that they appear to the unlearned as masked, to the others, however, if they are at least tolerably learned, undisguised and without any vizor.

and that

Nor could anybody have kept any record of them in his mind (save the learned, whenever indeed it might engage them) had not this heavenly institution of expression through symbolic images fixed the most noble nature of these acts more clearly in the eyes and minds of all and had the demonstration of their sweetness aroused the eager study even of the unlearned.

³⁸ In The Heroic Frenzies, trans. Paul E. Memmo, Jr., (Chapel Hill, 1964), pp. 257, 251.

For the special virtues inherent in the visual image, we recall that Leonardo asserts the superiority of painting over the other arts especially poetry on the ground that it serves the noblest sense, which is the sense of sight. '... by sight the beauty of created things is perceived, which are the chief source of love.' 'The eye is the principal means by which the central sense can most completely and abundantly appreciate the infinite works of nature.' 'Painting represents its subject to thee in an instant through the sense of sight' and that 'harmonious proportions of the parts composing the whole react and delight the eye.' 'Painting will move the senses more readily than poetry' and that

Painting transmits the same subject through a sense which is the true and direct intermediary between the object and the mind, and which transmits with the greatest accuracy the surfaces and shapes of whatever presents itself. And from these shapes is born the proportionality called harmony, which delights the sense of sight with sweet accord just as the proportions³⁹ of diverse voices delight the sense of hearing.

The idea that the visual image has a more direct impact on our mind is traceable to antiquity. Plato decided that the sense of sight is the noblest because it has the closest kinship to spirit⁴⁰. Horace has said that 'What enters the ears stirs the mind more feebly than what is placed before the trustworthy eyes' (Ars Poetica) One is reminded that the ancient 'art of memory' consists

³⁹ See Paragone-A Comparison of the Arts, No. 27.

⁴⁰ See Jean Hagstrum, The Sister Arts, p. 5; especially Note 5.

of impinging firmly on the mind a vivid picture of architectural places, real or imagined, representing the order of the things. The consequence of this emphasis on the primacy of the visual image for the literary artist is not hard to imagine. Cicero, in De Oratore (III, 161)⁴¹ where his discourses on the function of the metaphor, declares that words are used metaphorically

... because a single word in each case suggests the thing and a picture of the whole; or because every metaphor, provided it be a good one, has a direct appeal to the senses, especially the sense of sight, which is the keenest ... the metaphors drawn from the sense of sight are much more vivid, virtually place within the range of our mental vision objects . not actually visible to our sight.

The verbal image, based on vision, is thus affirmed to be a vital instrument in increasing the vigour of the language. Neo-platonism in the Renaissance played a decisive role in shaping the conception of the function of the poet, as shown in Giarda's observation, which runs,

For first every image and likeness, whether framed in words or expressed in colours, has this quality that it greatly delights hearers and spectators. Hence we find that the wisest of poets and orators, to whom it was given to mix in their speeches sweetness with usefulness, often use poetical and rhetorical images.

⁴¹ I am indebted to E.H. Gombrich in his essay, 'Icones Symbolicae: Philosophies of Symbolism and their Bearing on Art,' in Symbolic Images (London, 1972), for pointing this out.

From the implicit references to the Horatian principle of 'Utile dulce', it is clear that the poet serves a didactic function, which he serves best by presenting in his poetry vivid images whose forms, colours, and proportions rouse the mind in as direct and forceful a way as the 'symbolic images', adulated by Giarda, do, or the Egyptian hieroglyphics, so passionately clinched by the Renaissance as a quasi-magical mode of communication. With this end in mind, Tasso writes that

Now to lead to the contemplation of divine things and thus awaken the mind with images, as the mystical theologian and the poet do, is a far nobler work than to instruct by demonstration the function of the scholastic theologian.

(Discourses, p. 32)

The function of the poet and that of the 'divine theologian' who is the deviser of symbolic images, became practically interchangeable. As Frances Yates has pointed out⁴², 'To Bruno, the philosopher, the painter, and the poet, are (like Shakespeare's lunatic, lover and poet) "of imagination all compact." ' It is small wonder, then, that the poetic image in Sidney took over, in an almost mystical manner, large portions of the function of the Neo-platonic image-symbol,

... the peerless poet perform both: for whatsoever the philosopher saith should be

⁴² In her article, 'The Emblematic Conceit in Giordano Bruno's De Gli Eroici Furori and in the Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences,' JWCI, VI (1943), 101-121. See Note 1 on p. 109.

done, so as he coupleth the general notion with the particular example. A perfect picture I say, for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as the other doth.
(Apology, p. 107)

virtue, vices, matters of public policy or private government—replenish the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which, notwithstanding, lie dark before the imaginative and judging power, if they be not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of poesy.

(Apology, p. 107)

... a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example (for as for to move, it is clear, since the feigned may be tuned to the highest key of passion) ...
(Apology, p. 110)

For as the image of each action stirreth and instructeth the mind, so the lofty image of such worthies most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy ...

(Apology, p. 119)

Nay truly, though I yield that Poesy may not only be abused, but that being abused, by the reason of his sweet charming force, it can do more hurt than any other army of words ...

(Apology, p. 125)

In our attempt to understand the thought and art of the Renaissance, it is essential to remember that the Renaissance was primarily characterized by the rich corpus of figurative arts - symbols, emblems, imprese, and allegories which spawned on the imagination. This

is manifested by the 'furor' for emblems in the sixteenth century, which was inaugurated by Andrea Alciati's Emblematum Liber (1531). Etymologically, the word 'emblem' derives from Greek and as Geoffrey Whitney defined in 1586, in the first English book of emblems, A Choice of Emblems, 'is as much to saye in Englishe as to "To set in, or put in": properlie ment by suche figures, or workes; as are wrought in plate, or in stones in the pavements, or on the waulles, or such like, for the adorning of the place: having some wittie devise expressed with cunning workmanship, something obscure to be perceived at first, whereby, when with further consideration it is understood, it maie the greater delight the beholder.'⁴³ The Italian equivalent for the word is 'impresa', which comes from the verb 'imprendere', meaning 'to undertake'; in other words, designating a symbolical representation of a purpose, a wish, or a line of conduct that the bearer wishes to 'undertake'. The impresa, which was either amorous or military in the period of 'l'impresa manneriste' until this was succeeded by the period of 'l'impresa concettiste',⁴⁴ became very popular in academies and salons. The wide incidence of emblems and impresas in contemporary life is pictured by the anonymous friend of Samuel Daniel, who signed himself as N.W., in his introduction to Daniel's translation in 1585 of Paulo Giovio's famous disquisition on the aesthetic principles

⁴³ See Henry Green's edition of Whitney's "Choice of Emblems" (London, 1866), sig. **4 recto.

⁴⁴ In the words of Robert Klein, in his essay 'La Théorie de L'expression Figurée dans les Traites Italiens Sur Les Imprese 1555-1612,' in La Forme et L'intelligible (Paris, 1970), 320341.

involved in the 'science' or 'art' of making emblems,

Anyone who wishes to apply ornament to vacant or to bare surfaces will find in this little book, as in a well-furnished storehouse, all that he may wish to inscribe or paint on the walls of the house, on the windows, the carpets, the hangings, pictures, tableware, figures, rings, trinkets, clothing, tables, beds, in short on every piece of furniture in all apartments, so that in their essential features objects in everyday use may thus be rendered in all cases effective and attractive to the eye. Whoever is desirous to enrich his productions with the device of a short sentence, graced with an agreeable illustration, will be able to find abundant material, for he can take from the present book whatever may appear to be suitable for all kinds of ornamental purposes. Such can readily and quickly be found on consulting the general agreement of the subjects, or on the reference to the index⁴⁵.

There is no doubt that Sidney took a lively interest in the emblem literature of the Renaissance, for in his letter to Languet from Venice in 1573, he proffered Ruscelli's Le Imprese Illustri (1566) as one of the 'elegantes libri' and most prized possessions of the Renaissance man of letters⁴⁶. John Aubrey records in his life of Sir Philip Sidney in Brief Lives⁴⁷ that

⁴⁵ Quoted by Gilbert R. Redgrave, in 'Daniel and the Emblem Literature,' Transactions of the Bibliographical Society, XI (1909-11), 39-58.

⁴⁶ See The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet (London, 1845), trans. S.A. Pears, p. 9.

⁴⁷ See the edition by Oliver L. Dick, (London, 1949), p. 279.

Tilting was much used at Wilton in the times of Enry Earle of Pembroke, and Sir Philip Sidney. At the solemnization of the great Wedding of William the 2^d Earle of Pembroke to one of the Co-heires of the Earle of Shrewsbury, here was an extraordinary Shew: at which time a great many of the Nobility, and Gentry, experienced: and they had shields of Pasteboard painted with their Devices, and Emblems: which were very pretty and ingenious, and I believe they were most of them contrived by Sir Philip Sidney.

That heroic pageantry and chivalric tournament which gave occasion to lavish use of emblems and impresses constituted a prominent feature of Elizabethan life is also confirmed by Frances Yates⁴⁸, who found the origins of the Iberian yearly jousts closely described by Sidney in the Arcadia in the Accession Day Tilts. Giordano Bruno dedicated his De Gli Eroici Furori, which is a collection of emblems described in words, to Sidney 1585. Abraham Fraunce, one of the Sidneian circle and an impassioned emblematiser, dedicated a manuscript emblem book together with an essay on rhetoric⁴⁹ to Sidney in the same year. He was the author also of a fuller treatment of the subject entitled Insignium, Armorum, Emblematum, Hieroglyphicum, et Symbolorum printed at London in 1588, dedicated to Robert Sidney. The important part played by Sidney in initiating the emblem vogue in England is testified by contemporary writers such as Henry Peacham in The Compleat Gentleman,

⁴⁸ See her article, 'Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts,' JWCI, XX (1957), 4-25.

⁴⁹ The Bod. Rawlinson MS D. 345.

who mentioned a collection made by himself of 'devices of Tiltings of Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex and others',⁵⁰. Thomas Blount, in his translation of Henri Estienne's The Art of Making Devices in 1646, listed Sidney's device of 'the Caspian Sea', with the motto 'Dine Refluxu' among others adopted by Elizabethan courtiers. The internal evidence of Sidney's work also provides ample support for Sidney's relish for the emblematic mode of communication. The Arcadia abounds in descriptions of devices on armours, shields, jewels, many of which were transposed direct from continental emblem collections. Among these the most interesting ones are that adopted by Philisides in the 1590 Arcadia with the motto 'Spotted to be Known',⁵¹ which has been shown to be specifically Sidney's property⁵²; and that adopted by Clitophon, the well-known 'ermine' impresa⁵³, where according to Roy Strong 'Sidney is describing a picture used in allegorical tournament of Elizabeth I accompanied by an ermine which cannot have been so very different from the "Ermine" portrait at Hatfield',⁵⁴. Apart from

⁵⁰ Cited by Rosemary Freeman, in English Emblem Books (London, 1948), p. 72, Note 2.

⁵¹ See Works, I, p. 285.

⁵² See D. Coulman's short note on the identification of Philisides as Sidney, 'Spotted to be Known,' JWCI, XX (1957), 179-80.

⁵³ Works, I, p. 108.

⁵⁴ In The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture (London and New York, 1969).

endowing actual devices with a genuine narrative interest in his prose writings, in Sidney's poetry, the device-like quality of the imagery of Astrophil and Stella has also been fruitfully studied by Frances Yates⁵⁵. An eminent example of this is Sonnet 48.

meaning. That is to say, the conceit is used as an emblem; which approves the saying of Mario Praz that 'emblems and conceits are fruits of the same tree, and the periods which are fond of conceits were also periods of emblems'.⁵⁶ An *impresa*, as Robert Klein has perceived, as a symbolic form properly functions as 'l'image intelligible': 'la theorie de l'art figuree avait comme premier postulat le caractere universel du disegno et le possibilite de rendre visible l'Idee'. The whole theory of the figurative arts hinges on 'la fonction du symbol pour représenter une idée par une figure qui "participe" a l'université et a l'idealité de son objet'.⁵⁷ The point that Klein stresses time and again is precisely that the *impresa* is 'un instrument de notre intellect', 'dont tous les éléments sont indispensables et strictement suffisants pour traduire un concetto unique, acte simple de la pensée'. In other words, we are reminded that the emblem is essentially a picture with a hidden meaning, and it is inadequate to read these 'pictures qua pictures', overlooking 'their ability to function as iconographic signs'.⁵⁸ The emblem functions as 'a conceptual, quasi-verbal discourse'. It is fundamentally addressed to the mind; and whatever show or semblance of sensuous existence it has points beyond itself and refers us away from itself to something spiritual which it is meant to

⁵⁶ In Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery (London, 1939), p. 11.

⁵⁷ In the essay already cited, 'La Théorie de l'expression figure,'.

⁵⁸ Bender, op. cit.

bring before the mind's eye. The sensuous presentation of the image in the emblem is one that is invested with metaphysical powers. Thus it is understandable that rich crops of meaning may be gleaned from the imagery of certain of the sonnets of Astrophil and Stella. The marshalling of the visual materials in the emblematic image bridges the gap between the sensuous and the abstract, and the concrete picture painted in words serve to figure forth Abstractions and vast conceptual meanings.

Soule's joy, bend not those morning starres from
me,
Where Vertue is made strong by Beautie's might,
Where Love is Chastenesse, Paine doth learne
delight,
And Humblenesse grows one with Majestie.

Similarly the star-eye image is expanded by the emblematic method to take on metaphysical dimensions, so that it is possible to interpret the eyes of the Mistress as a metaphor for the tantalizing nature of God, in Sonnet 42.

O eyes, which do the Sphaeres of beaultie move,
Whose beames be joyes, whose joyes all vertues be,
Who while they make Love conquer, conquer Love,
The schooles where Venus hath learn'd Chastitie.
O eyes, where humble looks most glorious prove,
Only lov'd Tyrants, just in cruelty,
Do not, o do not from poore me remove,
Keepe still my Zenith, ever shine on me.
For though I never see them, but straight wayes
My life forgets to nourish banisht sprites;
Yet still on me, o eyes, dart down your rayes:
And if from Majestie of sacred lights,
Oppressing Mortall sense, my death proceed,
Wrackes Triumphs be, which Love (high set) doth
breed.

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The pictorial conceit, like the pictorial emblem, serves to render the intelligible visible, which as Mario Praz has put it, argues a process of the 'materialization' of the spirit rather than 'sublimation'.⁶⁰ The recognition of the autonomy of the symbolic form won by the fashion for emblems which originated from the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the perfection of the emblem or impresa as 'un nouveau langage symbolique - image-idea: "Noeud de paroles et d'images" (Ammirato)', the intense sophistication of the techniques of devising emblems, as demonstrated by the discourses on the art by Paolo Giovio, Dominichi and Ruscelli, are all part of the same movement in which the sensuous tendency became combined with the didactic tendency. It is not difficult to understand the converse of this in poetry, resulting in the cultivation in verbal form of 'représentation quasi-visuelle' and the choice of vivid, vigorous images as a means of expressing meaning rather than bare, direct logical statement; hence the use of the pictorial method in Sidney, which consists most of the time of 'une image pensée remplaçant un concept'. Thus pictorialism forms a vital means of increasing the energies of the language in Sidney. In the next chapter we shall proceed to examine other ways of writing energetically adopted by Sidney.

⁶⁰ Op. cit., p. 13.

CHAPTER THREE THE ARCADIAN EXPERIMENTS

When we come to consider the rise of the vernacular in the sixteenth century, the significant part played by Sidney in realizing the potentialities of the English language cannot be over-estimated. As is well-known, the sixteenth century witnessed the making of the vernaculars, as exemplified by Du Bellay's attempt to make more 'illustrious' the French language in order to emulate with the Ancients, which intention is set forth in the following proclamations¹,

Et quand la barbarie des meurs de notz
ancestres eust deu les mouvoir à nous apeller
barbares, si est ce que je ne voy point pour-
quoy on nous doive maintenant estimer telz:
veu qu'en civilité de meurs, equité de loix,
magnanimité de couraiges, bref en toutes formes
& manières de vivre non moins louables que
profitables, nous ne sommes rien moins qu'eux:
mais bien plus, veu qu'ilz sont telz maintenant,
que nous les pouvons justement apeller par le
nom qu'ilz ont donne aux autres.

and that,

Ces raysons me semblent suffisants de faire
entendre a tout equitable estimateur des choses,
que nostre Langue (pour avoir ete nommes
barbares ou de noz ennemys ou de ceux qui
n'avoient loy de nous bailler ce nom) ne doit
pourtant estre deprisee, même de ceux aux
quelz elle est propre & naturelle, & qui en
rien ne sont moindres que les Grecz ou Romains,

¹ Du Bellay, La Défence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse, ed. cit., Livre I, chap. II.

The descriptive epithets that recur in La Déffence - the state of the vernacular tongues as being 'brutaux, cruelz & barbares', and the ambition of making the French language ultimately 'si copieuse & riche que la Greque ou Latine', strike the key-note in the writings of a lot of advocates for the aggrandisement of the native tongue. As 'Imitation' supplied the chief apparatus for the recovery of the wisdom of the Ancients in the efflorescence of the 'new learning' in the Renaissance, there was the general recognition of the necessity of making the vernacular 'rich' and 'copious', of augmenting the resources of the language, and refining and developing it, so that it may become a supple and flexible instrument for the expression of meaning. As R.R. Bolgar has pointed out², Erasmus' De Copia (1511), which was intended to be a textbook for schools for the mastery of the Latin tongue, 'has not been accorded the importance it deserves. It provides us in a sense with a clue to the whole of humanism. Specifying the techniques on which imitation depended, it makes clear what men were attempting not only in Latin, but also in the vernaculars ...'. Sheer aptness and lucidity of expression were regarded to be inadequate, and the concept of 'copia', which comprehends the meanings of 'variation, abundance or richness, eloquence, and the ability to vary or enrich language and thought'³, was set up as a rhetorical or

² Bolgar, Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries (Camb., 1954), p. 273.

³ The translation by Donald B. King in Erasmus' On Copia of Words and Things, trans. Donald B. King, introd. Herbert D. Rix (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1963).

stylistic ideal for writers to follow. There was in the sixteenth century as a whole a movement from the 'uneloquent language' to the 'eloquent language'⁴, and a glance through the manuals and treatises of rhetoric will exhibit a common intention to supplement, if not replace, 'plainness' or baldness of statement with 'exornation'. The latter, in fact, constitutes an inescapable heading in almost every handbook of rhetoric in the Renaissance. Thomas Wilson, for instance, in The Arte of Rhetorique (1553)⁵ enumerates 'fowre partes belonging to Elocution', namely, 'Plainnesse, Aptnesse, Composition, Exornation'. Wilson maintains that 'plaine words' are 'proper to an Orator' - 'First therefore, an Orator must labour to tell his tale, that the hearers may well know what he meaneth, and understand him wholly, the which he shall with ease vse, if he vtter his minde in plaine words, such as are vsually receiued, and tell it orderly, without going about the bush' (ed. cit., p. 2), and exhorts learners against speaking in 'dark language' and affectation of 'any strange ynkehorne terms'. 'Plainnesse' is regarded to be the first requisite; yet 'exornation' is put forward at the end to crown the art of 'elocution',

When wee haue learned apte wordes, and vsuall phrases to set foorth our meaning, and can orderly place them without offence to the Eare, wee may boldly commend and beautifie our talke

⁴ In the words of Richard F. Jones, in The Triumph of the English Language (London, 1953).

⁵ Ed. with introd. by G.H. Nair (Oxford, 1909).

with diuers goodly colours, and delitefull translations, that our speech may seeme as bright and precious, as a rich stone is faire and orient.

Exornation, is a gorgious beautifying of the tongue with borrowed wordes, and change of sentence or speech with much varietie. First therefore (as Tullie saith) an oration is made to seme right excellent by the kind selfe, by the colour and iuice of speech.

(op. cit., p. 169)

Wilson actually pens a panegyric of 'Elocution', which he lauds as 'that part of Rhetorique, the which aboue all other is most beautifull', in the following enthusiastic terms,

Elocution getteth words to set forth inuention, and with such beautie commendeth the matter, that reason semeth to be clad in Purple, walking afore both bare and naked. Therefore Tullie saieth well, to finde out reason and aptly to frame it, is the part of a wiseman, but to commend it by wordes and with gorgious talke to tell our conceipt, that is onely proper to an Oratour.

(ed. cit., p. 160)

George Puttenham, in his treatise on poetry, also devotes a whole book to the elaboration of the subject of 'Ornament', where expatiates on the importance of 'exornation' not only as a means of embellishing discourse, but for the better moving and delighting of the reader,

As no doubt the good proportion of any thing doth greatly adorne and commend it and right so our late remembred proportions doe to our vulgar Poesie: so is there yet requisite to

the perfection of this arte, another maner of exornation, which resteth in the fashioning of our makers language and stile, to such purpose as it may delight and allure as well the mynde as the eare of the hearers with a certaine noueltie and strange maner of conueyance, disguising it in no litle from the ordinary and accustomed: neuerthelesse making it nothing the more vnseemely or misbecomming, but rather decenter and more agreeable to any ciuill eare and vnderstanding .

Puttenham was responsible for introducing the idea of style as 'garment', which gained wide currency among Renaissance writers⁷,

Euen so cannot our vulgar Poesie shew it selfe either gallant or gorgeous, if any lymme be left naked and bare and not clad in his kindly clothes and colours, such as the common course of ordinary/speech and capacitie of the vulgar iudgement, and yet being artificially handled must needes yeld it much more bewtie and commendation. This ornament we speake of is giuen to it by figures and figurative speeches, which be the flowers as it were and colours that a Poet setteth vpon his language by arte, as the embroiderer doth his stone and perle, or passements of gold vpon the stuffe of a Princely garment, or as th'excellent painter bestoweth the rich Orient colours vpon his table of pourtraite ...

The extent to which Puttenham was speaking for the poetic practice of his age may be gauged by a survey of

⁷ See the discussion of the metaphor of 'style as a garment' in Rosemond Tuve's Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947), Chapter IV, 'The "Garment" of Style and Functional Sensuous Imagery,'.

⁸ Puttenham, op. cit., pp. 137-38.

the stream of lyrical anthologies which issued from the press from Tottel's Miscellany in 1557 to Davidson's Poetical Rhapsody in 1602, including such fanciful titles as A Handful of Pleasant Delights, A Gorgeous Galley of Gallant Inventions, The Paradise of Dainty Devices, The Phoenix Nest, etc⁹. Elizabethan poetry was characterized by the pervasive use of rhetorical figures and devices, so that when Sidney inveighed against the factitious conventionality of contemporary poetry - 'the honey-flowing matron eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation', he was commenting on a tendency in contemporary poetry which had been pressed too far.

The close alliance between poetry and rhetoric is a time-honoured one. Rhetoric was defined by Aristotle as 'the faculty of discerning in every case the available means of persuasion' and by Quintilian as 'the science of speaking well'. Thus rhetoric has from early times been recognized to be that branch of knowledge which has 'eloquence' as its object of study, as the very name 'elocutio', from which the word 'eloquence' derives, indicates. As Avril Bruten points out¹⁰, 'to scholastic thinkers rhetoric and poetry establish no important connection between words and truth because both

⁹ See the account of Elizabethan lyrical poetry in A Literary History of England, II, The Renaissance (1500-1660), by Tucker Brooke and Matthias A. Shaaber, 2nd edition (London, 1967), Part II, chap. 1, pp. 383-97.

¹⁰ In her unpublished doctoral dissertation submitted to Cambridge University, May, 1966, 'Res and Verba in Spenser's Poetic,'.

are concerned with style, and style is an expedient means, not a necessary end,' This is because in the Middle Ages rhetoric took up new and specialized functions, in the form of 'ars dictaminis' and 'ars praedicandi', and classical rhetoric became practically reduced to the consideration of 'elocutio'. Apart from Cicero's youthful work De Inventione, the rhetorical textbook that held most sway in this period is the Pseudo-Ciceronian Ad Herennium, more than half of which is devoted to the setting forth of the resources of 'elocutio'. Thus rhetoric in the Middle Ages was regarded as an 'art of recommendation', whose task is to recommend the certain truths of theology which revelation guarantees, or those discovered in any other discipline. That is to say, it came to be regarded almost exclusively as a verbal art, or an art of words. This view of rhetoric as stylistic decoration is that put forward by Martianus Capella in his picture of Dame Rhetorica in his De Nuptiis (ca. 410-427), and shared also by Stephen Hawes, in his depiction of Dame Rethoryke in The Passetyme of Pleasure¹¹. The poet appeals to Dame Rethoryke for the gift of eloquence,

And depaynt my tonge with thy ryall floures
Of delycate odoures that I may ensue
In my purpose to glade myne auditoures
And with thy power that thou me endue
To moralyse thy lytterall censes trewe
And clense awaye the myst of ygnoraunce
With depured beames of goodly ordynaunce
(lines 673-679)

The efficacy of 'elocucyon' as a means of recommending

¹¹ Ed. W.E. Mead, Early English Text Society (London, 1928).

what 'inuencyon hath the purpose wrought' is set out in the following encomiastic terms,

Yet elocucyon with the power of Mercury
The mater exorneth ryght well facundyously

In fewe wordes swete and sentencyous
Depaynted with golde harde in construccyon
To the artyke eres swete and dylycyous
The golden rethoryke is good refeccyon
And to the reder ryght consolacyon
As we do golde frome coper purify
So that elocucyon doth ryght well claryfy

The dulcet speche frome the langae rude
Tellynge the tale in termes eloquent
The barbary tongue it doth ferre exclude
Electyng wordes whiche are expedyent
In Latyn or in englysshe after the entent
Encensynge out the aromatyke fume
Our langage rude to exyle and consume
(lines 908-924)

Hawes's poem furnishes an instance of the fusion or confusion of rhetoric with poetry, which is a continuation of the medieval tradition. Poetry is praised by Hawes in terms which are strikingly similar to those applicable to rhetoric - 'O redolent well of famous poetry/O clere fountayne replete with sweteness/Reflerynge out the dulcet dylycacy/Of .iiii. ryuers in meruaylous wydenesse' (lines 1051-1054), for rhetoric is regarded as the fountainhead of ornate diction. One of the four rivers that flow from the well of poetry is called 'carbuncles', that is, the rhetorical figures. Virgil is praised for his rich use of rhetorical ornaments,

Amyddes of whom the tour is so goodly
Of Vyrgyll standeth most solacyous
Where he is entered in stone precyous
(lines 1060-1062)

Likewise Chaucer was praised by Lydgate as a source of noble sentiment and the founder of eloquent diction. In the Middle Ages, the poetical treatises, such as the Poetria Nova of Geoffrey of Vinsauf (fl. ca. 1210), were actually manuals dealing exclusively with rhetorical techniques, 'dispositio' and 'elocutio', which were applied to poetry. However, despite its strong medieval flavour, we find Hawes in more than one places giving utterance to sentiments which are strikingly modern,

When the mater is founde by inuencyon
 Be it mery or yet of grete sadnes
 Sette in a place by the dispocycyon
 And by elocucyons famous clerenes
 Exornate well and redy to expres
 Than pronounceyacyon with chere and countenance
 Conueniently must make the vtterance

For though a mater be neuer so good
 Yf it be tolde with tongue of barbary
 In rude maner without the dyscrete node
 It is dystourbaunce to a hole companye
 For to se them so rude and boystrously
 Demeane themselfe vtteryng the sentence
 Without good maner or yet intelligence

And thus the gentyll rethorycyan
 Through the labour of his ryall clergy
 The famous nurture orygynally began
 Oppressynge our rudenes and our foly
 And for to gouerne vs ryght prudently
 The good maner encreaseth dygnyte
 And the rudenesse also inqwyte

(lines 1184-1225)

In this passage we find the adumbration of several ideas which acquired rich significances in the sixteenth century - the tirade against the 'tongue of barbary' and

'rude maner' of speaking, the vision of the 'gentle rethorycyan' in a sense as the 'shpherd' of the people 'Through the labour of his ryall clergy/The famous nurture orygynally began/Oppressynge our rudenes and our foly', and most important of all, foreshadowing the creed of the union of 'sapientia' and 'eloquentia', already mentioned in the preceding chapter, which was zealously embraced in the sixteenth century. The gentle speech of the 'gentyl rethorycyan' is believed to have a civilizing effect on the hearers, 'To gouerne vs ryght prudently/The good maner entreaseth dygnyte/And the rudenesse also inyquyte'.

In the sixteenth century, 'eloquentia' was regarded as a cultural ideal which was to be assiduously cultivated, and an epitome of some of the finest aspirations of the age. This can be seen from the distemper of Ciceronianism which swept England in this period, giving rise to 'diligent imitators of Tully and Demosthenes (most worthy to be imitated)', who 'keep Nizolian paper-books of their figures and phrases'. There was the attempt to render the vernacular a 'worthy' medium of expression, comparable to the classical languages, which embodied the 'wisdom' of the Ancients. This is the conviction of Ascham, in The Scholemaster (ed. cit.),

... in the Greeke and Latin tong, the two onelie learned tongues, which be kept, not in common taulke, but in priuate bookes, we finde alwayes, wisdom and eloquence, good matter and good vtterance, neuer or seldom a sonder.

(p. 265)

But yet, bicause the prouidence of God hath left vnto vs no other tong, saue onelie in the Greke and Latin tong, the trew preceptes, and perfite examples of eloquence, therefore must we seeke in the Authors onelie of those two

tongues, the trewe Paterne of Eloquence,
if in any other mother tongue we looke to
attaine, either to perfit vtterance of it
our selues, or skilfull iudgement of it in
others.

(p. 283)

Tasso, writing in the late Cinquecento, also urged the supreme necessity of eloquence - 'And eloquence, which derives its name from elocution, is not second even to prudence, if indeed the two can possibly be disjoined, since many prudent men for lack of this gift have been kept out of the government of kingdoms and republics and thought almost infants' (Discourses, p. 139). The amount of attention that is dedicated to the cultivation of 'eloquent' expression in the Renaissance may be estimated from the quantity of rhetorical textbooks that reached the public, if not used in schools, since the publication of Erasmus's De Copia in 1511, which include Leonard Cox's The Arte or Crafte of Rethoryke (1530), Richard Sherry's A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes (1550) and A Treatise of the Figures of Grammar and Rhetorike (1555), Wilson's The Arte of Rhetorike (1553), Richard Rainolde's A Book Called the Foundacioun of Rhetorike (1563), Roger Ascham's The Scholemaster (1570), Henry Peacham's The Garden of Eloquence (1577), Gabriel Harvey's oration on the Rhetor in the same year, which are a list of the rhetorical treatises in English that Sidney might have known, by the time he commenced his poetic career. From an examination of the rhetorical precepts and practice of the age, one can see the shaping influence of contemporary rhetoric on Sidney's art of poetry. What is particularly illuminating is the high importance the rhetoricians attached to the

affective power of the language, for 'moving' or 'persuading' is traditionally one of the threefold aims of the orator - 'docendi, movendi, delectandi' (Quintilian, Inst. Orat., VIII, Pr., 6). These aims were reiterated by Wilson in the Renaissance, who declared that 'Three things are required of an Orator. To teach. To delight. And to perswade'. Wilson also prescribed in an imperative way that

Now when these two are done, hee (the orator) must perswade, and moue the affections of his hearers in such a wise, that they shalbe forced to yeeld vnto his saying, ...

(op. cit., p. 4)

Wilson declared that

Among all the figures of Rhetorique, there is no one that so much helpeth forward an Oration, and beautifieth the same with such delightfull ornaments, as doth amplification. For if either wee purpose to make our tale appeare vehement, to seeme pleasant, or to be well stored with copie: needes must it be that here we seeke helpe, where helpe chiefly is to be had, and not els where.

(op. cit., p. 116)

For the reason that 'the beautie of amplifying, standeth most in apt mouing of affections' (op. cit., p. 130). The intimate relation of rhetoric to the moving of the affections is revealed by the fact that in Aristotle, one of the three appeals of rhetoric is to the 'pathos', that is, the feelings, of the audience, as distinguished from the 'logos', which is their reason, and 'ethos', which is based on confidence in the moral trustworthiness of the speaker (Rhetoric

1.2. 1356^a25)). As has been discussed earlier, language in the Renaissance was believed to have an ethical function, and a source of influence on man's moral behaviour. Rhetoric, above all, was devoted to the fashioning of man's moral conduct, which explains why the rhetorician takes into account the ethical and psychological aspects of man as in Wilson's analysis of the affections,

Affections therefore (called Passions) are none other thing, but a stirring or forsing of the minde, either to desire, or els to detest and loth any thing, more vehemently then by nature we are commonly wont to doe. We desire those things, we loue them, and like them earnestly, that appeare in our iudgement to be godly: wee hate and abhorre those things that seeme naught, vngodly, or harmful vnto vs. Neither onely are wee moued with those things, which wee thinke either hurtfull, or profitable for our selues, but also we reioyce, we be sorie, wee pittie an other mans happe.

(op. cit., p. 130)

Behind this is certainly the Aristotelian concept of the twofold nature of man: the 'concupiscible' side of human nature to embrace the good, and the 'irascible' side to shun evil. A neat formulation of this ethical conception of rhetoric is available in Bacon's The Advancement of Learning, who reached the conclusion that 'The duty and office of Rhetoric is to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will.'¹² Bacon applauded the exercise of eloquence on the ground

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Bacon, Works, ed. cit., III, p. 409.

that

For we see that speech is much more convenient in adorning that which is good than in colouring that which is evil; for there is no man but speaketh more honestly than he can do or think: and it was excellently noted by Thucydides in Cleon, that because he used to hold on the bad side in causes of estate, therefore he was ever inveighing against eloquence and good speech; knowing that no man can speak fair of courses sordid and base.
(Ibid., p. 410)

Knowledge of contemporary rhetoric is essential to a full understanding of Sidney's poetry for the light it sheds on Sidney's basic assumptions. Poetry is indissolubly linked to virtue; and poetry towers above the rest of the arts because it serves the function best of 'moving' to virtuous action - 'And that moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well nigh the cause and the effect of teaching' (Apology, p. 112), '... the poet, with the same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually than any other art doth.' Behind all these claims is the 'fallen' view of human nature, that 'reason' is perpetually swayed by 'passion' from doing good (a theme that runs through the Arcadia and Astrophil and Stella, and which is one of the greatest themes of Elizabethan literature), which is precisely what makes the 'teaching' of poetry such an urgent matter of practical expediency,

Nay truly, learned men have learnedly thought that where once reason hath so much overmastered passion as that the mind hath a free desire to do well, the inward light each mind hath in itself is as good as a philosopher's book; seeing in Nature we know it is well to do

well, although not in the words of art which the philosophers bestow upon us; for out of natural conceit the philosopher drew it. But to be moved to do that which we know, or to be moved with desire to know, 'hoc opus, hic labor est'.

(Ibid., p. 113)

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that both in theory and practice the prime objective of the writing of poetry to Sidney is the 'moving' of our affections. In the Arcadia, we find Sidney investigating, through actual experiments, 'energetic' forms of writing that will address themselves to our mind and senses in the most direct and urgent way. That Sidney is preoccupied with the 'mystery' of the nature and the process of imaginative creation in the Arcadia is revealed by the addition of a highly figured and rhetorically written episode to the opening of the romance in the revised and expanded version of 1590. In this episode our attention is drawn to the laments of two shepherds Klaius and Strephon, at the departure of a lady called Urania, who has gone to the island of Cythera, the traditional abode of Venus. What is interesting about Urania is her high and inspiring nature, which is portrayed to be a source of elevating influence upon the two shepherds,

hath not the onely love of her made us
(being silly shepherds) raise up our thoughts
above the ordinary levell of the worlde, so
as great clearkes do not disdain our
conference? hath not the desire to seeme
worthie in her eyes made us when others are
sleeping, to sit viewing the course of
heavens? when others were running at base, to
runne over learned writings? when other marke
their sheepe, we to marke our selves? hath not
shee throwne reason upon our desires, and,
as it were given eyes into Cupid: hath in any,

but in her, love-fellowship maintained
friendship between rivals, and beauty
taught the beholders chastity?

(Works, I, p. 8)

In a poem added presumably by the Countess of Pembroke to the 1593 edition of the Arcadia Urania is described as 'nothing earthly, but of fire and aire'.¹³ As Katherine Duncan-Jones has pointed out¹⁴, from a poem written by Nathaniel Baxter, one of Sidney's past tutors and addressed to the Countess of Pembroke long after Sidney's death, Sir Philip Sidney's Ourania, That is, Endimions Song and Tragedie, Containing all Philosophie (London, 1606), it is apparent that 'Sidney was closely associated both with the revival of sacred verse and with the adoption of Urania as its Muse.' And although, as Duncan-Jones has clarified, the identification of Urania as the Countess of Pembroke, who is the patroness of religious poetry 'does not take us very far in explaining her relationship with Strephon and Kalis', that Urania is intimately related to and indeed spurs Strephon and Kalis to the writing of poetry is apparent from the fact that in the Old Arcadia the lament of the two shepherds over the departure of Urania gave occasion to the most beautiful double sestina written by Sidney, 'Ye goat-herd gods', very finely analysed and appreciated by Empson¹⁵. What is

¹³ Sidney, Poems, p. 250.

¹⁴ In her article, 'Sidney's Urania,' RES, N.S. XVII, No. 66 (1966), 123-32.

¹⁵ Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (London, 1954), pp. 34-38.

likely is that whatever Urania was meant by Sidney to be, in this baffling and mysterious conception of Urania's nature as the Muse or Heavenly Beauty, and in the account of the transformation Urania wrought upon the 'silly shepherds', Strephon and Klaius, there is an approximation of the inward changes, the quasi-religious conversion that takes place when one is enamoured of poetry, or a similar uplifting force. The passage stands as a tentative analysis of the poetic mind, where the act of creation is seen to stem from a highly specialized experience pertaining to the human personality.

In the history of the rise and development of vernacular poetry in Elizabethan England, the importance of the Arcadia as a storehouse of poetic experiments merits our fullest attention. The contribution of the Arcadian poems lies not so much in the form of actual achievement (though doubtless formidable in several cases), as in the thorough study and understanding of the theoretical and technical problems of writing poetry that these experiments entailed. It is from Sannazaro's Arcadia and his piscatory eclogues that Sidney borrowed the title and form of pastoral romance interspersed with verses, with four sets of eclogues marking crucial breaks in the central action. The Arcadia garners a wide range of experiments in diverse foreign, especially Italian, verse forms - the double sestet, the crown, terza rima, the sonnet, carmen correlativum, the madrigal, and so on; and above all the highly controversial experiments in classical quantitative hexametres whose significance for English poetry has long been disputed by critics. It is fitting, therefore, to look upon the Arcadian poems as a fountainhead of creative energies for later Elizabethan writers for the sheer

brilliance and ingenuity of the experiments, the vitality of Sidney's verse, and the vigour and consistency with which Sidney endeavoured to acclimatize foreign verse forms on English soil. The impression one gets after reading the Arcadia, apart from noticing the inescapable moral and political concerns which are so deeply characteristic of the Elizabethan temper, as in Astrophil and Stella. In the Old Arcadia, where there is no reference to Urania as a possible source of inspiration of the whole work¹⁶, the idea of poetry as composed under the guiding light of the 'Muse' is taken up time and again: as in the brief mentioning of 'country muses' in the statement that 'But among the best singers of the shepherds, who had in their youth been brought up in some art, to help the natural benefits of the country muses, there grew a controversy ...',¹⁷ and in the depiction of Basilius that 'seeing the sun what speed he made to leave our west to do his office in the other hemisphere, his inward muses made him in his best music sing this madrigal',¹⁸. In the first instance the 'country muses' may well refer to anonymous sylvan deities or mythological beings that preside over poetic creation, but in the second instance the 'muses' are definitely used as a synonym for the internal promptings compelling Basilius to the creative act.

¹⁶ With the implication, as Duncan-Jones asserts, that 'he (Sidney) may have intended her departure at the beginning of the romance to indicate that it is not to be a divine but a secular work' (op. cit., RES, N.S., XVII, No. 66 (1966), p. 130).

¹⁷ The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. cit., p. 89.

In the Arcadia the relation between the central action and the individual poems dispersed in it is also worth our examination. The question which presents itself is how far these poems spring organically from the narrative, and whether they are actually detachable from the central action, being in fact rhetorical set-pieces which are the end in themselves. In certain cases, the poem does seem to be a functional part of the whole, such as what follows,

Transformd in shew, but more transformd in minde,
I cease to strive, with double conquests foild:
For (woe is me) my powers all I finde
With outward force and inward treason spoild.

For from without came to mine eyes the blows,
Whereto mine inward thoughts did faintly yeeld;
Both these conspired poore Reason's overthrowe;
False in my selfe, thus have I lost the field.

Thus are my eyes still Captive to one sight:
Thus all my thoughts are slaves to one thought
still:

Thus Reason to his servants yeelds his right;
Thus is my power transformed to your will.

What marvaile then I take a woman's hew,
Since what I see, thinke, know is all but you?

The above poem is integral to the central action. It furthers the plot: it highlights the moment of 'discovery' of the disguise of Pyrocles as Cleophila. Thematically, it recapitulates the central theme of the struggle between Reason and Passion; and announces the first of the successive overthrows of Reason by Passion, which eventually wreak total havoc in the pastoral retreat. The song of Musidorus disguised as Dorus, 'Come shepherd's weeds, become your master's mind', performs a comparable function (Ibid., p. 40). Basilius' song, 'Let not old age disgrace my high desire' (Ibid., p. 95), is also

dexterously tailored to the mood of the speaker, and serves as a humorous commentary on the situation. Another set of poems which perform a similar dramatic function are found in the episode in which Philoclea acquires self-knowledge as she ponders over her earlier avowal of chastity engraved on 'a fair white marble stone'. The juxtaposition of this earlier poem with the subsequent palinode brings out the 'frailty' and inconsistency of women, as in Hamlet, and in a larger sense, the frailty of human nature; and deepens the basic irony of the situation. The two poems, bearing witness to the transformation of Philoclea's state of mind, add to the anguish of Philoclea and increase the poignancy of the whole scene of intense self-interrogation. However, in other cases, the narrative interest of the songs and poems inserted to the action is much more questionable. An indication that they do not necessarily stem from the characters and actions of the prose narrative is the fact that some of them we find are transposed and ascribed to different speakers in the New Arcadia of 1590¹⁹. For example, the tirade against Cupid is assigned to Miso in Book II in the 1590 Arcadia instead of to Dicus; the eclogue between Plangus and Boulon reported by Histor over the unfortunate fate of Queen Erona is exchanged between Basilus and Plangus instead in the new version; and the 'blason' of Philoclea's beauty by Cleophila in the Old Arcadia, Book III, upon the sight of Philoclea in bed, is transferred to a completely different episode in the New Arcadia. The poem, instead of being 'a song the shepherd

19 The above poems by contrast are retained and affixed to the same dramatic situation in the new version.

Philisides had in his hearing sung of the beauties of his unkind mistress', appears to be the original creation of Zelmane, when she beholds Philoclea in the bath scene. Yet the most interesting point is that in the Old Arcadia this long poem actually interrupts the flow of the narrative, and the narrator, who frequently intrudes into the story, feels obliged to give the following explanation,

But do not think, fair ladies, his thoughts
had such leisure as to run over so long a ditty;
the only general fancy of it came into his mind,
fixed upon the sense of that sweet subject.
(Ibid., p. 242)

The story-teller's apology shows that the poem is foreign to the main narrative purpose, and arrests rather than advances the general movement of the story. In fact, in many cases, such as the song of Dorus in Book II in the Old Arcadia, 'feed on my sheep; my charge, my comfort, feed' which is answered by Philisides' corresponding poem 'Leave off my sheep: it is no time to feed', and the set of poems composed by Dorus and Cleophila in Book III which consists of variations of the same motif, 'This merchant man' (Ibid., pp. 170-71), the narrative context appears to be only a pretext for composition. The Arcadia, especially the old version, is punctuated with songs and poems which seem to be written for their own sake, such as the poem 'Virtue, beauty, and speech, did strike, wound, charm', which is the most elaborate example of 'carmen correlativum' written by Sidney; so that it is debatable whether these poetical utterances are there for the sake of these poems. The truth is, what we get in the Arcadia is a vast symphony of characters issuing in songs and speeches

and poems, who are concerned with giving expression to their thoughts and feelings and also with refining their utterances. In 1590 Arcadia, we have, for example, an account of Dorus in the act of poetic composition, sedulously striving to express his emotions in the most 'energetic' and moving way,

That conceipt found such friendship in his thoughts, that at last he yelded, since he was banished from her presence, to seeke some meanes by writing to shew his sorrow, & testifie his repentance. Therefore getting him the necessarie instruments of writing, he thought best to counterfaite his hand (fearing that as alreadie she knew his, she would cast it away as soone as she saw it) and to put it in vers, hoping, that would draw her on to read the more, chusing the Elegiac as fittest for mourning. But pen did never more quakingly performe his office; never was paper more double moistned with inke & teares; never words more slowly married together, & never the Muses more tired, then now with changes & rechanges of his devises: fearing howe to ende, before he had resolved how to begin, mistrusting ech word, condemning eche sentence. This word was not significant, that word was too plain: this would not be conceived; the other would be ill conceived. Here Sorow was not inough expressed; there he seemed too much for his owne sake to be sory. This sentence rather shewed art, then passion; that sentence rather foolishly passionate, then forcibly moving ...

(Works, I, p. 356)

In the above passage, which gives a detailed account of the agonizing and painful process of artistic creation²⁰, the literary preoccupation of Sidney breaks

²⁰ Compare Sonnet 27 by Ronsard in the sequence to Cassandre, in Les Amours, ed. H. Weber & C. Weber (Paris, 1963), p. 19.

through to the foreground as it does in Astrophil and Stella. The characters in the Arcadia are constantly engaged in the quest for eloquent and forceful expression and it is in connection with this central motif that we have to consider 'music' in Sidney's writings. All of the poems in the Arcadia are set to music; or so we are told that Dorus or Cleophila or Philoclea resorts to his or her 'shepherd pipe', or the lyre, the lute, and the viol; so that we are introduced to a musical universe, 'a world of instruments'. We recollect that the most popular form of art in the sixteenth century is music. For example, we are told that in order to declare her mind, 'Cleophila (first saluting the muses with a bass viol hung hard by her) sent this embassy in versified music to both her ill-requited lovers' (The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, ed. cit. p. 218). Musical exercises form an important element in the life of Sidney's heroes and heroines, who give vent to their feelings through the medium of music. In Book III of the Old Arcadia, in the cave scene where the tormented Cleophila is forced by the frantic Gynecia into a granting of her favour, the former, overburdened by woes, 'sitting down in the first entry of the cave's mouth, with a song she had lately made she gave doleful way to her bitter affects', and Gynecia does the same. Similarly Philoclea, at the nadir of despair on account of Pyrocles' apparent faithlessness, finds in music her only consolation: 'The song, having been accorded to a sweetly played-on lute, contained these verses which she had lately with some art curiously written to enwrap her secret and resolute woes' (Ibid., p. 229) and on seeing Pyrocles, 'giving a pitiful but sweet screech, she took againe the lute and began to sing this sonnet which might serve as an explaining to other' (Ibid., p. 231). Music is also used sometimes as an instrument of persuasion,

which is the stratagem adopted by Dorus,

Dorus, that found his speeches had given alarm to her imaginations, to hold her the longer in them and bring her to a dull yielding-over her forces (as the nature of music is to do), he took up his harp and sang these few verses ... The music added to the tale, and both fitted to such motions in her as now began to be awaked, did steal out of the fair eyes of Pamela some drop of tears; although with great constancy she would fain have overmastered at least the show of any such weakness.

(Ibid., p. 107)

Earlier, Pamela has found herself susceptible to Dorus's use of a tale about himself as a means of swaying her feelings - 'But no music could with righter accords possess her senses than every passion he expressed had his mutual working in her. Full well she is apt to receive belief, but hard to ground belief' (Ibid., p. 106). In the 1590 Arcadia, Amphialus similarly sees in music his best agent of persuasion,

Whatsoever could be imagined likely to please her, was with liberall diligence perfourmed: Musickes at her windowe, & especially such Musickes, as might (with dolefull embassage, call the mind to thinke of sorow, and thinke of it with sweetnes; with ditties so sensiblie expressing Amphialus case, that everie worde seemed to be but a diversifying of the name of Amphialus.

(Works, I, p. 381)

Amphialus also causes his 'love-divining dreame' to be 'song unto her (which he had seen the night before he fell in love with her) making a fine boy he had, accorde a prettie dolefulness unto it' (ibid., p. 394).

Sidney's interest in the moving power of music is

apparent from his reference to it as 'the most divine striker of the senses' (Apology, p. 122), and this is consonant with the humanistic belief in the benevolent 'effects' of music, its power of purifying and refining the minds of the auditors, and transporting them into higher levels of knowledge. This is in accordance with the ancient view of music, such as revealed in the celebration of the marvellous, 'ravishing' power of music which works on the animate and inanimate alike, in the mythological fables of Orpheus and Amphion (both mentioned by Sidney in the Apology²¹). Plato's Timaeus (35-6, 41-2), where he puts forward the view of the universe and subsequently the human soul as composed of harmonic intervals, furnished the foundation for a later musical philosophy. In the Republic (III, 398E ff.) the Dorian and Phrygian modes were allowed to be retained by the guardians of the Republic because 'the Dorian mode alone of tunes seems to act, while the Phrygian makes men enthusiastic'²². The power of music for moral reformation was recognized by Plato. Aristotle introduced the concept of music, rhythm and melody, as 'imitations of anger and gentleness, and also of courage and temperance, and of virtues and vices in general, which hardly fall short of the actual affections, as we know from our own experience, for in listening to such strains our souls undergo a change' (Politics, VIII, 5). The Pythagorean explanation of the physical universe in terms of harmony and number also emphasized the 'effects' of music. In the Renaissance,

²¹ It is noteworthy that both are regarded by Sidney as poets, which is a measure of the extent to which poetry took over the functions of music in the Renaissance.

²² Trans. Paul Shorey, Loeb edition.

there was the attempt to restore the 'effects' of the music of the Ancients, as embodied in the aims of the group known as 'the Camerata',²³ composed of poets, musicians and scholars such as Count Giovanni Bardi, Vincenzo Galilei, Doni, and others, active in Florence in the late sixteenth century. But what aroused Sidney's interest in exploring the relation between music and poetry was undoubtedly the precepts and experiments of the French Pleiade poets, whose works Sidney certainly knew of. As Frances Yates tells us²⁴, 'In the opening words of the Statutes of Baif's Academy there is laid down a certain artistic aim, namely the revival of poetry and music "measured" together after the fashion of the ancients' and 'these artistic labours are undertaken, not for art's sake alone, but for certain effects which are expected of them.' For that purpose, Baif advocated the composition of classically 'measured' songs in which the quantities of the syllables are carefully made to correspond with the value of the notes of music; and Ronsard likewise called for a closer union of poetry and music in laying down rules for the establishment of the New Poetry, although he did not go so far as a complete abandonment of rhyme and accent for quantity. In Sidney, apart from the fact that in the Arcadia, all the lyrics are described as being set to music, the close association of poetry and music is

²³ See the account of 'the Camerata' in G.L. Finney's work, Musical Backgrounds for English Literature: 1580-1650 (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1962), Chapter VI, 'Musical Humanism: An Anti-Pythagorean Cross-current,'.

²⁴ In her work The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century (London, 1947), Chapter III, 'The Measured Poetry and Music,'.

manifested by his statement that

... he (the poet) cometh to you with words
set in delightful proportions, either
accompanied with, or prepared for, the well
enchanting skill of music;

(Apology, p. 113)

It is in the light of this deep interest in the relation between poetry and music of Renaissance poets that we can comprehend the full significance of Sidney's experiments in classical quantitative hexameters, which are too often dismissed as freakish and futile undertakings; and Sidney's contribution to the founding of the English metre. In the Apology, Sidney opposes 'forcible quality' to 'measured quantity', and the meaning of 'quality' is left unclear. I am inclined to believe that by 'quality', Sidney does not mean 'accent' as it is tempting to assume, but rather the degree of the imaginative appeal of each word - its tone and colour and form which has a direct impact on our minds. For it is noted that when Sidney wishes to talk about 'accent', he uses the word 'accent', and 'quality' is used in connection with 'forcibleness' or 'energia', which has to do with the cargo of meaning carried by words rather than with 'stress' or 'accent'. Ficino, in the philosophical distinction he makes between poetry and music²⁵, contends that 'poetry is superior to music, since through the words it speaks not only to the ear but also directly to the mind.' By 'quality', Sidney might well have in mind this 'intelligible', as distinguished from the 'audible',

²⁵ See Frances Yates, op. cit., p. 40.

quality or dimension of language. Sidney's perception of these two distinguishable aspects of poetry or language in general is revealed by the following passage,

For if 'oratio' next to 'ratio', speech next to reason, be the greatest gift bestowed upon mortality, that cannot be praiseless which doth most polish that blessing of speech; which considers each word, not only (as a man may say) by his forcible quality, but by his best measured quantity, carrying even in themselves a harmony——without, perchance, number, measure, order, proportion be in our time grown odious.

(Apology, p. 122)

Sidney employs a number of words to designate this 'auditory' aspect of language or poetry - 'number, measure, order, proportion'. 'Number' refers to the number of syllables; and by 'measure' or 'proportion', which are roughly synonymous, Sidney designates the length or duration of the syllables. Sidney is aware that it is these 'auditory' ingredients of the language which make poetry 'the only fit speech for Music'. For, if, as C.S. Lewis declares²⁶, Sidney understood the importance of 'accent' for English prosody better than all of his contemporaries, that is to a large extent due to the fact that he has a sensitive ear for its 'proportion' or 'quantity'. Similarly Tasso, in considering the function and components of language, says that

²⁶ In English Literature in the Sixteenth Century—excluding drama (Cambridge, 1954).

Words are therefore images of images and should resemble them; and although the concept, which is almost interior speech, is born on the instant, words in contrast take some time to pronounce; and since time is measure, measure too has to be considered in words.

It follows then that three conditions come together in what we call the form of speech: words (almost like matter that is to receive the form), measure, and concept or thought as we may call it.

(Discourses, p. 131)

The statement that 'since time is measure, measure too has to be considered in words' crystallizes the perception that poetry, unlike painting, is a 'temporal' rather than 'spatial' medium, just as Leonardo has made a similar point that painting is superior to poetry because description in words take place successively in time whereas 'painting presents its subject to us in an instant through the sense of sight'²⁷. It is in this respect that poetry most resembles music, that the poet is necessarily concerned with 'not speaking (table talk fashion or like men in a dream) words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but peizing each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject' (Apology, p. 103). This 'musical' property of language, the necessity of 'peizing each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject' presents a crucial factor that has to be brought into consideration in the experiments for a New Poetry.

²⁷ A view that looks forward to Lessing's demarcation of the boundary between poetry and painting in his Lapkeon, written in the middle of the eighteenth century.

We are in a better position to understand now the motives behind Sidney's introduction of classical metres into English poetry, or the parallel experiments of the French Pleiade poets. Sidney played a conspicuous part in subjecting English poetry to the laws of classical Latin versification²⁸, and Spenser, in his letter to Harvey (1579-80), made the well-known reference to the founding of an 'areopagus', for the 'general surceasing and silence of balde Rymers, and also of the verie best to: in steade whereof, they haue, by authoritie of their whole Senate, prescribed certaine Lawes and rules of Quantities of English sillables for Englishe Verse, hauing had thereof already greate practise, and drawen mee to their faction.'²⁹ The leaders in question, 'they', refer to 'the two worthy Gentlemen, Master Sidney and Master Dyer'. Classicists like Ascham, in the general rehabilitation of ancient letters, advocated the abolition of 'rude beggarly rhyming, brought into Italie by Gothes and Hunnes, whan all good verses and all good learning to, were destroyed by them: and after caryed into France and Germanie: and at last receyued into England by men of excellent wit in deede, but of small learning, and less iudgement in that behalfe.'³⁰ Without going into the question of how far Sidney was motivated

²⁸ For a more detailed account of experiments in the establishment of the new versification, see Prof. G.L. Hendrickson's article, 'Elizabethan Quantitative Hexameters,' PQ, XXVIII (1949), 237-260.

²⁹ See the 'Spenser-Harvey Correspondence. 1579-80', in Elizabethan Critical Essays (London, 1937), ed. G.G. Smith, p. 89.

³⁰ Ascham, The Scholemaster, ed. cit., p. 289.

by 'purist' intentions as such, that Sidney was deeply involved in this movement can be seen from repeated references in the Spenser-Harvey correspondence to activities of the Sidneian circle in this direction. Both of them showed enthusiasm for the 'Rules and Precepts of Arte ... which M. Drant deuised, but enlarged with M. Sidney's own iudgement',³¹ 'M. Drant' being Thomas Drant, Archdeacon of Lewes, a well-known champion of the use of Latin quantitative metres for English poetry and remembered for being the first to translate into English Horace's De Arte Poetica. As William Ringler points out³², Sidney's observations on the experiments for the new prosody can be found in three places: 1) in the Apology, 2) in the cancelled version of the ending to the First Eclogues, in the Jesus manuscript of the Old Arcadia, where we can find the dispute between Dicus and Lalus over the relative merit of using quantitative metres or accentual ones, 3) 'Nota', or some specific instructions for determining the quantity of English syllables which can be found in the Huntington MS 116 of the Old Arcadia, or rather, the St. John's College manuscript, Cambridge 308, whose text represents Sidney's final revision of that version. From these sources, we can derive Sidney's full views on the quantitative measures; and the significance of all these probings and speculations for the establishment of the English prosody.

As Sidney's 'Nota' in the margin of the St. John's

³¹ In Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. cit., p. 99. See also p. 102.

³² In his article, 'Master Drant's Rule,' PQ, XXIX (1950), 70-74.

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College indicates, the most obvious result of these quantitative verses is definitely the impetus they provided for determining the 'length' of English syllables, in differentiation from Latin syllables, in rules such as 'Consonant before consonant always long, except a mute and a liquid ('as refrain'), such indifferent', or 'Single consonants commonly short, but such as have a double sound (as 'lack', 'will', 'till') or such as the vowel before doth produce long (as 'hate', 'debate').'³³ The contribution of this towards the better undersnading of native speech characteristics is self evident. The consideration of the relative merits of the two rival systems of versification - 'measured' or 'rhyming', also contributed to the discovery of the best mode of metrical organization of the language that can best produce the 'effects' of moving to virtuous action, which is supposed to be the end of poetry. For as Sidney has said, although it is true that verse is only an 'apparel', 'being but an ornament and no cause to Poetry, since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets', nevertheless 'the senate of poets hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment, meaning, as in matter they passed all in all, so in manner to go beyond them' (Apology, p. 103). The claims of the 'measured' mode of writing poetry are urged by Dicus in the passage that follows,

Dicus said that since verses had their

³³ See The Courtess of Fembroke's Arcadia, ed. cit., pp. 80-81.

chief ornament, if not end, in music, those which were just appropriated to music did best obtain their end, or at least were the most adorned; but those must needs most agree with music, since music standing principally upon the sound and the quantity, to answer the sound they brought words, and to answer the quantity they brought measure. So that for every semibreve or minim, it had his syllable matched unto it with a long foot or a short foot, whereon they drew on certain names (as dactylus, spondeus, trocheus, etc.), and without wresting the word did as it were kindly accompany the time, so that either by the time a poet should straight know how every word should be measured unto it, or by verse as soon find out the full quantity of the music. Besides that it hath in itself a kind (as a man may well call it) of secret music, since by the measure one may perceive some verses running with a high note fit for great matters, some with a light foot fit for no greater than amorous conceits. 'Where,' said he, 'those rhymes we commonly use, observing nothing but the number of syllables, as to make it of eight, ten, or twelve feet 'saving perchance that some have some care of the accent), the music, finding it confused, is forced sometimes to make a quaver of that which is rough and heavy in the mouth, and at another time to hold up in a long that which, being perchance but a light vowel, would be gone with a breath; and for all this comes at length a hink, tink, blirum and lirum, for a rhyming recompense, much like them that, having not skill to dance (proportioning either slowly or swiftly his foot according to his ear), will yet for fellowship clap his feet together to make a noise. And this is the cause we have such hives full of rhyming poets, more than ever there were owls at Athens, where of the other there were but few in all ages come to our hands, but they dearly esteemed.'

(*ibid.*, p. 89)

From the above account it can be seen that 'measured'

poetry is advocated because it can best produce the 'effects' of music - 'more fit for music, both words and time observing quantity, and more fit lively to express divers passions, by the low or lofty sound of the well-weighed syllable' (Apology, p. 140). The observation of 'quantity' is a means of making poetry reproduce the effects of music; and the restoration of the 'ancient' kind of versifying is of a piece with the attempt to restore the music of the Ancients of Baif's Academy. On the other hand, the 'modern' kind of versifying, 'observing only number (with some regard of the accent), the chief life of its tandeth in like sounding of the words, which we call rhyme' is granted to have the following advantages,

Lalus on the other side would have denied his first proposition, and said that since music brought a measured quantity with it, therefore the words less needed it, but as music brought time and measure, so these verses brought words and rhyme, which were four beauties for the other three. And yet to deny further the strength of his speech, he said Dicus did much abuse the dignity of poetry to apply it to music, since rather music is a servant to poetry, for by the one the ear only, by the other the mind, was pleased. And therefore what doth most adorn words, levelled within a proportion of number, to that music must be implied; which if it cannot do it well it is the musician's fault and not the poet's, since the poet is to look but to beautify his words to the most delight, which no doubt is more had by the rhyme, especially to common ears to which the poet doth most direct his studies, and therefore is called the popular philosopher. And yet in this the finest judgement shall have more pleasure, since he that rhymes observes something the measure but much the rhyme, whereas the other attends only measure without all respect of

rhyme; besides the accent which the rhymers regardeth; of which the former hath little or none. 'And therefore', said Lalus, 'meseems rather like those kind of poets are such manner dancers which, not binding them to return to one cadence, are ever kicking of their heels, and leave the pleasant observation of the chief cause. And where by the number of our kind you object too much facility, although easily no fault, yet they that will bind themselves to rhyme as the Tuscan and Arcadian shepherds do, you shall not find them so thick. And for the few of the other kind, the cause is that many did write, but few wrote well, and therefore few lasted to the posterity; and the same no doubt will fall to a great number of rhymes, which die as soon as they are born, and few remain to come out of wardship.'

(ibid., pp. 89-90)

The statement that 'music is a servant to poetry, for by the one the ear only, by the other the mind, was pleased' is an unmistakable echo of the Ficinian distinction between poetry and music, already mentioned. Although the debate between Dicus and Lalus in the Old Arcadia is deliberately left open; and Sidney concluded in the Apology that 'English, before any other vulgar language I know, is fit for both sorts', the 'accentual' metres were ultimately to carry the day in Sidney's own poetic practice and in Elizabethan poetry in general. The reasons for this are not difficult to guess. For it is this 'rhyming' mode of versification that takes into account all the possibilities of the language - 'these verses brought words and rhyme, which are four beauties for the other three.' This mode of versification, which is independent of music, presses into service all the resources of the native speech. Here we can see that Sidney reached the perception that the poet is primarily

concerned with words, and that there is a difference in kind between music as it is (with words set to it), and the music of poetry - 'since the poet is to look but to beautify his words to the most delight, which no doubt is more had by the rhyme, especially to common ears to which the poet most direct his studies'. It is very likely that influenced by the opinions of fellow members of the hypothetical 'academy', the 'Areopagus', who advocated the use of Latin quantitative measures and the programme of the French Pleiade poets to effect a closer connection between poetry and music, Sidney hesitated to give first place to this latter 'modern' mode of versification. Yet in the theory advanced by Lalus, we can see seeds of the later victory of 'accentual' verses.

Significantly, both the 'Nota' and the controversy between Dicus and Lalus, though later cancelled, are appended to the Old Arcadia, which is a sure indication of Sidney's preoccupation with these burning poetical issues of the day, and his interest in metrical experiments. Having thoroughly investigated the delicate relation between poetry and music through his experiments in quantitative hexameters, perceiving at the same time the fundamental difference between the two, Sidney was able to bend his energies in the Arcadian poems towards the creation of a new kind of poetry, an unprecedented kind of poetry that would justify his claims that 'our language giveth us great occasion, being indeed capable of any excellent exercise of it' (Apology, p. 140). For, as John Thompson has admirably put it, 'In Sidney's poetry the metrical system of modern English reaches perfection for the first time. Everything that has been fragmentary before is fully realized. The technical

details of the relation of language to the metrical pattern are settled in the form they were for centuries to keep (or consciously to depart from), in poem after poem so fluent that the achievement seems effortless'.³⁴ The poems of the Arcadia are distinguished by the minute precision and technical meticulousness with which Sidney attended to their composition. Quoting Thompson again, the achievement of the Arcadian poems lies in the fact that 'Sidney brings to perfection the exact, regular correspondence of features of the language to the same features in the metrical pattern.' In other words, there is a complete satisfaction of all the formal requirements of the metre which Sidney adopts, and a perfect marriage of native speech characteristics to the exigencies of the metre. Convention is most fruitfully utilized; so that what emerges is a beautifully constructed piece of verbal artifact which brings the possibilities of the English language to new levels. Of this, the following examples serve as apt illustrations:

Up, up Philisides, let sorrowes goe,
Who yelds to woe, doth but encrease his smart.
Do not thy hart, to plaintfull custome bring,
But let us sing, sweet tunes do passions
ease,
An olde man heare, who would thy fancies
raise.
(Poems, p. 22)

Dorus, tell me, where is thy wonted motion
To make these woodes resounde thy lamentation?
Thy sainte is dead, or dead is thy devotion.
For who doth holde his love in estimation,
To witnes, that he thinkes his thoughts
 delicious,
Seekes to make ech thing badge of his sweet

of the potentialities and capabilities of the English language to the full.

Apart from the metrical brilliance, the poems of the Arcadia are important in yet another way. They also fine demonstrations of Sidney's rhetorical genius, which is evidenced by the fact that both Abraham Fraunce and John Hoskyns used the Arcadia as a source of illustrative materials for their respective rhetorical manuals, The Arcadian Rhetorike (1588) and Direcccons for Speech and Style (1599). There is no question that Sidney was a zealous student of rhetoric; for apart from the fact that rhetorical handbooks such as Erasmus' De Copia was used at schools, public oratory and declamation gained greater importance in Elizabethan life than in the Middle Ages, as religion and politics became the burning questions. The internal evidence of the Arcadia also shows that Sidney took a lively interest in oratory, the finest example of this being the description of Zelmane's oratorical skill and thorough knowledge of the art of persuasion in the episode of the commoners' riot in Book II of the New Arcadia. The Apology, as has been noted already, is constructed in the form of a classical oration; and so are some of the speeches in the Arcadia, notably the dispute between Musidorus and Pyrocles, the one inveighing against women, the other defending them (New Arcadia, Book I, chap. 12). Interstudded in the prose narrative are frequent references to the Orator as the following ones. In delineating the pathos of Parthenia's refusal to marry Argalus, Sidney digresses to say that

Truely Sir, a very good Orator might have a fayre field to use eloquence in, if he did but onely repeate the lamentable, and truely affectionated speeches, while he

conjured her ...

(Works, I, p. 35)

and in brief asides such as the statement that

It were the part of a verie idle Orator
to set forth the humbers of wel-devised honors
done unto them: ...

(ibid., p. 205)

Yet what is most important for our purpose is Sidney's expressive use of rhetoric, both in prose and in poetry, as a means of communicating meaning. The Arcadia is richly overlaid with rhetorical schemes and figures throughout; and I wish to demonstrate in the following chapter that these rhetorical devices are not merely ornaments and serve a decorative purpose only, but act as a functional principle of organization and safe conductors of the poet's thoughts and feelings. They are manipulated by Sidney to create a truly sufficient and energetic 'language of imitation'.

CHAPTER FOUR THE LANGUAGE OF IMITATION

In considering the poetic achievement of Astrophil and Stella, it is fruitful to adopt as a guide to the understanding of the sequence the remark made by Touchstone in As You Like It (Act III, scene iii), about the nature of the 'poetical': 'truly, for the truest poetry is the most feigning'. In the brief, jesting exchange between the simple-minded, enquiring Audrey and the quibbling, equivocating Touchstone we find one of the most intriguing, thought-provoking linking of the poet and the lover, the writing of poetry with the art of feigning in Elizabethan literature.

The aptness of this remark as a preamble to a discussion of the sequence is demonstrated by the fact that the connection is hinted in the very first line of Astrophil and Stella, 'Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show'. The discussion in this chapter proposes to demonstrate that Sidney believed, as much as Touchstone, that 'the truest poetry is the most feigning', among other things, and an understanding of the art of 'feigning' in Astrophil and Stella lays central to the understanding of the poetic theory and practice of Sidney. 'Full, material, circumstantial' are the descriptive epithets applied by Lamb to the sequence, and these testify to the vividness and realism which characterize the sequence, and which have long led critics of Sidney to fuse and confuse literature and life, fiction and fact in their indefatigable dissection of the biographical problem of Astrophil

In Astrophil and Stella, we find Sidney denouncing the artificiality of contemporary love-lyricists in exactly the same way.

Some lovers speake when they their Muses
entertaine,
Of hopes begot by feare, of wot not what
desires:
Of force of heav'nly beames, infusing
hellish paine:
Of living deaths, deare wounds, faire
stormes and freesing
fires:

Some one his song in Iove, and Iove's
 strange tales attires,
 Broadred with buls and swans, powdred with
 golden raine:
 Another humbler wit to shepheard's pipe
 retires,
 Yet hiding royall bloud full oft in rurall
 vaine.

To some a sweetest plaint, a sweetest
 stile affords,
 While teares powre out his inke, and sighs
 breath out his words:
 His paper, pale dispaire, and paine his own
 doth move,
 (Sonnet 6)

In fact, we find in Astrophil and Stella professions of true love intertwined with the repudiation of the conventional decorations and embellishments of style to such an extent that the plain style is virtually identified and canonized as the poetic style most capable of 'moving' the lover's mistress and portraying the truth of his emotions.

For me in sooth, no Muse but one I know.
Phrases and Problems from my reach do grow,
And strange things cost too deare for my poore
sprites.
How then? even thus: in Stella's face I
read,

Striving abroad a foraging to go,
 Until by your inspiring I might know,
 How their blacke banner might be best
 staid,
 displaid.
 But now I meane no more your helpe to trie,
 Nor other sugring of my speech to prove,
 But on her name incessantly to crie:
 For let me but name her whom I do love,
 So sweete sounds straight mine eare and
 heart do hit,
 That I well find no eloquence like it.

Similarly in Sonnet 74, we find an open avowal
 of the apostleship in the plain style,

I never drank of Aganippe well,
 Nor ever did in shade of Tempe sit:
 And Muses scorne with vulgar braines to
 dwell,
 Poore Layman I, fo sacred rites unfit.
 Some do I heare of Poets' furie tell,
 But (God wot) wot not what they meane by it:
 And this I sweare by blackest brooke of hell,
 I am no pick-purse of another's wit.
 How falles it then, that with so smooth an
 ease
 My thoughts I speake, and what I speake doth
 flow
 In verse, and that my verse best wits doth
 please?
 Guess we the cause: 'What, is it thus?' Fie no:
 'Or so?' Much lesse: 'How then?' Sure thus
 it is:
 My lips are sweet, inspired with Stella's
 kisse.

The 'literary sonnets' of Astrophil and Stella
 furnish abundant verbal echoes of Sidney's invective
 against the abuses of the ornate style in the Apology,
 which a comparison of the above examples with the
 text of the following passage from the Apology will
 immediately make apparent,

So is that honey-flowing matron eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation: one time with so far-fetched words, that may seem monsters, but must seem strangers, to any poore Englishman; another time with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a dictionary; another time with figures and flowers extremely winter-starved. But I would this fault were peculiar to versifiers, and had not as large possession among prose-printers, and (which is to be marvelled) among many scholars, and (which is to be pitied) among some preachers. Truly I could wish, if at least I might be so bold to wish in a thing beyond the reach of capacity, the diligent imitators of Tully and Demosthenes (most worthy to be imitated) and did not so much keep Nizolian paper-books of their figures and phrases, as by attractive translation (as it were) devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For now they cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is served to the table. Like those Indians, not content to waer earrings at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine.

(p. 138)

To appreciate fully the significance of Sidney's espousal of the 'art of plainness' in Astrophil and Stella, it is important to bear in mind that one of the dominant literary tendencies in the sixteenth century was the cultivation of 'eloquence', richness and 'copie' fo style, as exemplified by Erasmus' treatise On Copia of Words and Things (1511), dedicated to John Colet for use in St. Paul's School. As has been noted in the preceding chapter, in the words of R.R. Bolgar in Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries (Cambridge, 1954),

The 'De Copia' has not been accorded the importance it deserves. It provides us in a sense with a clue to the whole of Humanism. Specifying the techniques on which imitation depended, it makes clear what men were attempting not only in Latin, but also in the vernacular...

If we want to trace how the Humanist practice of imitation affected creative writing, if we want to go behind the scene and cast an eye on the mechanism of the process ... our best guide is Erasmus ... The 'De Copia' outlines his method. 'The Adages' presents us with the fruits of that method ... And finally 'the Colloquies' and 'The Praise of² Folly' shows us the finished product.

Suggested to Erasmus by a passage in Quintilian's Institutio Oratore, Book Ten, which in turn was based on a similar phrase in Cicero's De Oratore, Book Three, 'De Copia' set the artistic ideal for the century that writers must strive for 'copie', which Erasmus' modern translators render as 'variation, abundance or richness, eloquence, and the ability to vary or enrich language and thought'³. Erasmus deserves special mention at this juncture of our study of Sidney for the importance he attached to the choice of the appropriate diction as an end in itself, for 'just as the fine appearance and dignity of the body are either set off to advantage or disfigured by dress and habit, just so thought is by words. Accordingly, they err greatly who think that it matters nothing in what words

² P. 273. Referred to in Herbert D. Rix's introduction to On Copia of Words and Things (Milwaukee, 1963).

³ Op. cit. (see Note 3, Chapter Three).

something is expressed, provided only it is in some way understandable.' The above-quoted passage from the Apology is replete, in fact, with innuendoes and references to contemporary literary practices which came to a head at the time Sidney was writing, the more often than not slavish imitation of Cicero ('the diligent imitators of Tully and Demosthenes (most worthy to be imitated) did not so much keep, Nizolian paper-books of their figures and phrases, as by attentive translation (as it were) devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs'), and widespread use of rhetorical devices as a means of the enhancement and 'exornation' of style ('figures and flowers extremely winter-starved'). Abundant evidence from sixteenth century texts testifies to the predominance of this tendency towards the 'sugring' of speech, the lavish use of stylistic ornaments - 'pied flowers', 'phrases fine', 'new found Tropes', 'strange similies', 'sweetest stile' and 'choisest flowers my speech to engarland so' as a positive merit, and a standard of excellence which writers should aim at achieving. The prevalence of such terms in Francis Meres' Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury (1598), albeit a mundane and pedestrian collection of commonplaces and remarks regarding contemporary writers, is a good illustration of this tendency,

As Eloquence hath found many preachers
and orators worthy fauorers of her in the
English tounge: so her sister poetry hath
found the like welcome and entertainment
giuen her by our English poets, which makes
our language so gorgeous & delectable
among us.

(p. 67)

As the Greeke tongue is made famous
and eloquent by Homer, Hesiod, Euripides,
Aeschylus, Sophocles, Pindarus, Phocylides
and Aristophanes; and the Latine tongue
by Virgill, Ouid, Horace, Silius Italicus,
Lucanus, Lucretius, Ausonius and Clau
dianus: so the English tongue is mightily
enriched, and gorgeouslylie inuested in
rare ornaments and resplendent abiliments
by Sir Philip Sidney, Spence, Daniel,
Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlowe and
Chapman.

(p. 73)

As the soule of Euphorbus was thought
to liue in Pythagoras: so the sweete wittie
soule of Ouid liues in mellifluous and hony-
tongued Shakespeare, witnes his Venus and
Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugred Sonnets
among his priuate frends, &c.

As Epiu Stolo said, that the Muses would
speake with Plautus tongue, if they would
speake Latin: so I say that the Muses would
speak with Shakespeares fine⁴filed phrase,
if they would speak English.

(p. 76)

In order to see this movement in the correct
historical perspective, we have to turn to Bacon who,
writing with the benefit of hindsight in the century
that followed, was able to analyse the causes and
summarize the situation in the following manner,

So that these four causes concurring, the
admiration of ancient authors, the hate of
the schoolman, the exact study of languages,
and the efficacy of preaching, did bring in
an affectionate study of eloquence and
copie of speech, which then began to flourish.
This grew steadily to an excess; for men
began to hunt more after words than matter;

⁴ See Francis Meres's Treatise "Poetrie", ed. D.C.
Allen, University of Illinois Studies in Language
and Literature, XVI, 3-4 (Urbana, Ill., 1933).

and more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of the matter, worth of subject, soundness of judgement, life of invention, or depth of judgement. Then grew the flowing and watery vein of Osroius, the Portugal bishop, to be in price. Then did Sturmius spend such infinite and curious pains upon Cicero the orator and Hermogenes the rhetorician, besides his own books of periods and imitation and the like. Then did Car of Cambridge, and Ascham, with their lectures and writings, almost deify Cicero and Demosthenes, and allure all young men that were students into that delicate and polished kind of learning. Then did Erasmus take occasion to make the scoffing echo; 'Decem annos consumpsi legendo Cicerone', (I have spent ten years in reading Cicero:) and the echo answered in Greek, 'one, Asine'. Then grew the learning of the schoolmen to be utterly despised as barbarous. In sum, the whole inclination and bent of those times was rather towards cope than weight.

It was in reaction against these abuses of Ciceronian imitation, the tendency to imitate the merely formal characteristics, and to neglect thoughtful matter in favour of commonplace formulas, meretricious figures and schemes culled from one's reading, that the same adocate of 'copia', Erasmus, was led to present in the Ciceronian Nosoponus a scathing analysis of the Italianate Ciceronian

⁵ See Bacon, Works, ed. cit., III, pp. 283-84.

imitator⁶. Similarly, Gabriel Harvey, in his oration before the students of Cambridge, Ciceronianus (1577), a work mainly of Ramist inspiration, urged a much closer union of thought and language, meaning and expression in his exposition of true Ciceronian eloquence⁷. Sidney belonged firmly to this tradition of pressing a return to greater 'purity', and more thoughtful use of language in satirising the excesses of contemporary poets in his sonnets ('Or with strange simillies emrich each line,/Of herbes or beasts, which Inde or Afrike hold', Sonnet 3), and in the Apology,

How well store of 'similiter cadences'
doth sound with the gravity of the pulpit,
I would but invoke Demosthenes' soul to
tell, who with a rare daintiness useth
them.

(p. 138)

Now for similitudes in certain printed
discourses, I think all herb~~ar~~ists, all
stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes are
rifled up, that they come in multitudes
to wait upon any of our conceits; which
certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the
ears as is possible: ...

(p. 139)

⁶ In Ciceronianus, or A Dialogue on the Best Style of Writing, trans. by Izora Scott in Controversies Over the Imitation of Cicero as a Model for Style and some phases of their influence on the schools of Renaissance (New York, 1910).

⁷ See Gabriel Harvey's Ciceronianus, introd. by Harold S. Wilson and trans. by Clarence A. Forbes, in University of Nebraska Studies in the Humanities No. 4 (Nov., 1945).

Sidney's contribution to the 'purification' of the English language in this respect scarcely escaped notice, and was in fact the subject of praise in Drayton's elegy To my most Dearely-Loved Friend Henry Reynolds Esquire, of Poets and Poesie (1627)⁸,

The noble Sidney, with this first arose,
That Heroe for numbers, and for prose.
That thoroughly pac'd our language as to show,
The plenteous English hand in hand might goe
With Greeke and Latine, and did first reduce
Our tongue with Lillies writing then in use;
Talking of Stones, Stars, Plants, of fishes,
Flyes,
Playing with words, and idle Similies,
As th'English, Apes and very Zanies be
Of every thing, that they doe heare and see,
So imitating his ridiculous tricks,
They spake and writ, all like meere
lunatiques.

Set against this background, the 'literary sonnets' of Astrophil and Stella acquire special significance for providing the key to understanding 'the art of imitation' in Sidney's poetry. For as a clear break from the first sonnet cycle of the Elizabethan period, the work that has gained mention almost always in Elizabethan literary history as a precursor to the greater works to follow, Thomas Watson's Hecatompethia (1582), Sidney's poems are marked by an unequivocal declaration of sincerity and truthfulness, expressing itself in the condemnation and discarding of the traditional, Petrarchan conventions and stylistic devices, which is affirmed and re-affirmed in one sonnet after another. What the poet appears to be

⁸ See The Works of Michael Drayton, ed. J. William Hebel (Oxford, 1932), III, p. 228.

saying seems to be that the force of his emotions is so great, his concern with the 'moving' of his mistress to a benevolent understanding of his case is so immediate that he can ill afford to rely on the conventional phrases and 'conceits' of his contemporaries. To body forth his emotions in as forceful and 'energetic' a manner as possible, the lover-poet is driven to the creation of a new poetic voice, a new mode of expression that is capable of portraying in an lovely and realistic a way as possible the extremity of his feelings. The 'artistic programme' proclaimed in the 'literary sonnets' could hardly fail to elicit critical comment, and as Robert L. Montgomery points out, 'the Defence is echoed in a number of sonnets in Astrophil and Stella which argue against conventional devices in lyric ornament and urge a plainer, more direct style, and had the sequence carried out this program with utter and obvious fidelity to its new principles, the work of the critic would be simpler than it is. Perhaps, indeed, criticism would be unnecessary.'⁹ It is significant that Astrophil and Stella does not abandon the devices familiar in the Arcadia poems, and while the sequence does speak with a different voice, it does not represent the sharp, absolute break with ornateness that some of its own poems would suggest'¹⁰.

⁹ In Symmetry and Sense (Austen, Texas, 1961), Chapter 5, 'The Theory of Artless Style,', p. 64.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

Perhaps the declarations of Sidney himself, as a critic and a defender of the noble aims of poetry in Apology, afford the most illuminating clues to the apparent contradictions in his 'artistic programme' as revealed in the literary sonnets of Astrophil and Stella. The 'end of speech', according to Sidney, is 'the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the mind' (Apology, p. 140). Where style is concerned, Sidney was a typical representative of the disciples of the Renaissance artistic doctrine of 'Follow Nature', as shown in the following discussion of the comparative merits of 'courtiers' and 'professors of learning' in the art of writing,

Undoubtedly (at least to my opinion undoubtedly) I have found in divers smally learned courtiers a more sound style than in some professors of learning; of which I can guess no other cause, but that the courtier, following that which by practice he findeth fittest to nature, therein (though he know it not) doth according to art, though not by art: where the other, using art to show art, and not to hide art (as in these cases he should do), flieth from nature, and indeed abuseth art.

(Apology, p. 139)

Accordingly, we find Sidney experimenting with rhythm and language in Astrophil and Stella to create a poetic art which is 'fittest to nature', which is characterized by a 'plain sensibleness' which Sidney believed would best commend itself to the readers. Seen in this

context, Sidney's attitude towards the use of rhetorical ornament was not one of complete abandonment but rather one of highly discriminate application, as revealed in the following commentary on the ancient rhetoricians,

For my part, I do not doubt, when Antonius and Crassus, the great forefathers of Cicero in eloquence, the one (as Cicero testifieth of them) pretend not to know art, the other not to set by it, because with a plain sensibleness they might win credit of popular ears; which credit is the nearest step to persuasion; which persuasion is the chief mark of Oratory—I do not doubt (I say) but that they used these tracks very sparingly; which, who doth generally use, any man may see doth dance to his own music, and so be noted by the audience more careful to speak curiously than to speak truly.

(Apology, p. 140)

Sidney's poetry fully demonstrated the putting into practice of the poetic theory he eloquently expounded in the Apology: the adoption of a plainer, more direct style, the open avowal of the intention to 'speak truly' rather than 'curiously' and the fashioning of a poetic art which is 'fittest to nature'. To this end, a wide array of rhetorical devices was enlisted to enhance the 'forcibleness', or 'energia' (in Sidney's own words), of the poetry. The rhetorical devices in Sidney were never used as an end in themselves (as Sidney himself had warned against the excessive practices of his contemporary

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So that I cannot chuse but write my
mind,
And cannot chuse but put out what I
write,
While those poore babes their death in
birth do find:
And now my pen these lines had dashed
quite.

But what is most interesting apart from the dexterous application of the figure 'gradatio' is the verbal pattern, the subtle word-play and antithesis set up in the verses, as in the lines

Stella, the onely Planet of my light,
Light of my life, and life of my desire.

Wherein the word 'light' undergoes a subtle, verbal transmogrification from the more general, expansive sense of 'light' as 'sphere' to the concrete evocation of 'light' as 'light' in line 2, gliding through the repetition of 'life' to the heavy, thudding end of the line in 'desire'. In this way, the descent of the image of Stella in the poet's mind from the plane of the ethereal to that of the fleshly is complete. In a similar fashion, Sidney puns on the word 'rich/Rich' in Sonnets 24 and 37; and the word 'touch' in Sonnet 9,

Queene Vertue's court, which some call
Stella's

made of 'touch' (basanite, a kind of glossy black stone which has the property of drawing straw¹²), whereby Astrophil, like a straw, is helplessly attracted to her. Astrophil is 'touched' by the vision of Stella's beauty, and as Max Putzel has pointed out in his study of this conceit, 'being touched can be a mystical and frustrating experience because Stella's virtue forbids Astrophil to touch her'. The mingling of senses, however, does not stop here but evokes further analogies: 'touch' is also the 'touchstone' by which the 'metal/ mettle' of Astrophil's character (like gold and silver) are to be tested. Another example of this type of verbal conceit is the following line from Sonnet 36,

My forces razde, thy banners raised
within:

where what is amazing is not just the skilful combination of the rhetorical figures 'antanaclasis' and 'antitheton' but the startling antithetical effect achieved in the 'razde-raised' conceit. As many a critic has commented on, Sidney's verses abound in the use of figures of 'repetitio' and in these figures of repetition ('anaphora', 'epizeuxis', 'anadiplosis', 'epanalepsis' and 'translatio',

¹² See Ringler's explanatory note on Sonnet 9 (Works, pp. 463-64).

etc.), Sidney achieves subtle variations of meaning, instils irony, wit and surprise and infuses his verses with a compelling vigour, that very same quality of 'forcibleness' or 'energia' which he pontificates on in the Apology. A good example of this is Sonnet 5, in which Sidney keeps turning on the phrase 'it is most true' and the word 'true', by means of which he drives home one of the central conflicts in the sequence, the conflict between the spiritual truth to which Astrophil ought to show undivided allegiance and his love for Stella which has become for him in itself a greater truth and a more powerful reality,

It is most true, that eyes are form'd
to serve
The inward light: and that the
heavenly part
Ought to be king, from whose rules who
do swerve,
Rebels to Nature, strive for their owne
smart.
It is most true, what we call Cupid's
dart,
An image is, which for our selves we
carve;
And, fooles, adore in temple of our
hart,
Till that good God make Church and
Churchman starve.
True, that true Beautie Vertue is
indeed,
Whereof this Beautie can be but a
shade,
Which elements with mortall mixture
breed:
True, that on earth we are but pilgrims
made,
And should in soule up to our countrey
Move:

True, and yet true that I must
Stella love.

The repetitive pattern is often finely married to the poet's tone of voice, so that by the repetition of a particular word or phrase Sidney manages to insinuate a whole attitude of mind, such as in the following examples, Sonnet 6, where Sidney satirizes the conventional stylistic practice of his contemporary love-lyricist,

To some a sweetest plaint, a sweetest
style affords,

and Sonnet 10, where the word 'heaven' takes on a definite sarcastic ring,

Or seeke heavn's course, or heavn's
inside to see:

Or the word is repeated each time with a slightly different shade of meaning, as in the following concluding couplet from Sonnet 11,

Reason thou kneel'dst, and offeredst
straight to prove
By reason good, good reason her to
love.

'Reason' in line 13 thereof is Reason personified, like the other abstractions similarly dealt with in the sequence; but 'reason' in 'by reason good' refers to 'reasoning'

verging on the point of becoming sophistry.
In Sonnet 34, Sidney likewise plays with the
word 'wit',

Peace, foolish wit, with wit my wit
is mard.

In other instances, such as the following,

I now have learn'd Love right, and
learn'd even so,
As who by being poisond doth poison
know.
(Sonnet 16)

Is constant Love deem'd there but
want of wit?
Are Beauties there as proud as here
they be?
Do they above love to be lov'd, and
yet
Those Lovers scorne whom that Love
doth possesse?
Do they call Vertue there ungrateful-
nesse?
(Sonnet 31)

Not thou by praise, but praise in
thee is raisde:
It is a praise to praise, when thou
art praisde.
(Sonnet 35)

In all these instances, the figures of
repetition (the use of 'plocce' in the line
'Peace, foolish wit, with wit my wit is mard',
'conduplicatio' and 'translatio' in 'I now
have learn'd Love right, and learn'd even so,/
As who by being poisond doth poison know' and

Far far too long to learne it
 without booke:
 What, a whole weeke without one
 peece of looke,
 And thinke I should not your large
 precepts misse?
 When I might reade those letters faire
 of blisse,
 Which in her face teach vertue, I
 could brooke
 Somewhat thy lead'n counsels, which
 I tooke
 As of a friend that meant not much
 amisse:
 But now that I, alas, do want her
 sight,
 What, dost thou thinke that I can ever
 take
 In thy cold stuffe a flegmatike
 delight?
 No Patience, if thou wilt my good,
 then make
 Her come, and heare with patience
 my desire,
 And then with patience bid me beare
 my fire.

and suffused with the wit that is character-
 istic of Sidney's more overtly 'intellectual'
 conceits. 'Desire', in Sonnet 72, is portrayed
 in an equally dramatic and playful way, which
 allures its reader to in an intellectual
 exercise in order to perceive the full
 significance,

Desire, though thou my old companion
 art,
 And oft so clings to my pure Love,
 that I
 One from the other scarcely can
 descrie,
 While each doth blow the fier of my
 hart;
 Now from thy fellowship I needs must
 part,
 Venus is taught with Dian's wings to

flie:
lie;
dart.

I must no more in thy sweet passions
Vertue's gold now must head my Cupid's

As shown in the above examples, Sidney's poetry is 'energetic' in the sense that nothing is trite or second-hand but thought out by the poet and charged with deep feelings; and so the 'conceits' in his poetry require a corresponding effort on the part of the reader to engage in the mental process leading to the finished product. The sonnets of Astrophil and Stella are pervaded by this quality, and in some of them we find the conceit developed into a kind of myth, as in the following,

Love borne in Greece, of late fled
from his native place,
Forc'd by a tedious prooffe, that
Turkish hardned
hart,
Is no fit marke to pierce with his
fine pointed dart:
And pleas'd with our soft peace, staid
here his flying race.
But finding these North clymes do
coldly him embrace,
Not usde to frozen clips, he strave
to find some part,
Where with most ease and warmth he
might employ his art:
At length he perch'd himself in Stella's
joyfull face,
Whose faire skin, beamy eyes, like
morning sun on snow,
Deceiv'd the quaking boy, who thought
from so pure light,
Effects of lively heat, must needs in
nature grow.
But she most faire, most cold, made him
thence take his flight

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To my close heart, where while some
firebrands he did lay,
He burnt unwares his wings, and
cannot fly away.
(Sonnet 8)

and in Sonnet 17,

His mother deare Cupid offended late,
Because that Mars, growne slacker
in her love,
With pricking shot he did not
thoroughly move,
To keepe the pace of their first
loving state.
The boy refusde for feare of Marse's
hate,
Who threatned stripes, if he his
wrath did prove:
But she in chafe him from her lap
did shove,
Brake bow, brake shafts, while Cupid
weeping sate:
Till that his grandame Nature pittying it,
Of Stella's browes made him two better
bowes,
And in her eyes of arrowes infinit.
O how for joy he leapes, o how he crowes,
And straight therwith, like wags new
got to play,
Fals to shrewd turnes, and I was in
his way.

and of course Sonnet 7,

When Nature made her chiefe worke,
Stella's eyes,
In colour blacke, why wrapt she beames
so bright?
Would she in beames blacke, like painter
wise,
Frame daintiest lustre, mixt of shades
and light?
Or did she else that sober hue devise,

In object best to knit and strength
 our sight,
 Least if no vaile those brave gleames
 did disguise,
 They sun-like should more dazle then
 delight?
 Or would she her miraculous power
 show,
 That whereas blacke seemes Beautie's
 contrary,
 She even in blacke doth make all
 beauties flow?
 Both so and thus, she minding Love
 should be
 Placed ever there, gave him this
 mourning weed,
 To honour all their deathes, who for
 her bleed.

In all these instances, Sidney composes a bit of narrative fiction and the classical motifs of the Runaway Cupid or the love and strife between Venus and Mars are utilized to portray in concrete terms the effects and operations of love - how carefree Astrophil came to be hopelessly caught, how in vain he struggled and how subdued. In Sonnet 7 the myth of Nature is devised to explain the incomparable beauties of Stella and in the following poem,

Flie, fly, my friends, I have my
 death wound; fly,
 See there that boy, that murthring boy
 I say,
 Who like a theefe, hid in darke bush
 doth ly,
 Till bloudie bullet get him wrongfull
 pray.
 So Tyran he no fitter place could
 spie,
 Nor so faire leuell in so secret stay,
 As that sweete blacke which vailles
 the heav'nly eye:
 There himselfe with his shot he close

doth lay.
 Poore passenger, passe now thereby
 I did,
 And staid pleas'd with the prospect of
 the place,
 While that blacke hue from me the bad
 guest hid:
 But straight I saw motions of lightning
 grace,
 And then descried the glistring of
 his dart:
 But ere I could flie from thence, it
 pierc'd my heart.
 (Sonnet 20)

Sidney gives dramatic expression to the well-known contemporary theory about the inception of love, that it is engendered by 'beams' like lightning emanating from the lady's eyes and striking the lover's heart. The dramatic effect is achieved by the skilful use of the figures 'epizeuxis', 'epanalepsis' and 'epitheton' to produce to sense of urgency in the opening lines.

Flie, fly, my friends, I have my
 death wound; fly,
 See there that boy, that murthring
 boy I say,

Indeed, 'energy' is perceived as deriving from scenes and situations that arise from the dramatic moment and Sidney in Astrophil and Stella is never tired of cultivating in his verses a sense of the vivid speaking voice. For instance, in Sonnet 34, Sidney employs the figure 'antipophora' to compose a piece of dramatic dialogue and dissects, through the progressive question and answer with a pretended interlocuter, the therapeutic effects

of writing love poetry on the lover.

Come let me write, 'And to what end?'
To ease
A burthned hart. 'How can words
ease, which are
The glasses of thy dayly vexing
care?'
Oft cruell fights well pictured forth
do please.
'Art not asham'd to publish thy
disease?'
Nay, that may breed my fame, it is
so rare!
'But will not wise men thinke thy
words fond ware?'
Then be they close, and so none shall
displease.
'What idler thing, then speake and
be not hard?'
What harder thing then smart, and not
to speak?
Peace, foolish wit, with wit my wit is
mard.
Thus write I while I doubt to write, and
wreake
My harmes on Ink's poore losse,
perhaps some find
Stella's great powrs, that so confuse
my mind.

Similarly, in Sonnet 54, by making use of the figures 'anaphora', 'interruptio' and 'epizeuxis' (in line 8) and 'antanaclasis' (in line 9) and 'brachylogia', 'asyndeton' in the concluding couplet, Sidney manages to create in his poetry the modulations and inflections of the human voice.

Because I breathe not love to everie
one,
Nor do not use set colours for to
weare,
Nor nourish speciall lockes of vowed
haire,

'place' in the succeeding clauses in lines 6 and 7.

For she protests to banish thee her
face,
Her face? O Love, a Rogue thou then
shouldst be,
If Love learne not alone to love and
see,
Without desire to feed of further grace.

In this way, Sidney's verses are never dull but enlivened by a sense of the vivid imaginative presence of the 'personified abstractions'. And in this intimate fashion, by way of the dramatic dialogue between the lover-poet and the deity Love, Sidney spells out the conflict between Love and Desire, with the mistress symbolising the School of Virtue standing in the middle. Sidney's ability to produce varied emotional effects by the skilful manipulation of figures of rhetoric is also seen in many instances, such as the following.

I might, unhappie word, o me, I might,
And then would not, or could not see
my blisse:
(Sonnet 33)

where the deep feeling of remorse and the sense of happiness missed is created by the use of the figure 'epanalepsis' in the repetition of 'I might' in line 1, and the use of 'asyndeton' whereby the line is broken up into short clauses as if by the ejaculation of strong feelings. In line 2, the sense of remorse and frustration is further strengthened by the repetition of the

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'would not' and 'could not'. Similarly, in line 8 of Sonnet 48, the sense of mounting passion is conveyed by the use of the figures 'asyndeton' and 'auxesis', or 'avancer', according to Puttenham,

O looke, o shine, o let me die
and see.

Line 2 of Sonnet 59 likewise furnishes a further example of a figure of repetition, 'epizeuxis', utilized to emphasize the sense of urgency and the intensity of the poet's feelings,

If he do love, I burne, I burne
in love!

In Sonnet 74, a combination of figures of repetition, 'parathesis',^{and} in the repetition of the same sound in words in close succession, 'epizeuxis', are utilized to satirize the near-to ridiculous poetical effects produced by Sidney's contemporary poets, who blindly imitated whatever was in vogue,

Some do I heare of Poets' furie
tell,
But (God wot) wot not what they meane
by it:

By the insertion of the phrase 'God wot', in parenthesis, as an aside to himself, Sidney slightly holds back the swift flow of the line but manages to highlight his scorn.

Doubt there hath bene, with his
 golden chaine
 The Oratour so farre men's harts
 doth bind,
 That no pace else their guided steps
 can find,
 But as he them more short or slacke doth
 raine,
 Whether with words his sovereignty he
 gaine,
 Cloth'd with fine tropes, with strong-
 est reasons
 lin'd,
 Or else pronouncing grace, wherewith
 his mind
 Prints his owne lively forme in rudest
 braine.
 Now judge by this: in piercing phrases
 late,
 Th'anatomy of all my woes I wrate,
 Stella's sweete breath the same to me did
 reed.
 O voice, o face, maugre my speech's
 might,
 Which wooed wo, most ravishing delight
 Even thos' sad words even in sad me did
 breed.

In Sonnet 60, Sidney portrays in paradoxical
 terms the fond lover's love-hate relationship
 with his mistress,

When my good Angell guides me to the
 place,
 Where all my good I do in Stella see,
 That heav'n of joyes throwes onely
 downe on me
 Thundred disdains and lightnings of
 disgrace:
 But when the ruggedst step of Fortune's
 race
 Makes me fall from her sight, then
 sweetly she
 With words, wherein the Muses'
 treasures be,
 Shewes love and pitie to my absent case.
 Now I, wit-beaten long by hardest Fate,
 So dull am, that I cannot looke into

The ground of this fierce Love and
lovely hate;
Then some good body tell me how I do,
Whose presence, absence, absence
presence is;
Blist in my curse, and cursed in my
blisse.

In the finest of these 'paradoxical' poems, Sidney fully demonstrates the 'energy' of his poetry by spelling out his theme imaginatively from the outset, in the way that Sidney reckons would best engage his reader's attention, as in the following example,

With what sharp checkes I in my selfe
am shent,
When into Reason's audite I do go:
And by just counts my selfe a banck-
rout know
Of all those goods, which heav'n to me
hath lent:
Unable quite to pay even Nature's rent,
Which unto it by birthright I do ow:
And which is worse, no good excuse
can show,
But that my wealth I have most idly
spent.
My youth doth waste, my knowledge
brings forth toyes,
My wit doth strive those passions to
defend,
Which for reward spoile it with vaine
annoies.
I see my course to lose my selfe doth
bend:
I see and yet no greater sorow take,
Then that I lose no more for Stella's
sake.
(Sonnet 18)

Instead of stating directly as genuine paradoxes of fact his paradoxical experience of love, Sidney presents metaphorically the theme of the conflict between Reason and Passion. In the

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octave of the sonnet, in an image that anticipates the metaphor of accounting in Sonnet 30 of Shakespeare's Sonnets,

Then can I grieve at grievances fore-
gone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay, as if not paid before.

Sidney makes extensive use of accounting imagery and compares himself to a profligate, one who is bankrupt in the many virtues that Nature has bestowed on him as the result of the vain pursuit of Passion,

With what sharp checkes I in my selfe
am shent,
When in Reason's audit I do go:
And by just counts my selfe a bank-
rout know
Of all those goods, which heav'n to me
hath lent:
Unable quite to pay even Nature's rent,
Which unto it by birthright I do ow!
And which is worse, no good excuse can
show,
But that my wealth I have most idly
spent.

In Sonnet 62 Sidney bemoans the virtuous nature of his mistress' love, which goads him on to the improvement of his mind rather than the satisfaction of his desire. Not only are the figures of rhetoric - 'plocce', 'conduplicatic', and 'polyptoton' - called in to aid his depiction of the paradoxical nature of his mistress' behests, but he presents one image after another - 'thus watred was my wine', 'these tempests of vaine love ... And anchor

tottring barge:
 Least joy, by Nature apt sprites to
 enlarge,
 Thee to thy wracke beyond thy limits
 straine.

and

But give apt servants their due place,
 let eyes
 See Beautie's totall summerd summ'd in
 her face:
 Let eares heare speech, which wit to
 wonder ties,
 Let breath sucke up those sweetes, let
 armes embrace
 The globe of weale, lips Love's
 indentures make:
 Thou but of all the kingly Tribute
 take.
 (Sonnet 85)

the military imagery in the opening lines
 of Sonnet 98,

Ah bed, the field where joye's peace
 some do see,
 The field where all my thoughts to
 warre be traind,

and the portrayal of Stella as the powerful
 overlord in Sonnet 107,

Stella since thou so right a Princess
 art
 Of all the powers which life bestowes
 on me,
 That ere by them ought undertaken be,
 They first resort unto that soueraigne
 part;
 Sweete, for a while give respite to
 my hart,
 Which pants as though it still should
 leape to thee:
 And on my thoughts give thy

To this great cause, which needs
 both use and art,
 And as a Queene, who from her
 presence sends
 Whom she employes, dismisse from thee
 my wit,
 Till it have wrought what thy owne
 will attends.
 On servants' shame oft Maister's blame
 doth sit;
 O let not fooles in me thy workes
 reprove,
 And scorning say, 'See what it is to
 love.'

Or whether they crowd upon the mind as a quick succession of fleeting impressions, as in the following examples: the apostrophe to 'Sleep' in Sonnet 39.

Come sleepe, o sleepe, the certaine
 The baiting place of wit, the balme
 The poore man's wealth, the prisoner's
 Th'indifferent Judge between the high
 and low;

The rich associative power of Sidney's imagination is manifested by the rapid accumulation of diverse images in the panegyric of kiss in Sonnet 79.

Sweet kisse, thy sweets I faine would
 sweetly endite,
Which even of sweetnesse sweetest
 sweetner art:
Pleasingst consort, where each sence
 holds a part,
Which, coupling Doves, guides Venus'
 chariot right.

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