

MYTHOLOGICAL ALLEGORY IN SIDNEY'S ARCADIA

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Ann Rauch Mermel

August, 1974

FOREWORD

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ABSTRACT

By defining poetry as "an arte of imitation," but the poet as a maker of "golden" worlds unlike any that "nature bringeth foorth," Sidney, in his Defence of Poesie, seemed to contradict himself. Scholars are divided into those who believe that he advocated the imitation of probable actions in the world of nature and those who believe he advocated the imitation of Ideas in the mind of God. A middle position is presented here: that in writing the Arcadia Sidney imitated mythological actions which, in turn, imitated divine Ideas.

Since, according to Neoplatonic thought, the Ideas were manifested at four levels of being, each mythic action imitates, not one level, but four. In ascending order of proximity to the Godhead, the levels are the natural, the cosmological, the astrological, and the theological. In the 1593 Arcadia, the characters of Basilius, Pyrocles, Musidorus, Plangus, and Erona all have mythological counterparts, and the major actions in which they participate have mythological parallels.

Basilius, like Saturn, misunderstands an oracle, opposes generation, reigns during a time of peace (or a golden age), and ultimately falls from power. At the natural level, he represents Time (which brings some lives to a close but also brings other lives into being), the harvesting (which cuts down what has ripened, to make way for new growth), and false opinion (which he bases on mere appearances instead

of on Ideal Reality). At the cosmological level, Basilius represents the contemplation of divinity, but also a turning away from the world and its obligations. At the astrological level, he corresponds to a predisposition to melancholy and passivity, but also to intelligence and wise counsel. At the theological level, he represents the spiritual death that precedes regeneration and renewal and the fallen condition of man that precedes redemption. His recovery suggests the resurrection of the body, at the end of time.

Pyrocles, as a type of Hercules, fells tyrants (or monsters), kills a lion, dresses in women's clothing, quells rebellions, rescues two people from imprisonment (or Hades), and marries a beautiful maiden. At the natural level, he defeats sensuality, cowardice, wrath, and other disorderly emotions. At the cosmological level, he represents human love for the World Soul, the love of the World Soul for the Angelic Mind, and the love of the Angelic Mind for the Godhead. Moreover, Pyrocles overcomes transience and unites himself with eternal Youth. At the astrological level, he is a type of sun-god, who defeats winter and brings life above ground in the spring. At the theological level, he is a type of Christ, who harrows Hell, survives a death sentence, and marries the Church.

Musidorus is a type of Apollo, who falls in love, pursues a reluctant maiden, disguises himself as a shepherd, and defeats a tyrant (or monster). At the natural level, he is associated with springtime, sunlight, and reason. In the winter, his power wanes; in

the spring, it revives. At the cosmological level, he represents the Sun, who overcomes primordial moisture so that the world can be formed. Moreover, in the Angelic Mind, he symbolizes the Idea that, by attracting the love of the World Soul, engenders the world of nature. As a type of Apollo, Musidorus, when he tempers his powers, overcomes corruption; when he fails to control his own force, he fosters corruption. At the astrological level, he corresponds to the director of the Muses, who maintains universal harmony among the spheres. Since Apollo, by directing the spheres, influences affairs on earth, Musidorus corresponds to those astrological influences that reinforce divine Providence. At the theological level, he symbolizes Christianity, which conquers error (a monstrous snake or Python). While disguised as the shepherd, Dorus, he symbolizes grace. His ultimate victory over the death sentence represents the recovery of innocence, or redemption.

Plangus and Erona together are types of Hippolytus who are punished for failing to pay due respect to the god of love. Plangus and Pyrocles together are also types of Hippolytus (and Bellerophon), who reject the amorous attentions of lascivious older women. As a type of Bellerophon, Pyrocles defeats a chimerical monster. (Since the revised Arcadia is incomplete, the story of Plangus remains unresolved.) At the natural level, Pyrocles defeating the monster of lust represents Virtue astride the Pegasus of Fame. At the cosmological level, Pyrocles, as a type of Bellerophon, symbolizes the vapors that are conveyed upward by the sun (the winged Pegasus). Like Bellerophon, he rises only to fall to earth

again: for mortals, moral victories are never final. Hence, Pyrocles has to fight repeated battles. Like earth and water, he cannot remain aloft. Erona's imprisonment also represents the separation of the elements, the gross, earthly part always falling below. At the astrological level, Pyrocles and Plangus, as types of Bellerophon, are predisposed to undertake high enterprises. Theologically, in repulsing amorous older women, they are types of Christ who resist the Antichrist (Anteia).

Because the Countess of Pembroke knew that Sidney intended the revised Arcadia to be a heroic poem, she removed from the 1593 edition those passages that showed the heroes to be licentious and the heroines unchaste. As a heroic poem, it contains epic machinery, but only at the allegorical levels, not in the literal plot. Events that seem improbable at the literal level are allegorically appropriate to the foreconceit. If the reader recognizes that the groundplot of the Arcadia is mythological, and if he searches for the mysteries that Renaissance Neoplatonists associated with mythology, he will find that the unity of this heroic poem resides, not in the literal action, but in the foreconceit that accompanies the mythological actions. The pagan gods and heroes who correspond to Sidney's characters are present, but unseen. Although their presence provides additional delight, Sidney seems to have used it as a way of progressing towards, rather than a means of moving away from, the theological level. The foreconceit of the Arcadia is an affirmation of the dignity of man, who possesses the freedom and the power to ascend to God.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In his Defence of Poesie, Philip Sidney made two seemingly contradictory claims for poetry: it is "an arte of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it,"¹ but in practicing this art the poet invents "formes such as never were in Nature, as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like."² In short, the poet imitates nature, while, at the same time, he invents another nature. Despite Sidney's propensity for paradox, so evident in Astrophel and Stella³ and the Arcadia,⁴ twentieth-century critics tend to stress one claim at the

¹Sir Philip Sidney, The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963-68), III, 9. All subsequent references to Sidney's Defence will be to this edition.

²Sidney, III, 8.

³See, for example, Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression (1952; rpt. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp. 144-52. Smith resolves a paradox that underlies most of the sonnets in Astrophel and Stella by drawing a distinction between Stella and the reader, and another between Astrophel who eschews art and Sidney the conscious artist. To the extent that the reader is able to share Stella's point of view, "he will believe in the artlessness and simplicity of the poet, and the great feat of hiding art by art will be achieved." This study attempts a comparable thing: to resolve the contradiction inherent in Sidney's two definitions of poetry. The answer, however, will not lie, as it did for Smith, in a study of point of view.

⁴See Kenneth Orne Myrick, Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 179, where he concedes that Sidney's "paradoxes, jingles, personifications, and other figures . . . mar his English."

expense of the other, thereby avoiding the need to locate the point at which the contradiction is resolved. For example, Joel E. Spingarn holds that Sidney, like Bacon, foreshadows the development of classicism in England⁵ and that his definition of poetry "agrees substantially with what might be designated Renaissance Aristotelianism."⁶ Indeed, Sidney was, in Spingarn's view, responsible for "the introduction of Aristotelianism into England,"⁷ and Aristotelian critics, during the Renaissance or any other period, regard poetry as imitation and the plot as the essential feature of an epic or a drama. Consequently, they tend to subordinate doctrine to plot, to a credible account of characters in action, whereas some of Sidney's contemporaries, such as Sir John Harrington, who defended poetry as allegory, tended to subordinate plot to doctrine. For a Renaissance Aristotelian, the plot, taken literally, will teach a moral lesson, for the meaning of the plot inheres in the action itself. Hence, the poet, assuming that life should, ideally, make sense, strips away coincidence and irrelevancy in order to provide a beautiful coherence that is necessarily moral.

The poet makes history reasonable; he gives perfect examples of vices and virtues for human imitation; he makes virtue succeed and vice fail, as history can but seldom do. Poetry, therefore,

⁵ Joel E. Spingarn, A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, 2nd ed. (1908; rpt. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1963), p. 176.

⁶ Spingarn, p. 171.

⁷ Spingarn, p. 176.

conduces to virtue, the end of all learning, better than any other art or science⁸

The action imitated will be convincing because it is coherent, and moving because it is convincing.

The classicist, Spingarn explains,

limiting the sense and application of Aristotle's definition of poetry as an imitation of life, regarded the fable as the medium of this imitation, and the more perfect according as it became more truly and more minutely an image of human life. In criticism, therefore, the growth of classicism is more or less coextensive with the growth of the conception of the fable, or plot, as an end in itself.⁹

Inasmuch as the Aristotelian plot consists of a three-part causal sequence in which the beginning causes the middle to come about, and the ending follows of necessity from the middle, it needs to be plausible. Too much reliance on chimeras, furies, or any sort of epic machinery tends to weaken the plot by making it improbable. Hence, the Aristotelian plot, while conducive to the teaching of morality, is less conducive to the teaching of religious doctrine than a more loosely constructed medieval allegory, which is neither obliged nor expected to imitate nature. The allegorist, unlike the imitator, assumes that "poetry is one of the most effective aids to the higher learning of God's divinity, and poets themselves are really popular philosophers and popular divines."¹⁰ The allegorist, then, in the Renaissance as in

⁸Spingarn, p. 173.

⁹Spingarn, p. 176.

¹⁰Spingarn, p. 175.

the Middle Ages, might well subordinate plot to doctrine, inventing a plot more mysterious than coherent.

For Spingarn, Sidney's Defence is a classical document, advocating imitation, not invention, exemplary action, not allegory. Kenneth O. Myrick, in Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman, refers frequently to Spingarn, for Myrick, too, holds that Sidney stressed the imitation of the probable through the use of representative examples.¹¹ According to both Myrick and Spingarn, the literal story portrays, for Sidney, an immanent Aristotelian universal, not a transcendent Platonic form. That is, Sidney would have the poet imitate general truths about human life. The events in the story, while often unexpected, should be framed "according to an inner connection, and not by chance"¹²

Referring to Sidney's passage about the poet's ability to invent chimeras, Myrick points out that this statement occupies only one line in a thirteen-line passage, while, in the remaining twelve lines, Sidney "lavishes all his eloquence on the poetry which shows the earth and man 'better than nature bringeth forth.'"¹³ In this context, says Myrick, "better" means more coherent, but it also means in accordance with God's Providence. He adds that, for Sidney, the "right" poet removes the irrelevant and the incoherent from the actions he imitates by

¹¹Myrick, p. 116.

¹²Myrick, p. 132.

¹³Myrick, p. 123. He is quoting Sidney, from the Defence, in Works, III, 8.

observing poetic justice. The world of the poem is superior to the actual world because, in the "golden world," God's Providence prevails over chance.¹⁴

Myrick has borrowed from S. L. Wolff the term "providential plot" to indicate "a chain of events which are part of a divine plan."¹⁵ Hence, Myrick concludes that "the chimeras, enchanters, monsters, and magic of the ancient epics or the medieval romances held for Sidney little interest,"¹⁶ for these were improbable creatures that have no part in the general truths of human life. Moreover, God's Providence does not rely on them. The poet's business is to disclose a divine plan which is ordinarily "obscured in the apparently helter-skelter events of the everyday world."¹⁷ Unlike Spenser and Tasso, who included epic machinery in their heroic poems, then, Sidney kept out of his Arcadia all supernatural intervention, both pagan and Christian. "His abandonment of supernatural machinery is perhaps the most striking point in which Sidney seems to have ignored Minturno," says Myrick, for Minturno, in L'Arte Poetica, "expressly approved . . . the whole supernatural

¹⁴Myrick, p. 248.

¹⁵Myrick, p. 250, referring to Samuel Lee Wolff, The Greek Romances in Elizabethan Prose Fiction, Columbia University Studies in Comparative Literature (New York: The Columbia University Press, 1912), p. 320.

¹⁶Myrick, p. 123.

¹⁷Myrick, p. 351.

machinery which the Christian religion offered in place of that in the ancient pagan epic."¹⁸

Yet Myrick is convinced that Sidney, in revising his Arcadia, intended it to be a heroic poem, and he even goes so far as to find unity of action in the revised version, pointing out that it begins in medias res and that earlier events in the plot are reported by characters, not by the narrator.¹⁹ The characters involved in the action, both those who narrated and those who are narrated about, are all types. Strephon and Klaius (who, after rescuing Musidorus from the sea, conduct him to Kalander in compassionate silence) illustrate tact, Amphialus (who was willing to keep the princesses imprisoned but not to rape them) illustrates courtesy, Pyrocles (the younger of the two heroes, who unwittingly attracts the amorous advances of both the king and the queen) represents personal beauty, and Musidorus (Pyrocles' elder cousin who, during the siege of Cecropia's castle, after jousting twice with Amphialus disguised as a black knight and a third time as a forsaken knight, finally dealt Amphialus a near-fatal wound) exemplifies noble horsemanship.²⁰ The types teach a moral lesson by illustrating "perfect heroism, like Argalus, Euarchus, and the two princes, or of pure villainy, like Plexirtus, Andromana, Clinias, and Cecropia"²¹ Contrasting types serve to reinforce the lesson by serving as foils

¹⁸Myrick, p. 120.

¹⁹Myrick, p. 146.

²⁰Myrick, p. 296.

²¹Myrick, p. 251.

to one another. Amphialus and Argalus, for example, are polar opposites in the story, for while

the one seeks unavailingly to win Philoclea by constraint; the other has won Parthenia of her own free will, when her mother has tried to force another match. Amphialus, rebelling against his uncle and native prince, "justifieth the injustice" by his hopeless passion for Philoclea. Argalus sacrifices a happy love to die for his king, though not born his subject. In both love and war the disinterested conduct of the one knight throws into sharp relief his rival's breach of loyalty and justice, and his underlying egoism. The contrasts of character in the Arcadia perhaps explain in part the antithetical style.²²

On the other hand, critics who stress the "forms such as never were in nature," find that Sidney, like Harington, Fraunce, and Golding, believed the poetic image to stem from a Platonic Form and consequently to lend itself to allegorical interpretation, since the microcosmic and the actual are transcended by the abstract and the ideal, which the poet imitates directly. Moreover, the ideal manifests itself in more than one mode of being, or on more than one level of existence; consequently, the imitation is not confined to images and actions within a natural or earthly framework. The transcendent idea manifests itself in an image that may not resemble the appearance or the behavior of anything in actual existence. Edwin Greenlaw holds that Sidney, like most of his contemporaries, inherited the assumption "that the great epics should be regarded as allegories."²³ Greenlaw draws a distinction,

²²Myrick, p. 252.

²³Edwin A. Greenlaw, "Sidney's Arcadia as an Example of Elizabethan Allegory," in Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge (1913; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), p. 327.

however,

between the interpretation of Virgil given, for example, by Alberti in 1468, and the conception held in the time of Tasso and Spenser. The earlier view was still medieval: The Aeneid was an allegory of Platonism and Christianity, which were held to be identical. . . . But Sidney sees in Aeneas the portrait of the "excellent man"²⁴

In other words, writers in the later sixteenth century had abandoned fourfold or theological allegory, replacing it with the personification of secular virtues and vices. Oddly, Greenlaw illustrates this point by quoting a passage from Harington's "A Brief Apology for Poetry," a document that bears in places a marked resemblance to Dante's "Letter to Can Grande della Scalla." Harington maintains in this passage that an epic should be read for the literal sense, the moral sense, the political sense, the philosophical sense, and the divine sense. Like Dante, he was applying the method of the Biblical exegetes to secular literature. Harington seems, then, a poor example to illustrate a late-Renaissance movement away from theological allegory in the direction of personification allegory.

Nevertheless, Greenlaw finds in Book II of the revised Arcadia a gallery of speaking portraits of virtues and vices, both public and private, showing in each case that the "fore conceit"²⁵ determined the

²⁴Greenlaw, pp. 327-28.

²⁵Sidney, III, 8: "The skill of ech Artificer standeth in that Idea, or fore conceit of the worke, and not in the worke it selfe. And that the Poet hath that Idea, is manifest, by delivering them foorth in such excellencie as he had imagined them" Hereafter, throughout this study, the term "fore conceit" will be spelled as one word and used without quotation marks or documentation.

character of the various rulers, courtiers, and lovers, who were personifications, not individuals or even types. Plexirtus, for example (who had wrested the throne of Paphlagonia from his brother after blinding his father), equals tyranny, and Amphialus (Basilus' nephew whose war to marry Philoclea was also a war for a throne) equals ruthless ambition disguised as honor, while Erona (who ordered all statues of Cupid torn down) equals blasphemy against love, and Pamphilus (who had forsaken nine gentlewomen) inconstancy.²⁶ When a character behaves as an embodiment of a virtue or a vice, however, he is little more than a personification of an idea. Personification allegory or extended metaphor is really only one step away from Myrick's representative example, and it has the disadvantage of reducing the plot to the interrelationships between ideas that are often bodied forth in two-dimensional characters. Greenlaw acknowledges that "the entire story of Pyrocles and Musidorus is an example of the exaltation of friendship between men,"²⁷ but he stresses Sidney's portraits, not his plot; he fails to recognize the psychological complexity of some of the characters, such as Amphialus, who is not, at all times, an embodiment of ruthless ambition. Consequently, Greenlaw's analysis of the second book of the revised Arcadia finds it to consist of a catalogue of good and bad rulers and good and bad

²⁶Greenlaw, pp. 331-333.

²⁷Greenlaw, p. 333.

lovers. His reading fails to account for the appeal of this summa because he ignores many of the significant actions that these men and women are engaged in.

Edward Bloom, like Greenlaw, distinguishes between the fourfold allegory of the Middle Ages and the twofold allegory of the later Renaissance. For Dante and his contemporaries, Bloom explains, allegory was expected to embody "that which we are to believe, that which we are to do, and that toward which we are to aspire,"²⁸ but during the Renaissance, "practitioners and critics . . . synthesized the three symbolic levels into one."²⁹ Like Greenlaw, he cites Harington as a typical Renaissance allegorist, but Bloom quotes only part of Harington's discussion of allegory, so that Harington seems to have spoken only about a literal sense and a moral sense. His discussion, and illustration, of the political, philosophical, and divine levels of meaning are omitted.³⁰ Bloom agrees with Greenlaw that Sidney defended poetry as extended metaphor, and he quotes from the Defence the passage about Aesop and others who wrote "pretty Allegories, stealing under the formall tales of Beastes."³¹ If

²⁸Edward A. Bloom, "The Allegorical Principle," ELH, 18 (September 1951), 166.

²⁹Bloom, p. 166.

³⁰See Bloom, p. 167.

³¹See Bloom, p. 168. The passage he quotes from Sidney is in Works, III, 16.

Bloom had scrutinized the Arcadia in a single-minded search for beast fables, just as Greenlaw scrutinized it in search of personifications of virtues and vices, he, too, would have been forced to disregard the most effective parts, or else to conclude that Sidney preached one poetic theory and practiced another.

More satisfactory interpretations have come from critics who occupy a middle position, such as Alan D. Isler and Walter R. Davis, who, even while equivocating about the word "allegory," discuss the symbolic content of some of the "speaking pictures" in the Arcadia. Isler, for example, finding a wisdom/courage dichotomy to be structural and pervasive in both versions of the Arcadia, aligns body, action, passion, and public virtue alongside courage on one side of this dichotomy and places soul, contemplation, reason, and private virtue alongside wisdom on the opposite side. Within this structure, Pyrocles (whose name means "glorious fire") and Musidorus (whose name means "gift of the muses")³² become "thralls to their passions,"³³ and for each hero the dominant virtue is the one that weakens. Since, for Isler, the changes in clothing symbolize the changes in moral condition, Pyrocles sheds his zeal for action and begins dressing like an Amazon, while Musidorus abandons his pursuit of knowledge and dresses like a shepherd. In an earlier incident, when Pyrocles kneels to yield his

³²Alan D. Isler, "The Allegory of the Hero and Sidney's Two Arcadias," Studies in Philology, 65 (January 1968), 178.

³³Isler, p. 179.

sword to Musidorus, he is Passion voluntarily relinquishing his power to Reason.³⁴

Much that Isler says about the Arcadia is convincing and helpful, but he reads it as a story teaching a moral lesson designed to "act as a guide for the gentleman, the Prince, or the commonwealth."³⁵ When he calls it an allegory, he is "alluding solely to its teaching function, to the doctrine which can be drawn from the actions of the characters and the multifarious incidents of the narrative, to the 'soul' of the work rather than to the 'body.'"³⁶ In other words, after listing analogous but graded (or gradable) concepts on each side of the wisdom/courage polarity, he has flattened the narrative action into a unilateral moral lesson.

Isler had the insights needed for recognizing the "forms that never were in nature" that pervade the Arcadia, had he been willing to fit it into a Neoplatonic framework. When Sidney says that the poet imitates not what is or has been but what should be, surely he had more in mind than a story about how to behave well in a love affair. The sense of déjà vu that the reader of the Arcadia experiences when he encounters certain events in the plot demands an explanation, and the place to look for this theoretical ground is logically the Defence

³⁴Isler, p. 183.

³⁵Alan D. Isler, "Heroic Poetry and Sidney's Two Arcadias," PMLA, 83 (May 1968), 378.

³⁶Isler, "Heroic Poetry," p. 373.

of Poesie. Too many critics, who read the Arcadia better than they theorize about it, have found the Defence an embarrassment to their readings. Near the close of the Defence, Sidney invites his readers "to beleieve with me, that there are many misteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpose were written darkly, least by prophane wits it should be abused" ³⁷ Isler, by neglecting to relate the images of wisdom and courage contained in the Arcadia to the mysteries attributed to poetry in the Defence, has declined Sidney's invitation.

Like Isler, Walter Davis finds the conflict between the active life and the contemplative life to be central to the Arcadia. Moreover, he finds narrative "layers" in the plot (chivalric, civic, and pastoral) and a Neoplatonic ladder of love superimposed, a ladder which Strephon and Klaius climb in their pursuit of Urania (Aphrodite Urania, who dwells in the Angelic Mind). Pyrocles and Musidorus, says Davis, attempt to mount the same ladder, in pursuit of Pamela and Philoclea (who reflect Urania at the level of the World Soul), but they get no higher than the second rung, ³⁸ where the love for a particular woman becomes spiritual as well as physical. Since only Strephon and Klaius can transcend the physical level, and they go away to Cytherea, beyond

³⁷Sidney, III, 45.

³⁸Walter R. Davis, A Map of Arcadia: Sidney's Romance in Its Tradition, in Sidney's Arcadia, Walter R. Davis and Richard A. Ianham, Yale Studies in English, No. 158 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 84-86.

the limits of the book, all of the events in the plot take place in one setting at a time, either in Asia Minor, in Arcadia, or in the rustic retreat itself. The heroes move from point to point on a geographic plane, on Davis' "Map" of the action, not into higher or lower modes of being. Stressing the inability of the two princes to mount the ladder, Davis concludes that the Arcadia, like Renaissance prose fiction in general, tests out precepts or ideas in a second nature created as a testing ground by the poet,³⁹ who was himself created by God. But for Davis the nature that Sidney created in the Arcadia is unilateral and all of a piece, not hierarchical and graded like the nature created by God.⁴⁰

Davis' reading of the Defence is masterful, and he comes close to resolving the troublesome contradiction by saying that Sidney's definition of poetry is a "typical Renaissance conflation of Aristotle, Horace, and Plutarch And his successive rephrasings move yet further from the idea of copying, toward the idea of producing an

³⁹Davis, Map, p. 82.

⁴⁰Davis' conception of a unilateral setting with areas marked off for certain types of events seems at variance with the graded parallel planes or the chain of being which, according to E. M. W. Tillyard, embodies the Elizabethan conception of the cosmos. Tillyard, in The Elizabethan World Picture (New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), p. 22, holds that the human urge to reach toward higher levels of being is the "animating principle" in Sidney's Defence. "More fundamental than any Aristotelian belief . . . was the Neo-Platonic doctrine that poetry was man's effort to rise above his fallen self and to reach out towards perfection." It is difficult to believe that Sidney's "golden world" of poetry could be so flat.

affective image."⁴¹ In discussing the Arcadia, however, he confines his attention to those affective images found in the descriptive passages, as though it were a symbolist poem, and he reserves the term "allegory" for the actions of Strephon and Klaius and for the game of barley break at the end of the first eclogue,⁴² where the characters have been given names that tell what they mean.⁴³ Hence,

⁴¹Walter R. Davis, Idea and Act in Elizabethan Fiction (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 29.

⁴²The poem that contains the account of the game of barley break, beginning "A shepherd's tale no height of style desires . . .," was not in the 1590 Arcadia. The Countess of Pembroke inserted it at the end of the first Eclogues in the 1593 edition, and it was retained in the 1598 folio, which Davis uses. Ringler comments that Sidney "probably would not have included it in the Arcadia, because it is too obviously a poem of the contemporary Elizabethan rather than of the ancient Arcadian country-side." See William A. Ringler, Jr., ed., The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 494. The poem appears in Ringler's edition on pp. 242-256, under "Other Poems."

⁴³Davis, Map, p. 94. The game consists of one couple trying to draw two other couples into a circle called Hell. The shepherdesses who participate are named Urania, Nous, and Cosma. "During the game Strephon changes partners from Urania to gross Cosma to the delicate little Nous, ending in heated pursuit of the radiant Urania again. The names of these girls suggest that the Plotinian hypostases are involved, and except for the puzzling rejection of Nous the game presents a reasonably consistent allegory of the circular operation of love. Thus Strephon, in all his pastoral innocence, mimes out the descent of the soul, its refusal of the created cosmos of matter and of the divine world of Ideas for something higher like union with the One to which Urania or Heavenly Love may lead him." Davis would not have found the rejection of the Nous puzzling, however, if he had equated Urania with Heavenly Beauty (Venus Urania) rather than with Heavenly Love. To Plotinus the Idea of Beauty was the highest of all ideas contained in the Nous (which is the Angelic Mind). When later Neoplatonists equated the ideas in the Nous with Greek and Roman gods and goddesses, Venus Urania became equated with this supreme Idea of Beauty. It is understandable that Strephon would want to progress from

even after finding most of the premises to infer allegory in the Defence itself, he disregards the possibility of a multi-level allegory in the Arcadia. In Idea and Act in Elizabethan Fiction Davis holds that "we must be as alive to analogy in early fiction as we are to its use in the multiple plots of Elizabethan drama, and we must be prepared to find analogies of various sorts: between one action and another, between human affairs and the divine, between man and the cosmos in which he operates."⁴⁴ Yet most of the correspondences he finds in the Arcadia are between static objects and ideas. In other words, actions are analogous to other actions in other geographic locations, but not to cosmic, ideal, or divine activity.

It is possible that Isler and Davis fail to resolve Sidney's seeming paradox only because they limit allegory to extended metaphor or personification. Since each of the most affecting parts of the Arcadia represents more than a single set of abstract ideas, both men infer that Sidney's main purpose in the Defence must have been to defend didactic fiction and to justify fantasy, not allegory, and that he only incidentally allowed for the creation of images that mirror Neoplatonic foreconcepts. Their interpretations imply an Arcadia crammed with

Nous to the highest aspect of Nous, which would be Urania. Love, as opposed to Beauty, is an aspiring spirit which seeks Beauty, not an eternal ideal. Socrates reported Diotima's distinction between the two in Plato's Symposium, and Plotinus and the later Neoplatonists accepted it.

⁴⁴ Davis, Idea, p. 25.

speaking pictures of virtues and vices, which force the reader's attention to inanimate objects, such as the statuary and paintings in Kalandar's garden and summerhouse and to the devices and furniture of the knights in the tournaments and battles. They also give undue prominence to isolated scenes, such as the one in which Pamela is embroidering or kneeling to pray, or in which Philoclea is brooding over the blotted ink on a slab of white marble. But they do not account for the reader's response to the plot itself. The Arcadia is skillfully plotted; the events evoke interest and create suspense. No one keeps reading simply to get from one set piece to another.

Douglas Bush, Rosemond Tuve, Michael Murrin, and others have worked with a more fruitful conception of Renaissance allegory. Bush, for example, after establishing that the Renaissance was in many ways an extension of, not a break with, the Middle Ages,⁴⁵ has traced the allegorical exegesis of pagan myths practiced by late-classical Stoics and Neoplatonists to the point at which it converged with the allegorical exegesis of the Bible initiated by the Church Fathers. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, this synthesis had been completed and established. Both exegetical methods assumed that a single event, whether historical, fictitious, mythological, or Biblical, reverberates with

⁴⁵Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, new rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), p. 21.

meaning at more than one level.⁴⁶ Early in the sixth century, Fulgentius had read Christian morality into the Greek and Roman myths; by the time of the twelfth-century Renaissance, Ovid had become "encrusted with astrological, allegorical, euhemeristic deposits."⁴⁷ Christine de Pisan's Epistle of Othea, written around 1400 and translated into English by Stephen Scrope sometime between the years 1440 and 1449,⁴⁸ by Anthony Babyngton somewhat later in the same century, and a third time by Robert Wyer around 1540, is more theological than any of its predecessors in the mythological tradition. Christine gives an allegorical reading to imaginary letters supposedly written by Othea, goddess of prudence, to fifteen-year-old Hector of Troy. The letters consisted of a hundred four-line poems, each relating briefly a pagan myth, but the narrator's exegesis of each letter, drawing upon Paul, the Church Fathers, or scripture, "concerns itself with the spiritual implications of what has been set forth"⁴⁹ There is a god or goddess representing each of the seven virtues, the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, and other points of Christian doctrine. The moral lesson implied by the

⁴⁶Bush, pp. 11-16.

⁴⁷Bush, p. 11.

⁴⁸Curt F. Buhler, ed., "Introduction," The Epistle of Othea Translated from the French Text of Christine de Pisan by Stephen Scrope, The Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. xxi.

⁴⁹Buhler, p. xiii.

story is scrupulously separated from the allegory and offered instead in a marginal "glose." As naive as some of Christine's exegeses may be, they seem more convincing than Greenlaw's and Isler's exegeses when applied to Sidney's Arcadia. She is at least aware that true allegory is more complex than an extended metaphor or a story that teaches a moral lesson.

Although Fulgentius' Mythologies⁵⁰ and Christine de Pisan's Epistle to Othea circulated in England throughout the sixteenth century, the more important mythological treatise available at that time was Boccaccio's De Genealogia Deorum, which was written over a thirty-year period, between 1340 and 1370,⁵¹ distributed widely throughout Europe during the fifteenth century, and readily available to English writers both in Latin and in Italian throughout the sixteenth century. According to Herbert G. Wright, "Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, had a copy, and there was one in the Royal Library of Scotland in 1578." Moreover, the Genealogia's

high standing may also be seen from Sir Thomas Hoby's purchase of Betussi's Italian translation when he was at Venice in 1554. The learned "E. K." had recourse to it when commenting on The

⁵⁰According to Leslie George Whitbread, trans. and ed., Fulgentius the Mythographer (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), a copy of the Mythologies may have been available in England as early as the ninth or tenth century. It was first printed in England in 1498. See pp. 25-29.

⁵¹Charles G. Osgood, "Introduction," Boccaccio on Poetry: Being the Preface and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Books of Boccaccio's "Genealogia Deorum Gentilium," 2nd ed. (1930; rpt. New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1956), p. xiii.

Shepheardes Calender in 1579, and there may be traces of it in the Faerie Queene, Greene's Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay, the anonymous Selimus, Jonson's Alchemist and Richard Barnfield's poems.⁵²

Boccaccio imposes a chronological order on the entire body of Greek and Roman mythology and at the same time finds in many of the myths several levels of significance. A given myth might be simultaneously a legend about a great man, an explanation of natural forces or human moral behavior, a prefiguring of biblical heroes and events, and even a foretelling of Judgment Day.

In his Life of Dante, Boccaccio lays the theoretical foundation for this practice of secular exegesis, saying that "the ancient poets, so far as it is possible to human capacity, followed in the footsteps of the Holy Spirit, which . . . revealed its lofty secrets to future times through the mouths of many writers, making them beneath a veil speak what it intended at the proper time to show in deeds, without any veil."⁵³ Consequently, early pagan literature

possesses openly that by virtue of which it may nourish little children, and preserves in secret that whereby it holds rapt in admiration the minds of sublime thinkers. Thus it is like a river, if I may use the figure, wherein the little lamb may wade, and the great elephant freely swim.⁵⁴

⁵²Herbert G. Wright, Boccaccio in England from Chaucer to Tennyson (London: Athlone Press, 1957), pp. 36-37.

⁵³Giovanni Boccaccio, The Life of Dante, in The Earliest Lives of Dante, trans. James Robinson Smith, Yale Studies in English (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1901), p. 50.

⁵⁴Boccaccio, p. 50.

The "sublime thinkers" are benefitted by reading the pagan poets,

Boccaccio reasons, because

It is manifest that everything acquired by labor has more sweetness than that which comes without effort. The obvious truth, since it is quickly and easily seized, delights us and passes into the memory. But in order that, acquired by toil, it should be more pleasing and for that reason the better retained, the poets concealed it under many things that are not, apparently, in accord therewith. They chose fables rather than any other disguise, because the beauties thereof attract those whom neither philosophic demonstrations nor persuasions are able to draw.⁵⁵

Since ancient literature not only teaches morality but also prefigures Christian doctrine, Boccaccio concludes that "theology and poetry can be called almost the same thing, when they have the same subject" ⁵⁶
In reading poetry, as in reading scripture, the knowing reader will make every effort to penetrate the veil.

According to Jean Seznec, "the chief link between the mythology of the Renaissance and that of the Middle Ages is Boccaccio's Genealogy of the Gods."⁵⁷ He availed himself of all of the major allegorical

⁵⁵Boccaccio, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁶Boccaccio, p. 54.

⁵⁷Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art, trans. Barbara Sessions, Bollingen Series, No. 38 (1953; rpt. New York: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 220. On pp. 221-22 Seznec shows that Boccaccio drew upon Fulgentius, the various Ovid moralisées, and an incalculable number of other earlier sources, regarding all "as equally reliable" and "without exception, recipients of wisdom from on high." It would be pointless, then, for this study to undertake an examination of the metrical and prose Ovid moralisées whose content made their way into Boccaccio's Genealogia and into the three major mythological handbooks. See Bush, pp. 14-16, for a summary account of these moralizations of Ovid, which abounded between the later years of the thirteenth century and the later years of the fifteenth.

interpretations from earlier periods, including a still unidentified "Theodontius," whom he frequently cites,⁵⁸ and transmitted them to the three major sixteenth-century mythographers: Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, whose History of the Gods first appeared in Basel in 1548, Natale Conti, whose Mythologie appeared in Venice in 1551, and Vincenzo Cartari, whose Images of the Gods was also published in Venice, in 1556. Seznec points out that Giraldi concentrates on etymologies, Conti on philosophy, and Cartari on iconography, but concludes that "the resemblances between the three works greatly outweigh the differences."⁵⁹

Since Fulgentius' Mythologies, Christine de Pisan's Epistle to Othea, and Boccaccio's De Genealogia Deorum were known in England throughout the sixteenth century, and since the mythological handbooks of Giraldi, Conti, and Cartari were available to Englishmen traveling in Europe during the second half of the century, Sidney's readers were probably familiar with the practice of reading levels of meaning into Ovid, Virgil, and Homer. Just as Dante had taken the next logical step after the biblical exegetes by writing, in the Divine Comedy, a secular theological allegory, so the time was right for Spenser and Chapman to write their own mythological allegories instead of writing exegeses of ancient material.⁶⁰ Sidney, however, in Bush's opinion

⁵⁸Seznec, pp. 221-22.

⁵⁹Seznec, p. 233.

⁶⁰Bush, pp. 30, 307.

only glanced at allegory, and perhaps did not have much faith in it. He found parables and allegories edifying, but his parables were Christian, and his allegories the fables of Aesop. Yet his strong moralizing instinct is apparent. He appeals constantly to classical exempla and sees in the Aeneid a picture of the excellent man . . . ; he embodied similar ideas in the revised Arcadia.⁶¹

So Bush, in full knowledge of the availability of mythological exegesis and multi-level allegory in Renaissance England, finds himself in essential agreement with Myrick about the unimportance of allegory in the Arcadia. He terms it a heroic poem, but a moral one, rife with concrete examples of Aristotelian universals. Yet he is forced to concede that, close to the end of the Defence, Sidney "seems, in a mood both playful and serious, to share in part the current view when he cites Clauser and Cornutus and agrees that the fables of Hesiod and Homer 'give us all knowledge.'"⁶² Bush seems, then, at least as inconsistent as Sidney. If the fables of Hesiod and Homer "give us all knowledge," then Sidney did more than "glance" at allegory. Bush ignores Sidney's statement that follows the one he quoted, in which Sidney invites the reader "to beleeeve with me, that there are many misteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpose were written dark-ly" ⁶³ In this invitation, Sidney exhibits a greater faith in allegory than Bush has acknowledged.

⁶¹Bush, pp. 70-71.

⁶²Bush, p. 71.

⁶³Sidney, III, 45.

Like Bush, Michael Murrin provides all of the background necessary to indicate that an allegorical exegesis of the Arcadia might be fruitful, then subsequently declines to attempt one. For the Renaissance, he explains, allegory (not verse) was what distinguished a poem from a mere popular romance: a poem had to contain more than one level of meaning.

We tend to forget the moral context of this theory and the higher, almost ecstatic values placed upon the spoken word. The men of the Renaissance believed that the cosmos itself came into being by the spoken Word of the Lord, just as the poet creates fictional worlds through speech. By analogy one can say that the universe is God's myth and poetry man's myth. Within this context the poet's claim that his fictions are allegorical takes on fantastic proportions, for he is really arguing that his poetry has all the resonance and depth that one finds in the material cosmos.⁶⁴

Murrin's statement seems almost to paraphrase an important one of Sidney's:

Neyther let it be deemed too sawcie a comparison to ballance the highest poynt of mans wit with the efficacie of Nature: but rather give right honor to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who, having made man to his own likenes, set him beyond and over all the workes of that second nature, which in nothing hee sheweth so much as in Poetrie, when with the force of a divine breath he bringeth things forth far surpassing her dooings⁶⁵

Murrin helps prepare the reader to understand the impact of the Arcadia, for he shows that multi-level allegory comprises a type of

depth discourse, in which the poet talks about many things at the same time, using an image in one world to signify its corollaries

⁶⁴Michael Murrin, The Veil of Allegory: Some Notes toward a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 66-67.

⁶⁵Sidney, III, 8-9.

in the other two. This is a position assumed by Julian and Sallustius and later by Pico in his Second Proem to the Heptaplus. The poet can apply celestial or earthly symbols to divine things, which can be represented as stars, wheels, animals, or one of the elements. Likewise, divine names can signify earthly things. The poet moves up and down the chain of concord, literally exchanging natures as well as names among the three orders. He practices allegory, speaking in a symbolic fashion which he bases not on his subjective imagination but on the objective order of the universe.⁶⁶

Serious Renaissance poems, Murrin continues, like serious late-classical poems, imitated the cosmos which, in turn, imitated the thoughts of God; whereas "pseudopoets"⁶⁷ like Gascoigne may have imitated archaic styles, but not the ancient and ageless ideas that Virgil had imitated.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Murrin, p. 48. It is interesting to contrast Murrin's conception of allegory with that of C. S. Lewis, who, in the Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition (1936; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 44-45, limits allegory to the personification of ideas and regards multi-level allegory as a special kind of symbolism. "If our passions," says Lewis, "being immaterial, can be copied by material inventions, then it is possible that our material world in its turn is the copy of an invisible world. As the god Amor and his figurative garden are to the actual passions of men, so perhaps we ourselves and our 'real' world are to something else. The attempt to read that something else through its sensible imitations, to see the archetype [sic] in the copy, is what I mean by symbolism or sacramentalism."

⁶⁷Murrin, p. 86.

⁶⁸It is important to keep in mind that for Sidney "one may be a Poet without versing, and a versefier without Poetrie" (Sidney, III, 27). A poet is recognized by "that faining notable images of vertues, vices, or what els, with that delightfull teaching . . ." (III, 11). Murrin, after drawing a distinction between the oratorical poet (who wants to be clearly understood by all members of his audience) and the allegorical poet (who wants to veil the truth from the "profane" and reach only the intelligent few), places Gascoigne among "a group of pseudopoets" in the oratorical tradition, who wrote straightforwardly about the "commonplaces of their own day." This type of fiction could be readily understood by everyone. (See Murrin, pp. 84-85.)

Spenser's poetry abounds in cosmic allegory, but unfortunately, Murrin finds,

not everyone in Tudor England shared with Spenser this fascination with the cosmos. Hawes did not, nor did Turberville, Gascoigne, Sidney, and many other of Spenser's contemporaries and near contemporaries. He might not have found cosmic allegory in the classical dictionaries or even in Boccaccio But he would have found this stress in Golding or in the Florentines or perhaps in Alanus de Insulis and the other medieval predecessors of Pico and Ficino. His contemporary, Harington, had it, and so did Reynolds later.⁶⁹

The Florentine Neoplatonists considered only the allegorist a poet, Murrin maintains, but he adds that many English critics during the second half of the sixteenth century concerned themselves exclusively with the oratorical tradition. As a result, none of Spenser's contemporaries was able to write knowingly about the Faerie Queene.⁷⁰ I maintain that Sidney's Arcadia, too, and for the same reason, has suffered a dearth of knowing readers, both in the sixteenth century and today.

Despite the availability, then, of late-classical and medieval poetry containing cosmic allegory, despite Spenser's interest and Harington's, despite some of the most fervent passages in the Defence, Sidney, according to Murrin, limited his Arcadia to a mere "pseudopoem"; ultimately the "avante-garde of the new age, Sidney and Jonson, reduced the ends of poetry for the most part to moral instruction."⁷¹ Undoubtedly

⁶⁹Murrin, p. 166.

⁷⁰Murrin, pp. 19-20.

⁷¹Murrin, p. 131.

Murrin has overlooked the resonance of the Arcadia and has been immune to its impact. Yet much of what he writes about the theory and history of allegory is useful in explaining the strong responses Sidney's heroic poem evokes, the sense of déjà vu it wakens in some, if not in all, readers.⁷²

The answer seems to lie in a general misconception of the nature of Sidney's poetic images. Everyone has agreed that Sidney required poetry to move the reader to love and practice virtue,⁷³ and everyone has agreed that he required it to feign some "notable images of vertues and vices,"⁷⁴ but no one, it seems to me, has fully recognized that, for Sidney, the "speaking picture of Poesie"⁷⁵ is more than a series of motionless images. The picture that bodies forth a foreconceit, what Davis terms the "affective image,"⁷⁶ is an imitation of an action.

⁷²See Murrin, pp. 98-99: "In his interpretation of plots the allegorical critic ignored a distinction normally drawn by twentieth-century critics, that between myth and the literary work conceived in its own right. . . . These critics tacitly assume that a myth . . . has certain meanings contained within itself, regardless of who adapts it. . . . They further assumed that poets would naturally work with myth because its extra dimension perfectly mirrors the allegorical character of their own creations." Murrin adds that "the basic plot of an allegory must always be mythic." I find this "extra dimension" present in the Arcadia. The recognition of certain familiar myths that underlie the basic plot enhances the reader's pleasure, making him feel that he has visited this "golden world" before.

⁷³See the Defence in Sidney, III, 11: "The finall end [of poetry] is, to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate soules made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of."

⁷⁴Sidney, III, 11.

⁷⁵Sidney, III, 14.

⁷⁶Davis, Idea, p. 29.

It should be "moving" in both senses of the word: it should "move men to take . . . goodnesse in hand . . .,"⁷⁷ and it should imitate a sequence of events. As an imitation of an action, poetry is comparable to history, although the historian sometimes lies, while the poet "nothing affirmeth"⁷⁸ People go to history, Sidney maintains, looking for truth, but they go to poetry expecting it to be fiction. (His underlying assumption is that both historian and poet recount a sequence of events.) The adult reader should know that a story is a "groundplat" or foundation upon which the poet has erected "a profitable invention."⁷⁹

Sidney's analogy between the plot or action and a groundplot or foundation requires a closer look, for it furnishes the key to his conception of a poetic image, of what he terms a "speaking picture."⁸⁰ In the sixteenth century the word "invention" had come to mean something more than the selection of material for an argument; it had reference to the activity of the poet, who, by the use of his imagination, portrays something marvelous in a fable that cloaks a truth.⁸¹ Significantly,

⁷⁷Sidney, III, 10.

⁷⁸Sidney, III, 29.

⁷⁹Sidney, III, 29. Hereafter, throughout this study, the term "groundplot" will be used with modern spelling and without quotation marks or documentation.

⁸⁰Sidney, III, 9.

⁸¹Murray W. Bundy, "'Invention' and 'Imagination' in the Renaissance," JEGP, 29 (October 1930), 540.

for Sidney the narration, not the isolated set piece, provides the groundplot for the invention. The plot itself is the groundplot; that is, the story bodies forth a Neoplatonic truth. As for Sidney's word "groundplot," Forrest G. Robinson, in his discussion of Sidney's "visual epistemology," points out that the astrologer John Dee, who was Sidney's chemistry instructor, was the first to use it and that Sidney himself was the second.⁸² According to the OED, Sidney and Dee both used this word to indicate a plot of ground occupied by a building: in other words, a foundation for a higher structure.

It is the narrative plot, then, not the descriptive details, that serve as a foundation for several levels of meaning. Moreover, none of the sixteenth-century critics specifies that the literal level, or groundplot, of the story be enacted by characters who bear the names of mythological figures in order to perform this allegorical function. Neither Sidney nor his contemporaries Abraham Fraunce and John Harington confine multi-level allegory to stories about the gods and goddesses. Harington, for example, in one of the notes appended to Book Two of the Orlando Furioso, finds Bayardo, a fictitious horse, to be a type of Pegasus, and Renaldo, leaving behind his rival in pursuit of Angelica, to be a type of Bellerophon, "flying the false accusation of Pretus wife," on the back of Pegasus.⁸³ For that portion of the story, then,

⁸²Forrest G. Robinson, The Shape of Things Known: Sidney's Apology in Its Philosophical Tradition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 126.

⁸³John Harington, trans., Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse, Ludovico Ariosto (1591; facsimile rpt. Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1970), p. 15.

the action of Bayardo reverberates with all of the meaning assigned to the action of Pegasus by Fulgentius, Christine de Pisan, Boccaccio, Giraldi, Cartari, and Conti, as well as by Fraunce in the Countesse of Pembroke's Yuychurch III, and by Golding in his "Epistle to Leicester," which forms an introduction to his translation of the Metamorphoses.

Even the Greek romances, which were widely read at the time, would have accustomed the sixteenth-century reading public to the presence of mythological parallels in the actions of characters not named for deities. Apuleius' Golden Ass, translated by William Adlington in 1566, contains, for example, a new twist on a recognizable myth when Charite begs her husband Tlepolemus to confine his hunting to goats and avoid all other wild beasts. He disobeys her, is felled by a "dangerous wild boar,"⁸⁴ and his deceitful friend Thrasyllus, who covets Charite, finishes him off with a thrust of the sword into the thigh. The boar and the thigh wound, identifying Tlepolemus with Adonis, point the reader to the significance of the incident, while the name Charite indicates that this woman is a type of Venus Urania, not Venus Dione.⁸⁵ The Golden Ass abounds in plots that parallel various myths, bodying forth moving images of virtues and vices.

⁸⁴Lucius Apuleius, The Golden Ass (1566), trans. William Adlington, ed. Harry C. Schnur (1962; rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1972), pp. 179-80.

⁸⁵Sears Jayne explains that "there were two versions of the birth of Aphrodite in mythology. One is that she rose out of the foam of the sea where the seminal fluid fell from the castration of Uranus. Hence she is called Aphrodite Urania. The other story is

Lewis Soens, who at this date has not yet published an interpretation of the Arcadia, provides a reading of Sidney's Defence that would justify viewing the Arcadia as a mythological allegory:

Sidney welded the commonplaces which he used into a whole by arguing that the poet is a man who sees the "ideas" of the virtues as they may be conceived to exist in Plato's ideal world (which is also the "golden world" of Greek and Roman myth and Adam's prelapsarian world, Eden).⁸⁶

God has cleared the poet's reason so that he can see the noumena, but the poet uses a narrative, a story, to reveal the Ideas to the audience and to make them moving. Soens is convinced that for Sidney "right" poetry was allegorical, and he is equally convinced that Sidney shared the Neoplatonic world-view held by other members of the Leicester circle.⁸⁷ Soens also recognizes that a myth can be regarded as a picture, or icon; he points out that Du Flessis de Mornay, in his Trewnesse of the Christian Religion (which Sidney and Golding translated), uses myths as icons that can exert either beneficent or malevolent influences on men.⁸⁸

that she was born of a union of Zeus and Dione. From the two myths there arose the concept of two Venuses, one heavenly, and the other earthly. . . . This duality early acquired the moral connotation of spiritual and fleshly love which it has in Plato, the Neoplatonists, and Ficino." See Sears Reynolds Jayne, trans. and ed., Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1944), p. 142, note 28.

⁸⁶Lewis Soens, ed., Sidney's "Defence of Poesy" (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. x.

⁸⁷Soens, p. xvii.

⁸⁸Soens, p. xix.

It is not necessary, of course, for Sidney to have heard about mythological allegory and Neoplatonism from his daily companions, nor is it possible to establish who learned what from whom: whether, for example, Sidney read Fulgentius for himself or read about him in Boccaccio, whether Sidney read Ebreo for himself or learned about him through conversations with Fraunce or Spenser. Leone Ebreo's Dialoghi d'Amore, written by 1502, had been published in Italian in 1535. In Dialogue II of this work, Ebreo added a metaphysical framework to Boccaccio's mythological exegeses.⁸⁹ Boccaccio had already demonstrated that the pagan myths concealed truths about human morality, natural philosophy, and Christianity. Ebreo, after locating the natural and moral level of meaning in the Neoplatonic World Soul, added an astrological level,⁹⁰ which he located in the Angelic Intelligence, just

⁸⁹See Cecil Roth, "Introduction," The Philosophy of Love, Leone Ebreo, trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and Jean H. Barnes (London: The Soncino Press, 1937), p. xii. The second and third editions were published in Venice in 1541 and 1545 (p. xiii). Then, on p. xv, Roth adds that "the Dialoghi was among the most popular philosophical works of its age. In the space of twenty years it went through at least five editions in the Italian original. It was twice translated into French . . . no less than three times into Spanish, as well as into Latin and Hebrew. It was known to Camoens and to Montaigne." The Friedeberg-Seeley and Barnes translation, however, is the only published English translation. Since no published English translation existed during Sidney's lifetime, the present translation has been selected for use in this study.

⁹⁰See C. S. Lewis, The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 104-105. During antiquity the gods had been conceived of at first as embedded in, later as riding on, their respective planets within the Ptolemaic scheme. Leone Ebreo, p. 179, says that the gods in the Angelic Intelligence are spirits that move the spheres. Though immaterial, they inhabit material planets.

under God in the Neoplatonic scheme. Each myth, he explains, contains

not one but many meanings, called "senses" . . . woven by the ancient poets into their poems. First of all they set down in the literal sense, as a kind of outer husk, the history of certain people and of their noteworthy and memorable deeds. Within this same fiction, like an inner rind nearer to the kernel, they included the moral sense, useful for the active life of men, which justified the acts of virtue and condemned the vices. Moreover the same words concealed some true knowledge of facts, natural or heavenly, astronomic or theological, and sometimes two or even three scientific senses are contained in the tale, like the seeds of a fruit within its rind. And these inmost senses are called "allegorical."⁹¹

Ebreo illustrates with the story of Perseus, a son of Jupiter, who killed the Gorgon and flew

away through the ether, which is the highest heaven. The historic meaning of this is that Perseus, called a son of Jupiter because of the share he had of jovial virtues . . . killed Gorgo, an earthly tyrant,--(for "Gorgo" means "earth" in Greek)--and was by men exalted to the skies for his virtues. Or again morally Perseus signifies the prudent man, son of Jupiter, i.e. endowed with Jupiter's virtues, who, destroying the base and earthly vice symbolised by the Gorgon, ascended to the heaven of virtue. Then as for its allegoric meanings: first, it tells how the human mind, Jupiter's offspring, slaying and overcoming the earthiness of the gorgonic nature, raised itself to understanding of the noble and eternal truths of Heaven, in which speculation human perfection consists. This allegory is the natural one, because Man is a natural being. But the tale also stands for another, heavenly allegory, to wit: that the celestial nature, child of Jupiter, having by its continual movement caused death and destruction among lower terrestrial bodies--this celestial nature, triumphant over corruptible things, detaching itself from their mortality, flew on high and remained immortal. Furthermore [the tale] stands for a third theological allegory, namely: that the angelic nature, which is the child of Jupiter, supreme god and creator of all things, destroying and putting from itself all corporeity and earthy materialness, symbolised by the Gorgon, rose to Heaven, forasmuch

⁹¹Ebreo, pp. 110-11.

as it is the intelligences separated from body and matter which forever move the heavenly spheres.⁹²

It is worth noting that Ebreo carefully separated the moral meaning from the allegorical,⁹³ just as Christine de Pisan had done before him and John Harington was to do after him; that is, the whole myth or mythological poem teaches that a prudent man can overcome vice and acquire virtue, but at the natural level of allegory, mind slays earthiness and ascends to truth. For Ebreo, the four physical elements (earth, water, air, and fire) exist alongside the ideas of the virtues and vices at the level of the World Soul. Both modes, the physical and the ideal, are equally within the natural order; each is equally represented by gods and goddesses. Unlike other Florentine Neoplatonists, Ebreo denies that evil is a mere absence of good; he finds vices to be active forces within the scheme because, after all, God created base matter, too, and all imperfections. "Hence God," Ebreo contends, "has assigned to them as principles, Ideas of their own: not material but efficient and formal, which are the cause of the being of these imperfect things, rooted in privation and hypostatized for the necessary being of the Universe."⁹⁴

⁹²Ebreo, pp. 111-112. (Brackets are the translator's.)

⁹³When Alan Isler classifies the Arcadia as an allegory on grounds that the story in its entirety teaches a moral lesson, he was disregarding the careful distinction that an allegorical critic in the Renaissance would have made. See p. 12, above, and note 35.

⁹⁴Ebreo, p. 120. In A Woorke Concerning the Trewnesse of the Christian Religion, Du Plessis de Mornay also equates some of the pagan

Rosemond Tuve considers the separation of the moral from the allegory in late medieval and Renaissance exegeses to be significant and profitable. She points out that Christine de Pisan, in the Epistle of Othea, states the moral lesson in a brief marginal "glose" but devotes lengthy paragraphs, headed "Allegorie," to those figures that coincide with moral qualities, for these represent "adornments" of the spirit that comes from and returns to heaven and, to borrow theological terminology, speaks figurally, tropologically, and anagogically. The distinction between tropology and morality is the distinction between Ideal Forms and practical instruction. Christine is not reducing the tropological to the literal; she is, in fact, adding levels.⁹⁵ She finds her analogies not between tenor and vehicle, but between two tenors.⁹⁶ "It is part of the reason why," Tuve maintains, "a Hercules-Christ image lived on; men seemed to learn something about Christ's fortitude from Hercules!" She adds that "the interpreters probably

gods with "feends" and "Devils," as though they were the embodiments of Vice and, as such, testified to the existence and goodness of the one true God. See Sidney's translation of part of this work in Sidney, Works, III, 250-251.

⁹⁵Rosemond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 288-292.

⁹⁶Tuve, p. 302. The terms "tenor" and "vehicle" come from I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 97, where Richards explains that in a metaphor "the tenor [is] the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means." See also William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature, rev. by C. Hugh Holman (Indianapolis: The Odyssey Press, 1960), pp. 483-484.

noted also the operation of a phenomenon recognized in modern criticism: subterranean meanings not present to the conscious mind of an author, but so truly related to what he is endeavoring to express that his imagery travels beyond the mark he shot at and thus conveys them."⁹⁷ Christine does seem to have anticipated Ebreo's method without, however, erecting a Neoplatonic framework around it for the benefit of the reader. She simply assumed it.

Rosemond Tuve says nothing about Ebreo; yet his second dialogue marks a further advance in the allegorical heritage that Sidney was to receive. The fact that Christine's entire work was ostensibly intended as a memory aid for a fifteen-year-old boy, to help him remember his religious doctrine, is compatible with the Neoplatonic doctrine of pre-existence, of the heavenly origin of the soul and its ultimate return, found in Pico and Ficino as well as in Ebreo, and expressed by Pyrocles in Book Five of the revised Arcadia.⁹⁸ Ebreo's Dialoghi made its way to England, where some passages appeared virtually verbatim in Fraunce's Countesse of Pembroke's Yuychurch Part III and in Harington's "Apologie of Poetry" prefaced to his translation of the Orlando Furioso.⁹⁹ It also made its way to Portugal, where Montemayor

⁹⁷Tuve, p. 236. Tuve finds this kind of allegory in Spenser, finds theoretical grounds for it in Sidney's Defence, finds "Sidneyan poetics" in the Faerie Queene, but bypasses any discussion of the Arcadia. See p. 368.

⁹⁸Sidney, II, 165. Pyrocles' discussion of pre-existence and memory will be dealt with at length in later chapters.

⁹⁹The passage Harington borrowed from Ebreo was the passage quoted above, pp. 33-34, interpreting the myth about Perseus slaying the Gorgon. See Harington, sig. ¶ iij.

borrowed a long passage for Book Four of his Diana, which Bartholomew Yong finished translating into English in May, 1583, although publication was delayed until 1598.¹⁰⁰ Sidney himself had translated two of the poems from the Diana and had also borrowed from it for "the opening description of Strephon and Klaius, and their lament for Urania."¹⁰¹ Since Thomas Wilson, in a printed dedication to Fulke Greville of a later translation of the Diana, testified that Sidney "did very much affect and imitated the excellent Author there of,"¹⁰² it seems a safe guess that Sidney had been exposed to Ebreo's metaphysical scheme and allegorical method indirectly, through Fraunce, Harington, and Montemayor, if not directly. (He was, of course, capable of reading the Dialoghi in the original Italian, even as his friends John Harington and Abraham Fraunce had done.)¹⁰³

Although Fulgentius and Christine de Pisan were available to English poets throughout the sixteenth century, the Florentine Neoplatonists, then, also served to strengthen the connection between

¹⁰⁰Judith M. Kennedy, "Introduction," A Critical Edition of George of Montemayor's Diana and Gil Polo's Enamoured Diana (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. xxi.

¹⁰¹Kennedy, p. xxxvii.

¹⁰²Kennedy, p. xxxii.

¹⁰³See Bush, p. 321: Fraunce's "allegorical matter seems to be compiled chiefly from Vincenzo Cartari, Natalis Comes, an annotated edition of Ovid (Cambridge, 1584), and Leo Hebraeus" (i.e. Leone Ebreo).

religious truth and pagan mythology.¹⁰⁴ Abraham Fraunce, like Sidney and Harington, insists that verse is only incidental to poetry, whereas the presence of spiritual truth is essential to it.¹⁰⁵ He has his commentator, Elpinus, explain that

Both poetry, a speaking picture, and paynting, a dumbe poetry, were like in this, that the one and the other did under an amyable figure and delightsome veyle, as it were, cover the most sacred mysteries of auncient philosophie. Nay, Pythagoras himselfe by his symbollicall kinde of teaching, as also Plato by his conceited parables and allegoricall discourses in his bookes called, Phaedrus, Timaeus, and Symposium, may make any man beleewe, that as the learned Indians, Aethiopians, and Aegyptians kept their doctrine religiously secret for feare of prophanation, so the Grecians by their example, have wrapped up in tales, such sweete inventions, as of the learned unfoldr may well be deemed wonderfull, though to a vulgar conceit, they seeme but frivolous imaginations. Yea that song of the most wise Salomon, called for the excellencie thereof the Song of Songs, is altogether mysticall and allegoricall, least any man thinke my speech but a tale, in attributing so much to poeticall tales¹⁰⁶

For Fraunce and his contemporaries, in England and abroad, it was possible to believe that parallel mysteries resided in ancient Indian, Aethiopian, Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew poetry because, like the Florentine Neoplatonists, they believed that Dionysius the Areopagite, disciple of

¹⁰⁴See C. S. Lewis, Spenser's Images of Life, ed. Alastair Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 8-9. Ficino and Pico (he never mentions Ebreo) "believed not only that all myths and hieroglyphics hide a profound meaning but also that this ancient pagan undermeaning is really in agreement with Christianity." See also Seznec, p. 98.

¹⁰⁵See note 68, p. 25, above.

¹⁰⁶Abraham Fraunce, The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch: Entituled, Amintas Dale (1592; MLA Rhotograph Series No. 75), sig. 3^v.

Paul, in Acts 17:34, was the same Dionysius who wrote the Celestial Hierarchy. Just as the Hebrew Cabbala was regarded as a written record of truths which Moses had received orally from God, so the Celestial Hierarchy was regarded as a written record of truths which the author had received orally from Paul. In actuality, the Hebrew Cabbala, written between the ninth and thirteenth centuries after Christ, and the Celestial Hierarchy, written some five hundred years after Paul,¹⁰⁷ are both rooted in Platonic philosophy, a fact which accounts for the parallels that so astonished Pico.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, Golding, in his letter to Leicester prefacing his translation of the Metamorphoses, could claim that the pagan poets had read Moses and could equate the account of creation in Ovid with the account of creation in Genesis, the Golden Age with Adam's time in Paradise, Deucalion with Noah, Hades with Hell, and the Elysian fields with Heaven.¹⁰⁹ If the pagan poets, he reasoned

with leesings and with fables shadowed so
The certaine truth, what letteth us too plucke those visers fro
Their doings, and too bring ageine the darkened truth too lyght,

¹⁰⁷Lewis, Discarded Image, p. 70.

¹⁰⁸He touches on these parallels in the Heptaplus and in the Oration on the Dignity of Man. See Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, 2nd ed. (1967; rpt. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1968), pp. 20-22.

¹⁰⁹Arthur Golding, "Epistle to Leicester," Shakespeare's Ovid: Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses (1567), ed. W. H. D. Rouse (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 8-11.

That all men may behold thereof the cleerenesse shining bryght?
 The readers therefore earnestly admonisht are too bee
 Too seeke a further meaning than the letter gives too see.¹¹⁰

Edgar Wind points out that

if the nature of the pagan gods were understood in the mystical sense of the Orphic Platonists, and the nature of the Mosaic Law in the hidden sense of the Cabbala, and if the nature of Christian Grace were unfolded in the fullness of the secrets which St. Paul had revealed to Dionysius the Areopagite
[then] An element of doctrine was thus imparted to classical myths, and an element of poetry to canonical doctrines.¹¹¹

The conviction that "a myth gets its animation from a mystery"¹¹² pervades many of the literary theories of the period, and a serious poem could reasonably be expected to contain such a mystery, veiled but available to the superior reader.

When Isler and Greenlaw provide serious readings of the Arcadia devoid of any mystery, then, they are blinking at a well-established practice and habit of thought that surrounded Sidney. If it is not a poem but a trifle,¹¹³ as Sidney modestly claimed, thrown together in moments of leisure to amuse the Countess, then it need not be looked to for moral seriousness at all. If, on the other hand, it is a poem,

¹¹⁰Golding, "The Epistle," ll. 537-542. He goes on to say that he himself has given only the moral lesson to be learned from the various myths in order to avoid being tedious (by stating the obvious?), but, as shown above, he assumes the presence of the theological level, and in the creation myth he provides some exegesis at the natural level.

¹¹¹Wind, pp. 20-21.

¹¹²Wind, p. 21.

¹¹³Sidney, I, 3-4.

then it is an allegory, probably concealing a mystery about the World Soul, about the Angelic Intelligence, and about God. These truths should reach the reader, not one at a time in an Aristotelian causal sequence, like a scale, but all at once, like the sound of a musical chord.

In the Stephen Scrope translation of the Othea, the false judgment of Midas is likened to the false judgment of Pilate and opposed to the wisdom of Apollo, who insisted "that the sowne of the harpe is more to preise than the sowne of the pipe or of the floyte."¹¹⁴ Allegorically, Apollo was upholding the truth of Christian doctrine, while Midas "iuged the blessid Sone of God to be taken and streyned as an harpe and to be honged on the gebet of the Crosse as a briboure [Impostor]"¹¹⁵ Rosemond Tuve points out that Scrope had himself added in this image of "Christ 'streyned as a harpe' upon the Cross to make the music of love."¹¹⁶ By the late fifteenth century, when Scrope made his translation, the relationship between human and divine truth, temporal and eternal truth, natural and supernatural truth, had frequently been likened to a harmony. Inasmuch as, for Sidney, a poetic creation paralleled the divine creation, it would not

¹¹⁴Scrope, p. 38.

¹¹⁵Scrope, p. 38.

¹¹⁶Tuve, p. 300.

be surprising if he, like Apollo, would play his music of love on a harp of many strings.¹¹⁷

Sidney treats the concept of harmony in several key places in the Arcadia. In Book One, Chapter IX, Musidorus, trying to persuade Pyrocles that it is time to leave Arcadia now and pursue the active life, holds that the man of integrity maintains "a right harmonie betwixt it [his outward behavior] and the inward good"¹¹⁸ Pyrocles' behavior, he feels, is discordant, unworthy of his principles. Pyrocles, in defending his determination to stay in Arcadia awhile, points out the advantages of solitude, for purposes of contemplation: "Trulie as I know not all the particularities, so yet I see the bounds of all these knowledges: but the workings of the minde I finde much more infinite and my solitarines perchaunce is the nurse of these contemplations."¹¹⁹ He points to the perfection of Kalanders garden, the locale of his contemplation, showing that the blades of grass are all "of an equal height," the trees "clothed with a continuall spring."¹²⁰ Next he poses the rhetorical question: "Doth not the aire

¹¹⁷See Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture, p. 101: "ever since the early Greek philosophers creation had been figured as an act of music; and the notion appealed powerfully to the poetically or the mystically minded. . . . But there was the further notion that the created universe was itself in a state of music, that it was one perpetual dance."

¹¹⁸Sidney, I, 55.

¹¹⁹Sidney, I, 56.

¹²⁰Sidney, I, 57.

breath health, which the Birds (delightfull both to eare and eye) do daily solemnize with the sweet consent of their voyces? Is not every eccho thereof a perfect Musicke?"¹²¹ Just as the echo corresponds to the song of the birds, so the birdsong seems to correspond to the music of the spheres. This kind of extrapolation was characteristic in the literature of the period.

Pyrocles goes on to conjecture that a goddess may inhabit the region. Richard Lanham, somewhat cynically, claims that his speech is insincere, that Pyrocles "aims not at praising the scenery but at deceiving his friend."¹²² It seems more likely that Kalander's garden is emblematic of the higher harmony that Pyrocles will contemplate and describe in the prison scene in the last book of both Arcadias. Four chapters later the reader learns from Pyrocles that Basilius' rustic lodges are shaped like stars, and in the following chapter Pyrocles describes the banqueting house in the garden, where the fountain is so arranged that the sun makes a rainbow in the water, and where

¹²¹Sidney, I, 57.

¹²²Richard A. Lanham, The Old Arcadia, in Sidney's Arcadia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 248. In all fairness, Lanham is discussing the Old Arcadia, which I feel was only slightly less serious than the revised version, but which he treats as a comic novel. See A. C. Hamilton, "Et in Arcadia Ego," for a comparison of Lanham's study of the Old Arcadia with Davis' study of the revised version. Hamilton concludes that "most readers will be surprised when Davis bends the Arcadia to a religious reading, and every reader should be surprised when Lanham turns it upside down." Modern Language Quarterly, 27 (September 1966), 350.

there were birds also made so finely, that they did not onely deceive the sight with their figure, but the hearing with their songs; which the watrie instruments did make their gorge deliver. The table at which we sate, was found, which being fast to the floore whereone we sate, and that devided from the rest of the buildings (with turning a vice, which Basilius at first did to make me sport) the table, and we about the table, did all turne rounde, by meanes of water which ranne under, and carried it about as a Mille.¹²³

The flowing of the water is suggestive of the Neoplatonic emanation from the Godhead, the star-shaped lodges of the sphere of the fixed stars or constellations, the revolving table of the revolutions of the seven planets in their respective spheres, and again the birdsong brings to mind the music of the spheres.

According to Leo Spitzer, "the Pythagorean theory of the harmony of the spheres was retained by the Romans and, by their mediation, transmitted to the Christians: the most important document in this connection is the one so dear to Dante . . . the Somnium Scipionis of Cicero"¹²⁴ Spitzer finds the concept of world harmony a prevalent theme in late medieval literature, where birds frequently represented saints and the harmony of their saintly songs, like the harmony of the cosmos, comprised a "gift of Grace."¹²⁵ Even if Sidney

¹²³Sidney, I, 92.

¹²⁴Leo Spitzer, "Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung' Part I," Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion, 2 (1944), 421. See also Seznec, pp. 140-141: Macrobius and Martianus Capella, in the fifth century, assigned a muse to each sphere with Apollo directing from the center and Thalia resting silently on the earth.

¹²⁵Spitzer, p. 451.

had not received this medieval heritage, he would have been familiar with Petrarch's Canzone III, in "To Laura in Death," which contains a paradise in which birds sing sweet songs from the sacred bough of a laurel tree that lightning finally uproots. In the very next stanza appears a "crystal fountain," which "gush'd from a rock" where the poet "sat and drank / With infinite delight," not the water but the songs of the birds, until "the earth before me sank / And bore with it away / The fountain and the scene" ¹²⁶ For Petrarch the death of Laura changed the harmony to discord; for Sidney's Pyrocles, inner harmony and cosmic harmony were to converge in a happy ending. The artifact, the golden bird constructed in such a way that it sings about cosmic harmony, fed by the waters of divine emanation, is, in fact, emblematic of Sidney's poetic intention, for it imitates the action of the cosmic order. Like Keats's Grecian urn and Yeats's golden bird in Byzantium, it bodies forth a literary theory.

Thomas Nashe, in The Unfortunate Traveller, describes the summer banqueting house of a wealthy Roman merchant containing an entire artificial cosmos: the floor of green marble covered with painted flowers, the ceiling of crystal dotted with painted planets that seemed to orbit while emitting "a certaine kinde of soft angelical

¹²⁶ Francesco Petrarca, The Sonnets, Triumphs, and Other Poems of Petrarch, trans. Robert Guthrie MacGregor (New York: Hurst & Co., 1900), p. 252.

murmering musicke in their often windings & going about; which musick the philosophers say in the true heaven, by reason of the grosenes of our senses, we are not capable of."¹²⁷ Standing on the marble floor were artificial trees, and

on the wel clothed boughs of this conspiracie of pine trees against the resembled Sun beames, were pearcht as many sortes of shrill breasted birdes as the Summer hath allowed for singing men in hir silvane chappels. Who though there were bodies without soules, and sweete resembled substances without sense, yet by the mathematicall experimentes of long silver pipes secretlye inrinded in the intrailles of the boughs whereon they sate, and undiscerneable convoid under their bellies into their small throats sloaping, they whistled and freely carold theyr naturall field note But into this silver pipe . . . if anie demand how the wind was breathed Forsoth ye tail of the silver pipe stretcht it selfe into the mouth of a great paire of belowes, where it was close soldered, and bailde about with yron, it coulede not stirre or have anie vent betwixt. Those bellowes with the rising and falling of leaden plummets wounde up on a wheele, dyd beate up and downe uncessantly, and so gathered in wind, serving with one blast all the snarled pipes to and fro of one tree at once. But so closely were all those organizing implements obscured in the corpulent trunks of the trees, that everie man there present renounst coniectures of art, and sayd it was done by inchantment.¹²⁸

Werner Von Koppenfels has indicated that in this passage Nashe was trying to outdo Sidney:

A more striking example of Nashe's imitation by amplification would be hard to find. By adding abundance of technical detail--all this within the framework of the Golden Age Myth--and by using a style more affectedly ornate than even the Arcadian, Nashe

¹²⁷ Thomas Nashe, The Works of Thomas Nashe, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, (1904-1910; rpt., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), II, 282-83.

¹²⁸ Nashe, II, 283-84.

transforms Sidney's "place not fairer in naturall ornaments, then in artificiall inventions" into one of his most impressive and characteristic scene-paintings.¹²⁹

Von Koppenfels draws no other conclusion from the parallel presence of the singing birds, yet the conclusion almost demands voicing: Nashe, like Sidney, was showing that the poet/artist imitates the hierarchical cosmos. In the Anatomie of Absurditie he speaks of poetry as "a more hidden & divine kinde of Philosophie,"¹³⁰ and goes on to draw an analogy between grapevines and allegories, Deucalion's deluge and Noah's flood, in terms reminiscent of Sidney, Golding, Harington, and Fraunce. The point is that, in the sixteenth-century view, the cosmos had emanated from the Godhead into successively lower realms of being (all operating simultaneously), culminating in base matter, and that, as Michael Murrin points out, sixteenth-century poetry imitated the cosmos.¹³¹ The levels of meaning in an allegorical action will correspond to the degrees of spiritual truth in the cosmic order. Just as the late classical writers had recognized correspondences between eight strings on a lute, eight musical modes, eight spheres (counting the fixed stars), and nine muses (Thalia, who is Silence,

¹²⁹Werner Von Koppenfels, "Two Notes on Imprese in Elizabethan Literature: Daniel's Additions to The Worthy Tract of Paulus Jovius; Sidney's Arcadia and the Tournament Scene in The Unfortunate Traveller," Renaissance Quarterly, 24 (Spring 1971), 25.

¹³⁰Thomas Nashe, The Anatomie of Absurditie, in Elizabethan Critical Essays, ed. G. Gregory Smith, I (1904; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 328.

¹³¹See p. 25, above.

is the ninth, but she sits on the earth), so Renaissance writers, who were deeply influenced by their late-classical predecessors, likened the simultaneous functioning of all levels to a musical chord, or a harmony.¹³²

For Sidney the groundplot or foundation of the poem was the narrative, as shown above. How, then, to insure that the narration will strike a chord and imitate the cosmos? The answer may well lie in his use of mythological actions. If the reader is unaware of the mythic parallels in the Arcadia, he is likely to find the work, as Lanham did, a comic novel.¹³³ Once the underlying myths become visible, however, the troubling paradox in the Defence of Poesie dissolves, because the Arcadia is indeed an imitation of mythological actions which do in fact refer to supernatural figures from the realm of Cyclopes, Chimeras, and Furies. The widespread assumption among Sidney's contemporaries that myths were allegories and that only allegories were poems has been too often overlooked by twentieth-century readers. At least some part of Sidney's audience would have recognized at once that four pagan myths form the groundplot of the Arcadia and suffuse it with a mystery: the reign and fall of Saturn, the servitude of Hercules to Omphale, the servitude of Apollo to Admetis, and the temptation,¹³⁴ death, and transfiguration of Hippolytus.

¹³²Seznec, p. 142.

¹³³See above, p. 43, note 122.

¹³⁴The seductive stepmother portion of the Hippolytus myth is sometimes dealt with in Renaissance handbooks under Bellerophon, who also resisted a stepmother's sexual advances.

The following chapters will deal with Basilius as a type of Saturn, Euarchus as a type of Jupiter, Pyrocles as a type of Hercules, Musidorus as a type of Apollo, Gynecia and Plangus' stepmother as types of Phaedra, Erona and Plangus as types of Hippolytus. Their actions and interactions will be found meaningful at the natural level, the heavenly level, and the theological level, because Sidney and his contemporaries would have been aware of these meanings. Edgar Wind has suggested that

the question to what extent any Renaissance painter, even one so renowned for his intellect as Botticelli or Raphael, would have cared to master a philosophical system is perhaps less awkward to answer than it might seem: for we must not confuse our own labour in reconstructing their knowledge with their relatively effortless way of acquiring some of it by oral instruction.¹³⁵

What Wind has said of the painters is equally true of the poets: they probably had little need to read Fulgentius, Boccaccio, Christine de Pisan, Leone Ebreo, and Natale Conti. Because he lacks the advantage of all the good conversation enjoyed by members of the Earl of Leicester's circle, the twentieth-century reader needs to be more exhaustive and more painstaking than Sidney's contemporaries in searching for meaning. The difficulty is not insurmountable, however. Subsequent chapters will attempt to show that the recognition of mythological parallels and their attendant allegorical significance will enrich the present-day reader's understanding of the Arcadia.

¹³⁵Wind, p. 14.

II. THE REIGN, FALL, AND RESURRECTION OF SATURN

The plot of the revised Arcadia¹ can be said to consist of two love affairs that succeed despite obstacles, and the degeneration of a king who is ultimately restored. Since the degenerating king imposes the obstacles on the lovers, the two plot lines are interwoven from the beginning. In keeping with the premise established in the previous chapter, this study will provide an exegesis of many of the events from both plot lines, first by showing that each event parallels a familiar mythological event, and then by transferring the cosmological, astrological, theological, and natural overtones of the myth to the parallel event in the Arcadia. In some instances, this allegorical content will provide a plausible explanation for the inclusion of certain events in the Arcadia that seem otherwise to violate the formal unity of the work. The present chapter will focus on the figure of Basilius, since he is the pivotal character on which both plots revolve.

¹Since the 1593 Arcadia contains essentially all that is in the Old Arcadia, in its revised form, with additional episodes, I shall use the 1593 version throughout this study. Many of the earlier adventures of Pyrocles and Musidorus, which are not given in the Old Arcadia, have significant mythological parallels. Moreover, the 1593 Arcadia contains a fuller account of the mishaps of Plangus and Erona, and of the misdeeds of Plexirtus. I shall assume, also, that any changes sanctioned by the Countess of Pembroke were compatible with Sidney's intention.

A. The Story of Basilius

Basilius, the king of Arcadia, though absent from many pages of the Arcadia, may well be as important thematically as the young heroes, Pyrocles and Musidorus. He first appears by name in Book One, when Kalander describes Basilius to the newly-arrived Musidorus as a king better equipped to inspire love than fear in his subjects. "Whereof the cause is, that though he exceed not in the vertues which get admiration; as depth of wisdom, height of courage and largenesse of magnificence, yet is hee notable in those whiche stirre affection, as trueth of worde, meekenesse, courtesie, mercifulnesse, and liberalitie."² Somewhat later in Book One, after Pyrocles has disguised himself as the Amazon Zelmane, he, too, describes Basilius to Musidorus, stressing the old man's courtesy, and calling him "an honest and well-minded gentleman."³ Basilius, now eighty years old, has reigned successfully for many years despite his lack of magnificence, for his subjects, like their monarch, are renowned for their "well tempered minds." Also like their king, they are unwarlike, and they are convinced that "the shining title of glorie so much affected by other nations, doth in deed helpe little to the happiness of life." Hence, they are "not sturred with false praise to trouble others quiet"⁴ When,

²Sir Philip Sidney, The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963-68), I, 19.

³Sidney, I, 88.

⁴Sidney, I, 19.

ultimately, events make war unavoidable, even Basilius' military strategy is characteristic of a man inclined to be passive, withdrawn, and inactive. When Cecropia has kidnapped the two princesses and Zelmane, Basilius lays siege to her castle, but he

rather used the spade, then the sworde; or the sworde, but to defende the spade; girding aboute the whole towne with trenches; which beginning a good way of from the towne, with a number of well directed Pioners, he still caryed before him till they came to a neere distance, where he builded Fortes, one answering the other, in such sort, as it was a prettie consideration in the discipline of warre, to see building used for the instrument of ruine, and the assayler entrenched as if he were besieged.⁵

In war as in peace, Basilius is more inclined to exercise caution than courage, but in the past Arcadia has prospered under his rule.

Shortly before the story opens, however, Basilius has withdrawn to a pastoral retreat and has turned the reins of government over to Philanax, his most respected courtier, in a paradoxical attempt to avoid losing the throne. An oracle at Delphi had foretold that, at an unspecified point in the future, Basilius' sons-in-law would be on trial for his murder, while a foreigner ruled in his place. Hence, Basilius has withdrawn to a star-shaped lodge, far removed from the capital city of Mantinea, and has forbidden his daughters to marry or even to associate with potential suitors. Yet when Pyrocles, disguised as the Amazon Zelmane, makes his appearance, the elderly king himself

⁵Sidney, I, 412. This quotation also provides an example of the kind of paradox that, in Myrick's opinion, "mars" Sidney's sentences. See p. 1, note 4, above.

becomes a suitor, attempting to initiate an adulterous love affair with this man he believes to be a woman. "You never saw fourscore yeares daunce up and downe more lively in a young Lover," Pyrocles disdainfully reports to Musidorus, "as fine in his apparrell, as if he would make me in love with a cloake" ⁶

Basilius not only proves unable to recognize that Zelmane is Princess Philoclea's suitor, but he also proves unable to recognize that Dametas, the shepherd he assigns to guard Princess Pamela, displays "bestly ignorance" instead of "vertuous simplicitie." ⁷ As the action progresses, it becomes increasingly apparent that Basilius, by assuming the truth of the oracle and attempting to forestall its fulfillment, has lost his ability to distinguish between truth and falsity in his present situation. "Not the sharpest pearcer into masked minds," ⁸ he befriends Clinias, a sly but cowardly actor employed by Cecropia, Basilius' envious sister, to precipitate a peasants' rebellion. But perhaps Basilius' most flagrant oversight occurs in the cave, where he believes himself engaged in amorous delight with Zelmane and fails to discern until dawn that the other occupant of the bed is not Zelmane but Gynecia, his own wife. In his consternation, he disregards Gynecia's warning, swallowing down the apparently harmless contents of a golden cup which in actuality contains a potent drug.

⁶Sidney, I, 93.

⁷Sidney, I, 22.

⁸Sidney, I, 324.

Throughout the book, Basilius' failing vision is underscored by his weakening devotion to Apollo, the god of light. He moves gradually from devout worshipper to passive believer, then to avowed skeptic, and finally to devotee of darkness. At length he sings a hymn to "Night, the ease of care the pledge of pleasure," urging Night to

Be victor still of Phoebus golden treasure:
Who hath our sight with too much sight infected⁹

The hymn completed, he slips into oblivion, into a deathlike sleep that deceives everyone, for he is assumed to be dead.

B. The Myth of Saturn

The Roman God Saturn and the Arcadian King Basilius have much in common: both are old; both have retreated to a rural-agricultural setting; both are inclined to melancholy at certain times and lechery at certain other times; both have misused oracles; both have acted to retard generation; both have had and then lost their ability to perceive truth, and, as a result, have swallowed down something that is not what they think it is. In character, both combine earthy qualities with intellectual ones, decadence with divinity. Both, in a general sense, correspond to the concept of fallen man.

A portion of Sidney's groundplot in the revised Arcadia is devoted to Basilius' decline from a king who maintains control of his country and his emotions to a would-be adulterer who loses control

⁹Sidney, II, 91-92.

of both. This groundplot, since it parallels the Saturn myth told in Hesiod and Ovid, supports four levels of allegorical significance assigned to the myth by a procession of mythographers and philosophers: Fulgentius, in the sixth century; Boccaccio in the fourteenth; Ficino in the fifteenth; Ebreo, Conti, and Cartari in the early sixteenth; and Golding and Fraunce in the later sixteenth century. To understand the natural, cosmological, astrological, and theological significance of the decline, fall, and resurrection of Basilius requires a familiarity with certain aspects of the Saturn myth that Sidney and his readers would probably have possessed. For example, it would be necessary to know about the oracle that prompted Saturn to attempt, erroneously and unsuccessfully, to devour his children. It would also be necessary to know about the jealousy of Saturn's fellow-Titans that led them to throw him into a prison from which his son, Jupiter, magnanimously rescued him. It would be equally essential to know about the later unseating of Saturn, his descent into Tartarus, and his escape into Italy, where he ruled over simple mortals in a pastoral setting. The allegorical significance of Basilius and of those events in which he participates rest upon these four aspects of the Saturn myth.

In Book One of the Metamorphoses, Ovid shows God converting Chaos to Nature by separating the elements, fashioning the earth and heavens, stocking the earth with plants and animals, and filling the heavens with "Gods and Starres and Planets." Lastly, either God or Prometheus

(Ovid is not quite sure which one it was), made man.¹⁰ The god that God (Boccaccio was to call Him Demogorgon) assigned to rule over the newly created world was Saturn, and while he reigned a Golden Age was in progress. During this period, according to Ovid, there were no laws, no punishments, no travel, no farming.

And men themselves contented well with plaine and simple foode,
 Did live by Raspis, heppes and hawes, by cornelles, plummes
 and cherries,
 By sloes and apples, nuttes and pearres, and lothsome bramble
 berries,
 And by the acornes dropt on ground from Joves brode tree in
 fielde.
 The Springtime lasted all the yeare, and Zephyr with his milde
 And gentle blast did cherish things that grew of owne accord.¹¹

All this repose came to an abrupt halt when Jove initiated the Silver Age by dispatching Saturn to "lymbo." Henceforth, four seasons a year replaced eternal springtime, and seasonal changes necessitated human dwellings and the cultivation of the soil.

The Metamorphoses has nothing more specific to say about how Saturn took possession of the throne, about how Jupiter deposed him, or where Lymbo was, but most of Ovid's readers would have already known from Hesiod's Theogony that Saturn had attempted to swallow down all of the male children that Rhea bore to him after he had "learned from Earth and starry Heaven that he was destined to be

¹⁰ Arthur Golding, Shakespeare's Ovid: Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses (1567), ed. W. H. D. Rouse (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), Book I, ll. 1-100.

¹¹ Golding, Book I, ll. 117-123.

overcome by his own son."¹² Rhea, however, outwitted him by making a substitution for each infant, showing him, instead of Jupiter, a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes. By the time that Saturn had vomited up the stone, young Jupiter was already safely hidden in Crete, where Rhea nursed him "in a remote cave beneath the secret places of the holy earth"¹³ After Jupiter had grown to manhood, Hesiod continues, he discovered that his uncles, Saturn's fellow Titans, were launching a rebellion against their ruler. In order to rescue his father, Jupiter led the Olympian gods to victory over the rebellious Titans, hurling all except Saturn into Tartarus, deep inside the earth. Ironically, Jupiter later found that, in order to rule on Olympus himself, he had to send the father he had rescued to join the other Titans in Tartarus. Thus Saturn found himself reigning over an underworld "loathsome and dank, which even the gods abhor," on the far side of "an immoveable threshold of bronze"¹⁴ His only subjects

¹²Hesiod, The Theogony, in Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1914), p. 113. Although available early in the sixteenth century in Greek, the Theogony was first published in a Latin translation, together with the Greek, in Cologne in 1542. From that time on, it was continuously available throughout Europe in Latin translation. Sidney probably read it in the Latin, although, like many of his contemporaries, he knew some Greek, too. The Theogony was first translated into English by William Broome, in 1750. See Robert Watt, Bibliotheca Britannica or a General Index to British and Foreign Literature (Edinburgh, 1824; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, n.d.), I, 491. Since no published English translation existed during Sidney's lifetime, the present twentieth-century translation has been selected.

¹³Hesiod, p. 115.

¹⁴Hesiod, p. 137.

were the brothers who had warred against him earlier. Just as Jupiter hated Saturn, so, according to Hesiod, Saturn, who was "the wily, youngest and most terrible of her [Gaea's] children . . . hated his lusty sire [Uranus]" and gained control of Olympus in the first place only after castrating his own father.¹⁵ Paradoxically, the Golden Age had, then, begun and ended in violence. When Uranus lost his sexual potency, Saturn reigned; when Saturn lost his intellectual power, Jupiter reigned. Yet in the intervals, peace and prosperity prevailed on earth.

Vincenzo Cartari, a sixteenth-century Italian mythographer, gives a different version of the fall of Saturn. He shows the Golden Age beginning after Jupiter expelled his father from Olympus: Saturn fell for many days, until "at the length hee arrived in Italie, where hee lived manie yeares with Ianus, then king of that part of the Countrey where Rome afterwards was built"¹⁶ According to Cartari, Saturn instructed the primitive Italian people in agricultural methods, and Janus repaid him with some neighboring land in Italy, over which he might reign. Only in Italy, Cartari holds, and only during the reign

¹⁵Hesiod, p. 89. According to Boccaccio, Jupiter also castrated Saturn (just as Saturn had castrated Uranus) before he succeeded in driving Saturn from the throne of Olympus. See Giovanni Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri, ed. Vincenzo Romano (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1951), I, 387.

¹⁶Vincenzo Cartari, Le Imagini, con la Spositione de i Dei degli Antichi (1556), trans. Richard Linche, as The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction (London: Adam Islip, 1599), sig. D.

there of Saturn, had there been a Golden Age. In Cartari's version, Jupiter had never hurled Saturn into Tartarus at all. But he gives no explanation for the subsequent decline into an Age of Silver.

Natale Conti, like Cartari, assumes that Saturn reigned over Italy, not over Olympus, during the Golden Age, and he finds it paradoxical that "under the reign of Saturn the majesty of the laws [of nature] was sacredly and religiously honored and that each one lived with all equity and innocence, and that nevertheless he had himself wickedly and unhappily violated the laws of nature by which men are conjoined together by trying to kill his children."¹⁷ However, kings, according to Conti, must sometimes be forgiven for doing the expedient thing in order to retain their command. Saturn, he insists, was a good ruler, and when Jupiter deposed him, this was not an advance, for during the Golden Age men obeyed the laws that were not so much

contained in books and manuscripts, or engraved in tablets of copper, as imprinted on the hearts of men And in fact, those who regulate their lives only according to ordinances of law, fearing to incur punishment, and whose natural condition

¹⁷Noel le Comte, Mythologie: c'est à dire, Explication des Fables, cōtenant les genealogies des Dieux, les cerimonies de leurs sacrifices, Leur gestes, adventures, amours, et presque tous les preceptes de La Philosophie naturelle & morale (Rouen: Jean Osmont, Manassez de Preaux & Jacque Besongne, 1611), p. 86: "sous le regne de Saturne la majesté des loix estoit saintement & religieusement honoree, & que chascun vivoit avec toute equité & innocence; & que neantmoins il ait lui-mesme si meschamment & malheureusement violé les liens de nature par lesquels les hommes sont conioints ensemble en faisant mourir ses enfans." Id est Natale Conti. The location of accent marks in this edition has been scrupulously followed in all quotations throughout this study, even though the marks have not been placed according to modern usage.

and movements do not do what he is expected to do, cannot be good men; on the other hand, those who do not commit any misdemeanor or offense out of fear of being punished, ought not be called men of goodness: but only men not bad.¹⁸

C. Basilius as a Type of Saturn

If Sidney shared Conti's evaluation of Saturn's character, and if he intended Basilius to be a type of Saturn, then he may have expected the reader to recognize that Basilius, even in exile, has many admirable qualities, and that Euarchus,¹⁹ who restores order in Arcadia while Basilius lies immobile under a black velvet pall, is too dedicated to the letter of the law to be wholly admirable. Basilius, in fact, when he awakens from his deathlike slumber, is compelled to temper some of the Jovian Euarchus' harsh decrees, rescinding the death sentences that Euarchus has issued for Pyrocles, Musidorus, and Gynecia.

¹⁸Le Comte, p. 92: "Mais il leur fit scavoir que cette sainte & sacree reverence deuë aux loix & à la justice, ne doit pas tant estre contenuë és livres & escripts, ou gravee en tableaux de cuiure, comme imprimee és coeurs des hommes . . . Et de faict, celuy qui regle seulement sa vie selon l'ordonnance des loix craignant de les enfreindre de peur d'encourir punition, & qui de son propre naturel & mouvement ne fait pas ce qu'il est tenu de faire, ne peut estre homme de bien: d'autant que celuy qui ne commet aucune meschanceté ou delict de peur d'estre chastié, ne doit pas estre appellé homme de bien; mais seulement, homme non-mauvais."

¹⁹To the extent that Euarchus adheres more rigidly to law than Basilius does, Euarchus can be regarded as a type of Jove who, temporarily at least, takes over the throne formerly occupied by Basilius. In this context only, the reign of Basilius seems to correspond to the Golden Age, and the brief reign of Euarchus to the Silver Age. To some extent Euarchus' military successes in Asia Minor seem also to correspond to Jove's successful suppression of the rebellion of the Titans.

Moreover, even before Zelmane's arrival in Arcadia, Basilius displayed a Stoic passivity that seemed to stem from the strength of his convictions rather than from the weakness of his character. His patience, like his propensity for melancholy, is presented to the reader, however, only in flashbacks. In Book Two, for example, Philoclea tells Pyrocles how her father had once, on the road to Megalopolis, encountered Plangus, who was in a state of utter despair over the imprisonment and threatened execution of his beloved, Erona. Although the dialogue that ensued between Basilius and Plangus is primarily about Plangus' grief and Erona's plight, it also provides an occasion for Basilius, then in his prime, to express his theodicy: that the gods send human suffering to serve a higher purpose.

Alas while we are wrapt in foggie mist
 Of our selfe-love (so passions do deceave)
 We thinke they hurt, when most they do assist.
 To harme us wormes should that high Justice leave
 His nature? nay, himselfe? for so it is.²⁰

When Plangus continues to reproach the gods and to lament the beautiful Erona's dangerous predicament, Basilius replies:

Yet Reason saith, Reason should have abilitie,
 To hold these worldly things in such proportion,
 As let them come or go with even facilitie.

²⁰Sidney, I, 228. After this dialogue took place between Basilius and Plangus, Basilius recorded it in verse, as "an exercise" (I, 226). It was written in "a little booke of foure or five leaves of paper," which the "water-spaniell" took to Amphialus while Philoclea was swimming in the River Ladon (I, 222). Afterward, Zelmane, in "her" unsatisfactory duel with Amphialus, retrieved it for Philoclea (I, 223-24).

But our Desires tyrannical extortion
 Doth force us there to set our chiefe delightfulness,
 Where but a baiting place is all our portion.²¹

As for the melancholy that attends the Stoic resignation, even Kalandar, who strongly disapproves of Basilius' abdication, acknowledges to Musidorus that Basilius has attracted to his Arcadian retreat a group of shepherds who compose oral poems "sometimes under hidden formes uttering such matters, as otherwise they durst not deale with," and that two or three strangers have also joined the group

whom inwarde melancholies having made weery of the worldes eyes, have come to spende their lives among the countrie people of Arcadia; & their conversation being well approved, the prince vouchsafeth them his presence, and not onely by looking on, but by great courtesie and liberalitie, animates the Shepheardes the more exquisitely to labour for his good liking. So that there is no cause to blame the Prince for sometimes hearing them; the blame-worthinesse is, that to heare them, he rather goes to solitariness, then makes them come to companie.²²

These flashbacks to a serene, contemplative Basilius suggest that Sidney invested his character with sufficient moral stature to make his fall potentially tragic, as Saturn's was, and that Euarchus, who restores order to Arcadia, might be Basilius' opposite without necessarily being his superior.

Ironically, an oracle predicting a fall started Basilius on a course of action that led to this fall; an analogous oracle had effected an equally ironic and analogous fall in the Saturn myth. Abraham

²¹Sidney, I, 230.

²²Sidney, I, 28.

Fraunce writes that "Saturne fearing the prediction of Oracles, that his owne sonne should expell him out of his kingdom, consulting with his brother Titan, resolved to devoure all the sonnes, that his wife Opis [Rhea] should beare unto him; and for that intent commaunded her to shew him every childe immediately after the birth thereof."²³

Basilus, having experienced some "strange visions" and some "melancholy dreames," consulted an oracle, too, traveling to Delphos to hear, from Apollo, that

Thy elder care shall from thy carefull face
 By princely meane be stolne, and yet not lost
 Thy yonger shall with Natures blisse embrace
 An uncouth love, which Nature hateth most.
 Both they themselves unto such two shall wed,
 Who at thy beer, as at a barre, shall plead;
 Why thee (a living man) they had made dead.
 In thy owne seate a forraine state shall sit.
 And ere that all these blowes thy head doo hit,
 Thou, with thy wife, adultery shall commit.²⁴

Philanax, whom Basilus appointed Regent to rule in his place, reveals, early in Book One, a profound respect for Basilus as a ruler, in a letter that he has written pleading with his king not to retire:

These thirtie yeares you have so governed this region, that neither your Subjectes have wanted justice in you, nor you obedience in them; & your neighbors have found you so hurtlesly strong, that they thought it better to rest in your friendshippe, then make newe triall of your enmitie. If this then have proceeded out of the good constitution of your state, and out

²³Abraham Fraunce, The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch: Entituled, Amintas Dale (1592; MLA Rhotograph Series, No. 75), sig. 6^v.

²⁴Sidney, I, 327.

of a wise providence, generally to prevent all those things, which might encomber your happiness: why should you now seeke newe courses, since your owne ensample comforts you to continue, and that it is to me most certain . . . that yet no destinie, nor influence whatsoever, can bring mans witte to a higher point, then wisdom and goodnes?²⁵

In Philanax's eyes, Basilius is clearly a superior character, not an unfit king.

D. Cosmological Exegesis

Just as Conti, in his cosmological exegesis of the Saturn myth, ranks Saturn higher than Jupiter, so Sidney may have ranked the unfallen Basilius higher than the inflexible Euarchus. Conti equates Saturn's father, Caelus (or Uranus), with God, and Saturn with the Angelic Mind, "which gives law generally to all things."²⁶ Saturn is said to have castrated his father, Conti explains, simply because this Mind could only be created once and never duplicated.²⁷ When Saturn transmitted the divine energy to "the ethereal region, then one calls it Jupiter, but when he descends into the bodies below to excite them and prepare for generation, then they name him Venus."²⁸ In other words, Jupiter

²⁵Sidney, I, 24-25.

²⁶Le Comte, p. 98: "qui donne loy generalement à toutes choses"

²⁷Uranus had the potential to engender only one Saturn; analogously, God exerted His total power in creating the only possible Angelic Mind. The castration of Uranus symbolizes the fact that, once the Angelic Mind came into being, all lower modes of being could come into existence only through the Mind.

²⁸Le Comte, p. 98: "la region etheree, lors on l'appelle Iupiter: mais quand il descēd és corps d'embas pour les exciter & preparer à la generation, lors on le nomme Venus."

represents, for Conti, that aspect of the World Soul that looks upward to the Angelic Mind and beyond that to God; Venus, on the other hand, represents a lower aspect, which imprints the divine Forms on base matter, thereby creating the physical world itself. Saturn, however, occupies the Divine Mind, the realm just below God, where the Ideas reside eternally, emanating an influence that penetrates the physical universe and becomes Jupiter.

Sidney probably expected his audience not only to recognize that Basilius was a type of Saturn, but also to know, from the mythological handbooks of Conti and others, where to place this Saturnine figure within the Neoplatonic ontology. In general, the Renaissance mythographers had adopted the world view that Ficino and Ebreo had imposed upon the myths about creation and the Golden Age. Ficino, for example, in his Commentary on Plato's Symposium, had previously described the creation of the world as the last stage of a process initiated by the Godhead, who first created the Angelic Mind by setting apart a portion of chaos. When this chaos

turned toward God, it was illumined by the glory of God himself. In the glow of His radiance its own passion was set ablaze. When its whole passion was kindled, it drew close to God, and in cleaving to Him, assumed form. For God, who is omnipotent, created in the Angelic Mind, as it cleaved to him, the forms of all things to be created . . . the globes of heaven and the elements, the stars, the kinds of vapors, the forms of stones, metals, plants, and animals.²⁹

²⁹Marsilio Ficino, Commentary on Plato's Symposium, in Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium, trans. and ed. Sears Reynolds Jayne (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1944), p. 127. Ficino completed his first version of the Commentary, in Latin, in 1467, and

Men call these forms by the names of the mythological gods, Ficino continues, and "in this way all the gods are assigned to certain parts of the lower world," but their Ideas actually reside in the Angelic Mind, where "in some spiritual way was painted, so to speak, everything which we sense in these bodies," or gods.³⁰

The next stage in the creation of the cosmos, according to Ficino, was the formation of the World-Soul out of the remaining chaos:

Now in the same way that the Angelic Mind, just born and formless, was turned by love toward God and received from Him its form, so also the World-Soul turned toward the Mind and toward God, from whom it was born. And, although it was at first formless and a chaos, it was directed by love toward the Angelic Mind, and of forms received from the Mind became a world; and so with the matter of this world, although in the beginning it lay a formless chaos without the ornament of forms, attracted by innate love, it turned toward the Soul and offered itself submissively to it, and by the mediation of this love, it found ornament, from the Soul, of all the forms which are seen in this world; and thus out of a chaos was made a world.³¹

Ficino goes on, in a later chapter, to distinguish between the Forms called by the names of gods in the Angelic Mind and the Forms called

the second in 1475. According to Jayne, he translated the second version "almost immediately into Italian." Each version was published shortly after completion. See Jayne's "Introduction," p. 18. According to Nesca Robb, the definitive edition of Ficino's *Opera Omnia* was published in Basle, in 1573. See Nesca A. Robb, *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance* (1935; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1968), p. 300. Numerous editions of Ficino's *Commentary* followed, but none in English until this one, in 1944. Since no published English translation was available to Sidney, I have quoted from the present twentieth-century translation throughout this study.

³⁰Ficino, p. 127.

³¹Ficino, p. 129. See also note 20, p. 126, where Jayne distinguishes between Plotinus' conception of emanation as a perpetual process and Ficino's conception of definite steps performed in an established sequence.

by the names of the same gods in the World Soul. Unlike Conti, he finds each god present at all levels of Being. Within the Angelic Mind, which Ficino calls Uranus, Saturn exists as essence, Jupiter as life, and Venus as intelligence. Within the World Soul, the comprehension of divinity is called Saturn, the operation of the heavens is called Jupiter, and the generation of lower forms is called Venus.³² In other words, Saturn is at every level associated with abstraction and contemplation, Jupiter with actual existence and activity. Sidney seems, in the Arcadia, to have transferred these associations to Basilius and Euarchus respectively, so that, in part, the account of Basilius' abdication is opposed to Euarchus' military campaigns in Asia Minor, the contemplative life to the active. Basilius listens to the melancholy songs of shepherds and prays to Apollo, while Euarchus imposes Greek rule on small kingdoms and lays siege to Byzantium.

E. Astrological Exegesis

Boccaccio, a hundred years before Ficino, had described the astrological influence which the planet Saturn bestowed upon its natives, and the later mythographers, adopting his astrological explanations, carried them forward. Saturn, Boccaccio explains,

is the one who assigns toil to those attending the cultivation of the fields, the measuring and division of the earth, of long and laborious peregrinations, of jails, of sorrows and griefs . . . of affliction, of destruction, of the departing

³²See Ficino, p. 142.

of the dead and their remains All of which similarly are attributes of the man Saturn, as any man having eyes will easily see He was made gloomy and displayed melancholy in his humor and sadness in his exile. He is considered an old man, both because he was then [old] while he was being driven out and because old men are repulsive in appearance, and as much more ill-smelling, and because in council and in shrewdness they are most valuable because of their years.³³

Like Boccaccio, but less colorfully, Leone Ebreo provided an astrological explanation of Saturn's dual character, and Ebreo's Saturn, like Boccaccio's, resembles Sidney's Basilius in many respects. That is, he is sometimes admirable, sometimes contemptible. Saturn is, in Ebreo's account, the son of Caelus (heaven) and Vesta (earth), and when Vesta's qualities prevail, Saturn's astrological influence is largely malevolent. "He is pictured old, sad, ugly," writes Ebreo, "of a meditative aspect, ill-clad and carrying a scythe in his hand, because he renders such the men over whom he rules, and the scythe is an implement of agriculture, to which he addicts them."³⁴ There are obvious parallels between this picture of Saturn and Sidney's Basilius, a king eighty years old who retires to a rustic lodge in

³³Boccaccio, II, 389-90: "Est preterea significator operis ad agriculturam spectantis, mensurationum terrarum atque divisionum, peregrinationum longarum ac laboriosarum, carcerum, tristiarum atque merorum . . . et afflictionum, destructionum, amissionum mortuorum et eorum reliquiarum Que omnia quam conformia sint Saturno homini attributis, quoniam facile videbit oculatus homo Mestus autem fingitur, ut melanconica complexio et exilii tristitia ostendatur. Senex, et quia tunc erat dum pulsus est, et quia turpis faciei sint senes, et ut plurimum fetidioris, et quia consilio et astutia, qua summe valent annosi, valuit ipse."

³⁴Leone Ebreo, The Philosophy of Love, trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and Jean H. Barnes (London: The Soncino Press, 1937), p. 134.

the forest. His daughter Pamela exemplifies his inexorable influence. When Prince Pyrocles of Macedonia first meets her, she is dressed in the rustic garb of a peasant girl, as one condemned by a Saturnine father to a rural life unsuited to a princess of royal blood. Yet her manner remains regal, and between her breasts she wears a diamond set in black horn bearing the defiant inscription: "yet still my selfe."³⁵

Ebreo also offers an astrological interpretation of that part of the myth in which Saturn attempts to devour his own children:

The allegory is that Saturn destroys all the beauties and excellencies shed on the lower world by the other planets and especially what proceeds from Jupiter, that being the highest and most glorious: as justice, liberality, magnificence, religion, elegance, splendour, beauty, love, grace, benignity, freedom, prosperity, wealth, pleasures and the like: all of which Saturn ruins and destroys.³⁶

The belief that the planet Saturn exerted a baleful influence was widespread during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For example, Ficino, born under Saturn, had been as convinced of this baleful influence as Ebreo was. Seznec says of Ficino that

his own inner life is shadowed by fear of Saturn, the sinister ancient who presided over his birth. He knows that he cannot escape that baleful influence, which condemns him to melancholy. At the most, he can try to turn it into other channels, to use it for good: Saturn, demon of inertia and sterility, is also the presiding genius of intellectual concentration. But even so, Saturn's patronage imposes strict limitations on those to whom it extends, and it is only within these limitations that

³⁵Sidney, I, 90.

³⁶Ebreo, p. 136.

man is free to shape his personality. This conviction literally obsesses Ficino, and his friends try in vain to distract him from his somber thoughts.³⁷

Saturn is, nevertheless, the son of heaven as well as earth, the "first of the planets and nearest to the heaven of stars."³⁸ When he is in the ascendant, then, he renders his natives valuable in councils, according to Boccaccio,³⁹ and bestows upon them "great intelligence, deep meditation, true science, right counsels and constancy of spirit,"⁴⁰ according to Ebreo. This description of Saturn's better nature fits the Basilius who had inspired the undying loyalty of Kalander and Philanax, the Basilius for whom the shepherds mourned in the Fourth Eclogues.

Basilius, as a type of Saturn, has a dual nature, and, like his mythological counterpart, he is often admirable.⁴¹ He begins as the successful ruler of a prosperous kingdom. His reign is a Golden Age, a time of simplicity and peace. Then he degenerates, destroying

³⁷Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art, trans. Barbara Sessions, Bollingen Series, No. 38 (1953; rpt. New York: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 60-61. Seznec's information came from Ficino's correspondence with Cavalcanti: Epistolae (Florence, 1495), III, p. lxix, v.

³⁸Ebreo, p. 134.

³⁹Boccaccio, see p. 390.

⁴⁰Ebreo, p. 134.

⁴¹For a statement of a contrary view, see the reference to Lanham, p. 43, above.

what he has created. The peasants grow restive and revolt. His sister and her son, Amphialus, begin to covet the crown. And within his own soul, passion usurps the reign of reason. When earthiness finally overcomes the divinity within him, he falls. What Ebreo says about Saturn's dual nature applies equally well to Basilius' dual nature:

from his father's side he bestows divinity of soul, and from his mother's, corporal ugliness and decay, wherefore he symbolises poverty, death, burial, and things hidden beneath the earth, stripped of bodily garb and adornment. For this reason they imagined that Saturn devoured all his sons, but not his daughters, because he destroys all individuals but preserves their mothers, the roots of the earth. So he is rightly called son of Heaven and Earth.⁴²

Some of Sidney's groundplot may well have stemmed from the astrological implications of the reign and fall of Saturn. Ugly and aged, Basilius descends into a dark cave, swallows down what he believes to be a refreshing drink, falls into a death-like slumber, lies inert under a black velvet pall. Yet thirty hours later he rises again, returns to his rightful seat of judgment, and reverses the harsh sentences that Euarchus, the Jovian type, has just passed: instead of being buried alive, Gynecia will regain her former position of honor; instead of being thrown from a tower, Pyrocles will marry Basilius' younger daughter, Philoclea, who will thus avoid having to enter a nunnery; and finally, instead of losing his head, Musidorus, himself the Duke of Thessaly, will marry Pamela, Basilius' elder daughter, who is next in line to the throne of Arcadia. So Basilius, like his prototype Saturn, shows himself to be a son of heaven and

⁴²Ebreo, p. 134.

earth, a baleful influence and a benevolent one. First he halts the generative process; then he restores it.

F. Natural Exegesis

Those events in the Arcadia which record the degeneration of Basilius as a ruler lend themselves to allegorical interpretations at the natural level as well as the astrological level. Ficino, as stated above, equated Saturn at the heavenly level with essence (or abstraction), at the natural level with the comprehension of divinity.⁴³ At the natural level of allegory, Ebreo adds that

Saturn was first supreme in the world of birth, restraining seeds within the earth and congealing the semen of animals at the outset of conception: however, in the season when things that have been born grow and acquire grace, it is Jupiter who rules and presides over them, and, depriving his father Saturn of his sovereignty, relegates him to the nether world, i.e. the dark places wherein are hidden the seeds of things before birth, over which seeds Saturn properly bears sway.⁴⁴

The dark cave into which King Basilius crept for what he believed to be an assignation with a young Amazon girl (really Pyrocles in disguise) surely corresponds to a "nether world" where proper marriages between two princes and two princesses are being prevented. Basilius is, in a sense, forestalling the fruitfulness of his heirs. The marriages, and the future progeny that might ensue from the marriages, lie dormant, like seeds in the ground, while the king seeks an illicit

⁴³See p. 67, above.

⁴⁴Ebreo, p. 137.

(and impossible) love affair with the man who wants to marry the king's daughter. The cave bears some resemblance to Hesiod's Tartarus,⁴⁵ where Jupiter imprisoned his father: an immovable "threshold of bronze" where roots are "unending" but inactive.⁴⁶

The cave in the Arcadia may, in fact, be the kind of image Tuve had in mind when she spoke of those rare occasions when an image transmits "subterranean meanings not present to the conscious mind of an author, but so truly related to what he is endeavoring to express that his imagery travels beyond the mark he shot at and thus conveys them."⁴⁷ Pyrocles, disguised as Zelmane, first notices the cave in the second part of Book III, after the war with Amphialus has ended and the princesses have been recovered. Basilius, his spirituality at its lowest ebb, has just told Zelmane that he loves her more than he loves Apollo (god of truth). "He was now enclined to returne to his pallace in Mantineia, and there he hoped he should be beter able to shew how much he desired to make al he had hers"⁴⁸ Zelmane, fearing that her disguise will be discovered in Mantineia, forestalls such a move by offering Basilius a promise of certain "favors to make him love the place, where the favors were received"⁴⁹ After

⁴⁵Described above, p. 57.

⁴⁶Hesiod, Theogony, p. 137.

⁴⁷Rosemond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 368.

⁴⁸Sidney, II, 6.

⁴⁹Sidney, II, 6.

assuring her that his "age is not without vigoure," Basilius departs, and at this point Pyrocles discovers the cave which will figure largely in the groundplot⁵⁰ or plan of action that he is devising to enable him to elope with Philoclea.

Being come even neere the lodge, she saw the mouth of a cave, made as it should seeme by nature in despite of Arte: so fitly did the riche growing marble serve to beautifie the vawt of the first entrie. Underfoot, the ground semed mynerall, yeelding such a glistering shewe of golde in it, as they say the Ryver Tagus carries in his sandie bed. The cave framed out into many goodly spacious Roomes There rann through it a little sweete River, which had lefte the face of the earth to drowne her selfe for a smale waye in this darke but pleasant mansion. The very first shewe of the place entised the melancholy minde of Zelmane to yeelde her selfe over there to the flood of her owne thoughtes.⁵¹

The cave is a place of melancholy, as Tartarus was for Saturn, whether the threshold be of marble or of bronze. The darkness within is the absence of the light of spiritual truth. Gynecia has gone farther into the cave than Pyrocles has, but he hears her voice and follows. When they meet, she tells Pyrocles that she knows he is a man and begs him to satisfy her passion, threatening to tell Basilius about him if

⁵⁰Sidney, II, 40. Sidney uses this term twice in the Arcadia (the differences in spelling are insignificant). The second time it appears is in I, on 146, when Gynecia, alone in the forest and torn between desire for Pyrocles and shame for her desire, asks herself "Where canst thou find any smal ground-plot for hope to dwel upon?" Both in the Defence and in the Arcadia the word "groundplot" suggests a sequence of events. However, in the Arcadia Sidney uses it in the sense of a future sequence, or plan of action, whereas in the Defence he uses it in the sense of a sequence of events which supports a structure of meaning.

⁵¹Sidney, II, 7.

he refuses. Pyrocles is forced to promise a meeting in the cave in the near future, and his plan turns out to be that Basilius, not Pyrocles, will steal into the dark cave to copulate with Gynecia, who will be disguised as Zelmane but expecting Pyrocles, not her own husband, to enter her bed.

There are overtones from Apuleius' Golden Ass hovering over all of the events that transpire in the cave in Sidney's Arcadia. In the Golden Ass, Lucius, the narrator, sees in his aunt's garden a white marble statue of Diana surrounded by stone guard dogs. Behind the dogs, carved in stone, was

a cavern, environed with moss, herbs, leaves, sprigs, green branches, and boughs of vines growing in and about the same, and within the image of the statue glistened and shone marvellously upon the stone; under the brim of the rock hung apples and grapes polished finely, wherein art (envying nature) shewed its great cunning: for they were so lively set out that you would have thought that now autumn, the season of wine, had breathed upon them the colour of ripeness, and that they might have been pulled and eaten; and if, bending down, thou didst behold the running water, which seemed to spring and leap under the feet of the goddess, thou mightest mark the grapes which hung down and seemed even to move and stir like the very grapes of the vine. Moreover amongst the branches of the stone appeared the image of Acteon looking eagerly upon the goddess: and both in the stream and in the stone he might be seen already beginning to be turned into a hart as he waited to spy Diana bathe.⁵²

Walter Davis suggests that the statue of Actaeon was shown to Lucius as a warning against the wrong kind of love,⁵³ but it also seems significant

⁵² Lucius Apuleius, The Golden Ass (1566), trans. William Adlington, ed. Harry C. Schnur (1962; rpt. New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 45.

⁵³ Walter R. Davis, A Map of Arcadia: Sidney's Romance in Its Tradition, in Sidney's Arcadia, Walter R. Davis and Richard A. Ianham (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 15-16.

that the statue of Diana and Actaeon is outside of the cave, and only its reflection appears within the cave itself. Moreover, something about the cave's beautiful but hard and repellent threshold suggests that Actaeon's mistake lay in viewing a divinity, not with the intellect, but with the sensual eye. Plato's allegorical cave in the Republic comes to mind, where values are inverted and people aspire toward the shadows instead of the Reality of the sun.

Apuleius, like Sidney, used plots that paralleled myths, thereby transferring the allegorical content of the ancient myth to the plot of his newly composed work. Apuleius' cave, like Sidney's, probably has saturnine implications that were more immediately obvious in late-classical times, and during the Renaissance, than they are today. The autumnal fruit carved into the stone would have reminded earlier readers that Saturn carried a sickle for reaping the harvest and allegorically for cutting down people who had ripened with age. Boccaccio explains that

our poets, when they feigned that Saturn had many children and devoured all but four of them wished to have understood from this fiction nothing else than that Saturn is time, in which everything is produced, and as everything is produced in time, it likewise is the destroyer of all and reduces all to nothing. Of the four children that he did not devour, the first is Jove, that is the element of fire; the second is Juno, the wife and sister of Jove, that is the air, by the means of which fire works its effects below; the third is Neptune, god of the sea, that is the element of water; the fourth and last is Pluto, god of the inferno, that is the earth, lower than any other element.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Giovanni Boccaccio, The Life of Dante, in The Earliest Lives of Dante, trans. James Robinson Smith, Yale Studies in English (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1901), p. 52.

In other words, Saturn, as time, devours individuals, but not the material elements of which they are composed.

At whatever point in prehistory the Greek god Cronus merged with the Roman god Saturn, Saturn became associated with Time, because Cronus-Chronos was an easily recognized pun. Sidney's contemporary, Abraham Fraunce, availing himself of this etymology, provides an interpretation of the Saturn myth, at the level of natural allegory, where the meaning resides in the World Soul: Saturn devouring his male offspring represents Time, which

consumeth individua, this thing, and that thing, but not the roote and ground of things, figured by the female sex. Juno the ayre, with Jupiter the fire, and Neptune and Pluto the water and earth, are not devoured: for, the foure elements continue still: but the rest are still subject to continuall corruption: corruption I meane in part, which is alwaies a generation, of some other particularitie, not a totall or generall destruction: which is the cause, that time cannot digest and utterly consume, but is enforced to vomite and restore even those very bodies which bee first devoured, according to thatould ground which giveth us to learne, that as nothing can be made of nothing, so nothing can be made to be nothing.⁵⁵

A thousand years before Fraunce, Fulgentius had associated the reign of Saturn with the time of the harvest, and, like Fraunce, the connection he offers is etymological. Fulgentius, however, based his interpretation on the Latin name, Saturn, instead of the Greek name, Chronos. In his Mythologies, he described Saturn as

an elderly man, with his head covered, carrying a scythe. His manhood was cut off and, thrown into the sea, gave birth to Venus. Let us then hear how Philosophy interprets this. She

⁵⁵Fraunce, sig. 7^r.

says thus: Saturn first secured dominion in Italy; and seizing people for his harvest prerogative, he was named Saturn, for glutting (saturando). . . . He is reported as having devoured his own sons because every season devours what it produces; and for good reason he carries a scythe, either because every season turns back on itself like the curved blades of scythes or on account of the crops; whence also he is said to have been castrated, because all the strength of crops is cut down and cast into the fluids of the belly as into the sea, just as Venus is produced from these circumstances because they necessarily produce lust.⁵⁶

Fulgentius, then, like Fraunce, associated Saturn with time and seasonal changes, but in addition Fulgentius associated Saturn with over-indulgence, with an overeating of the fruit that produces a lust in the belly. A god, or a king, whose lust halts the generative process is, in a sense, devouring his own offspring, and when, in the Arcadia, Basilius vows that his daughters are never to marry and then himself lusts after his daughter's lover, he may be functioning in the ground-plot of the Arcadia as a type of Saturn.

Conti, like Fulgentius, associates Saturn not only with Time and the harvesting of crops, but also with lust:

Saturn was strongly inclined to luxury and lecherous acts: that is why they have told this story about him, that loving Philyra, daughter of Ocean, as he was in that rapture of his love, Ops happening to catch him in the act: but from the shame that he had about it, he changed himself to a horse⁵⁷

⁵⁶Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, The Mythologies, in Fulgentius the Mythographer, trans. and ed. Leslie George Whitbread (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), p. 49. Notice that Fulgentius treats Saturn and Uranus as one figure.

⁵⁷Le Comte, p. 95: "Saturne fut fort enclin à luxure & actes veneriens: c'est pourquoy l'on en fait ce conte, qu'aimant Philyre fille de l'Ocean, comme il estoit en la iouyssance de ses amours, Ops survenant le prit sur le faict: mais de honte qu'il en eut il se transforma en cheval"

If Sidney did not meet with this association in Fulgentius, he probably found it in Conti, or in conversation with others who had found it in Conti. Perhaps Basilius, shamed by Gynecia after the night in the cave, just as Saturn was shamed by Ops, is also, in a sense, transforming himself to a creature of a lower order when he loses consciousness and falls to the ground, for he was renouncing the light of reason, the uniquely human faculty, when he renounced Apollo. An unconscious man and a conscious beast are equally devoid of reason, equally dead to moral perceptions. Ficino's Saturn, at the level of the World Soul, represented the comprehension of divinity.⁵⁸ When this comprehension has totally dissipated, Saturn is no longer Saturn.

G. The Pan Myth

In typical Renaissance fashion, Sidney did not confine himself to a single myth throughout the Arcadia, but synthesized, instead, a variety of myths, which in combination mean more than the sum of the parts.⁵⁹ Sidney seems more successful than his contemporaries, however,

⁵⁸See pp. 67 and 72, above.

⁵⁹John Harington, for example, in his notes appended to Book VIII of the Orlando Furioso, explains that "Angellicas horse that carried her into the sea alludes to the bull that bare Europa such an other voiage." In the notes appended to Book X, however, Harington finds that "In Angellica tyde to the rocke and deliuered by Rogero, he alludes manifestly to the tale in Ouid of Andromade and Perseus who with his shield turned the beholders into stones." Sir John Harington, Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse (1591; facs. rpt. Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1970), pp. 63 and 80.

in interweaving the myths into a unified effect.⁶⁰ That portion of Sidney's groundplot which deals with the decline, fall, and restoration of Basilius is a particularly good example of Sidney's ability to weave a unity out of diversity, because here a single character represents more than one mythological figure. When Basilius, at the nadir of his spiritual strength, slips out of his own bed in the lodge (where he has been lying beside Pyrocles disguised as Zelmane disguised as Queen Gynecia) to descend into the dark cave and enter the bed of Gynecia (whom he believes to be Zelmane who is really Prince Pyrocles), he is no longer a Saturnine figure. Sidney has transformed him from a contemplative Saturn to an earthy and sensual Pan. The transformation

⁶⁰ Basilius is, however, the only major character in the Arcadia who parallels more than one mythological figure. The fact that the mythological parallels are, in general, sustained from one book to the next throughout the Arcadia may be related in some way to the fact that the episodes in the Arcadia, unlike the episodes in most Renaissance epics, are attached to the main plot. Kenneth Myrick, in Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman (1935; rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), points out that, according to Minturno, "the special function of the episodes is to give still further magnitude and variety, and thus to clothe the heroic poem in a suitable magnificence" (p. 159). Hence, in revising, Sidney felt compelled to increase the number of episodes, if the Arcadia was to become a heroic poem. Minturno did not require, however, that the numerous episodes be related to the main plot, as long as they were narrated by a character instead of by the poet. Myrick theorizes that Sidney "was dissatisfied" with "the loose structure of the medieval romances" and, consequently, he "was trying to weave every episode into the central pattern" (p. 169). Only the episodes of Pontus and Phrygia, says Myrick, are totally outside the main plot of the Arcadia. I plan to show, in future chapters, that even these two episodes can be related to the main plot if their mythological significance is kept in mind.

is as complete and as meaningful as any of Ovid's metamorphoses, and any reader familiar with Ovid's Fasti [Calendar] would have recognized that Sidney's was a variation of this familiar, farcical theme. Sidney facilitates the reader's recognition with a timely allusion: Basilius, getting into his own bed, trying not to waken his wife, lifts up the cover "as gently as (I thinke) poor Pan did, when in stead of Ioles bedde, he came into the rough imbracings of Hercules" ⁶¹

Ovid, using the names Pan and Faunus interchangeably, ⁶² tells an amusing tale about Faunus/Pan supposed to have occurred during the Golden Age, before the fall of Saturn.

The Arcadians are said to have tenanted the earth before the birth of Jupiter, and that nation existed before the moon. Their mode of life was like that of the beasts of the field, spent amid no comforts; they were still a multitude unskilled in arts and uncivilized ⁶³ . . No steer then panted under the crooked plough

⁶¹ Sidney, II, 50.

⁶² Mark P. O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, Classical Mythology (1971; rpt. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1972), p. 406: "The Arcadian king, Evander, was said to have come to Rome and there to have founded the first settlement upon the Palatine hill. On the side of the hill is a cave, the Lupercal, where the she-wolf (Lupa) was said later to have suckled Romulus and Remus, and here in former times Evander worshiped his Arcadian god, Pan, who . . . was the equivalent of Faunus." According to Conti, another name for Faunus is Pandion. See Le Conte, p. 368. There may have been an etymological reason, then, for Faunus to become equated with Pan.

⁶³ Publius Ovidius Naso, The Fasti; or Calendar of Ovid, in Ovid's Works, trans. Henry T. Riley, I (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1912), 59. Since no published English translation of the Fasti existed until 1640, the present twentieth-century translation has been selected for use throughout this study. See Watt, II, 723.

During this age of rough innocence, Faunus, watching Hercules and Omphale (Sidney calls her Iole) enter a cave, found Omphale eminently desirable. The cave they enter is a "grotto whose roof was fretted with porous pebbles, and the natural pumice stone; at its entrance ran a bubbling streamlet."⁶⁴ Inside, Hercules and Omphale exchange clothes to "lie apart upon couches placed close to one another. The reason was, that they were about to prepare a pious sacrifice to the discoverer of the vine, which they ought to perform in a state of purity when the day had dawned."⁶⁵ At midnight, Faunus entered the grotto and, cautiously avoiding the bed whose occupant wore a lion's skin, climbed into the other one.

His passions are at the highest pitch--meantime he draws up the bed-clothes from the bottom; the legs he finds are all bristling, rough with thick hair. The Tyrrhene hero flings him back with his arm just as he is making further attempts; he tumbles from the top of the couch.⁶⁶

The servants come running with lights, and everyone laughs at Faunus on the floor. "The God, thus deceived through a dress, thenceforth hates garments that impose upon the sight, and summons his officials to his [Lupercalian] rites in a state of nakedness."⁶⁷ Sidney's farcical episode in the cave has obvious parallels with Ovid's account of Faunus'

⁶⁴Ovid, Fasti, p. 60.

⁶⁵Ovid, Fasti, p. 60.

⁶⁶Ovid, Fasti, p. 61.

⁶⁷Ovid, Fasti, pp. 61-62.

mistake, and the parallel aligns Basilius with Faunus: he has mistaken a man for a woman, he has entered the wrong bed, he has lost his dignity. But Sidney gives the farce an additional twist by having Basilius leave the real object of his desire behind him in his own bed, thinking that Zelmane is Gynecia.

Like Saturn, Faunus/Pan had a dual nature. Abraham Fraunce calls him "the God of Sheepe and Shepheards"⁶⁸ whose name, meaning "All," equates him with the universal order of nature: his two horns represent the north and south poles;⁶⁹ his freckles the sphere of the fixed stars; and his sense organs (ears, eyes, nostrils, and mouth), adding up to seven, equal the seven planets. His beard and hair are the beams of light issuing from the planets and the stars; these beams cause earthly generation. However, his four limbs, which correspond to the four material elements, are crooked because sublunary things are necessarily malformed and inferior.⁷⁰ "The great God Pan" was an appropriate god for the doltish and inferior Dametas, with "so ill favourd a visar," to thank for his escape from the attacks of the lion and the bear.⁷¹ Yet this goat-like god is, according to Virgil, descended from Saturn:

⁶⁸Fraunce, sig. 11^r.

⁶⁹The poles, in this context, are points on the primum mobile, not the earth.

⁷⁰See Fraunce, sig. 11^v.

⁷¹Sidney, I, 122.

son of Picus, grandson of Saturn.⁷² Conti explains that

Pan is that universal matter of all natural bodies, which we call according to the real meaning of the word Everything: in which divine things conjoined with human things; which they explain by the superior form of Pan, which was very beautiful and seemed godlike; except that below was very deformed because of the impurity of inferior natural bodies.⁷³

Pan, then, like Saturn--and like Basilius--has a dual aspect. He is not altogether goatlike. He is godlike, too.

In Book Seven of the Aeneid, King Latinus, himself descended from the same family line, prays to Faunus for guidance at "a laurel of sacred foliage, guarded in awe through many years . . . dedicated to Phoebus" ⁷⁴ Basilius, like Faunus/Pan, is in some way associated with the worship of Apollo, god of the light of truth. The first oracle, which, if rightly understood, was a true one, came to him from Apollo, and Apollo seems an appropriate god for Basilius' better nature to revere,⁷⁵ because a contemplative nature seeks the truth. A ruler of

⁷²Publius Vergilius Maro, The Aeneid, Book VII, in Virgil's Works, trans. J. W. Mackail (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 129. In 1573 an English translation of the Aeneid, by Thomas Phaer and Thomas Twyne, was published. However, Sidney and his schoolmates read Virgil earlier than that, in Latin. See Mona Wilson, Sir Philip Sidney (1950; rpt. London: Folcroft Library Editions, 1971), p. 32, and John Buxton, Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance, 2nd ed. (1964; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 38. Hence, the present twentieth-century translation has been selected for this study.

⁷³Le Comte, p. 862.

⁷⁴Virgil, p. 129.

⁷⁵According to Conti, during the Golden Age, Saturn ruled alongside Janus in Italy. Some writers, Conti adds, "believe that Janus was the Sun and Saturn Time and that they reigned together in common agreement and counsel He made such an agreement with his

a gentle people, a patron of poets, a philosopher with a Stoic bent, Basilius set aside "three daies . . . to perfourme certaine rites to Apollo,"⁷⁶ in gratitude, after Zelmane had succeeded in quelling the peasants' rebellion. In a hymn that he wrote for this occasion, Basilius addressed the god of truth as

Apollo great, whose beames the greater world do light,
And in our little world do cleare our inward sight,
.
Thou God, whose youth was deckt with spoiles of Pythons skin:
(So humble knowledge can throw downe the snakish kinne)

Although he goes on to ask Apollo to "give us foresightfull mindes,"⁷⁷ Basilius shows evidence of having already lost much of the "humble knowledge" needed to "throw downe" his own "snakish kinne" of sinful lust, for he turns at once to Philoclea to ask what answer Zelmane has sent to his declaration of love.

brother Titan, who is the Sun, that he would slaughter all his sons. And what is that intended to say unless the Sun has conspired with Time, that all who would be born, would swiftly be taken to an end?" Le Comte, p. 96: "Quelques-uns croyans, que Ianus fut le Soleil, & Saturne le Temps, & qu'ils regnassent par-ensemble d'un commun accord & conseil Il fit telle capitulation avec son frere Titan, qui est le Soleil, qu'il occiroit tous ses fils. Et que veut dire cela, sinon que le Soleil a complotté avec le Temps, que tout ce qui naistroit, prendroit bien tost fin?" This provides a second means of Associating Basilius, as a type of Saturn, with the god Apollo. If Sun and Saturn were co-rulers and Saturn represented time, then Saturn/Basilius' defection would suggest a seeming victory of time and annihilation over sun and life. Such a situation would correspond to the winter season.

⁷⁶Sidney, I, 328.

⁷⁷Sidney, I, 328.

H. Theological Exegesis

According to Ringler, "the fifteenth-century Ovide Moralisé en Prose interpreted Python as the devil and Apollo as Christ."⁷⁸ The theological allegory implied by Basilius' hypocritical behavior as a worshipper of Apollo is obvious. The hymn concludes, in the last line, "that nothing wins the heaven, but what doth earth forsake," yet the time is close at hand when Basilius will go beneath the ground, into a spiritual darkness that would correspond to the autumnal corruption Fraunce was referring to, "which is alwaies a generation, of some other particularitie, not a totall or generall destruction"⁷⁹ The seasonal changes and the spiritual changes correspond. The summer sunlight and the light of divine illumination are universally associated, and Basilius, as a type of Saturn, will renounce the sun god, or Christ, before he goes underground:

Phaebus farewell, a sweeter Saint I serve,
The high conceits thy heav'nly wisdomes breed
My thoughts forget⁸⁰

The "sweeter Saint," of course, is Pyrocles disguised as Zelmane, who has aroused in Basilius a desire that ties him firmly to his "snakish kinne."⁸¹

⁷⁸William A. Ringler, Jr., ed., The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 398, citing C. de Boer, ed., Ovide Moralisé en Prose, p. 64.

⁷⁹Fraunce, sig. 6^v, but already quoted on p. 77, above.

⁸⁰Sidney, II, 5.

⁸¹Sidney, I, 328.

Earthiness and decadence have come to prevail over spirituality in Basilius, a Saturnine king who experiences a fall. Shortly before the cave episode, Gynecia, who, like her husband, lusts after Pyrocles, dreams of walking over thorns to get to Zelmane, only to find in Zelmane's place a corpse that resembles Basilius, "which seeming at the first with a strange smell to infect her, as she was redie likewise within a while to die, the dead bodie, she thought, took her in his armes, and said, Gynecia, leave all; for here is thy onely rest."⁸² Death and decay are associated with Basilius in her dream.

After a night of lovemaking in the cave with his own wife, whom he believed to be Zelmane, Basilius emerges from the mouth of the cave to sing a grateful hymn to Night, Apollo's opposite, urging the darkness to

Be victor still of Phoebus golden treasure;
 Who hath our sight with too much sight infected,
 Whose light is cause we have our lives neglected
 Turning all natures course to selfe displeasure.⁸³

The corruption is total now; Basilius has renounced Apollo to embrace, instead, dark ignorance. And at the theological level of allegory he has rejected Christ to worship Satan. His deathlike slumber on the floor of the cave corresponds to a death of the soul.

⁸²Sidney, I, 308.

⁸³Sidney, II, 92.

I. The Point at Which the Other Levels
Coincide with the Theological

At the level of the World Soul, the story of the fall of Saturn is a story about seasonal changes. What Fulgentius and Fraunce had to say about the Saturn myth applies equally well to Sidney's Arcadia. As Walter Davis points out, when Musidorus washes ashore at the beginning of the book, he is clinging to a board that Sidney likens to a bier. "To land near amorous Arcadia is to come out of the watery realm of death into a new life like that of the year."⁸⁴ In his opening sentence Sidney has already established that it is spring, "the time that the earth begins to put on her new apparel against the approach of her lover, and that the Sun running a most even course becomes an indifferent arbiter between the night and the day"⁸⁵ On the other hand, the Romans celebrated the Saturnalia in the dead of winter, in mid-December, and the Lupercalian rites in late February, at the end of the winter, in anticipation of another spring.⁸⁶ The autumnal harvesting, which the

⁸⁴Davis, Map, p. 91.

⁸⁵Sidney, I, 5.

⁸⁶See Myrick, p. 162: "Do the events fall within a single year? Here again we can only show what the author probably intended. More than once he indicates only vaguely the time that elapses between important events. We cannot say just how long it took to end the war begun by Amphialus and continued by Anaxius. Often we can be more definite. Musidorus' illness in Kalandar's house lasted six weeks, and his search for Pyrocles after his friend's second disappearance occupied two months. The last two books in the original version concern the events of only a very few days. Thus, even if the first three books were to occupy ten or eleven months, Sidney could still have kept the action within the time set by Minturno."

mythographers associated with Saturn, would correspond to Basilius' fixed opposition to "the point of his daughters marriage, because it threatned his death withall, [which] he determined to prevent, with keeping them unmarried while he lived."⁸⁷ The decree against marriage amounted to the devouring of his own offspring, or the cutting down of the family line. Fulgentius, furthermore, associated the harvesting with a heightening of erotic desire, holding that eating the fruit increased the lust in the belly.⁸⁸ Basilius' retirement did indeed serve to heighten his own eroticism, by giving him time and opportunity to become enamoured of Zelmane, who would otherwise have appeared in the Arcadian court undisguised, as an appropriate suitor for the hand of Princess Philoclea.

Sidney underscores the foreconceit of autumn midway in the book and bodies forth its positive and negative aspects in the jousting match between Amphialus and Phalantus. Both display autumnal designs on their furniture and armour. Amphialus'

furniture 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 winde plaies with them; and being made of a pale cloath of gold, they did beare the straw-coloured liverie of ruine. His armour was . . . formed into the figure of flames darckened, as when they newelie breake the prison of a smoakie furnace. In his shielde he had painted the Torpedo fish.⁸⁹

⁸⁷Sidney, I, 328.

⁸⁸See p. 78, above.

⁸⁹Sidney, I, 415. See also Emma Marshall Denkinger, "The Arcadia and 'The Fish Torpedo Faire,'" Studies in Philology, 28 (January 1931), 162-83, who explains that the torpedo fish, when caught, sends numbness

In other words, everything in Amphialus' design is suggestive of decay, death, inactivity, fruitlessness. Meanwhile, his opponent, Phalantus, also wears an autumnal design: the horse's

reines were vine branches, which ingendring one with the other, at the end, when it came to the bitte, there, for the bosse, brought foorth a cluster of grapes, by the workeman made so lively, that it seemed, as the horse champed on his bitte, he chopped for them, and that it did make his mouth water, to see the grapes so neere him. His furniture behind was of vines, so artificially made, as it seemed the horse stood in the shadow of the vine, so pretily were clusters of rubie grapes dispersed among the trappers which embraced his sides.⁹⁰

Phalantus' design, then, emphasizes the positive aspects of the autumn, the harvesting of the fruit, the cutting down or destruction that Fraunce conceived of as "alwais a generation, of some other particularitie, not a totall or generall destruction" ⁹¹ It is almost as though Amphialus, who has imprisoned the princesses in an attempt to force Philoclea to marry him, and Phalantus, a philanderer who cannot confine himself to one woman, each represented a single aspect of Basilius', and Saturn's, dual nature: sterility is in conflict with fertility.

Amphialus remains a secondary Saturnine figure throughout the book: he is frequently dressed in black, frequently melancholy, and he exerts

up the angler's arm to paralyze him. Denkinger also points out that Du Bartas called it "a secret Poppy and a sense-less Winter" and that Tasso used it for his personal imprese, accompanied by the motto, "stupor."

⁹⁰ Sidney, I, 415.

⁹¹ Fraunce, sig. 7^r.

a destructive influence over friends and foes alike. He is forced to kill his best friend, Philoxenus, in a duel he cannot avoid; Philoxenus' father dies of grief, Amphialus unwittingly kills Parthenia, a woman, who has disguised herself as a man and challenged him in order to revenge his murder of Argalus, her husband; and finally, Amphialus' own mother, Cecropia, backs away from his anger to fall to her death through the palace window. Like the planet Saturn, he seems, at the astrological level, to exert an inexorable malevolent influence.⁹² When he dresses to go plead with the imprisoned Philoclea, he seeks to impress her, but his appearance is that of death itself:

At length he tooke a garment more rich then glaring, the ground being black velvet, richly embrodered with great pearle, & precious stones, but they set so among certaine tuffes of cypres, that the cypres was like blacke clouds through which the starrs might yeeld a darke luster. About his necke he ware a brode & gorgeous coller; whereof the pieces enterchangeably answering; the one was of Diamonds and pearle, set with a white enamell, so as by the cunning of the workman it seemed like a shining ice, and the other piece being of Rubies, and Opalles, had a fierie glistring, which he thought pictured the two passions of Feare and Desire, wherein he was enchayned.⁹³

Like Basilius, Amphialus seems to die, but there is no funeral because the death-like state is not final. Just as Basilius rises and lifts aside his black velvet pall at the trial scene, so Helen of Corinth, whose personal physician, like Aesculapius, is noted for

⁹²Boccaccio, describing Saturn as a "hateful and noxious star," might almost be describing Amphialus. See Genealogie, p. 385: "odiosum atque nocuum . . . astrum"

⁹³Sidney, I, 367.

his miraculous cures, comes to bear Amphialus away to her own country.⁹⁴ At the natural level, then, he is winter, time of germination, when the roots are embedded underground awaiting springtime before they can sprout again. At the theological level, he would represent fallen man's hopes for a resurrection, through the offices of the healer Aesculapeius, son of Apollo, who prefigures Christ, the son of God. Sidney's more alert readers would probably have recognized that Basilius and Amphialus were parallel characters, and that both were types of Saturn bearing all of the allegorical content of the Saturn myth, at four levels of meaning.

It is important to remember that a reader who had recognized the story of the fall of Saturn underlying the story of the fall of Basilius would not have been surprised when, just after Euarchus had sentenced Gynecia, Pyrocles, and Musidorus to death,

those that were next the Dukes bodie, might heare from under the velvet, wherewith he was covered, a great voice of groning But Philanax and Kerxenus . . . leapt to the table, and putting of the velvet cover, might plainly discerne, with as much wonder as gladnesse, that the Duke lived.⁹⁵

The Renaissance mythographers would have prepared Sidney's audience for this resurrection, which would seem, not contrived, but natural.

Vincenzo Cartari, in his Le Imagini, con la Spositione de i Dei degli Antichi (1556), says of Saturn that

Martianus Capella depicts . . . his temples redemyt with a greene wreath, which seemeth still to flourish, his haire of his head, and his beard all milke white, looking like one of

⁹⁴See Sidney, I, 496-98.

⁹⁵Sidney, II, 204-05.

many yeares, withering and declining, and yet manifesting that
 it is in his power to rebecome youthfull, fresh, and blooming.
 The wreath on his head imports the beginning of spring of the
 yeare, his haire and beard the snowie approch of churlish
 Winter⁹⁶

Cartari reminds the reader that the four children who had, by means of
 disguises, escaped the jaws of Saturn were Jupiter (fire), Juno (air),
 Pluto (earth), and Neptune (water) and that these four basic elements
 "are not perishable by the all-cutting sickle of devouring time."⁹⁷

Cartari goes on to paraphrase Macrobius, who claimed that Saturn
 was married to Astarte, "the daughter of Celum,"⁹⁸ who made for her
 husband a helmet which hung down over the shoulders, where four wings
 were attached, "two of them volant, and two couchant, which signified,
 that although he slept, he alwaies waked, and flying, continued fixed
 and permanent"⁹⁹ In Sidney's "golden world" of fiction,
 Basilius, too, awakened after sleeping. At the end of the trial,
 after thirty hours spent in a deathlike slumber, Basilius rose to his
 feet, and similarly, Amphialus, at the end of the war, departed, still
 breathing, in Helen of Corinth's coach. In the World Soul these events
 can be seen to signify the coexistence of permanence and mutability,
 the endurance of the elements, the cycling of the seasons.

⁹⁶Vincenzo Cartari, Le Imagini, con la Spositione de i Dei degli
 Antichi, trans. Richard Linche, as The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction
 (London: Adam Islip, 1599), sig. Dii.

⁹⁷Cartari, sig. Dii.

⁹⁸Cartari, sig. Dii.

⁹⁹Cartari, sig. Diii.

Cartari's paraphrase of Eusebius provides an allegorical reading, at the level of the Divine Intelligence, that is applicable to the resurrection of Basilius and to the projected resurrection of Amphialus:

Eusebius further saith, That the same Astarte placed also upon the head of Saturne two wings, demonstrating thereby by one of them the excellencie and perfection of the mind, and by the other he meant mans sence and understanding. For say the Naturalists, the soule of man when she entreth into the humane bodie, bringeth with her from the spheare of Saturne the force of knowledge and discourse, so that the Platonickes understand by Saturne, the mind, and the inward contemplation of things celestiall, and therefore called the time wherein hee lived the golden age, as a time, entertaining quiet, concord, and true content.¹⁰⁰

When Basilius rises to his feet, when Amphialus continues to breathe, the Saturnine powers of contemplation are coming to prevail once again over the equally Saturnine earthiness and melancholy. The contemplation of the Divine Intelligence was, after all, the most that Ficino, as a native of Saturn, had felt justified in hoping for himself.¹⁰¹

To a Neoplatonist, the return to spring was a return to intellectual insights, to a state of justice in the soul.¹⁰² To a Christian Neoplatonist, however, there would be one further level of meaning supported by Sidney's groundplot about Basilius and Amphialus: the theological level of meaning, the meaning that came from God. Not spring, not even

¹⁰⁰Cartari, sig. Diii.

¹⁰¹See above, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰²See Davis, Map, Chap. 6, "Sage Counseling," for a helpful discussion of the Platonic analogy between justice in the state and justice in the soul (pp. 136-67).

a golden age, but a possible return to innocence was being celebrated. Sidney's happy ending was a reminder that man's "erected wit" could "body forth" a "golden world" of poetry where sinners had second chances and mistakes could be undone. The happy ending, far from a sop to the Countess' friends, probably prefigured the time, at the end of time, after "Death and Hades were flung into the lake of fire,"¹⁰³ when there would appear "a new heaven and a new earth."¹⁰⁴ Sidney undoubtedly had, as a schoolboy, translated Virgil's Fourth Eclogue:

Now is come the last age of the Cumaeen prophecy: the great cycle of periods is born anew. Now returns the Maid, returns the reign of Saturn: now from high heaven a new generation comes down . . . under thy rule what traces of our guilt yet remain, vanishing shall free earth forever from alarm The snake too shall die Behold how all things rejoice in the age to come.¹⁰⁵

E. M. W. Tillyard considered the 1590 Arcadia to be a fragment of an epic that Sidney never had the chance to complete. Tillyard disapproved of the 1593 version because he did not feel that, if Sidney had lived, he would have pasted the ending of a "romantic novel" to the serious heroic poem that began with a rapturous apostrophe to Urania spoken by two contemplative shepherds.¹⁰⁶ "Anyhow, in the authentic Arcadia Sidney did alter the main stress of seriousness from politics

¹⁰³Revelation 20:14.

¹⁰⁴Revelation 21:1.

¹⁰⁵Virgil, Eclogue IV, "Pollio," pp. 274-75.

¹⁰⁶See E. M. W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (1954; rpt. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1966), pp. 294-311.

to ethics and religion, and I cannot conceive that he would not have carried this process through."¹⁰⁷ He feels that the princes had not, in the 1593 version, been given an opportunity to purify themselves to the same extent already achieved by the two princesses under stress in prison. Yet Tillyard seems to be overlooking the profundity of Pyrocles' long speech, also spoken under stress in prison, in expectation of a death sentence, when he described the kind of memory that he expected to survive the death of his body:

Neither do I thinke, we shall have such a memorye, as nowe we have, which is but a relicke of the senses, or rather a print the senses have left of things passed, in our thoughtes, but it shall be a vitall power of that very intelligence; which as while it was heere, it helde the chiefe seate of our life, and was as it were the last resorte, to which of all our knowledges, the hiest appeale came, and so by that meanes was never ignorant of our actions, though many times rebelliously resisted, alwayes with this prison darkened: so, much more being free of that prison, and returning to the life of all things, where all infinite knowledge is, it cannot but be a right intelligence, which is both his name and being, of things both present and passed, though voyde of imagining to it selfe any thing, but even grown like to his Creator, hath all things, with a spirituall knowledge before it.¹⁰⁸

Just as Saturn was unable to devour the four elements, which recycle endlessly in varying forms, so death or time is, for Pyrocles, unable to devour the "right intelligence" or collective memory. The happy ending, then, if read as a mythological allegory, testifies to Sidney's seriousness as well as his artistry. In a modern novel there

¹⁰⁷Tillyard, p. 308.

¹⁰⁸Sidney, II, 165.

are seldom any miraculous recoveries, but in a mythological allegory spring follows after winter, spiritual influences gain ascendancy over the cold, the dry, and the melancholy, and the sinner dies into life. The figure of Basilius is no more, and no less, comic than Lucius, Apuleius' persona, who sheds his asininity in a springtime ritual, at the close of the Golden Ass, to become a man again, but this time a man who has been redeemed.

Basilius, then, is associated with the Divine Mind, the contemplative life, old age, melancholy, retirement, transience, lust, winter, and death, but, ultimately, with renewal. By judging the ending of the 1593 Arcadia inappropriate to a serious heroic poem, Tillyard is overlooking the profound philosophical and religious implications embodied in the regeneration of Basilius. The allegorical significance of Basilius seems to justify the Countess of Pembroke's decision to include the ending of the Old Arcadia in the 1593 edition of the revised version.

III. THE FEATS AND LABORS OF HERCULES

Prince Pyrocles, like Hercules, performs a series of heroic acts, subjugates himself to a woman, and rises to a higher mode of being. The figure of Hercules, throughout the Middle Ages and much of the Renaissance, was charged with cosmological, natural, astrological, and theological meanings. If the Arcadia is to be read as a multi-level allegory, those same meanings might apply to the character of Pyrocles. The present chapter will examine some of the principal actions of Pyrocles in an effort to establish him as a Herculean figure and to transfer the allegorical significance from Hercules to Pyrocles.

In the present chapter, the parallel between Pyrocles and Hercules will be shown to shed some light on Sidney's intention in revising the Arcadia. First of all, he did not insert the various accounts of events that had taken place before the story opened to give the impression of beginning in medias res. Rather, Sidney inserted these events to convert the romance to an epic, because Pyrocles turned out to be Herculean in scope, and the form, of necessity, followed the function. The Herculean hero had a lengthy record of achievements, and some of these had to be told in flashbacks for the sake of unity.

In the second place, the Countess of Pembroke made certain changes in the revised Arcadia because she was aware of her brother's serious

intention. In view of the allegorical content of the marriage of Hercules to Hebe, for example, it would have been inappropriate to overstress the sensual aspect of the love between Pyrocles and Philoclea. In the bedroom scene in the Old Arcadia, Pyrocles carries the nude Philoclea to her bed, while she offers only "a Weyke resistance whiche did stryve to bee overcome" ¹ In the 1593 Arcadia, however, Philoclea is not nude but garbed in a "faire smock," ² and she is so weakened by her recent illness that she falls asleep in Pyrocles' arms. ³ They spend the night in her bed with only "their neckes . . . subject each to others chaste embracements" ⁴ This change may have been made, not because the Countess disapproved of premarital sex, but because such behavior was inappropriate to a Herculean hero who defeats monstrous vices and rescues Christian virtues.

A. The Story of Pyrocles

The actions of Pyrocles, whose name in Greek means "glorious fire," exhibit moral zeal, political zeal, amorous zeal, and philosophical zeal. His adventures that have already occurred before the revised Arcadia opens are told in flashbacks, partly by Musidorus, partly by Pyrocles

¹Sir Philip Sidney, The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963-1968), IV, 227.

²Sidney, II, 60.

³See Sidney, II, 60.

⁴Sidney, II, 61.

himself. In those earlier events, the moral and political zeal predominates. This portion of the plot begins when Pyrocles and his cousin Musidorus, setting out for Byzantium to bring military assistance to Euarchus, Pyrocles' father, are separated by a storm at sea, Musidorus washing ashore at Pontus, Pyrocles at Phrygia. Since the cowardly King of Phrygia has been frightened by an oracle into believing that Musidorus will become a powerful ruler and possible threat to him, he readily agrees to release Pyrocles when Musidorus offers to take his cousin's place. At the time appointed for Musidorus' execution, however, Pyrocles, disguised as assistant executioner, arms Musidorus, and the two oppose all of the Phrygian forces. The fear-ridden king of Phrygia shouts his commands through a window until, at length, many of his subjects, contemptuous of his behavior, transfer their support to Pyrocles and Musidorus. Thwarting the king's attempt to flee the country, Pyrocles kills the king's only son, while Musidorus kills the king himself. This slaughter leaves the throne unoccupied, and the two cousins select as king "an aged Gentleman of approved goodnes (who had gotten nothing by his cousins power, but danger from him, and odiousnes for him) having past his time in modest secrecy"⁵

The nobleman receives this power, however, only

with such conditions, & cautions of the conditions, as might assure the people (with as much assurance as worldly matters beare) that not onely that governour, of whom indeed they

⁵Sidney, I, 201.

looked for all good, but the nature of the government, should be no way apt to decline to Tyranny.⁶

In their first two feats, Pyrocles and Musidorus work together to establish political order, their intentions indistinguishable from one another. Just as their combined efforts rid Phrygia of a tyrannical king and his only heir, so also their combined efforts dispatch the King of Pontus, an arbitrary and cruel tyrant who has beheaded Nelsus and Leucippus. They also go together to slay the king's two monstrous courtiers who, after falling from royal favor, have withdrawn to an impregnable castle on the edge of a rocky cliff. Later, Pyrocles, somewhat "desirous to do something without the company of the incomparable Prince Musidorus,"⁷ has occasion to part from his elder cousin and travel alone to answer Anaxius' challenge. (Since Pyrocles killed Euardes, Anaxius' uncle, on behalf of Erona, Anaxius has, for many months, been seeking to avenge his uncle's death by killing Pyrocles.) On his way he encounters Dido and eight other "Gentle-women" who are trying to stab Pamphilus to death with their bodkins. Fighting off seven or eight knights who insist that the ladies are only "taking their due revenge,"⁸ Pyrocles routs all of the women except the fierce Dido, only to find that he now has to save Dido herself from a band of Pamphilus' friends, who come to retaliate. At length, believing he has finally left Dido

⁶Sidney, I, 202.

⁷Sidney, I, 263.

⁸Sidney, I, 265.

in a secure refuge, he travels onward to keep his appointment with Anaxius, but later, when Pamphilus comes into view beating Dido with wands, Pyrocles interrupts his duel with Anaxius in order to rescue her a second time. In gratitude, Dido takes Pyrocles to her miserly father, Chremes, who immediately plots to get a reward from Artaxia for capturing her brother's killer. Instead of conducting Pyrocles to Anaxius to resume his fight, Chremes leads him into an ambush which nearly succeeds. Musidorus arrives in time, however, to enlist the support of the King of Iberia and to destroy Chremes' castle and all of his other earthly possessions. Chremes is sentenced to be hanged, but his last tears are expended on "the losse of his goods, and burning of his house."⁹

Once again, then, the elder cousin has provided help when help was needed. On a third occasion, however, while imprisoned in Cecropia's castle, Pyrocles has his chance to oppose three cruel foes unassisted: Anaxius, Lycurgus, and Zoilus, Amphialus' allies, who have come to help Amphialus break Basilius' siege. This time Pyrocles, disguised as the Amazon Zelmane, kills Zoilus and Lycurgus and is engaged in single combat with Anaxius when the 1590 Arcadia ends abruptly. Presumably the Countess of Pembroke believed that Sidney intended Anaxius to die in this fight, for Amphialus has already been carried away in the coach of Helen of Corinth, and the 1593 Arcadia opens with Basilius'

⁹Sidney, I, 277.

having recovered his daughters, just as the second Oracle had foretold that he would. When Pyrocles rode away from the fight with Anaxius to rescue Dido, he was forced to endure the derisive laughter of Anaxius and the spectators, who considered him a coward. This later encounter with Anaxius is, then, critical for Pyrocles' reputation, and he would hardly be worthy to marry Philoclea if he lost or avoided this confrontation. Anaxius appears "the very picture of forcible furie," and the match turns out to be one of "strength against nimblenes; rage, against resolution, fury, against vertue; confidence, against courage; pride, against noblenesse" ¹⁰

The encounter with Anaxius is the only significant action that originates before the opening of the book, before Pyrocles comes to Arcadia, and that culminates later, on Arcadian soil, as part of the main plot. Like the earlier episode in Pontus, three foes have to be felled before order can be restored, but this time Pyrocles handles it alone, and this time Philoclea's life and virginity are at stake. Structurally, then, Sidney has forged a link here between those actions that display Pyrocles' moral and political zeal and those that display his amorous and philosophical zeal. From the moment he dons the Amazon costume and becomes the guest of Basilius to the end of Book Five, when he marries Philoclea, Pyrocles directs his zeal toward his lady, whom he courts, wins, and idealizes. It is noteworthy that prior to falling in love with Philoclea, Pyrocles is capable of Herculean

¹⁰Sidney, I, 516-17.

accomplishments only with the assistance of Musidorus, whereas afterward he can perform daring feats unaided. On her behalf he kills a lion, turns back a rebellious mob, destroys the three evil brothers, and even claims, though innocent, to have forced his attentions on Philoclea, a confession designed to protect the good name of his lady while incriminating himself. Only the miraculous recovery of Basilius saves Pyrocles from being hurled from a tower, but by that time he has reflected on mortality and determined, to his own satisfaction, that his soul will survive the grave, even though all personal memories will be extinguished by death. He has won a philosophical victory.

B. The Myth of Hercules

Although Hercules performed twelve labors to fulfill his obligation to Eurystheus, and numerous other deeds of courage on his own initiative,¹¹ only eight of these have obvious parallels in the groundplot of Sidney's Arcadia: the killing of the Ceryneian Hind, the conquest of the Amazons, the crushing of Antaeus, the slaying of Geryon, the routing of the drunken Centaurs, the servitude to Omphale, the binding of Cerberus, and the final immolation of his body and the ascent of his spirit to Mt. Olympus. To understand the thematic importance of Pyrocles' great deeds, it is necessary to recognize that they parallel

¹¹Boccaccio lists thirty labors. See Giovanni Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri, II (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1951), 632-43.

these eight great deeds performed by Hercules. Any educated Elizabethan reader would have known, for example, that Eurystheus had commanded Hercules to bring to Mycenus a hind with feet of brass and horns of gold, known for its fearfulness even more than for its swiftness. The cowardly hind fled from the mountainside and threw itself into the River Ladon, where Hercules shot an arrow into its shoulder and carried it on his shoulders to Eurystheus, who, ironically, was so frightened at the sight of Hercules carrying the hind that he hid himself inside a copper vessel. Eurystheus later issued a command that henceforth Hercules deposit all his defeated monsters outside the gates of Mycenus.¹²

Once it became evident that the mythological monsters had been transformed, in the Arcadia, into political monsters, Sidney's description of the cowardly King of Phrygia would probably, for an Elizabethan reader, have stirred memories of Hercules' third labor. A first step in understanding the significance of the episode in

¹²Noel le Comte, Mythologie: c'est á dire, Explication des Fables, cōtenant les genealogies de Dieux, les cerimonies de leurs sacrifices, Leur gestes, adventures, amours, et presque tous les preceptes de La Philosophie naturelle & moralle (Rouen: Jean Osmont, Manassez de Preaux & Jacque Besongne, 1611), p. 546 (Id est Natale Conti): "Tiercement, il y auoit une Bische ayant les pieds d'airin & la ramure d'or, vers Oenone sacree á Diane; qu'homme viuant ne pouuoit prendre á la course, tant que lassee & horse d'halene elle s'enfuit en la montagne d'Artemise en Arcadie. & comme elle estoit preste de se ietter dans la riuere de Ladon, il la print, la chargea sur ses espaulles, & l'emporta á Mycene. Au demeurant Eurysthue fut tant estonné de la valeur d'Hercule, qu'il fit faire un vaisseau de cuiure, dans lequel il se cachoit quand il le sentoit approcher, & ne voulut plus laisser entrer dedans la ville, ains luy fit poser á la porte tous les monstres qu'il apportoit"

Phrygia, then, must be to recognize that it parallels an episode in the myth of Hercules.

Similarly, Dido and her eight gentlewomen and seven or eight knights would have been recognizable as Hippolyta and her twelve Amazons. Moreover, the ironic discrepancy between the nine women whom Pamphilus had seduced and betrayed and the thirteen fierce Amazons who served Diana, goddess of chastity, would not have been lost on an Elizabethan reader. (An occasional deviation from a recognizable parallel serves to highlight a paradox.) Hercules defeated the Amazons, killing some, routing others. Taking Deianira for himself, he gave Hippolyta to his friend Theseus.¹³ Pyrocles, equally victorious, kills only the knights, however, not the maidens, and after suppressing the overly aggressive gentlewomen, finds it necessary to take an opposite course by suppressing the overly aggressive Pamphilus. The fictitious hero, unlike his mythological analogue, is hampered by a code of chivalry.

Dido's materialistic father, Chremes, should also have been easily equated with his mythological counterpart, Antaeus:

Son of the Earth, King of Africa, . . . cruel and inhumane toward all strangers along the road, whom, wearied with pain, affliction, and fatigue, . . . he forced to fight with him This companion came to accost Hercules, who three times lifted him from the earth as though dead. But . . . every

¹³See Le Comte, pp. 549-50.

time his body touched the Earth, his natural mother, he raised himself up greatly refreshed, more strong and robust than before.¹⁴

Hercules managed to kill Antaeus by holding him overhead long enough to choke him. Chremes dies a similar death, by hanging, after being separated not only from the earth, but, more importantly, from his earthly possessions.

The defeat of the tyrannical King of Pontus and his two loyal giants seems to parallel the overthrow of Geryon, which comprised Hercules' tenth labor. Eurystheus had ordered Hercules to confiscate a herd of red oxen belonging to the three-bodied monster who lived on the island of Eurythia.¹⁵ Conti, in fact, explains Hercules' struggle against Geryon euhemeristically, as a battle between Egyptian forces led by Hercules (who is also Osiris on this occasion) and the Iberians, who were suffering under the rule of an arbitrary tyrant named Geryon.

For it was natural that he could not suffer a tyrant to reign. And the Geryons from the other coast were a family of giants. Osiris, having defeated and killed Geryon, left the kingdom of Iberia to three Geryones named Lominies, that is to say, captains and governors in charge, sons of the above-named Geryon, 1758 years before the coming of our Saviour.¹⁶

¹⁴Le Comte, pp. 553-54: "fils de la Terre, Roy d'Afrique, . . . cruel & inhumain envers tous les estrangers tirans chemin, lesquels . . . il contraignoit de lutter avec luy . . . mattez de peine mesaise & fatigue . . . Ce compagnon vint affronter Hercule; qui par trois fois le porta par terre comme mort. Mais . . . toutes les fois qu'il touchoit de son corps la Terre, sa mere naturelle, il se relevoit beaucoup plus frais, plus fort & robuste qu'auparavant."

¹⁵See Le Comte, p. 550.

¹⁶Le Comte, p. 552: "Car il estoit d'un naturel qui ne pouvoit souffrir regner un tyran. Et les Geryons d'autre costé estoient e'une famille de Geans. Osiris ayant defait & tué Geryon, laissa

As an alternate explanation, Conti suggests that

they call Geryon three-bodied because there were three brothers living in such friendship and harmony that it was not possible for more, so that it seemed but one soul inhabited the three bodies, or rather (according to the opinion of some others) because he reigned over three adjacent islands in Spain, known as Ebusa, Majorca, and Minorca.¹⁷

In either event, the King of Pontus indubitably rules over three bodies, too: his own and the bodies of

two brothers of huge both greatnesse & force, therefore commonly called giants, who kept themselves in a castle seated upon the top of a rock, impregnable, because there was no coming unto it, but by one narrow path, where one mans force was able to keepe downe an armie. These brothers had a while served the King of Pontus, and in all his affaires (especially of war, whereunto they were onely apt) they had shewed, as unconquered courage, so a rude faithfulness: being men indeed by nature apter to the faults of rage, then of deceit; . . . These men being of this nature (and certainly Jewels to a wise man, considering what indeed wonders they were able to performe) yet were discarded by that unworthy Prince¹⁸

In retaliation they ravage the countryside,

so that where in the time that they obeyed a master, their anger was a serviceable power of the minde to doo publike good; so now unbridled, and blinde judge of it selfe, it made wickednesse violent, and praised it selfe in excellencie of mischief;

le Royaume d'Iberie aux trois Geryons dictz Lominies, c'est à dire Capitaines & gouverneurs en chef, fils du susdit Geryon, 1758. ans devant la venue de nostre Sauveur."

¹⁷Le Comte, p. 572: "appellent-ils Gerion à trois corps, parce qu'ils estoient trois freres vivans en telle amitié & concorde qu'il n'estoit possible de plus, si qu'il sembloit que ce ne fust qu'une ame habitant en trois corps, ou bien (selon l'avis de quelques autres) pource qu'il regnoit sur trois isles adjacentes à l'Espagne, à sçavoir Ebuse, Maiorque & Minorque.

¹⁸Sidney, I, 204-05.

almost to the ruine of the countrie, not greatly regarded by their carelesse and lovelesse king.¹⁹

Once they have severed the head of the triple monster, Pyrocles and Musidorus have no difficulty in delivering Pontus from the other two bodies. The people of Pontus, like the people of Iberia described by Conti, have been living under the rule of a cruel tyrant. Their king possesses "a wanton crueltie: inconstant of his choise of friends, or rather never having a friend, but a playfellow; of whom when he was wearie, he could not otherwise rid himself, then by killing them"²⁰ As they have done in Phrygia, Pyrocles and Musidorus place a just ruler on the throne of Pontus. Pyrocles, who has been offered the crown, refuses it, finding instead "a sister of the late Kings (a faire and well esteemed Ladie) looking for nothing more, then to be oppressed with her brothers ruines, gave her in marriage to the noble man his fathers old friend, and endowed them with the crowne of that kingdome."²¹ For Pyrocles, as for Conti's version of Hercules, "it was natural that he could not suffer a tyrant to reign."²² And in Pontus, as in Geryon, one cruel head has ruled over three bodies.

On Basilius' birthday, at the very moment that Gynecia has chosen to reveal to Pyrocles her "deadly desires" for his body, a drunken

¹⁹Sidney, I, 205.

²⁰Sidney, I, 202.

²¹Sidney, I, 204.

²²Le Comte, p. 552. See above, pp. 100-01.

"multitudinous mob" attacks the lodge.²³ This mob bears some resemblance to the unruly Centaurs who stampeded when they smelled the wine that Pholus was serving to Hercules. "Some of these Centaurs," says Conti, "were armed with great pine trees that they had pulled up by the roots; others carried great rocks, others lighted torches, others great hatchets."²⁴ The rebellious Arcadians, too, carry unlikely weapons: a butcher "lifted up a great leaver," a miller "ran with a pitchfork at Dorus," and a "poore painter . . . stood by with a pike in his handes."²⁵ As though to point up the parallel, Sidney alludes to the stampeding Centaurs by explaining that this painter has only come along to observe a battle in order to prepare himself to paint the "skirmishing betwene the Centaures and Lapithes."²⁶ Moreover, wine precipitated both uprisings, the Centaurs greedy for the drink that Pholus poured for Hercules, the Arcadians already engaged in a "wassaling watch" when their discontent surfaces. Golding, in the "Epistle to Leicester," holds that

The frentick fray betweene the Lapithes and
The Centaures is a note wherby is given too understand
The beastly rage of drunkennesse.²⁷

²³Sidney, I, 310.

²⁴Le Comte, p. 547: "Les uns de ces Centaures estoient armez de grands arbres de pins qu'ils auoient arrachez avec leurs racines: les autres portoient de gros rochers, les autres des torches allumees, les autres de grandes coignees."

²⁵Sidney, I, 312-13.

²⁶Sidney, I, 313.

²⁷Arthur Golding, "Epistle to Leicester," Shakespeare's Ovid: Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses (1567), ed. W. H. D. Rouse.

Centaurs are not only suggestive of drunkenness, however, they are also suggestive of a state halfway between the human and the bestial,²⁸ and the narrator's scornful tone indicates that the rebellious peasants in the Arcadia just barely qualify as human:

Yet among the rebels there was a dapper fellowe, a tayler by occupation, who fetching his courage onelie from their going back, began to bow his knees, & very fencer-like to draw neere to Zelmane. But as he came within her distance, turning his sword very nicely about his crown, Basilius, with a side blow, strake of his nose. He (being a suiter to a seimsters daughter, and therefore not a little grieved for such a disgrace) stouped downe, because he had hard, that if it were fresh put to, it would cleave on againe. But as his hand was on the grounde to bring his nose to his head, Zelmane with a blow, sent his head to his nose.²⁹

Pyrocles, disguised as Zelmane, quells the peasants' rebellion, just as Hercules defeated the Centaurs. Each had some assistance: Pyrocles from Musidorus and Basilius; Hercules from Pholus and his mother Nuee.

Perhaps the actions of Pyrocles most closely approximate those of Hercules when the stalwart fictitious hero, like the stalwart mythological hero, dons feminine apparel and makes himself subservient to a

(1961; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), 11. 246-48. Hercules was not present at the battle between the Lapithes and the Centaurs, but drunken disorderliness and the use of unlikely weapons are common to both myths about the centaurs.

²⁸Abraham Fraunce, The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch: Entituled, Amintas Dale (1592; MLA Rhotograph Series No. 75), sig. 35^v, says that "in a common wealth, there be Bulls, Centaurs, Lyons, Scorpions, and such like; that is, savage and rude people, ungentle, cruel, crafty, and envious; to whose open violence and secreat supplanting the gouverner is ever subject."

²⁹Sidney, I, 312.

woman. According to Conti, Hercules loves Omphale, daughter of the King of Lydia, so much that he wanted to submit to her in every way.

He discarded

his quiver, his club, his lion's skin which served him for a breast plate, in exchange for the basket, the distaff, the spindle, and other jewels and trinkets of women. Here is that former invincible champion doing for love for a strumpet many things unworthy of his quality.³⁰

Conti's distaste for this transformation echoes Deianira's in the epistle that Ovid has her write to her erring husband:

What? didst thou nothing shame
 those brawned armes of thine
 With Goldsmiths worke, with glittering Gammes
 and owches brave to bine?
 Even those selfe armes (I say)
 the Lyons life that reft:
 Whose noble spoyle for mantell serves
 upon thy shoulder left?
 What? didst thou dare also
 upon thy curled heare,
 (For which a Popple fitter was)
 a mytred Hat to weare?

.....
 What? didst thou nothing shame
 that hand with flaxe to soyle,
 That had long earst in valiant fight
 ygot so manie a spoyle?
 With thwacking thombes thou drawst
 a very boysteous threed:
 And to thy stately Mistress yeeldst
 a just account with dreede.

 She hath atchivde the fame
 of all thy former deedes:

³⁰ Le Comte, p. 562: "son carquois, sa masse, & sa peau de Lion qui luy seruoit de cuirace, contre le panier, la quenouille, suieaux, & autres ioyaux & beatilles de femme. Voila doncques ce iadis inuincible champion faisant pour l'amour d'une putain beaucoup de choses indignes de sa qualité."

To her as to thy lawfull heyre
thy purchasde prayse proceedes.³¹

Musidorus' scorn for Pyrocles' transformation matches Deianira's (and Conti's) for that of Hercules.³² Discovering Pyrocles in the Amazon costume, Musidorus cautions him that

you endauger your minde; for to take this womannish habit (without you frame your behavior accordingly) is wholly vaine: your behavior can not come kindly from you, but as the minde is proportioned unto it. So that you must resolve, if you will playe your parte to any purpose, whatsoever peevish affections are in that sexe, soften your hart to receive them³³

He goes on to explain that just as love of a worthy object transforms the lover into the thing loved, so also the love of an unworthy object transforms the lover:

And truely I thinke heere-upon it first gatte the name of Love: for indeede the true love hath that excellent nature in it, that it doth transform the very essence of the lover into the thing loved, uniting, and as it were incorporating it with a secret & inward working. And herein do these kindes of love imitate

³¹George Turberville, trans., "Deianeira to Hercules," The Heroycall Epistles of the Learned Poet Publius Ovidium Naso (1567), ed. and introd. Frederick S. Boas (London: The Cresset Press, 1928), pp. 117, 118, 120.

³²Musidorus is proven wrong, of course, by future events, in which Pyrocles' valor shows itself unimpaired. Analogously, Hercules' valor remained intact, even while he served Omphale as bondmaiden. Conti concedes that "still no one could vanquish him, during his love affair, to the extent that he could not have struck a valorous blow. For he defeated in war the Ephesian Cercopes, who compelled travelers to work in their vineyards as slaves, without pay." *Le Comte*, p. 562: "Toutesfois on ne le deptime point tant qu'encore n'alteil faiçt un coup de valeur durant ses amours. Car il defit en guerre les Cercopes Ephesiens, qui contraignoient les passans à trauailler en leurs vignes comme esclaves sans salaire."

³³Sidney, I, 77-78.

the excellent; for as the love of heaven makes one heavenly, the love of vertue, vertuous; so doth the love of the world make one become worldly, and this effeminate love of a woman, doth so womanish a man, that (if he yeeld to it) it will not onely make him an Amazon; but a launder, a distaff-spinner; or what so ever other vile occupation their idle heads can imagin, & their weake hands performe.³⁴

Pyrocles is clearly being associated with Hercules in this scene, for he is wearing a jewelled imprese of "a Hercules made in little fourme, but a distaffe set within his hand as he once was by Omphales commaundement with a worde in Greeke, but thus to be interpreted, 'Never more valiant.'"³⁵ Pyrocles, too, was never more valiant than during his servitude to a woman. While disguised as an Amazon, he not only killed a lion and quelled a rebellion, he also killed the three evil brothers, Anaxius, Lycurgus, and Zoilus and (presumably) delivered Pamela and Philoclea from Cecropia's castle.

Hercules was no longer wearing skirts when he bound the three-headed dog, Cerberus, and delivered Theseus and Alcestis from Hades, but this accomplishment bears a certain resemblance to Pyrocles' victory over Anaxius and his two brothers. Whereas Geryon had only one head for three bodies, Cerberus had three heads for one body.³⁶ Euardes'

³⁴Sidney, I, 78.

³⁵Sidney, I, 75-76.

³⁶Le Comte, p. 558, gives him fifty heads, but Virgil, Fulgentius, and Fraunce specify only three. See Virgil, The Aeneid, in Virgil's Works, trans. J. W. Mackail (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), Book Six, p. 114; Fulgentius, The Exposition of the Content of Virgil, in Fulgentius the Mythographer, trans. Leslie George Whitbread (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), sec. 22, p. 130; and Fraunce, sig. 27^v.

three nephews, while acting together to avenge the wounding of Amphialus and the death of their uncle, are each equally crafty, unlike the simple-minded giants who served the King of Pontus. Furthermore, now that Cecropia is dead and Amphialus departed, they are, in effect, guard dogs for the castle. The castle itself is much like a Hades, where torments are devised for the occupants and escape seemingly impossible. Only when the three brothers are immobilized can Pamela and Philoclea be freed. This is Pyrocles' greatest accomplishment, just as the binding of Cerberus was undoubtedly the greatest of Hercules' accomplishments, for, as Conti puts it, "it seemed now that the earth was not enough to exercise the virtue of Hercules: so Eurystheus commanded him to take himself to the houses of the damned and bring him that monstrous dog, Cerberus."³⁷ The three-headed dog was a formidable opponent, but "Hercules, seizing him by the waist, grabbed him so roughly that he broke all the bones."³⁸ Hercules, like Pyrocles after him, was unarmed, whereas Cerberus had poisoned fangs on each of his three heads, akin to the swords that Anaxius and his brothers each carry.

The greatness of Hercules was unmistakably established at the time of his death, when his body burned in the fire while his spirit

³⁷Le Comte, p. 558: "Or sembloit il que la terre ne fust bastante pour exercer la vertu d'Hercule: si luy fit Eurysthee commandement de se transporter iusques aux manoirs infernaux, & luy amener ce monstrueux espouventable chien, Cerbere."

³⁸Le Comte, p. 558: "Mais Hercule le saisissant par le fau du corps, l'estraignit si rudement qu'il luy froissa tous les os."

ascended to Jupiter, his father. Although Pyrocles does not die, he undergoes what amounts to a trial by fire (his very name suggests burning) while he is in captivity awaiting trial and expecting to die. At this time, in his thoughts, he separates the mortal elements from the immortal, anticipating that after death all sense impressions will be erased from the memory, but that "a right intelligence" will survive, "of things both present and passed," an imageless memory or "spirituall knowledge" of, not "the cullours," but rather "the lifes of all things that have bene or can be."³⁹ What the fire and Jupiter accomplished for Hercules, God and reflection accomplish for Pyrocles. More literally, Euarchus, Pyrocles' earthly father, restores him to princely status after the ordeal of imprisonment and trial, just as Hercules' heavenly father, Jupiter, after the immolation, "tooke him up above the cloudy spheere, / And in a charyot placed him among the streaming starres."⁴⁰

C. Pyrocles as a Type of Hercules

The Elizabethan reader might have inferred, from his character as well as his actions, that Pyrocles was a type of Hercules. Ebreo writes that "Hercules among the Greeks means a man most worthy and eminent in virtue,"⁴¹ and Conti concurs in a lengthy description of Hercules as a

³⁹Sidney, II, 165-66.

⁴⁰Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. Golding, Book 9, ll. 327-28.

⁴¹Leone Ebreo, The Philosophy of Love, trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and Jean H. Barnes (London: The Soncino Press, 1937), p. 145.

virtuous man:

to recognize that wisdom is a gift of God, and that one acquires no virtue without the will of God, they have feigned that Hercules (who represents a greatness of courage, strength of body, probity, and worthiness to punish all vices, and to trample underfoot all forces of voluptuousness) son of Jupiter: for those who by a singular integrity and beneficence employ their lives for the good and profit of the public, acquire not only a glorious reputation, but approach also very near to the divine nature. Now to encourage us to do this, the example of others is very useful, and firstly it is necessary to defeat those dangerous monsters, pride, anger, arrogance, and passion of the spirit; to purge from our souls all cruelty, to curb all illicit affections, to banish all dishonest lust; to flee avarice, to have hands clean of theft, pilfering, and other extortions; to stamp out unjust affliction, to extinguish all incontinence and carnal excess And just as such lusts engender nothing but grief and misery, so if someone removes himself from virtue, he is ensnared by his own way; we will feel finally how many miserable⁴² things there are to enslave oneself in villainous concupiscence.

In other words, Hercules reflects Jovian qualities and exemplifies the four virtues of the soul which Plato prescribed for the citizen and for

⁴²Le Comte, pp. 871-72: "Et pour donner à cognoistre que la sagesse est un don de Dieu, & que l'on n'acquiert aucune vertu sans la volonté de Dieu, ils ont feint Hercule (qui represente une grandeur de courage, force de corps, probité, & valeur à donner la chasse a tous vices, & fouler aux pieds toutes sortes de voluptez) fils de Iupiter: car ceux qui par une singuliere integrité & beneficence employoient leur vie pour le bien & profit du public, acquierent non seulement une glorieuse reputation, mais approchent aussi fort pres de la nature divine. Or pour nous encourager à ce faire, l'exemple d'autrui sert de beaucoup, & premierement il faut defaire ces dangereux monstres, orgueil, cholere, arrogace & fureur d'esprit; chasser de nostre ame toute cruauté, reprimez toutes affections illegitimes, forbannir toute volupté deshonneste; fuir auarice, auoir les mains nettes de rapine, volerie & autres extorsions; foulager les affligez iniustement; esteindre toute incontinence & dissolution charnesse Et dautant que toutes telles voluptez n'enfantent autre chose que douleur & misere, si quelqu'un se detraquant de vertu enfile le chemin d'icelles; il sentira finalement combien c'est chose miserable de s'esclauer à de vilaines conuoitises."

the state: wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Boccaccio had said that the name Hercules means either "glory on earth" (era deriving from terra which means earth) or "glorious strife" (erix meaning strife and cleo meaning glorious),⁴³ and Conti refers to an oracle that announced to Hercules:

Apollo gives you the beautiful name of Hercules:
For your glory resounds forever in the universe.⁴⁴

The name of Pyrocles, which means "glorious fire," seems appropriate to the name of a hero who is a type of Hercules, and at the time of the birth of Pyrocles "both Heavens & Earth" give abundant

tokens of the coming forth of an Heroicall vertue. The senate house of the planets was at no time to set, for the decreeing of perfection in a man, as at that time all folkes skilful therein did acknowledge: onely love was threatned, and promised to him, and so to his cousin, as both the tempest and haven of their best years.⁴⁵

The planetary signs indicating that a heroical virtue has been engendered in Pyrocles suggest that he will develop into a Herculean type and that only a woman can stand in the way of his predestined greatness. Like Hercules, he will have to avoid the snare of "villainous concupiscence."⁴⁶ As in the case of Hercules, an oracle foretells his future greatness, and his name associates him with the idea of strife. Furthermore, fire, the highest of the four elements, freed the heroic soul of Hercules from its

⁴³Boccaccio, II, 638.

⁴⁴Le Comte, p. 569: "Apollon d'Heracles le beau Surnom te donne: / Car ta gloire a jamais en l'Uniuers resonance."

⁴⁵Sidney, I, 189.

⁴⁶See above, p. 117, quoted from Le Comte, p. 872.

earthly encumbrances, and "fierie" is the word used to describe the character of Pyrocles on the occasion of the slaying of the lion:

The lion (seing Philoclea run away) bent his race to herward,
& was ready to seaze him selfe on the pray, when Zelmane (to
whome daunger then was a cause of dreadlesnes, all the composi-
tions of her elements being nothing but fierie) with swiftnesse
of desire crost him, and with force of affection strake him such
a blow upon his chine, that she opened al his body⁴⁷

Gynecia, noting the resemblance, "sware, shee sawe the face of the young
Hercules killing the Nemean Lion, & all with a grateful assent confirmed
the same praises" ⁴⁸ In short, Conti's brief summary of the
character and accomplishments of Hercules applies equally well to the
character and accomplishments of Pyrocles:

For he was in fact a very excellent and valorous leader in war,
who . . . decided to circle almost around the earth, to abolish
tyrannies, and to deliver the poor people from oppressions and
violent acts of those who were stronger: to reduce in the same
way the brutal people to a more gentle and civilized way of
living, directing them to this end by good laws and ordinances
which he established for all wherever he passed, leaving behind
lieutenants and governors to contain his subjects in peace,
harmony, friendship and humanity.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Sidney, I, 120.

⁴⁸Sidney, I, 124.

⁴⁹Le Comte, p. 570: "Car ce fut de faict un tres-excellent &
tres valeureux chef de guerre, lequel . . . se print à circuir presque
tout le rond de la terre, pour abolir les tyrannies, & deliurer
le pauvre peuple des oppressions & violences des plus forts: Reduire
par mesme moyen les peuples brutaux à plus douce & ciuile façon
de viure, les policant à cette fin de bonnes loix & ordonnances
qu'il establissoit par tout où il passoit, y laissant des lieutenans
& gouverneurs pour contenir ses suiets en paix, concorde, amitié &
humanité."

D. Cosmological Exegesis

For Hercules, as for Pyrocles later, a false aphrodisiac was prepared. Deianira, trusting in Nessus, sent that dead Centaur's blood-stained cloak to Hercules, believing that it would reawaken his desire for her. The cloak, instead, ate the flesh from his bones, and the pain led him to end his own agony by burning himself to death on a funeral pyre. Pyrocles is more fortunate, or more wary. Gynecia, like Deianira, believes that she possesses an aphrodisiac, which in this case consists of a liquid in a golden bottle, given her long ago by her mother.

This Gynaecia, (according to the common disposition, not only (though especiallie) of wives, but of all other kindes of people, not to esteeme much ones owne, but to thinke the labor lost employed about it) had never cared to geve to her husband, but suffred his affection to runne according to his owne scope. But now that love of her particular choyse had awaked her spirits, and perchance the very unlawfulness of it had a litle blowne the coale: among her other ornaments with glad minde she tooke most part of this liquor, putting it into a fair cup, all set with diamonds⁵⁰

The love potion proves to be a sleeping potion, however, and the recipient, instead of being Pyrocles, proves to be Basilius, the scorned husband. Ironically, Deianira had hoped to arouse her own husband's desire, whereas Gynecia hopes to avoid it. There is a further irony in that Pyrocles, the Herculean figure, thanks to the elaborate ground-plot which he had laid for an attempted escape with Philoclea, is unaffected by the love potion.

⁵⁰Sidney, II, 48.

Fraunce associates the Omphale episode with the Deianira episode, regarding both women as embodiments of wantonness.⁵¹

He that mastred men, was whipped by a woman, and enforced by her to spinne and handle a distaffe instead of an Iron clubbe: so doth wantonnes effeminate the most warlike hearts, and so much harder it is, to resist pleasure, then not to be overcome by payne. At length having passed through so many perils, and being infected with a shirt sent him from Deianira, and polluted with the venymous blood of the Centaure Nessus, he burnt himselfe on the mount Oeta: that is to say, his terrestrial body being purged and purified, himselfe was afterwards deified and crowned with immortality.⁵²

Conti, despite his apparent scorn for Hercules in women's clothing,⁵³ points out, however, that Hercules should really not be blamed for serving Omphale, after performing so many brave deeds, because "it is much more to be feared that we let ourselves be carried away by disorderly pleasures than by pains and difficulties which befall us, and it is a thing more honorable to conquer oneself, to govern our courageous impulses, than to conquer all the universe."⁵⁴ Pyrocles' imprese, "Never more valiant," comes to mind. It is important to remember that an oracle had assured Hercules that he would be cured

⁵¹Fulgentius, Mythologies, Book 2, sec. 2, in Fulgentius the Mythographer, p. 68, gives etymological justification for equating Omphale with lust.

⁵²Fraunce, sig. 47^r.

⁵³See p. 112, above.

⁵⁴Le Comte, p. 572: "Il est bien plus a craindre que nous ne nous laissions emporter à nos plaisirs desordonnez, qu'aux peines & difficultez qui nous suruiennent: & que c'est chose plus honorable de se vaincre soy-mesme, gouverner les impetuositez de nos courages, que de conquerir tout l'Uniuers."

of his madness "if he were going to sell himself to someone to whom he would do service for three years and gave the wages for his service to Eurytus"⁵⁵ (whose son he had killed). The period of servitude, then, was a period of purification.

It seems obvious that Gynecia functions to some limited extent as a type of Deianira in the Arcadia; that is, she is a jealous and seductive woman who may be said to embody wantonness. But it seems equally obvious that Sidney would have agreed with Conti, not Fraunce, about the valor displayed by Hercules during his period of servitude to Omphale. Ficino's discussion of love, whether directly or indirectly, must have been familiar to him.⁵⁶ After distinguishing between the desire to contemplate Beauty and the desire to generate another beautiful individual, Ficino holds that in either case "he who loves, dies; for his consciousness, oblivious of himself, is devoted exclusively to the loved one"⁵⁷ If this love is unrequited, the soul of the lover remains dead, but in a case of mutual love the two lovers "exchange identities."⁵⁸ That is, each has died, but each has been

⁵⁵Le Comte, p. 563: "s'il s'alloit vendre à quelqu'un au quel il fit service l'espace de trois ans, & donnast le loyer de son service à Euryte."

⁵⁶See above, pp. 65-66.

⁵⁷Marsilio Ficino, Commentary on Plato's "Symposium," in Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's "Symposium," trans. and ed. Sears Reynolds Jayne (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1944), p. 143.

⁵⁸Ficino, p. 144.

resurrected, because the dead lover lives again in his beloved. A further resurrection occurs when "he finally recognizes himself in his beloved and no longer doubts that he is loved."⁵⁹ Pyrocles' imprese indicates that Hercules was heroic when he dressed like a woman and that Pyrocles is equally heroic when he disguises himself as Zelmane. The change in garments probably represents a dying into the other person. When the real Zelmane disguised herself as a page in order to serve Pyrocles, and when, later, Parthenia disguises herself as a knight in order to kill her husband's killer, these, too, are probably enactments of Ficino's philosophy of love. Conversely, Pyrocles discards his Amazon costume after he is fully assured that Philoclea wants to marry him, because at that stage he has discovered himself again in the person of the woman he loves. When Basilius summons Argalus to help at the siege of Cecropia's castle, the messenger, appropriately enough,

found Argalus at a castle of his owne, sitting in a parler with the faire Parthenia, he reading in a booke the stories of Hercules, she by him A happy couple, he joying in her, she joying in her selfe, but in her selfe, because she enjoyed him: both encreasing their riches by giving to each other; each making one life double, because they made a double life; one, where desire never wanted satisfaction, nor satisfaction never bred sacietie; he ruling, because she would obey: or rather because she wold obey, she therein ruling.⁶⁰

Parthenia moves in a direction opposite to that of Pyrocles, however. She has already achieved the stage of "joying in her selfe . . .

⁵⁹Ficino, p. 145.

⁶⁰Sidney, I, 420.

because she enjoyed" Argalus, and when Argalus dies, she loses that self-image. Her own spirit has died with her husband's body, and his spirit, which now lives only in her, leads her to adopt his masculine clothing, in order to complete the task he has left undone: the killing of Amphialus. Donning the clothing of the opposite sex seems, for Sidney, to symbolize taking a step up the ladder of love, because it is a step away from particularity and separateness. And he associates this ascent with Hercules, as one who ultimately mounted to the very top, for after Hercules had thrown himself on a funeral pyre, "this fire served Hercules only to consume what had been mortal and corruptible." His soul, however, "was by Jupiter reinvested with an immortality triumphant and glorious, and raised to heaven with a majesty and divine reverence, to the great satisfaction of all the celestial court" ⁶¹

Pyrocles, of course, raises himself, rung by rung, up the ladder of love, from the love of a beautiful body to the love of a beautiful individual soul and still higher, to a third rung, where the lover in his own mind recognizes that the lady's beauty is part of an eternal ideal of beauty. ⁶² He does not, however, relinquish the two lower rungs

⁶¹Le Comte, p. 564: "ce feu seruit à Hercule pour seulement consumer ce qu'il auoit de mortel & corruptible. . . . il fut par Iupin reuestu d'une immortalité triomphante & glorieuse, & enleué aux cieux avec une maiesté & reuerence diuine, au grand contentement de toute la cour celeste"

⁶²After all, Pyrocles and Philoclea, in the revised *Arcadia*, slept innocently during those few hours in which they occupied the same bed. The Countess of Pembroke altered the original *Arcadia* by having them forgo premarital sex.

on the ladder. After all, Ficino assures us that "both loves are honorable and praiseworthy, for each is concerned with the divine image."⁶³ But unlike Hercules, Pyrocles does not die at the end of the story, and, so long as it is embodied in flesh, the spirit has certain limitations. The Emperor Julian, whose works were widely read during the Elizabethan period,⁶⁴ writes:

Not that anyone, surely, would venture to assert that any substance, even if it be composed of the purest aether, is superior to soul undefiled and pure, that of Heracles for instance, as it was when the creator sent it to earth. For that soul of his both seemed to be and was more effective than after it had bestowed itself on a body. Since even Heracles, now that he has returned, one and indivisible, to his father one and indivisible, more easily controls his own province than formerly when he wore the garment of flesh and walked among men. And this shows that in all things the conversion to the higher is more effective than the propensity to the lower.⁶⁵

⁶³Ficino, p. 143.

⁶⁴See Michael Murrin, The Veil of Allegory: Some Notes toward a Theory of Allegorical Rhetoric in the English Renaissance (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 52, where Murrin explains that Sallustius and Julian were "part of the pagan revival in the mid-fourth century. They share a basically common attitude toward allegory, particularly in their emphasis on cosmic exegesis, the mode of communication among the wise. In the Renaissance the Florentine Platonists revived their ideas" It is relatively unimportant whether Sidney read Julian in Latin or in a translation, or whether he simply read about him in the works of a Florentine Neoplatonist.

⁶⁵Julian, "Hymn to the Mother of the Gods," in The Works of the Emperor Julian, trans. Wilmer Cave Wright, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), I, 465, 467. Julian's Mysopogon et Epistolae, in both Greek and Latin, was published in Paris in 1566, and the Opera, also in both Greek and Latin, in 1583. The works of Julian were not published in an English translation, however, until 1733, when Thomas Taylor's translation was published in London. See Robert Watt, Bibliotheca Britannica, or a General Index to British and Foreign Literature (Edinburgh, 1824; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, n.d.), II, 559. Since Sidney, if he read Julian, read him in Latin, the present twentieth-century translation has been selected.

Pyrocles, in anticipation of death, conceives of a state in which he could experience a "hye and heavenly love of the unquenchable light."⁶⁶ This insight probably comprises a fourth or fifth step up the ladder, to the Idea or Form of beauty, which in turn reflects Heavenly Beauty itself.⁶⁷ For the moment, Pyrocles has risen from the realm of nature to that of the World Soul.

Pyrocles wins his greatest triumph, then, while in prison, but this is an inner action, a victory over himself. His greatest visible achievement is the victory over the combined force of Zoilus, Lycurgus,

⁶⁶Sidney, II, 166.

⁶⁷See Baldassare Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby, Everyman's Library No. 807 (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1948). In Book IV, Peter Bembo traces the ascent of the older lover from an original "coveting of the bodie" to a cherishing of the lady's soul, which he can "beholde . . . in it selfe simple and pure, and frame it within in his imagination sundred from all matter, and so make it friendly and loving to his soul . . ." (p. 317). Next, "through the vertue of imagination, hee shall fashion with himselfe that beautie much more faire than it is in deede. But among these commodities, the lover shall find another yet farre greater, in case he will take this love for a stayre (as it were) to climbe up to another farre higher than it" (p. 317). The stairway will lead him "out of this so narrowe a roome," to a state in which, "meddling all beautie together, he shal make an universall conceite, and bring the multitude of them to the unitie of one alone And thus shall he beholde no more the particular beautie of one woman, but an universall, that decketh out all bodies" (p. 318). The soul is now prepared to exercise the reason "with the studies of true Philosophie," but the top of the stairway is only reached when the understanding supplants the reason and the soul, "kindled in the most holy fire of true heavenly love, fleeth to couple her selfe with the nature of Angels . . ." (p. 319). This fire, Castiglione adds, "is the great fire in the which (the Poets write) that Hercules was buried on the toppe of the mountaine Oeta: and through that consuming with fire, after his death was holy and immortall" (p. 320).

and Anaxius, which frees Philoclea, the object of his love, the woman who reflects "the unquenchable light." If Zoilus, Lycurgus, and Anaxius are fictitious counterparts to the mythological Cerberus, then they take on the allegorical significance of Cerberus.

At the cosmological level, Fraunce sees Cerberus, Pluto's three-headed dog, as "the all-devouring earth, eating and consuming all earthly bodies."⁶⁸ To triumph over earth would be to triumph over transience, and Sidney may have intended to show that Pyrocles, in the service of a love both sensual and spiritual, accomplished something permanent. After the apotheosis of Hercules, Jupiter arranged for him to marry Hebe, who replaced Ganymede as cupbearer to Jupiter. Fraunce equates Hebe with "the very flowre of youth," and Ganymede, her predecessor, with winter. Since Hebe symbolizes youth, her marriage to Hercules indicates that "the fame of valyant and heroical personages is ever florishing."⁶⁹ Perhaps the marriage of Pyrocles to Philoclea could be interpreted the same way. His reputation for valor would, like the higher aspects of his love, endure beyond his earthly lifespan. Fraunce adds that "Hebe was framed like a sweet lasse: her roabes figured and flowred, & her head also adorned with a garland of sundry flowers. The Corinthians erected her a temple, in a certaine grove full of Cipresse trees: wherein such as escaped captivitie & thraldome, hanged up their

⁶⁸Fraunce, sig. 27^v.

⁶⁹Fraunce, sig. 33^v.

gyves and fetters in honor of Hebe."⁷⁰ The rescue from Cecropia's castle could be seen as a comparable deliverance from thralldom to the earth. Philoclea is at once the captive freed by Pyrocles and the inspiration that enables him to free her. She is a maiden, a goddess, and an eternal ideal: Philoclea, Hebe, and Youth.

E. Natural Exegesis

At the natural level of allegory, too, the deaths of Lycurgus and Zoilus and the presumed death of Anaxius have thematic importance. Fraunce finds that, at the natural level, Cerberus represents "mans bodie prest and appliable to all sensuall lust, but repugning and abhorring vertue and contemplation."⁷¹ His three heads represent "those three necessarie evils, which withdraw men from contemplation, I meane, hunger, thirst, and sleepe"⁷² Although Anaxius, Lycurgus, and Zoilus cannot be exactly equated with hunger, thirst, and sleep, they can, in combination, be associated with sensuality and opposed to self-control, making Pyrocles represent the virtuous life. Conti assigns to Hercules the virtues of "liberality, grandeur, courage, and excellency of strength, spiritual as well as bodily, hence, casting out of the spirit

⁷⁰Fraunce, sig. 33^r.

⁷¹Fraunce, sig. 27^v.

⁷²Fraunce, sig. 27^v.

all sorts of vices in general."⁷³ Some of Pyrocles' earlier accomplishments can, like those of Hercules, be viewed as victories won over vices of the soul rather than over tyrants and beasts. The King of Phrygia provides the most obvious example, for it is almost necessary to see him as Cowardice in order to see him as a type of the Ceryneian Hind, which, according to Conti, is noted for its "cowardice and inconstancy."⁷⁴ The death of the Phrygian king and his sole heir⁷⁵ would, in this reading, be the removal of any traces of cowardice from the character of the sixteen-year-old Pyrocles, who is still untried, having embarked only recently on his first journey, in the company of his elder cousin, Musidorus.

According to Fraunce, when Hercules killed the Nemean lion he was vanquishing from his soul "wrath, pride, and crueltie."⁷⁶ The lion is

fed and nourished in the forest of ignorance of our intellect, and makes a general ruin of what little good can be had there. Moreover, that is not all: for after having struck down this monster, that is to say, calmed the above-mentioned troubles of the spirit, it does not follow that we live our lives in repose

⁷³Le Comte, p. 568: "une bonté, grandeur de courage, & excellence de forces tant spirituelles que corporelles chassant hors de l'esprit toutes sortes de vices en general."

⁷⁴Le Comte, p. 571: "couardise & legereté."

⁷⁵The earlier achievements, for which Pyrocles required the help of Musidorus, can be seen as victories gained only with the assistance of a guardian angel or god, since Musidorus functions as an Apollonian figure. This point will be developed in the following chapter.

⁷⁶Fraunce, sig. 46^v.

and tranquillity, because many pleasures lie in wait for us and come to make war on us.⁷⁷

When Pyrocles kills Cecropia's lion and when, somewhat later, he suppresses a mob of unruly peasants (corresponding to drunken Centaurs), he is, in effect, purging himself of all unruly emotions that might gain control of his reason. These victories comprise a necessary prelude to the more positive pursuit of love. After he finally succeeds in freeing his soul, and his soul as reflected in Philoclea, from the three aspects of sensuality which held him prisoner in Cecropia's castle, he is free to complete his contemplative pursuit of the "unquenchable light."

F. Astrological or Heavenly Exegesis

The Hercules who strangled and killed Geryon was regarded by the Renaissance mythographers as a sun-god. It was possible, according to Conti, to "believe that Hercules was no other thing than the Sun, which for the love of the twelve images of the Zodiac, has been said to accomplish a dozen labors"⁷⁸ Moreover, the name Antaeus suggests contradiction or opposition,⁷⁹ hence, darkness and cold. "For, given

⁷⁷Le Comte, p. 570: "se paist & mourrit en la forest de l'ignorance de nostre entendement, & fait un degast général de si peu qu'il y peut auoir de bon. Si n'est ce pas tout: car apres auoir abatu ce monstre, c'est à dire, appaisé les susdits troubles d'esprit, il ne faut pas faire estat de viure toute nostre vie en repos & tranquillité; parce que beaucoup de voluptez nous guettent & nous viennent fair la guerre."

⁷⁸Le Comte, p. 572: ". . . qu'Hercule ne soit autre chose que le Soleil, que pour l'amour des douze images du Zodiaque, l'on dit auoir accompli douze labeurs"

⁷⁹See Le Comte, p. 572.

that Hercules is the sun, the earth, cold without faith, waxes merry and renews by its coolness that which the excessive heat had scorched."⁸⁰ Again, the name Pyrocles seems especially appropriate to a Herculean figure. A fiery zeal for justice, which may be said to have moved Pyrocles to rescue Dido before completing his duel with Anaxius, was temporarily counteracted by the cold and calculating materialism of Chremes. But primarily, at the astrological level, the defeat of Chremes, like Hercules' defeat of Antaeus, would be simply the defeat of winter by the sun.

The King of Pontus and his two giant followers, if they are regarded as the three-bodied Geryon, can be interpreted the same way. Fraunce explains that

Hercules kild Gerion, and brought away his oxen: where, by Hercules, both Pierius and Hesiodus his interpreter, understand the Sunne, sith he is the glorie and ornament of Juno, that is, the ayre And Gerion, they make to be winter . . . which signifieth to crye or roare, thereby noting the roaring and blustering tempests of winter, which are calmed, and repressed by Hercules, that is to say, by the heate of the Sunne.⁸¹

The two giants seem especially suited for the role of the tempests of winter, for after their king had discarded them, their anger, "now unbridled . . . made wickednesse violent . . . almost to the ruine of the countrie, not greatly regarded by their carelesse and lovelesse

⁸⁰Le Comte, p. 554: "Car attendu que Hercule est le Soleil, la terre froide de foy regaillardit & refait par sa fraischeur ce que la trop excessiue chaleur auoit liaui"

⁸¹Fraunce, sig. 34^r.

king."⁸² Again a lack of human warmth seems to parallel the lack of seasonal warmth, but Pyrocles' victory over the king and his giants can also be read astrologically as simply the victory of the sun over winter and its storms. Unfortunately, Sidney rarely describes the weather conditions surrounding events in the narrative, although it is possible that he expected his readers to imagine that Pontus killed Nelsus and Leucippe and that Chremes attacked Pyrocles on dark days. The season is only identified in the Arcadia in three places. The book opens "in the time that the earth begins to put on her new apparel against the approach of her lover, and that the Sun running a most even course becomes an indifferent arbiter between the night and the day . . . ,"⁸³ and it is winter in Galacia when Pyrocles and Musidorus discover the blinded King of Paphlagonia and his loyal son Leonatus:

It was in the kingdome of Galacia, the season being (as in the depth of winter) very cold, and as then sodainely growne to so extreame and foule a storme, that never any winter (I thinke) brought forth a fowler child: so that the Princes were even compelled by the haile, that the pride of the winde blew into their faces, to seeke some shrowding place within a certaine hollow rocke offering it unto them, they made it their shield against the tempests furie.⁸⁴

⁸²Sidney, I, 205.

⁸³Sidney, I, 5. See Walter Davis, A Map of Arcadia: Sidney's Romance in Its Tradition, in Sidney's Arcadia, Walter R. Davis and Richard A. Lanham (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 91: "To land near amorous Arcadia is to come out of the watery realm of death into a new life like that of the year." He discusses Musidorus' washing ashore as a rebirth.

⁸⁴Sidney, I, 207.

Hearing of the cruelty of Plexirtus, Leonatus' brother, who put out his father's eyes and turned him out into the cold, Pyrocles and Musidorus assist Leonatus and his father by repelling Plexirtus and forty horsemen, who have come to kill them. Plexirtus has at his command two powerful brothers, Tydeus and Telenor, who give unquestioning obedience. They save Plexirtus from death at the hands of Pyrocles and Musidorus, and the three remain together at Trebisonde, which the forgiving Leonatus gives Plexirtus to rule after Plexirtus' feigned repentance.

Since the most evil of Plexirtus' many evil deeds is committed in the winter, and since Pyrocles opposes them, it is tempting to regard Plexirtus, Tydeus, and Telenor as a composite Geryon-figure, akin to the King of Pontus and his two giants. However, Tydeus and Telenor end by killing one another, after Plexirtus, fearing their popularity, contrives to have them meet in single combat, each believing the other to be the King of Pontus coming to attack Plexirtus, who is still alive at the end of the book. Paradoxically, Pyrocles, bound by a promise to the real Zelmane, has to forgo assisting the King of Pontus (the good king, who had replaced the tyrant) and Musidorus in a battle against Otaves and two other evil giants, a third possible Geryon-figure, in order to defend Plexirtus against a "monstrous beast, of most ugly shape, armed like a Rhinoceros, as strong as an Elephant, as fierce as a Lion, as nimble as a Leopard, and as cruell as a Tigre."⁸⁵

⁸⁵Sidney, I, 300.

Had Sidney lived to complete his revision, he might have attached another pair of followers to Plexirtus and arranged for Pyrocles to defeat the three in a springtime setting. There is no way, of course, to guess what an author's unfulfilled and unstated intentions might have been, but the impact of the scene in Galacia is strong, and Plexirtus, like Erona, seems too major a thread simply to ravel out. To complete the astrological allegory (which was important to Elizabethans if not to the modern reader⁸⁶), something more needed to be done with the defeat of Plexirtus as one-third of Geryon, or winter.

In any event, Pyrocles does seem to parallel the figure of Hercules as a sun-god in his victories over Antaeus and Geryon, and in his marriage to Philoclea, who parallels Hebe. Conti says that

inasmuch as the Sun returning through the Zodiac regenerates and rejuvenates (expressed by the word Hebe) that which the winter seems to have stifled, it is said that Juno (the temperament of the air) gives to him [the sun] her daughter Hebe in marriage.⁸⁷

The marriage of Philoclea and Pyrocles, at the end of the Arcadia, surely represents, at one level, the return of spring.

⁸⁶See Rosemond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: Some Mediaeval Books and Their Posterity (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 225: "We have no real use for, and hence no real interest in the cosmological knowledge or mysteries Spenser or Chapman or Drayton might clothe in such images; this may be one reason why (unlike moral allegory) such imagery has not been reinvigorated by the studies of it, but remained sterile or only historically interesting." She was speaking, here, specifically of astrological interpretations.

⁸⁷Le Comte, p. 573: "dautant que le Soleil se r'approchant de nous par le Zodiaque fait renaistre & reuerdit comme en puberté exprimee par le mot Hebé, ce que l'hyuer sembloit auoir estouffé, c'est pourquoy l'on dit que Iunon c'est à dire le temperament de l'air, luy donna sa fille Hebé en mariage."

G. Theological Exegesis

The defeat of Anaxius and his brothers, which results in the subsequent liberation of Philoclea and Pamela, is the one event in the plot of the Arcadia most susceptible of a theological reading, for it parallels the binding of Cerberus and the liberation of Theseus and Alcestis, which in turn parallels the Harrowing of Hell. Fraunce identified Cerberus as sensuality at the level of natural allegory and as earth at the level of cosmological allegory; but a much earlier mythographer, Christine de Pisan, identified him with Satan and Hercules with

the blessid soule of Jhesu Criste, the which drewe oute the good soulis of holy patriarkes and prophetis that were in limbo. And be this example the good spirite schulde drawe to him alle vertues and beleue the articule that Sent Philip seith: Descendit ad inferna.⁸⁸

In the pagan setting of the Arcadia, the theological aspect is less explicit than the mythological, but as soon as Pyrocles can be associated with Hercules he can, by extension, be equated with Christ,⁸⁹ because Sidney, like his friend Golding, probably believed that the pagan poets had read Moses and had also "with leesings and with fables shadowed so / The certaine truth" that was later revealed in the New Testament.⁹⁰ In

⁸⁸ Christine de Pisan, The Epistle of Othea Translated from the French Text of Christine de Pisan by Stephen Scrope, ed. Curt F. Buhler, The Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 39.

⁸⁹ See p. 35, above.

⁹⁰ Golding, "The Epistle," ll. 537-42.

a pre-Christian myth, even if it were post-Mosaic, it was not to be expected that the body of Hercules would rise again. In the post-Christian Arcadia, however, it is not surprising that the plot-line should be altered, enabling Pyrocles to experience a spiritual restoration during the course of his earthly existence. At the theological level, the happy ending of the Arcadia amounts to a redemption for Pyrocles. For the sake of credibility, his body is not hurled from the tower before his soul is restored, but the four-level allegorical method enables Sidney to avoid fantastic occurrences in the plot without also eschewing all mystical content.

It is not surprising, then, that the Countess of Pembroke made her two changes in the 1593 Arcadia, having Musidorus steal only a chaste kiss from the sleeping Pamela and having Pyrocles fall into an innocent slumber beside Philoclea in the bed. On Castiglione's stairway of love, Pyrocles has mounted from sensual desire for Philoclea to love for her beautiful soul, and perhaps arrived at a concept of beauty itself. Yet, says Castiglione, the soul is still unable to "enjoy [the concept] altogether perfectly, because she beholdeth it onely in her particular understanding, which can not conceive the passing great universall beautie."⁹¹ The fourth step, then, is reached when "the soule kindled in the most holy fire of true heavenly love, fleeth to couple her selfe with the nature of Angels, and . . . being chaunged into an Angele, she

⁹¹Castiglione, p. 319.

understandeth all things that may be understood"92 Pyrocles has not, of course, taken this fourth step at the literal level, but allegorically his love for Philoclea may represent all kinds of love simultaneously. His very name suggests a burning, and his mythological analogue, Hercules, burned in a "holy" fire. Castiglione specifies that it was this "great fire in the which . . . Hercules was buried on the toppe of the mountaine Oeta: and through that consuming with fire, after his death was holy and immortall."93 If Pyrocles' love for Philoclea can be regarded as a burning desire at all levels, then, at some point long after the close of the book, he might mount the rest of the way to God. The marriage between Pyrocles and Philoclea may well have represented, at the heavenly level, the marriage of the individual soul to the Angelic Mind, and at the theological level, the marriage of Christ to the (Anglican) Church.

Despite Sidney's disclaimer, the Arcadia is no "trifle . . . triflinglie handled."94 It is a serious heroic poem that celebrates, in part at least, the spiritual victories of a courageous prince. When Sidney added to Book Two a series of episodes in which Pyrocles could display his military effectiveness, he was elevating Pyrocles from young lover to heroic young lover. When he added to Book Three the imprisonment

⁹²Castiglione, p. 319.

⁹³Castiglione, p. 320.

⁹⁴Sidney, I, 4.

in Cecropia's castle and the subsequent defeat of the three evil brothers, Sidney was elevating Pyrocles from heroic young lover to victorious young hero who loves the good--and loves God.

IV. THE SERVITUDE AND THE TRIUMPHS OF APOLLO

The significance which attaches to the character of Musidorus is far greater than, though not incompatible with, the role of a wiser elder cousin to Prince Pyrocles. Several events in the Arcadia in which Musidorus figures largely parallel certain Apollonian myths and invite the same allegorical readings that attended the myths for Elizabethan readers. Those events in the Arcadia on which the present chapter will focus are Musidorus' disguise as a shepherd, his consequent servitude to Dametas, his courtship and eventual marriage to Pamela, and his defeat of Amphialus. If Musidorus is regarded as a type of Apollo, these events take on cosmological, natural, astrological, and theological overtones that firmly establish the seriousness and the epic dimensions of Sidney's narrative. A twentieth-century reader is quick to appreciate the comedy in Musidorus' recantation and in his elaborate escape plot, but reluctant to accord to his other actions the respect that Sidney's loftier style suggests they deserve.

Hopefully, this chapter will make it clear that Musidorus is the major hero of the Arcadia, for his power of action exceeds that of Pyrocles. Hercules was a human hero whose soul ascended to heaven; Apollo was a god from the beginning. Analogously, Pyrocles, the younger and more inexperienced of the cousins, had to learn to be a hero; Musidorus, older and wiser, was a hero from the beginning.

A. The Story of Musidorus

Musidorus, whose name means "gift of the muses," has a paradoxical nature. Being older than Pyrocles "by three or foure yeares,"¹ he protects and supports his young friend, furnishing physical courage and reasonable advice when needed. In the beginning his physical and intellectual powers function as harmoniously as the nine Muses who direct the motions of the nine spheres. However, as Pamela's lover, he becomes at first emotional and precipitate in making sexual advances, then abject and overwhelmed with self-hatred. Body and soul are at war. Musidorus will have to kill Amphialus, paving the way for Pyrocles to kill Anaxius, before he can rescue Pamela from Cecropia's castle and regain his equilibrium. The final episode in the revised Arcadia finds Musidorus restored to his former character: protective toward Pyrocles, reasonable, self-disciplined, altogether a fit consort for Pamela, the heir to the throne of Arcadia.

When Musidorus is washed ashore at Laconia, after the shipwreck which has separated him from Pyrocles, he is rescued by two learned and philosophical shepherds, Strephon and Klaius, both awaiting a summons from their departed mistress, Urania (whose name is also the name of one of the Muses). Although he has used a coffer, which resembles a bier, to keep himself alive and afloat, he is near death by the time the

¹Sir Philip Sidney, The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963-68), I, 190.

shepherds escort him to Kalander's house, in nearby Arcadia, where he lies ill for six weeks. Meanwhile, the shepherds, having received their message from Urania, depart for Cithera, not to reappear until the time has come for Musidorus to meet with Amphialus in single combat at the siege of Cecropia's castle.²

Musidorus and Pyrocles are later reunited in Laconia, only to be separated once more in Arcadia, after Pyrocles has fallen in love with the picture of Philoclea in Kalander's summer house. In the summer house, they hold their first debate about the effect of love on the soul, Musidorus finding it deleterious, Pyrocles beneficial. At length, Pyrocles disappears, and although Musidorus searches the entire countryside for him, they are not reunited again until Musidorus finds Pyrocles, disguised as the Amazon Zelmane, attached to Basilius' rustic household. There the cousins engage in a second debate about the merits of love, but shortly thereafter Musidorus sees Pamela for the first time and discovers that he loves her as fervently as Pyrocles loves Philoclea. "I recant, I recant," he cries.³ Disguising himself as a shepherd, Dorus, he works for Pamela's clownish guardian, Dametas, in order to be near Pamela, whom he rescues from a bear by wisely waiting for the beast to rise on its hind feet before plunging his knife into its heart.

²See Katherine D. Duncan-Jones, "Sidney's Urania," Review of English Studies, n.s., 17 (May 1966), 131, where she suggests that the green and white knights who assist the Forlorn Knight at the siege are Strephon and Klaius.

³Sidney, I, 114.

Since Pamela has too much self-respect to welcome the advances of a mere shepherd, Musidorus is constrained to seem to court Mopsa, Dametas' daughter, while making veiled statements from which Pamela can infer that he is the famous Prince Musidorus of Thessaly. Hence, he can tell her about some of his earlier adventures, in which Musidorus had functioned as protector to the younger Pyrocles, Prince of Macedonia. Pamela comes to understand that Dorus, the teller of the tales, is Musidorus himself, and the love affair seems to be going well, until Musidorus impetuously tries to embrace his beloved, who at once rebukes and dismisses him. Shortly thereafter the princesses are captured, and Pamela remains out of his reach, behind the walls of Cecropia's castle, for the duration of the siege.

Unable to reveal his true identity, Musidorus, wearing black armor, joins the Basilian forces on the field of battle. Twice he tries unsuccessfully to confront Amphialus on the battlefield, but the third time, presenting himself as the "Forlorn Knight," he confronts Amphialus and defeats him. Once Amphialus has received his mortal (or near-mortal) wound, Anaxius takes command of Cecropia's forces, and Pyrocles has his opportunity to confront Anaxius and rescue Philoclea.

Sidney's revision ends with Pyrocles and Anaxius engaged in hand-to-hand combat, and the 1593 version of the Arcadia has a lacuna in which, the reader surmises, Pyrocles must have won, for in the next episode Musidorus is making arrangements to elope with Pamela. To this end, he tells Dametas that Aristomenes had once left a box of treasure

buried under an old oak tree some distance away from the rustic lodges, and he tells Miso that Dametas has arranged an assignation in Mantinea with a young woman named Charita. But more importantly, he tells Mopsa that Apollo, banished from Olympus and working as a herdsman for Admetis, had been resting himself "in the boughes of a pleasaunt Ashe tree"⁴ when Jupiter decided to pardon him. From that very tree Jupiter had received him

again to his golden spheare. But having that right nature of a God, never to be ungratefull, to Admetus hee had graunted a double life, and because that tree was the chappel of his prosperous prayers, he had given it this equality, that whatsoever of such estate, and in such maner as he then was, sate downe in that tree, they should obtaine whatsoever they wished But because said Dorus, Apollo was at that time with extreme grieffe muffled, round aboute his face, with a skarlet cloake, Admetus had given him, and because they that must wish must be muffled in like sorte, and with like stuffe, my master Dametas is gone . . . to provide him a skarlet cloake⁵

Miso, he adds, has gone to Mantinea, also in search of a scarlet cloak, hoping to return with it to the ash tree ahead of Dametas. Dorus then hands the ambitious Mopsa a scarlet cloak, so that she can be the one to get the first and only wish, but he warns her not to come down until, after hearing her name called three times, she has made that wish. Whoever calls her, in whatever guise he appears, will be Apollo.

While Dametas, Miso, and Mopsa scatter, each propelled by self-interest, Pamela and Musidorus escape to a pine forest, where Musidorus carves a poem into the bark of a tree about the magnificent ascent that

⁴Sidney, I, 21.

⁵Sidney, I, 21.

the tall pines make. Later, with Pamela asleep in his lap, he lowers his face to kiss her, but he is interrupted by a mob of "clownish vilaines," who capture them by force.

The night that Basilius and Gynecia meet in the cave is the same night that Dametas returns from his fruitless digging for Aristomenes' treasure, to find that Pamela is missing from the lodge and that Mopsa is sitting, muffled in a red cloak, in the top of an ash tree. Mopsa, thinking Dametas to be Apollo, falls from the tree and persists in replying to all her father's questions about Pamela with a repeated request for a lusty and kingly husband. This dialogue continues until Miso arrives to hit Dametas over the head with a cudgel. Finally Dametas decides to go to the other lodge in search of Pamela, where he finds Pyrocles in bed with Philoclea. After Basilius is discovered dead (or seemingly dead) in front of the cave, Philanax's troops overtake the "clownish vilaines," and Musidorus is jailed with Pyrocles.

Their discussion about immortality the night before the trial is as central to the development of Musidorus as it is to the development of Pyrocles.⁶ Although the two cousins, early in the Arcadia, took opposing positions in their debate about love, it may be unwise to regard them as polar opposites, either in their characters or in their philosophical conclusions. Rather, the elder cousin and the younger cousin seem to be cut from the same mold, both at first acting to correct the evils of society and both later ascending the ladder of

⁶See Sidney, II, 99-100.

love to a stage at which they acquire some insight into the life that survives the death of the body. Pyrocles bears the same relationship to Musidorus that Hercules bears to Apollo; that is, Hercules was a hero who only became a god after he died, but Apollo was a god from the beginning. Both, nevertheless, function as sun gods.⁷ Hence, Pyrocles, in his youth and inexperience, follows the lead of the wiser Musidorus until his love for Philoclea enables him to find his own way to spiritual insights. The conversation between the two cousins while in prison demonstrates the fallacy of equating Pyrocles with action and Musidorus with contemplation.⁸ Both heroes engage in both pursuits. At this crucial moment, Pyrocles, who had been raised and educated in Thessaly with Musidorus, says that "there did I learne the sweete mysteries of Phylosophy"⁹ Musidorus is less impassioned than Pyrocles in his consideration of the kind of memories that can survive the grave, but their thoughts are complementary, not opposing. Hence, Musidorus, facing death with serenity, tells Pyrocles that

our soules which are put into the sturring earth of our bodyes,
have atchieved the causes of their hether coming: They have
knowne, & honoured with knowledge, the cause of their creation
Since then eternitie is not to be had in this conjunction, what is

⁷See pp. 130-31, above.

⁸See Alan D. Isler, "The Allegory of the Hero and Sidney's Two Arcadias," Studies in Philology, 65 (January 1968), 171-91. Isler finds the conflict between action and contemplation to be central to the meaning of the Arcadia, and he consistently equates Pyrocles with action and Musidorus with contemplation.

⁹Sidney, II, 163.

to be lost by the separation but time? Which since it hath his ende, when that is once come, all what is past is nothing: and by the protracting nothing gotten, but labour and care. . . . Neither will I any more yeeld to my passion of lamenting you, which howsoever it might agree to my exceeding friendship, surely it would nothing to your exceeding vertue.¹⁰

He is not, however, denying the survival of the soul, only its survival as a separate entity, which Pyrocles, too, had denied. For Musidorus, as for Pyrocles, personal memories will die with the body, but

the intellectuall parte or intelligence, which voide of all morall vertues, which stande in the meane of perturbacions, doth onely live in the contemplative vertue, and power of the omnipotent good, the soule of soules, and universall life of this great work, and therefore is utterly voide, from the possibilitie of drawing to it selfe, these sensible considerations.¹¹

He restates his position in a song, in which he says that death, "vew'd in reasons light," is actually an opportunity to escape from passion, which dims the vision of "our owly eyes." When passion ceases, our eyes "be clearde," and we can enjoy "the blisse of peacefull minde."¹²

At the trial both cousins are wearing their princely garments for the first time in Arcadia, but Pyrocles arrives looking "gentle and bashfull," Musidorus looking severe, like one with "a minde much given to thinking," yet both are "over ruled by reason and resolution."¹³

When Philanax terms Musidorus a "woolvish shepheard" and "counterfeite

¹⁰Sidney, II, 164.

¹¹Sidney, II, 165.

¹²Sidney, II, 166.

¹³Sidney, II, 170.

Prince,"¹⁴ Musidorus reminds him that he and Pyrocles together had rid the country of wild beasts and rescued the princesses from Cecropia's castle. In short, both, by the time they come to the trial, have shown themselves to be reasonable and courageous men. Although both are equally innocent of the charges, both are sentenced to death. And after Basilius awakens from his death-like sleep, each is acquitted and then permitted to marry his chosen princess.

B. The Myth of Apollo

Those portions of the Apollo myth most relevant to the story of Musidorus are the argument with Cupid, the pursuit of Daphne, the servitude to Admetis, and the victory over the Python. Just as Musidorus condescends to Pyrocles in their two debates about the merits of love, so Ovid had Apollo, confident that his own arrows had the power to fell monsters, condescending to Cupid:

. . . and what has thou thou wanton baby so
 With warlike weapons for to toy? It were a better sight,
 To see this kinde of furniture on my two shoulders bright:

 Content thy selfe sonne, sorie loves to kindle with thy brand,
 For these our prayes to attaine thou must not take in hand.¹⁵

True, Musidorus urges Pyrocles to take up his weapons again, but the tone of an elder warrior lecturing to an errant youth is much the same

¹⁴Sidney, II, 191.

¹⁵Ovid, "The First Booke," Shakespeare's Ovid: Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses, ed. W. H. D. Rouse (1961; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), ll. 550-52, 557-58.

in both stories. Moreover, both Apollo and Musidorus display a contempt for the "sorie loves" that Cupid's arrows effect. Ovid had Cupid gain respect for the efficacy of his marksmanship as well as his weapon by having him mount to the top of Mount Parnassus and

There from his quiver full of shafts two arrowes did he take
Of sundrie workes: tone causeth Love, the tother doth it slake.
That causeth love, is all of golde with point full sharpe and
 bright,
That chaseth love is blunt, whose steel with leaden head is
 dight.¹⁶

With the leaden arrow, Cupid shot Daphne, one of Diana's chaste nymphs; with the golden one, he shot Apollo, who

Immediately in smoldring heate of Love the tone did swelt,
Again the tother in hir heart no sparke nor motion felt.¹⁷

The emotional extremes that could ensue from Cupid's two kinds of arrows were familiar to Elizabethan readers from a myriad of sources, and variations of the motif were prevalent and easily recognized. For example, Ariosto in his Orlando Furioso, and Harington in his translation, had transformed the arrows into fountains:

The cause of this, first from two fountaines grew,
Like in the tast, but in effects unlike,
Plaste in Ardenna, each in others vew,
Who tastes the one, loues dart his heart doth strike,
Contrarie of the other doth ensew,
Who drinke thereof, their louers shall mislike.
Renaldo drank of one, and loue much pained him,
The other dranke this damsell, that disdained him.¹⁸

¹⁶Golding, "The First Booke," ll. 565-68.

¹⁷Golding, "The First Booke," ll. 571-72.

¹⁸John Harington, "The Second Booke," Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse, by John Harington, facs. ed. (1591; rpt. Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1970), p. 7.

In explaining the moral, Harington notes that "the two fountaines
 [represent] . . . the two notable contrarieties of the two affections,
 of love and disdaine, that infinit sorts of people daily tast of, while
 they runne wandring in that inextricable laberinth of loue."¹⁹

Sidney's Pamela parallels Daphne to a certain limited extent. Although she does not, like Daphne, forswear marriage, she does indeed rule out a marriage to someone beneath her in rank, and even after discovering that Dorus is Prince Musidorus, she still displays extreme disapproval at his premarital sexual advances. Like Apollo, Musidorus seeks a way to convince his beloved that he is more than a lowly shepherd. In Fraunce's account of the myth, which closely parallels Ovid's, Apollo follows close on the heels of the fleeing Daphne, protesting that he is

Noe brute mountaine bird, no swayne, no rustical Hoblob,
 No threed-bare pastor, with an hyred flock by the forrest,
 Prowd of a bawling curre of a iarring pipe, or a sheep-hooke,
 But burning Tytan, bright Phoebus, chearful Apollo.²⁰

He tries also, to no avail, to convince her that

. . . Daphne flies from a faithful
 Friend, from a wounded soule, from a constant lover Apollo.²¹

Some of the elements of the myth, while present in Sidney's narrative, have been transferred from god to nymph, others from nymph to god. For

¹⁹Harington, Orlando Furioso, p. 7.

²⁰Abraham Fraunce, The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch: Entituled, Amintas Dale (1592; MLA Rhotograph Series No. 75), sig. 31^v.

²¹Fraunce, sig. 31^v.

example, Pamela's apparent disdain for Musidorus is not long-lived, but Musidorus' self-hatred for having offended her replaces it, and he appears at the siege on Cecropia's castle as the Forsaken Knight, wearing black armor with a whip (for self-flagellation) on his helmet. Moreover, Pamela never turns into a laurel tree, but it is not inappropriate for Musidorus, when he finds Pyrocles disguised as a woman, to be as astonished as "Apollo is painted when he saw Daphne sodainly turned into a Laurell,"²² for the same force that transformed Pyrocles will soon transform him, and Prince Musidorus will become a lowly shepherd. In the Arcadia the lover, not his beloved, undergoes a metamorphosis. Earlier, when Pamela rejected Musidorus as a suitor because he was a mere shepherd, he "remayned as a man thunder-stricken,"²³ and stood there, shocked at her reply, for so long that it seemed "my feete began to grow into the ground, with such a darkenes and heaviness of minde, that I might easilie have bene persuaded to have resigned over my very essence."²⁴ So the prince, already a shepherd, is now almost a tree.

Sidney has altered the myth, then, so that Apollo, not Daphne, becomes something else, but Musidorus' transformation from a prince to a shepherd also parallels another myth about Apollo: the story of his

²²Sidney, I, 76.

²³Sidney, I, 153.

²⁴Sidney, I, 154.

servitude to Admetis. According to Conti, when Jove banished Apollo from Mount Olympus for having killed the Cyclops, Apollo wandered around the world, "subjected to human calamities, [for] all things necessary to the continuation of that life were lacking to him," so that he was "constrained to hire himself out to Admetis, King of Thessalie, in order to lead to pastures his horses and flocks. Others say that he had been given to him [Admetis] in order to serve him; and that because he guarded his sheep he was named Nomius [guardian of the flocks]." ²⁵ Musidorus, like Apollo, has roamed the world, subject to human calamities, and also like Apollo, he has come, as shepherd, to serve a king. Becoming a shepherd, however, for Musidorus, is at the same time a means for pursuing his lady (or nymph). The Daphne myth and the Admetis myth have been combined.

Just as Musidorus has to fell Amphialus in order to save the royal line of Arcadia, so Apollo had to fell the Python in order to save the dry land, newly emerged from the "slimie mud / Brought over all but late before by violence of the flud," to make it habitable for "the newmade folke, which never erst had knowne / So foule a Dragon in their lyfe, so

²⁵Noel le Comte, Mythologie: c'est á dire, Explication des Fables, cōtenant les genealogies des Dieux, les cerimonies de leurs sacrifices, Leur gestes, adventures, amours, et presque tous les preceptes de La Philosophie naturelle & morale (Rouen: Jean Osmont, Manassez de Preaux & Jacque Besongne, 1611), p. 267: "assubietti aux calamitez humaines . . . toutes choses necessaires pour l'entretienement de cette vie luy manquoient, fut contraint de se louer á Admet Roy de Thessalie pour mener aux pastis ses haras & troupeaux. Les autres disent qu'il luy fut donné pour le servir; & que pource qu'il garda ses brebis il fut nommé Nomien"

monstrously foregrowne" ²⁶ Like Musidorus, Apollo had to be a liberator before he could be a lover. The slaying of the Python came early in his career, almost as soon as he was born, according to Boccaccio ²⁷ and Ebreo. ²⁸ Ovid, too, indicates that Apollo was young enough to be inexperienced with his bow and arrow at that time. He had hunted, but he had not yet overcome a monster.

The God of shooting who no where before that present tide
Those kinde of weapons put in ure, but at the speckled Deare,
Or at the Roes so wight of foote, a thousand shaftes well neere,
Did on that hideous serpent spende: of which there was not one,
But forced forth the venim'd bloud along his sydes to gone.
So that his quiver almost voyde, he nailde him to the grounde,
And did him nobly at the last by force of shot confounde. ²⁹

Macrobius, stressing the dual aspect of Apollo, says that a supplicant asking the god for health customarily begins with the words: "'Heal, O God of Healing'; but . . . when invoking a curse on a person, the words then [are] equivalent to 'Launch thine arrow and smite.' These latter words are the words which Latona is said to have used when she was exhorting Apollo to assail the attacking Python with arrows" ³⁰

²⁶ Golding, "The First Booke," ll. 519-20, 527-28.

²⁷ See Giovanni Boccaccio, Genealogie Deorum Gentilium Libri, ed. Vincenzo Romano (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1951), I, 179.

²⁸ See Leone Ebreo, The Philosophy of Love, trans. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and Jean H. Barnes (London: The Soncino Press, 1937), p. 143. See also Macrobius, The Saturnalia, trans. Percival Vaughan Davies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 123.

²⁹ Golding, "The First Booke," ll. 530-36.

³⁰ Macrobius, p. 117. Although the Saturnalia was known to Bede and to John of Salisbury (See Percival Vaughan Davies, "Introduction," in Macrobius, pp. 24-25), it was not published in England until 1694.

Paradoxically, Apollo was the god who protected the flocks and who preyed upon them, the god of reason and the god overcome by passion, the bestower of immortal fame and the god who killed.

C. Musidorus as a Type of Apollo

Apollo, like his human counterpart, Musidorus, had a paradoxical nature. The god is associated with the cypress tree, signifying death,³¹ and the laurel tree, signifying eternal fame. Early in Book One of the *Arcadia*, Pyrocles finds Musidorus in shepherd's garb, "a garland of Laurell mixt with Cypres leaves on his head, wayting on his master Dametas, who at that time was teaching him how with his sheephooke to catch a wanton Lambe"³² The Elizabethan reader would have known from this description not only to associate Musidorus with Apollo, but also to realize that his shepherd's disguise could prove either harmful or helpful. The outcome, for a time, remains uncertain. According

However, after 1472, when it was first published in Venice, numerous Latin editions of this work were published in Italy, France, and Germany, throughout the remainder of the fifteenth century and all of the sixteenth. See Robert Watt, *Bibliotheca Britannica or a General Index to British and Foreign Literature* (Edinburgh, 1824; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, n.d.), II, 632. I have selected the present twentieth-century translation, because it is the first published English translation of the *Saturnalia*.

³¹See Fraunce, sig. 26^v: The cypress is "sacred to Pluto, being once cut never buddeth or brancheth." It is also associated with Apollo, however, for Apollo had transformed Cyparissus into a cypress tree when the youth persisted in grieving for his pet deer, which he had accidentally shot.

³²Sidney, I, 152.

to Conti,

When they had begun to sing Paeans in favor of Apollo, they began also to call him Ieye (as they called Bacchus Eueie), which name comes from two Greek words, of which the one means to bandage or heal, the other means to send out or to draw forth: because the rays of the Sun sent here below with a moderate warmth saves human life in its being: but also they are harmful and dangerous, being excessive and their warmth too vehement.³³

Before he can be effective, Musidorus has to reconcile his own conflicting tendencies, for his ardent desire for Pamela conflicts with his obligation to live reasonably, as a Thessalian prince. He has been established as a type of Apollo from the very beginning of the story, when he is rescued by Strephon and Klaius, two nearly perfect shepherds, who leave him at Kalander's house when they answer Urania's summons. Musidorus stays behind in Arcadia to become, within a few months' time, a shepherd. It is almost as though the shepherds and the god had exchanged places.

Apollo, as the god who "fedde Admetus his Sheepe, Kine, and Oxen, by the river Amphrysus,"³⁴ is associated with shepherds, and "because he guarded his [Admetis'] sheep he was named Nomius [guardian of the

³³Le Comte, p. 278: "Quand doncques l'on eut commencé à chanter des Paeans en faueur d'Apollon, on commença aussi à l'appeller Ieye (comme on appelloit Bacchus Eueie) lequel nom vient de deux mots Grecs, dont l'un signifie panser ou guerir; l'autre vaut autant qu'envoyer ou tirer: pource que les rais du Soleil enuoyez çà-bas avec une chaleur moderee conseruent la vie humaine en son estre: mais aussi sont'ils nuisibles & dangereux estans desmesurez & leur chaleur trop vehemente."

³⁴Fraunce, sig. 34^r.

flocks/."35 Yet he is also, paradoxically, associated with wolves, for, according to Conti, Apollo's mother, Latona, had "transformed herself for twelve days into a wolf, and thus arrived at Delos, where she had place to give birth."36 Conti adds that "the wolf was consecrated to Apollo, who is called the light and flame of the world, inasmuch as he has an eye sharp and perspicacious."37 Cartari agrees that the acute vision of the wolf is related to that of Apollo, for "the Wolf is of so sharpe and cleere sight, that hee sees very perfectly in the thickest night, piercing through the vaporous mistinesse of the same, as the Sunne upon his first apparence and second howers circuit, rarifies the condensate aire"38 He also finds that a wolfish appetite corresponds to the evaporation of moisture, pointing out that, "as the powerfull vertue of the Sunne sucketh up and drieth the watrish exhalation of the earth: so the voracious greedinesse of the Wolfe dispatcheth and consumeth that prey which in his famin meeting him by chance."39

³⁵Le Comte, p. 267: "pource qu'il garda ses brebis il fut nomme Nomien"

³⁶Le Comte, p. 265: "se transmua douze iours en loup, & ainsi arriva à Delos, où elle eut moyen d'accoucher."

³⁷Le Comte, p. 268: "Le Loup fut cōsacré à Apollon, qui est appelé la lumiere & flambeau du monde, d'autant qu'il a l'oeil tressubtil & perspicace."

³⁸Vincenzo Cartari, Le Imagini, con la Spositione de i Dei degli Antichi (1556), trans. Richard Linche, as The Fountaine of Ancient Fiction (London: Adam Islip, 1599), sig. E vi.

³⁹Cartari, sig. E vi. See also Macrobius, p. 120.

Philanax's oxymoron at the trial, when he calls Musidorus a "woolvish sheeheard," should, then, have been a reminder to Sidney's readers that Musidorus is a type of Apollo and that, like Apollo, he has a paradoxical nature. Unlike Apollo, however, his destructive tendencies are more often directed toward himself than toward others. When he appears among the Basilian warriors to confront Amphialus in single combat, his apparel reflects his self-hatred, which seems excessive only to the reader who fails to recognize in it the wrath of Apollo. Musidorus' livery is

as blacke, as sorrowe it selfe could see it selfe in the blackest glasse: his ornaments of the same hew, but formed in the figure of Ravens, which seemed to gape for carrion: onely his raynes were snakes, which finely wrapping themselves one within the other, their heads came together to the cheekes and bosses of the bit, where they might seeme to bite at the horse, and the horse (as he champte the bit) to bite at them; and that the white foame was ingendred by the poysonous furie of the combatt. His Impresa was a Catoblepta which so long lies dead as the Moone (whereto it hath so naturall a sympathie) wants her light. The word signifieth that The Moone wanted not the light, but the poore beast wanted the Moones light. He had in his headpiece, a whippe, to witnesse a self-punishing repentaunce.⁴⁰

Musidorus must have selected each detail with an eye to its significance, carefully assembling a collection of items to indicate what needed to be conquered within his own soul. His estrangement and separation from Pamela would liken him to a catoblepta, for he has been deprived of his beloved to reflect back the light of his own love.⁴¹

⁴⁰Sidney, I, 455.

⁴¹There is no actual animal known as a "catoblepta," but the OED lists a "catoblepas," which is another name for the gnu. According to the OED (under "catoblepas"), Golding, in his part of the translation

Macrobius says that "Men call Apollo the Twin God because he presents a twin form of his own divinity, by himself giving light and shape to the moon, for, as a twofold star giving light from a single source, he illumines the periods of day and night."⁴² The interdependence of the sun and the moon, and the laurel tree's dependence upon the light of the sun to keep it alive, were related truths, according to Conti, who points out that "the effigy of the moon held in one hand a branch of laurel, demonstrating that she received the heat and the light from the sun."⁴³ Both the moon and the laurel need the rays of the sun to keep them alive. If Pamela is considered a type of Daphne, Daphne in turn a type of Diana, the moon goddess, and if the laurel tree

of de Mornay's Of the Trewnes of the Christian Religion (1587), defined a catoblepas as "the beast of Aegipt which killeth those whom it looketh upon." Sidney's use of the catoblepta does not conform to Golding's definition, nor to Pliny's description of the legendary catoblepta as "an animal of moderate size, and in other respects sluggish in the movement of the rest of its limbs; its head is remarkably heavy, and it only carries it with the greatest difficulty, being always bent down towards the earth. Were it not for this circumstance, it would prove the destruction of the human race; for all who behold its eyes, fall dead upon the spot." The Natural History of Pliny, trans. John Bostock and H. T. Riley, II (London: George Bell & Sons, 1890), 281-82. Pliny's Historia Naturalis was first printed in Venice, by John de Spira, in 1469. Numerous editions followed, in Paris, Basel, Cologne, and Rome, as well as in Venice. There were two French editions published during Sidney's lifetime, one in 1563, another in 1582. Although an Italian translation was published in 1476, the first published English translation was that of Philemon Holland, in 1601. (See Watt, II, 763.) Since Sidney would have read Pliny in the Latin, I have selected, for this study, the present 1890 translation.

⁴²Macrobius, p. 125.

⁴³Le Comte, p. 273: "l'effigie de la Lune tenoit en une main une branche de Laurier, demonstrant qu'elle receuoit sa chaleur & lumiere du Soleil."

represents Daphne transformed, then Musidorus' imprese clearly indicates that the natural order has been inverted, so that the sun is wholly reliant upon the moon for its light. In his dejection, he counts himself to have no more divinity than a "poore beast." The sun subordinating itself to the moon might indicate that the lover has exchanged identities with his beloved, but it might also indicate that Musidorus, his soul darkened by regret and repentance, can only regain the light of reason by re-learning it from Pamela.

As for the snakes on the reins, they suggest the Python that bites at the horse on which Musidorus rides to rescue Pamela. Whether Amphialus is regarded as Musidorus' Python, or as the externalization of an inner monster that Musidorus needs to overcome, the correspondences hold, for in the confrontation Amphialus aims with his sword for "the shoulder of the forsaken Knight; from whence sliding, it fell upon the necke of his horse, so as horse and man fell to the ground"⁴⁴ The horse is killed, but Musidorus fights on. As for the ravens gaping for carrion, Apollo had changed the color of the raven from white to black for inciting him to murder Coronis, who had been unfaithful. Ovid reports that the god despised not only the raven, but himself, for this loss of self-control:

He blames himselfe for giving eare so unadvisedly.
 He blames himselfe in that he tooke it so outrageously.
 He hates and bannes his faithfull birde because he did enforme
 Him of his lovers naughtinesse that made him so to storme.

⁴⁴Sidney, I, 458.

He hates his bow, he hates his shaft that rashly from it went:
And eke he hates his hasty hands by whom the bow was bent.⁴⁵

Once convinced that he could not restore Coronis to life, Apollo "tooke the baby from hir wombe and from the fire flame, / And unto double Chyrons den conveyed straight the same."⁴⁶ The child was Aesculapius, who grew up to be a healer. Sometimes Apollo and Aesculapius are referred to interchangeably, because Apollo's beams, when temperate, were healing. The Forsaken Knight, then, rode forth to conquer a monster of intemperance who had separated him from the woman he loved. The defeat of Amphialus prepared him to recover Pamela and ultimately to unite with her in marriage.

D. Cosmological Exegesis

The cosmological implications of the figure of Apollo that apply best to Musidorus are those related to the slaying of the Python and the transformation of Daphne. In both of these myths, Apollo has been explained as the Sun God, who overcame excessive moisture in order that the world might be formed. Ebreo explains that Apollo's mother, Latona, impregnated by Jupiter, was ready to "give birth in the Universe to the lunar and solar light," but that Juno, Goddess of the Air,

in jealous anger at this pregnancy, prevents by her densification and vapours the delivery And moreover the serpent Python (i.e. the great humidity remaining after the Flood) was pursuing

⁴⁵Golding, "The Second Booke," ll. 772-77.

⁴⁶Golding, "The Second Booke," ll. 792-93.

her with the continual ascent of the vapours, which densened the air and would not let the rays of moon or sun come to birth. They call the superabundance of moisture a serpent because it caused the destruction of the plants and animals of earth.⁴⁷

When, at last, "Apollo was born, he is said to have slain the serpent Python with his bow and arrows; i.e. the sun, having appeared, dried up with his rays the humidity which was preventing all generation of animals and plants."⁴⁸

The costume worn by the Forsaken Knight is more, then, than a collection of emblems linking Musidorus to Apollo. It is also expressive of the absence of light before the creation of the physical universe and of the subsequent loss of organic life after a great flood that had almost destroyed the world. Musidorus, the "gift of the muses," has assumed the form of lifelessness; yet, paradoxically, his opponent, Amphialus, is likewise a manifestation of darkness, decay, and death.⁴⁹ When Amphialus confronts Musidorus on the field of battle for the third and final time,

he would needes appeare all in blacke; his decking both for him selfe, and horse, being cut out into the fashon of very ragges: yet all so dainty, joyned together with pretious stones, as it was a brave raggednesse, and a riche povertie: and so cunningly had a workeman followed his humour in his armour, that he had given it a rustie shewe In his shield he bare for his devise, a Night, by an excellently painter, with a Sunne with a shadow⁵⁰

⁴⁷Ebreo, pp. 142-43.

⁴⁸Ebreo, p. 143.

⁴⁹See p. 91, above.

⁵⁰Sidney, I, 454.

The fact that one black knight confronts another suggests that the Python that Musidorus must overcome is, indeed, a mental or spiritual monster attacking from within, for Amphialus is a mirror image of Musidorus. Both are forlorn; both are self-destructive. When the darkness gives way to the light, then life and generation can begin simultaneously in the microcosm and in the macrocosm, the microcosm reflecting Ideas that reside in the World Soul, the macrocosm reflecting Ideas that reside in the Angelic Intelligence. Sidney attaches a cosmic importance to the battle between Musidorus and Amphialus by observing that the "Sunne and wind (if the astonished eies of the beholders were not by the astonishment deceived) did both stand still to be beholders of this rare match. For neither could their amazed eies discern motion in the Sunne, and no breath of wind stirred" ⁵¹

Significantly, two other unknown knights accompany the Forlorn Knight both to and from the battlefield. One of these, being decked

all in greene, both armour and furniture, it seemed a pleasant garden, wherein grewe orange trees, which with their golden fruites, cunningly beaten in, & embrodered, greatly enriched the eye-pleasing colour of greene. In his shield was a sheepe, feeding in a pleasant field, with this word, Without feare, or envie. ⁵²

This phrase could allude to the perfect generosity of God, who, in Ficino's account,

created in the Angelic Mind, as it cleaved to Him, the forms of all things to be created. . . . In those forms were conceived

⁵¹Sidney, I, 456.

⁵²Sidney, I, 462.

the globes of heaven and the elements, the stars, the kinds of vapors, the forms of stones, metals, plants, and animals. . . . In this way all the gods are assigned to certain parts of the lower world⁵³

The green knight's motto seems to refer to a loving Creator who had withheld no benefits and had, "without feare, or envie," created a fruitful universe. The other knight assisting Musidorus

was all in milke white, his attiring else, all cutte in starres, which made of cloath of silver, and silver spangles, each way seemed to cast many aspects. His device was the very Pole it selfe left voide. The word was, The best place yet reserved.⁵⁴

This phrase could refer to the sun, not yet materialized, which was to occupy the best, or middle, position among the nine spheres, between Venus and Mars.

Katherine D. Duncan-Jones has suggested that the green and white knights may be Strephon and Klaius, returned from Cythera to assist Musidorus,⁵⁵ and this suggestion seems valid, especially since the two perfected shepherds, in pursuit of Aphrodite Urania, would be allegorically appropriate assistants to the self-divided Musidorus. In another sense, however, the green knight could be regarded as emblematic of Apollo's other, more positive aspect. The orange trees bearing fruit

⁵³Marcilio Ficino, Marsilio Ficino's Commentary on Plato's "Symposium," trans. and ed. Sears Reynolds Jayne (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1944), pp. 127-28.

⁵⁴Sidney, I, 462.

⁵⁵Duncan-Jones, p. 131. She finds that the green knight's device suggests "the pair's innocent, near-religious life as shepherds" and the white knight's refers to "their celestial contemplation and love for Urania."

suggest the victory of organic life over dark vapours and sterility. Although the shepherd on the green knight's shield is suggestive of Apollo in servitude, the servitude to Admetis, at the cosmological level, conveys positive implications. A shepherd, after all, nurtures the flocks. According to Macrobius, "Apollo has been called 'the God of Shepherds,' not from having served as a shepherd and (as the story goes) from having fed the flocks of King Admetis, but because the sun feeds all that the earth brings forth, so that men sing of him as the feeder not of a single kind of stock but of all kinds."⁵⁶ The trees bearing oranges would be consistent with this reading, for the Creator would, in perfect fruitfulness, have nourished the sun that nourished organic life.

As for the device on the shield of the white knight, Ebreo defines the Pole as the "outermost sphere turning on two poles."⁵⁷ This sphere would be the primum mobile that houses the Angelic Mind and puts the World Soul in motion. The Idea of the Sun resided here, even before the "World-Soul turned toward the Mind and toward God . . . and of forms received from the Mind became a world"⁵⁸ At this stage the Idea of the sun materialized and became a "planet," which in turn bestows life-giving rays upon the earth. Cartari holds that "of all the celestiaall bodies hee carrieth greatest force in the creation of terrene

⁵⁶Macrobius, p. 121.

⁵⁷Ebreo, p. 127.

⁵⁸Ficino, p. 129.

things"59 The presence of the green and white knights, like the immobilization of the sun and the wind, testifies to the cosmological significance of the battle. The outcome is more than epic in scope. Not the fate of nations, but the fate of the natural universe hangs in the balance. If the world itself is to be fruitful, the Forlorn Knight needs to overcome stagnation and to activate the life forces, both within his own soul and within the World Soul.

The Forlorn Knight's raven that eats carrion suggests a degenerative process that is equal and opposite to the cosmological significance of the green and white knights, for the bird of death is feeding on dead flesh. Macrobius equated the Python with corruption, and Apollo's victory over the Python with purification: "for the epithet 'Pythian,' as applied to Apollo, in the opinion of the physicists . . . [is] from a word which means 'to make rotten,' a process which is always the result of great heat."⁶⁰ The heat, Macrobius explained, caused a vapor to rise from the moist earth,

which moved rapidly in spirals to the parts above and, after it had become heated, rolled back thence, like a deadly serpent, to the parts below, where it infected all things with the potency of the corruption which only heat and moisture can generate. The density and darkness of the vapor veiled the very sun and seemed as it were to take away its light; but at length the vapor was dissipated, dried up, and destroyed by the divine heat of the sun's rays falling upon it like arrows, and this gave rise to the myth of the killing of a serpent by Apollo.⁶¹

⁵⁹Cartari, sig. E ii.

⁶⁰Macrobius, p. 123.

⁶¹Macrobius, p. 124.

In mythological terms, Apollo's victory would mean that the raven would have no more carrion to feed upon.

Yet the very heat that poisoned the earth "like a deadly serpent" could only have originated with Apollo himself. Moreover, the raven's grisly fare was appropriate to the bird that incited Apollo to a wrath that almost cost him the life of Aesculapius, his unborn child, who was later to become a god of medicine and healing. Cartari furnishes further evidence that Apollo had a paradoxical nature, reporting that Apollo is sometimes called the God of the Inferno because,

from the over-vehement ardour and riscaldarion of his beames, pestilences and infections are engendred and nourished on the earth: but yet say they, not so universally dispersed, or undoubtedly mortall, but with the moderate warmth and temperature thereof, they are chased away, and healthie aires and naturall increases spring up and re-succeed.⁶²

Unlike Macrobius, Cartari acknowledges that the corruption (the Python) is one aspect of Apollo's own nature. Fraunce, too, equates the Python with corruption and corruption with Apollo. That is, pestilence results when the sunlight is excessive. He explains that Apollo's "beames be pestiferous, if too hote, and therefore doth Homer make him plague the Grecian armie: but healthful, if moderate and temperate."⁶³ Conti concurs, terming Apollo a "worker for both health and pestilence;

⁶²Cartari, sig. E vi.

⁶³Fraunce, sig. 33^r.

inasmuch as the virtue of the Sun is quite profitable for medicine, although the too excessive heat of it is deadly to all animals."⁶⁴

If the defeat of Amphialus can be considered the vanquishing of the corruption caused by the deadly heat of an over-vehement sun, then perhaps the rescue of Pamela can be regarded as a recovery of "healthie aires" and also as a preliminary to a period of generation, when "naturall increases" will "spring up and re-succeed." The beautiful scene in the pine forest can, by extension, be identified with the transformation of Daphne, and a cosmological reading of that portion of the Apollo myth can be applied to this idyllic scene. Pamela and Musidorus have made their escape, and after a journey during which they find "their hartes in that right harmonie of affection, which doth enterchangeably deliver each to other the secret workinges of their soules," they come to rest in a "faire thyck wood"⁶⁵ Pamela carves into a pine tree a poem expressing her love for Musidorus, and he in turn engraves on the same tree a poem claiming that his thoughts are higher than her thoughts, because his are directed upward to her, whereas hers, being directed toward him, "cannot but downewarde fall."⁶⁶ In mythological terms, the nymph has been elevated to a

⁶⁴Le Comte, p. 859: "ouurier de santé & de pestilence; d'autant que la vertu du Soleil est fort nuisible à la medecine, veu que la trop excessiue chaleur d'iceluy est pestifere à tous animaux."

⁶⁵Sidney, II, 24.

⁶⁶Sidney, II, 25.

position higher than that of the sun god. Only a moment before the villains arrive to capture the lovers, Musidorus is leaning over the sleeping Pamela to "put his face as lowe to hers, as hee coulde, sucking the breath with such joye, that he did determine in himselfe, there had ben no life to a Camaeleons if he might be suffered to enjoye that foode."⁶⁷ These passages from the scene in the pine forest are compatible with Ebreo's explication of the metamorphosis of Daphne, for Ebreo says that Apollo's pursuit of Daphne

is intended to show how great and universal is the might of love over even the proudest and most powerful god of all the heavenly ones, that is: the sun. Therefore they gallantly imagine that he was boasting how, with his bow and arrows, which are his scorching rays, he had slain the horrible serpent Python, who destroyed all things⁶⁸

The god of love, however, triumphed over the sun-god, for

all Apollo's pride--natural to the sun--and exultation in this work could not defend him from the shot of Cupid's bow and arrow, since love not only compels lower things to love higher, but draws the higher to love the lower. Thus Apollo loved Daphne, daughter of the river Peneus, who is the natural humidity of earth, derived from the rivers that flow through her. Of this moisture the sun is enamoured; and casting towards it his burning rays, seeks to draw it to himself, exhaling it in vapors. . . . And so the sun loves the moisture, and would draw it to him for the satisfaction of his need, but it flees from the sun, as all things flee from what consumes them; or again because the solar rays drive the moisture into the pores of the earth, causing it to flee from the surface.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Sidney, II, 27.

⁶⁸Ebreo, p. 163.

⁶⁹Ebreo, pp. 164-65. (Brackets are the translator's.)

This Apollonian power to attract and consume would explain Pamela's original reluctance when faced with Musidorus' excessive ardor. As for the laurel tree, "more than any other tree it displays the union of the solar beams with the moisture of the earth."⁷⁰ The laurel, according to this interpretation, represents not demotion of nymph to a tree, but a marriage or harmony, such as that achieved by Musidorus and Pamela on their journey, when they delivered "interchangeably . . . each to other the secret workings of their soules"⁷¹ The laurel, being what Tillyard would term a primate,⁷² must necessarily have corresponding meanings at every level of existence. Ebreo establishes it as a primate, claiming that "thus this tree is called laurel because it is to other trees what gold is to metals; and because the ancients, as it is written, called it 'laudo' as an emblem of laud, and because its leaves formed the crowns of those worthy of eternal laud."⁷³ Musidorus is surely a hero worthy of "laud," but when he inhales Pamela's breath (that is, her soul), he perfects and completes himself sufficiently to rise to a higher mode of being. Sidney's image of the chameleon is apt in this connection, for

⁷⁰Ebreo, p. 165.

⁷¹Sidney, II, 24.

⁷²See E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (New York: Vintage Books, n.d.), pp. 29-30.

⁷³Ebreo, pp. 165-66. The editor in a footnote on p. 165 explains that "lauro" sounds like "l'oro."

the lover and his beloved have reversed positions here, each being absorbed into what the other person is.⁷⁴

Ebreo examines the process by which the lover and the beloved person combine identities, in a thoughtful passage dealing with the problem of grace; that is, why should God love the Angelic Mind or the Angelic Mind the World Soul, for love, according to Plato, implies a deficiency. Ebreo solves the problem by reasoning that

defect in the inferior would involve defect in the superior whereon it depends, inasmuch as imperfection in an effect signifies imperfection in its cause. Whereas, then, the cause loves its effect and the superior its inferior, it desires to perfect the inferior and unite it to itself, so as to deliver it from imperfection; because in delivering it, it likewise delivers itself, from defect and imperfection. Thus, failing the union of the inferior with the superior, not only the former remains incomplete and unhappy, but the excellent perfection of the latter too remains tainted with deficiency. For no father can be happy while his son is imperfect⁷⁵

Like a chameleon, then, Musidorus has inhaled Pamela, who no longer shrinks from him, and both have been elevated to a laurel tree and all corresponding primates. At each hypostasis, they will rank at the top. Their marriage, appropriately enough, unites the kingdoms of Thessaly

⁷⁴According to Pliny, II, 303, the chameleon "is the only animal which receives nourishment neither by meat nor drink, nor anything else, but from the air alone." Sidney is saying, then, that the chameleon, unlike Musidorus, would have been a vessel inadequate to contain Pamela's soul. Hence, "there had ben no life to a Camaeleons if he might be suffered to enjoye that foode" (Sidney, II, 27). Pico della Mirandola refers to man as a chameleon because he has the ability to take on the attributes of a plant, a beast, or an angel. See the Oration on the Dignity of Man, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, eds. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr., Phoenix Books (1948; rpt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 225.

⁷⁵Ebreo, pp. 181-82.

(the greater) with Arcadia (the lesser), the male with the female, and the sun with moisture.⁷⁶ It may also represent the copulation of the World Soul with the warring atoms, which resulted in the generation of the physical universe. Ficino has described this union as an act of love in which

the matter of this world, although in the beginning it lay a formless chaos without the ornament of forms, attracted by innate love . . . turned toward the Soul and offered itself submissively to it, and by the mediation of this love, it found ornament, from the Soul, of all the forms which are seen in this world; and thus out of a chaos was made a world.⁷⁷

The marriage of Musidorus to Pamela is cosmic in scope. It represents the union of heat and moisture, in just proportions. The laurel tree, in this context, signifies a state of balance, or health, in the natural order.

E. Natural Exegesis

At the natural level of allegory, Apollo is associated with the season of spring, on the one hand, and with reason and clear thinking on

⁷⁶Sir Thomas Elyot's famous passage on dancing in the Boke Named the Governour testifies to the prevailing assumption that a state of balance required the male to be dominant, the female subordinate. See The Governor in The Golden Hind: An Anthology of Elizabethan Prose and Poetry, ed. Roy Lamson and Hallett Smith, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1956), pp. 39-40. See also Macrobius, p. 123, who relates that Latona's twins, Apollo and Diana, each took their proper places in the universe: "the sun being carried up by a mighty force of heat to the parts above, but the moon (weighed down by a kind of warmth peculiar to its nature, and moister, and as it were of the feminine sex) occupying the parts below--as if the sun consisted of the substance of a father and the moon of the substance of a mother."

⁷⁷Ficino, p. 129.

the other, for those are the Forms he assumes at the level of the World Soul. At this level, the defeat of the Python is interpreted as a victory over both winter and passion, and the transformation of Daphne a renewal of the vegetation as well as the recovery of a state of balance within the individual soul. If Musidorus is regarded as a type of Apollo, then he, too, must represent springtime and mental clarity. Significantly, it is spring when Musidorus reaches the shore of Laconia, and Strephon and Klaius find at first "no shew of life" in him.⁷⁸ It is the time of the vernal equinox, "the time that the earth begins to put on her new apparel against the approach of her lover,"⁷⁹ and Musidorus is that "lover," the warming sun of the springtime, soon to make himself felt. By the time of the summer solstice, approximately three months later, he is in Arcadia, disguised as a shepherd, pretending to Menalcas that he is "a Thessalian Gentle-man, who by mischaunce having killed a great favorit of the Prince of that country, was pursued . . . and that therefore I was determined . . . to disguise my selfe among the shepards of Arcadia" ⁸⁰ Just as Apollo offended Jupiter and came to Thessaly to tend Admetis' flocks, so Musidorus feigns to have offended a Thessalian nobleman and to have come to Arcadia to tend Basilius' flocks. It is almost as though he has devised his story by substituting a mere nobleman for Jupiter and by making

⁷⁸Sidney, I, 8.

⁷⁹Sidney, I, 5.

⁸⁰Sidney, I, 116.

Thessaly the place from which he was banished instead of the place to which he has come for refuge. The parallel between the myth and the alibi is sufficient to justify equating Musidorus' arrival in Greece with the arrival of spring.

Cartari illustrates Apollo's function as a seasonal god by describing an Egyptian statue of him

in the shape of a man, with the head of it (as it might seeme) halfe shauen, and the haire taken away, so that on the right side only remained haire, which . . . meaneth, that the sun is never absent from Nature, but she continually feeleth the vertues and operations of his raies. And that that part of the head that is shauen, signifies, that though the sun for some time detain his glorious aspect from the world, yet that he is to return and re-beautifie the same with as great brightnesse as at the first, as those haire so shauen will againe spring forth & re-increase to their true and full perfections.⁸¹

Somewhat later he describes another statue of Apollo on which six multi-colored jewels adorn the temples, which represent "the pleasant and perfect verdure of the spring with sundry-sorted colours of straungest commixture, [which] beautifies and depaints the earth."⁸² When Musidorus appears on the battlefield in the guise of the Forlorn Knight, to oppose Amphialus, he is notably lacking in jewels and bright colors. The blackness of his armor and livery suggests winter, that season in which the vegetation is dead or below the ground, like the hair on the left side of the Egyptian statue, and his mood is as dark as his wintry attire.

⁸¹Cartari, sig. F iv.

⁸²Cartari, sig. G iii.

He needs, at this point in the plot, to be recognized as not only the absence of the warm sunlight, which will later return, but also as the absence of the light of reason, which will also return later. Musidorus' dimming begins early in Book Two, when he discovers that Pamela cannot accept the love of a mere shepherd. Since he is unable to reveal his true identity, he spends many hours "leaning to yonder Palm,"⁸³ and watching the carefree sheep, who, unlike men, can enjoy love without pain. "Truely in such cogitations have I sometimes so long stood, that me thought my feete began to grow into the ground, with such a darkenes and heavines of Minde, that I might easilie have been perswaded to have resigned over my very essence."⁸⁴ As noted earlier in this chapter, the god instead of the nymph seems to be turning into a tree, but at the natural level of allegory, the significant phrase in this passage is the "darkenes and heavines of Minde," for the Apollonian figure is losing his bright reasonableness.

In Book Three, shortly after Pamela has let "Dorus" the shepherd see that she really cares for him, the light of reason grows still dimmer.

This favour filling him with hope, Hope encouraging his desire,
& Desire considering nothing, but opportunitie: one time (Mopsa
being called away by her mother, & he left alone with Pamela)

⁸³The palm tree has been traditionally associated with Apollo. According to Conti, p. 264, Latona leaned the newborn Apollo against a palm tree on the island of Delos, and he adds, on p. 277, that the winners of the Pythian games were sometimes awarded a branch of palm.

⁸⁴Sidney, I, 154.

the sudden occasion called Love, & that never staid to ask Reasons leave; but made the too-much loving Dorus take her in his armes, offering to kisse her, and, as it were, to establish a trophee of his victorie.⁸⁵

Pamela responds by ordering him "Away," declaring him an "unworthy man to love, or to be loved."⁸⁶ Immediately thereafter Cecropia's agents capture Pamela and Philoclea, so that Musidorus has no opportunity to redeem himself until he joins Basilius' forces disguised in black armor. Meanwhile, he suffers, not from self-pity, not even from grief at her absence, but rather "as one that detested himselfe."⁸⁷ In the elegy which he writes to her (which she never receives), he terms himself "a caitife wretch"⁸⁸ and swears:

First let Cimmerian darknes be my onel' habitation:
first be mine eyes pulde out, first be my braine perished;
Ere that I should consent to doo such excessive a dammage
unto the earth, by the hurt of this her heavenly jewell.⁸⁹

He has relinquished all hope, he continues, "And banished doo I live, nor now will seeke a recov'rie"⁹⁰ Nevertheless, winter and unreasoning despair are never permanent, and Musidorus, like the shaven left side of Apollo's head, is soon to make his "recov'rie." His

⁸⁵Sidney, I, 355.

⁸⁶Sidney, I, 355. Sidney has so interwoven the two myths that the flight of Daphne is what makes it necessary for Apollo to overcome the Python.

⁸⁷Sidney, I, 355.

⁸⁸Sidney, I, 357.

⁸⁹Sidney, I, 359.

⁹⁰Sidney, I, 359.

"braine" will never perish, and the return of spring is, after all, predictable. Earlier in the story, after the "shepherd" Dorus told Pamela about the earlier exploits of Musidorus, as though he were telling her about another man, she asked him if he knew how it all ended. "Alas no," he replied, "for even here the Historiographer stopped, saying, The rest belonged to Astrologie."⁹¹ Yet grounds for hope already existed that the shepherd would recover his princely form, defeat a tyrant, and make a marriage that, like a laurel tree, would be "warm, aromatic and evergreen."⁹²

According to Ebreo, "wise poets and victorious generals are crowned [with the laurel], all these being subjects of the sun, who is the god of wisdom and the author of victories and the exaltation of rulers."⁹³ Musidorus is established early in Book One as a wise and reasonable man. In his first debate with Pyrocles about love, Musidorus holds that virtue, "like the cleare heaven, is without cloudes"⁹⁴ The god of the spring and the sunlight would necessarily see clouds as obstacles to clear vision, just as the god of mental illumination would regard emotions as clouds, which interfere with clear thinking. In the second debate, he maintains that

⁹¹Sidney, I, 163.

⁹²Ebreo, p. 162.

⁹³Ebreo, p. 162.

⁹⁴Sidney, I, 55.

reason should have absolute command over the senses,⁹⁵ although afterward he recants and lets his love for Pamela and his anguish at her rejection overcome him. It is primarily his wisdom that attracts Pamela to him in the first place, even before she realizes that he is not beneath her in rank. She marvels at his skill in controlling a horse, which she likens to a king controlling a country and to a mind controlling a body:

For though he had both spurres and wande, they seemed rather markes of soveraintie, then instruments of punishment; his hand and legge . . . commanding without threatning . . . [so] that it seemed as he borrowed the horses body, so he lent the horse his minde: in the turning one might perceive the bridle-hand something gently stir, but indeed so gently, as it did rather distill vertue, then use violence.⁹⁶

Fraunce, in explicating the myth of the fall of Phaeton, equates Apollo's horses with "the vulgar people," and the bridles with "the stay of government."⁹⁷ Moreover, his reins represent "a moderate and temperate kinde of discipline."⁹⁸ Since Phaeton fails to heed the instructions of his wise father, he falls, and "This happeneth to al such magistrats as will not rule according to Apolloes rule. The Sunne indeede hath a contrarie motion to that of the heaven: but he traverseth the heaven gently, not crosseth it overthwartly: and so must a ruler overrule the stubburne vulgar."⁹⁹ Musidorus' horsemanship, then, not only aligns

⁹⁵See Sidney, I, 77.

⁹⁶Sidney, I, 179.

⁹⁷Fraunce, sig. 36^r.

⁹⁸Fraunce, sig. 36^v.

⁹⁹Fraunce, sig. 36^v.

him with Apollo, but also demonstrates his fitness to reign over his own Thessaly and Pamela's Arcadia.

At the close of Book One, Pamela has already noted Musidorus' reasonable method of killing the bear. She herself is fully aware that wisdom is proverbially "the best refuge against that beast,"¹⁰⁰ but her fear overcomes her reason, and she falls to the ground. Meanwhile, Musidorus wisely and unemotionally waits for the bear to stand upon its hind legs before he plunges his dagger into its heart.¹⁰¹ Musidorus is clearly characterized by his superior powers of reason, whereas Dametas is clearly characterized by his inferior powers of reason and his dismal ignorance. Ironically, Musidorus must take his orders from Dametas while awaiting an opportunity to declare his love to Pamela. After Pamela has been rescued from the bear, Dametas claims full credit, falsely likening himself to the sun, as the employer of "Dorus," and likening "Dorus" to the moon who merely reflects Dametas' glory.¹⁰² Ultimately, however, Musidorus uses his reason to devise a plan of escape, and Dametas is established as an anti-type of Apollo in the comic scene beneath the ash tree, where Musidorus has so deluded Mopsa that she believes her ignorant father, Dametas, to be Apollo in

¹⁰⁰Sidney, I, 122.

¹⁰¹See Isler, p. 182. Throughout this article, Isler holds that Sidney equated Musidorus with contemplative wisdom and contrasted him with Pyrocles who, according to Isler, represents Musidorus' polar opposite, zealous action. I disagree with Isler, because I find that in many ways Pyrocles parallels Musidorus. See p. 145, above.

¹⁰²See Sidney, I, 122.

disguise. Meanwhile, Musidorus, who has been a prince in disguise, is headed for the pine forest with his chosen princess. His victory over Amphialus (winter and passion) is now in the past, and he has only the ordeal of captivity and trial to undergo before he attains another springtime, or return to full power and high position.

F. Astrological Exegesis

Musidorus' very name, "gift of the Muses," is sufficient to identify him, at the astrological level, with Apollo, the leader of the Muses. Since there are nine Muses, each located on a separate sphere, Apollo, from his central position, becomes their leader and the "conductor of the heavenly music." He is well-suited for this position, Ebreo explains, because "his motion is more regular than that of any of the others, ever unswervingly through the midst of the Zodiac, ever straight upon his course."¹⁰³ Cartari, too, finds him responsible for universal harmony and the music of the spheres, for "Many that have depicted the shape of Apollo, make him holding in his hand a Harpe with seven strings, agreeing in number with the planets of the heavens, which moving with a due distinction, yeeld forth a pleasing harmonie."¹⁰⁴ Conti, too, associates the harp with Apollo, saying that the god invented the harp while he was watching the flocks of Admetis,¹⁰⁵ but Conti, unlike the

¹⁰³Ebreo, p. 161.

¹⁰⁴Cartari, sig. E iii.

¹⁰⁵Le Comte, p. 282.

other mythographers, goes on to draw a distinction between the harp and the lyre. He "recalls that the harp and the lyre were different instruments, since Apollo is the author of the one and Mercury of the other."¹⁰⁶ Although other mythographers use the harp and the lyre interchangeably, it still seems significant that Sidney has Musidorus accompany himself only on a harp. He uses an instrument only twice, once when he sings, ostensibly to Mopsa, a song he has composed for Pamela,¹⁰⁷ and again when, still disguised as Dorus, after relating some of the achievements of Prince Musidorus, he declares that "The rest belonged to Astrologie. And therewith, thinking her silent imaginations began to work upon 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"¹⁰⁸ The song he sings is the mournful one beginning "My sheep are thoughts, which I both guide and serve . . . ," and ending:

What wooll my sheepe shall beare, whiles thus they live,
In you it is, you must the judgement give.¹⁰⁹

This seems another instance in which Musidorus has exchanged places with Pamela, this time on the astrological level, elevating her to the position of influential planet and demoting himself to a native of that

¹⁰⁶Le Comte, p. 269: "On recueille que la harpe & la lyre sont instrumens diuers, puis qu'Apollon est autheur de l'un, Mercure de l'autre" See also Fraunce, sig. 37^v, where Mercury had given Apollo his lyre in exchange for Apollo's staff.

¹⁰⁷See Sidney, I, 155.

¹⁰⁸Sidney, I, 163.

¹⁰⁹Sidney, I, 164.

planet. Astrologically, the sun was the most influential of all the "planets," for it "alone presides over the planets in their courses," according to Macrobius, "and if the movements of the planets themselves have power, as some think, to determine or (as it is agreed that Plotinus held) to foretell the sequence of human destinies, then we have to admit that the sun, as directing the powers that direct our affairs, is the author of all that goes on around us."¹¹⁰ When love occasions an exchange of identities, then Pamela, who is Musidorus' beloved, becomes equally significant as a force to maintain order in the cosmos and in the affairs of men. In this context, all of Musidorus' earlier exploits, in which he removed tyrants, enthroned just monarchs, and defeated giants, can be seen as events that Apollo caused to happen by exerting his planetary influence. Consequently, Pamela's fervent but well-reasoned retort to Cecropia about order in the universe becomes a singularly appropriate speech for Musidorus' beloved to make, since the sun, of all the planets, is the most regular in its movements.¹¹¹ "If nothing but Chaunce had glewed those pieces of this All, the heavie partes would have gone infinitely downewarde, the light infinitely upwarde, and so never have mett to have made up this goodly bodie,"¹¹² she insists. Conti, who, like most of his contemporaries, found astrology

¹¹⁰Macrobius, p. 114.

¹¹¹See footnote 103, above.

¹¹²Sidney, I, 408.

and Christianity quite compatible,¹¹³ considered "that all which is here below is ruled and governed by the bodies which are above; which nevertheless do not act at all unless through the permission and will of God, sovereign and allpowerful."¹¹⁴ Hence, the beautiful universal order, the harmonious working together of all of the parts is for Pamela proof of God's providence, but at the astrological level, to the reader, it is also evidence that Musidorus, the type of Apollo, has established order in the past, and will reestablish it in the near future.

The sun would be in the winter solstice, at its lowest ebb, during Pamela's imprisonment, for Musidorus/Apollo is overcoming a god of winter and an inner darkness when he defeats Amphialus. On the other hand, the sun would have been in the summer solstice earlier, when Musidorus, disguised as Dorus, pretended to court Mopsa while he really courted Pamela; for Musidorus had landed in Laconia at the time of the vernal equinox, had taken six weeks to regain his health in Kalandar's house, had gone to fight the Helots for a very few days, had spent several weeks, after that, searching for Pyrocles, finally arriving at the rustic retreat about the third week in June. The sun enters the sign of Cancer, or the crab, on June 22, the time of the summer solstice, and Sidney ingeniously has Musidorus give Pamela a jeweled crab, in approximately the latter part of June, to indicate that although he

¹¹³See Tillyard, pp. 52-60.

¹¹⁴Le Comte, p. 283: "tout ce qui est cabas est regi & gouverné par les corps qui sont en haut; qui neantmoins n'agissent point que par la permissiō & volōte de Dieu souuerain & tout-puissant."

addresses his attentions to the servant, he really intends them for her mistress.¹¹⁵ His love-making is compelled to take a crab-like or indirect course.

By the time of the trial and the restoration of Basilius, it is spring again, and it is possible that, had Sidney lived to complete his revision, he might have set one final event at the time of the following summer solstice, in order to tie up some loose threads in his plot. Macrobius explains that the games held in Rome in honor of Apollo were commemorative of a battle in which the Romans routed an attacking army after Apollo dropped a cloud of arrows on the attackers.

At the time of these games the sun in our country shines immediately overhead, for the Crab is in the summer tropic, and, while the sun is on its way through this part of the heaven, its bright rays illuminate our temperate zone, not from afar but falling directly downward from above. Some therefore have thought that the purpose of the Games of Apollo is to appease the god of heat at that particular time. I find, however, in the written authorities these games were instituted to commemorate a victory¹¹⁶

Possibly the forces of Artaxia and Plexirtus might have been overcome at the next summer solstice, when Apollo's influence was at its strongest. At the same time, Erona might have been rescued. The combined force of Musidorus and Pyrocles should have been sufficient to reestablish the harmony at the personal and political levels.

¹¹⁵Sidney, I, 164.

¹¹⁶Macrobius, pp. 118-19.

G. Theological Exegesis

The theological implications of the slaying of the Python and the transformation of Daphne are supplied by Fulgentius, Boccaccio, Ebreo, and Christine de Pisan. Fulgentius equates Apollo with Christian doctrine and the Python with error, for when Apollo "shows his rays he cuts through all the darkness of uncertainty. It is related that the Python was slain with arrows, and in Greek easy belief is called pithos. They say that he slew the Python because all false belief is crushed like serpents when the true light appears."¹¹⁷ Musidorus' external battle with Amphialus can readily be seen in this light, for Amphialus is wearing the tattered black rags of an outworn pagan religion. As for the inner conflict taking place in Musidorus' own soul, the raven feeding on carrion would suggest inner doubts about immortality and the snakes a temptation to disbelief and consequent sin.

Boccaccio reports that, according to Albericus, the "Python can be seen as the destroyer of faith, but he himself is destroyed by the clearness of truth reappearing, which was effected by the appearance of the light of the sun."¹¹⁸ After defeating Amphialus, Musidorus can

¹¹⁷Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, The Mythologies, in Fulgentius the Mythographer, trans. and ed. Leslie George Whitbread (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), p. 58, sec. 17.

¹¹⁸Boccaccio, p. 238: "Albericus insuper dicebat ob id fictum eum occidisse Phitonem, quia Phyton fidem auferens interpretetur, que oblatio fidei tunc de medio tollitur, cum veritatis claritas referatur, quod per solis lumen efficitur."

be expected to discard the apparel of the Forlorn Knight and to return, if not yet as Musidorus (the "gift of the Muses"), at least as Dorus ("gift," or "Grace").

Ebreo provides an elaborate conflation of the myth of the birth of Apollo with the Biblical account of the creation, noting that when

the spirit of God breathed upon the waters of the abyss and made light This refers to the legend of Latona--(the substance of heaven)--of whom Jupiter--(i.e. God Most High, Creator of all things)--became enamoured and begot on her the light-giving bodies Besides this, the abyss of waters--(i.e. the serpent Python)--prevented heaven from delivery on earth of the light of the sun and moon. Finally, in the isle of Delos (representing the appearance of the dry land, which at the outset was not large, but situated like an island amid the waters) they first manifested themselves Hence the sacred account of Creation relates that after what had been created on the first day, night and day were created on the second and the ethereal firmament outspread, which marked the separating of air, water and earth.¹¹⁹

According to this account, then, the Python was the abyss of waters and Apollo was the light that God created on the second day. Musidorus' emergence from the waters on the shore of Laconia can, indeed, be read as the primordial appearance of light in the world. The reader would be prepared, then, from the very beginning to appreciate the stature of Musidorus, the significance of his accomplishments, and the importance of what might seem on the surface a merely romantic love affair.

Christine de Pisan finds theological overtones in Apollo's pursuit of Daphne which transfer readily to Musidorus' courtship of Pamela. Othea advises that:

¹¹⁹Ebreo, p. 144. (Brackets are the translator's.)

If thou wilt haue a crowne of victory,
 Which is bettir than any good worldly,
 Damee /Daphne/ thou moste folwe and pursuwe
 And thou shalte haue hir, yif thou wylte wel suwe.¹²⁰

In the "glose" she retells the myth of Daphne's transformation and explains that the laurel suggests the victory that a lover enjoyed beneath a laurel tree but that the laurel also "may be take for golde, the which betokeneth worship. It is seid to the good knyzt that he moste pursuwe Damee, yif he wull haue a crowne of laurere, that is to seie, peine & trauaile, yif he wull come to worship."¹²¹ Under "Allegorie" Christine associates a still loftier victory with a crown of laurel, for she holds that the lover's perseverance will "lede him to the victorie of paradise, of the which the ioies be infinite."¹²² Musidorus, in pursuit of Pamela, does indeed undergo pain and travail. For her sake, he defeats Amphialus who, if he parallels the Python, parallels false doctrine. For this victory over error, Musidorus is amply rewarded, for he is permitted to marry the princess he has saved. As his bride, Pamela will enable him to experience infinite joy, of the spirit as well as the body. In the end perhaps Musidorus inherits not only the kingdoms of Thessaly and Arcadia, but also the Kingdom of God.

¹²⁰ Christine de Pisan, The Epistle of Othea Translated from the French Text of Christine de Pisan, ed. Curt F. Buhler, The Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 105.

¹²¹ de Pisan, p. 106.

¹²² de Pisan, p. 106.

V. THE TEMPTATION AND PUNISHMENT OF HIPPOLYTUS/BELLEROPHON

The myths of Hippolytus and of Bellerophon have in common the predicament of a young man who angers a lascivious older woman by resisting her amorous advances. In both myths the angered older woman tells the king that the young man has forced himself on her, the king believes her and unjustly orders the youth punished, and the woman later kills herself. In both, moreover, Jupiter opposes the deification of the young man. Although medieval and renaissance mythographers interpreted other aspects of both myths, their interpretations of the parallel portions of the two myths are the interpretations that will be most relevant to the plot of the Arcadia, for the Arcadia contains two older women who demand the amorous attentions of younger men: Gynecia and Andromana. To the extent that the myths of Hippolytus and Bellerophon are parallel, their interpretations can be transferred interchangeably to the plot of the Arcadia.

A. The Story of Plangus and Erona

Plangus, whose name comes from the Latin verb plango, meaning "to bewail or lament," spends a great deal of time doing exactly that. In the entire book, he never appears on the scene; all of his actions are reported by other characters. He is first presented as a grief-stricken figure traveling through Greece and Asia Minor in search of

help for Erona. Erona's imprisonment grieves him, and his grief forces him to recognize the tragic predicament of man, who, unlike the plants and animals, has a mind with which to know his own sorrow. "Griefe onely," says Plangus,

. . . makes his wretched state to see
 (Even like a toppe which nought but whipping moves)
 This man, this talking beast, this walking tree.
 Griefe is the stone which finest judgement proves:
 For who grieves not hath but a blockish braine,¹
 Since cause of griefe no cause from life removes.

If Erona, already sentenced to death, cannot be rescued before Queen Artaxia of Armenia names the day for her execution, then the world will have lost all of its meaning, for

The world the garden is, she is the flower
 That sweetens all the place; she is the guest
 Of rarest price, both heav'n and earth her bower.²

Moreover, Plangus is inconsolable; he refuses all comfort, and his attention never strays from the urgency of his quest.

If through mine eares pearce any consolation
 By wise discourse, sweete tunes, or Poets fiction;
 If ought I cease these hideous exclamations,
 While that my soule, she, she lives in affliction;
 Then let my life long time on earth maintained be,
 To wretched me, the last worst malediction.
 Can I, that know her sacred parts restrained be,
 For any joy, know fortunes vile displacing her,
 In morall rules let raging woes contained be?

¹Sir Philip Sidney, The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge University Press, 1963-1968), I, 227.

²Sidney, I, 229.

Can I foreget, when they in prison placing her,
 With swelling hart in spite and due disdainfulness
 She lay for dead, till I helpt with unlasing her?³

Receiving the false information that Pyrocles and Musidorus have both drowned in a shipwreck just off the Laconian coast, Plangus, after voicing his lament to Basilius, leaves Greece behind to seek help from Euarchus at Aulon. Euarchus, when he receives the sad news that his son and his nephew are dead, displays a Stoic self-control. Unlike Plangus, he triumphs over his misery. Sending Plangus on an advance expedition, Euarchus begins immediate preparations to attack Armenia. Shortly thereafter he follows with his entire fleet, but a storm scatters the fleet and brings Euarchus to the Laconian shore just in time to preside over the trial of Pyrocles and Musidorus. At the end of the book, then, "straunge stories of Artaxia and Plexirtus, Erona and Plangus,"⁴ are left unresolved, although Sidney might well have resolved them had he completed his revision. As it stands, Plangus may or may not have rescued Erona unaided; Pyrocles and Musidorus may or may not have arrived in time to help him.

In the 1593 Arcadia, Erona has already ordered the statues of Cupid removed, rejected Tiridates' proposal, and married the unworthy Antiphilus (now dead) many months before Musidorus washes ashore in Laconia at the opening of the book. Plangus, too, has already defected from Artaxia, the Queen of Armenia, and fallen in love with Erona. In a

³Sidney, I, 230.

⁴Sidney, II, 207.

desperate attempt to rescue her before Artaxia has her executed, he has been to Arcadia in search of Pyrocles and Musidorus and, believing them dead, has already departed. These earlier events, which caused Erona to be imprisoned and Plangus to lament, are told in flashbacks that come later in the book than the initial flashback containing Plangus' lament to Basilius. As an exercise, Basilius has written down this first lament in a book that belongs to Philoclea. While the Arcadian princesses are swimming in the River Ladon, Amphialus' spaniel steals the book, which Pyrocles/Zelmane later recovers from Amphialus at sword's point. Amphialus receives a slight wound from this encounter, and while he is being cared for at the lodge, Pyrocles inquires about the contents of the book. Philoclea replies by reading the poem aloud to both princes, then tells them as much as she knows of the story of Erona, which Plangus has told to Basilius who, in turn, has told it to Philoclea. Everything that Philoclea recounts to the princes has happened long before Plangus encountered Basilius on the road from Megalopolis.

In the best classical tradition, the tragedy of Plangus and Erona begins in medias res, those earlier events which initiated the present situation being narrated by various characters. Only the final step is missing: the resolution. The beginning of the Plangus and Erona story, however, is embedded in the middle of a larger action and inextricably interwoven with this larger action by a chain of causation. If Erona had not refused Tiridates, if Tiridates had not tried to seize

her country by force, if Pyrocles and Musidorus had not gone to her assistance, if Pyrocles, in her defense, had not killed Euardes and Tiridates, if Artaxia had not determined to avenge her brother's death, if Plexirtus had not married Artaxia, and if Plexirtus had not arranged for a ship's captain to murder Pyrocles and Musidorus in their sleep before the ship landed in Greece, Musidorus might never have become Kalander's guest, and Pyrocles might never have fallen in love with the picture of Philoclea. Moreover, if Anaxius had not determined to avenge his Uncle Euardes' death, Pyrocles would not have had an evil challenger to test his valor and his virtue. This particular subplot, then, unlike the other minor incidents in the Arcadia, has continuous importance. In addition, it attaches to the main plot two otherwise minor and isolated incidents, for Plexirtus is not only Artaxia's husband, but he is also the ungrateful son of the King of Paphlagonia, and Chremes is not only Dido's miserly father, but he is also the treacherous host who, in hopes of a reward from Artaxia, leads Pyrocles into an ambush from which Plangus' father rescues him. Therefore, although information about Plangus is episodic, at best, he has a strange importance to the main plots. The reader is never allowed to forget about Plangus.

In Chapter 13 of Book Two, Philoclea supplies the beginning of the story. She tells it to Pyrocles and Musidorus, who have already defended Erona against Tiridates, Euardes, Barzanes, and Plangus himself and have left her in a seemingly secure situation, married to

Antiphilus, the unworthy bridegroom of her choice. Since Philoclea does not yet know the true identity of her listeners, she is telling them a story they already know. Erona, she explains, was a princess of Lycia who persuaded her father to tear down all statues and pictures of Cupid. In retaliation, Cupid made her fall in love with Antiphilus, the son of her nurse, instead of with Tiridates, the King of Armenia, to whom her father had pledged her. After the death of her father, Tiridates tried to force her to marry him by besieging her city, and although Pyrocles and Musidorus succeeded in breaking the siege, Plangus captured Antiphilus, who promptly displayed his cowardice by urging Erona to marry Tiridates in exchange for his release. Once again Pyrocles and Musidorus came to her rescue, this time killing Tiridates. Artaxia, sister to Tiridates, became his successor to the throne of Armenia, and Plangus, who had spent eleven years at the Armenian court, accompanied the bitter Artaxia and their defeated forces home. Meanwhile, the victorious Erona married her beloved Antiphilus.

When Philoclea ends her story, the princes know no more than they knew at the outset, but in the next chapter Pamela, beginning where Philoclea ended, provides additional information, for she tells about Plangus and his incestuously inclined stepmother, Andromana (her name means "man-crazy").⁵ Andromana, while married to a citizen of the realm, had adulterous affairs with both Plangus and his father, the

⁵Walter R. Davis, A Map of Arcadia: Sidney's Romance in Its Tradition, in Sidney's Arcadia, Walter R. Davis and Richard A. Lanham (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 122.

King of Iberia. Finally the King sent his son to war, to avoid competition, and by the time Plangus returned, Andromana's husband was dead and Plangus' father was married to her. Although she had borne the King a son and a daughter, she expected to resume her affair with Plangus, but she

found (for the reverence of his fathers bed) a bitter refusall: which breeding rather spite than shame in her, or if it were a shame, a shame not of the fault, but of the repulse, she did not onely (as hating him) thirst for a revenge, but (as fearing harm from him) endeavoured to doo harme unto him.⁶

She accomplished her revenge by hiring an unscrupulous servant to "warn" the king that Plangus was seeking popular support in an attempt to seize the throne. In order to escape execution, Plangus fled to Armenia, where he spent eleven years under the protection of his cousin Tiridates. Hence, when Tiridates attacked Lycia, Erona's country, Plangus fought at his side. Ironically, it was Plangus who captured Antiphilus and Plangus who, later, after falling in love with Erona, tried unsuccessfully to get him released.

When Pyrocles is alone with Philoclea for the first time, he gives her an account of his own earlier adventures, including his service to Dido, his betrayal by Chremes, his capture by the Armenians, and his immediate rescue by the Iberians, led by Plangus' father, who appeared unexpectedly and who routed the Armenians only because they had harbored his hated son Plangus for eleven years. Musidorus, who had been following Pyrocles, arrived in time to assist the Iberians, and after the

⁶Sidney, I, 245.

battle Plangus' father took the two princes to visit his kingdom. There Andromana behaved toward Pyrocles and Musidorus precisely as she had behaved earlier toward her stepson Plangus. Thwarted in her repeated attempts to seduce both princes, she led the king to believe that they were planning to overthrow him.

Once the king imprisoned them, she renewed her demands, making their amorous attentions the condition of release. Chaste (though not necessarily celibate) by nature, they stiffened their resistance. Finally Zelmane, Plexirtus' daughter and Andromana's niece, who had fallen in love with Pyrocles, prevailed upon Palladius, Plangus' half-brother, to help them escape from prison. When the Iberian troops overtook the princes in Bythinia, Palladius was accidentally killed by one of his mother's own men. Andromana then, "deprived of all comfort, with eyes full of death . . . ranne to her sonnes dagger, and . . . strake her selfe a mortall wound."⁷ Her dying words to Pyrocles "were cursings of her ill set affection," and she wished for him "many crosses & mischances" in love.⁸ Plangus' father survived the deaths of Palladius and Andromana, but his distrust of Plangus also survived, and at the end of the Arcadia the father and son had not yet been reconciled.

Meanwhile, Zelmane, Andromana's niece, disguised herself as a page, Daiphantus, serving Pyrocles until, heartsick at evidence of the

⁷Sidney, I, 245.

⁸Sidney, I, 288.

cruelty of her father, Plexirtus, she died. Her last request was that Pyrocles should pardon and aid Plexirtus, who, they discovered, "was prisoner to an auncient Knight" and condemned to "be devoured by a monstrous beast, of most ugly shape, armed like a Rhinoceros, as strong as an Elephant, as fierce as a Lion, as nimble as a Leopard, and as cruell as a Tigre"⁹ Pyrocles, fulfilling his promise to Zelmane, "undertooke the combatte" and "slewe that monster,"¹⁰ but no details of the battle are provided because Pyrocles, who has been narrating his earlier adventures to Philoclea, modestly omits them. All that remains now for him to tell is the ingratitude of Plexirtus, who brought about the opening shipwreck by bribing a sea captain to murder Pyrocles and Musidorus during the journey to Greece.

Basilius provides all that remains to be told of Erona's misfortunes in reply to a question from Pyrocles, who is, of course, now disguised as Zelmane. Plangus had told the rest of the story to Basilius before leaving Arcadia to seek help from Euarchus. Antiphilus, by abusing his subjects, believing the flatterers, and falsely claiming royal ancestry to make it appear that he, not Erona, was the rightful heir to the throne, had quickly proved himself unfit to rule in Lycia. Next he claimed that Erona was barren and passed a law permitting him to have more than one wife. Finally, he proposed marriage to Artaxia, who led him to believe she would consider his proposal and arranged

⁹Sidney, I, 300.

¹⁰Sidney, I, 301.

for a meeting, to which she came with an army. Imprisoning both Erona and Antiphilus was, for her, a means of forcing Pyrocles and Musidorus to return to Armenia, for the embittered Artaxia was determined to avenge the death of her brother, Tiridates.

At this point in the story Plangus, observing Erona in prison, fell in love with her. The time was at hand for his self-recrimination and lamentation to begin. Though he desperately attempted to undo all the harm he had done as an accomplice of Tiridates and Artaxia, his best efforts were unavailing, and Artaxia turned Antiphilus over to the townswomen, who tortured him to death for condoning polygamy. Erona was sentenced to be burned at the stake unless Pyrocles and Musidorus appeared within twelve months to fight on her behalf. Although Erona had no interest in living after Antiphilus was dead, and no interest of any sort in Plangus, Plangus traveled far and wide in search of the two heroic princes, only to be told in Laconia that they were dead.

Meanwhile, Andromana's curse seems to have followed Pyrocles to Arcadia, for once again a middle-aged, married queen conceives an adulterous passion for him. Since Gynecia is also Philoclea's mother, the situation in Arcadia is both delicate and dangerous for him. Gynecia, of course, recognizes that he is a man, and she threatens to expose him if he refuses to become her lover. After Pyrocles has tricked her into lying with her own husband, and after Basilius has fallen to the ground in front of the cave, seemingly dead, Gynecia tries to hasten her own death by confessing to a crime that she has

not committed in order to punish herself for the adultery that she has pursued but not committed. Her confession, had Basilius not revived, would have amounted to a suicide, for murder was, of course, punishable by death.

B. The Myths of Hippolytus and of Bellerophon

The myth of Hippolytus appears in Book Six of the Iliad, Book Seven of the Aeneid, Book Fifteen of the Metamorphoses, and numerous other places, all available to Sidney, including Seneca's tragedy and Plutarch's Parallel Lives. Ovid's account in the Metamorphoses is brief and does not dwell on Phaedra's attempted seduction.¹¹ Hippolytus tells his own story to Egeria, King Numa's widow, who, like him, has retired to the Valley of Aricia:

The daughter of Pasyphae in vayne oft tempting mee
My fathers chamber too defyle, surmysde mee too have sought
The thing that shee with al her hart would fayne I should have
wrought.
And whither it were for feare I should her wickednesse bewray,
Or else for spyght bycause I had so often sayd her nay,
She chardgd mee with her owne offence.¹²

Enraged, Theseus banished his son, who was hastily departing in his chariot when suddenly

The sea did ryse, and like a mount the wave did swell on hye,
And seemed howger for too growe in drawing ever nye,

¹¹In the Heroides, IV, however, Phaedra's plea to Hippolytus is impassioned and prolonged.

¹²Arthur Golding, trans., "The Fifteenth Booke," Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses (1567), ed. W. H. D. Rouse (1961; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966), 11. 559-64.

And roring clyved in the toppe. Up starts immediately
 A horned bullocke from amid the broken wave, and by
 The brest did rayse him in the ayre.¹³

Frightened by the monstrous bull, Hippolytus' horses bolted, and one
 of the wheels broke off of the chariot.

Then from the Charyot I was snatcht, the brydles beeing cast
 About my limbes. Yee myght have seene my sinewes sticking fast
 Uppon the stub; my gutts drawn out alyve; my members, part
 Still left uppon the stump, and part forrth harryed with the cart:
 The crasshing of my broken bones; and with what passing payne
 I breathed out my weery ghoste.¹⁴

His soul was taken to Hades, but Cynthia brought Aesculapius to restore
 him to life, then altered his appearance, and, enveloping him in a
 cloud, conducted him to Aricia. Under the name of Virbius, he rules
 over the valley as "a God of small magnificence."¹⁵ Ovid says no more
 about Aesculapius in this connection, but Virgil adds that "the Lord
 omnipotent, indignant that any mortal should rise from the nether shades
 to the light of life, launched his thunder and hurled down to the
 Stygian water the Phoebus-born, the discoverer of such craft and
 cure."¹⁶

As for the death of Phaedra, Euripides and Seneca both presented
 it, but Sidney is most likely to have read about it in Seneca, since
 Thomas Newton's Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English

¹³Golding, "The Fifteenth Booke," ll. 569-73.

¹⁴Golding, "The Fifteenth Booke," ll. 585-90.

¹⁵Golding, "The Fifteenth Booke," l. 611.

¹⁶Publius Vergilius Maro, The Aeneid, Book Seven, in Virgil's Works,
 trans. J. W. Mackail (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 148.

appeared in 1581, whereas, according to Douglas Bush, "the almost total ignorance of Greek drama, which was not translated at all--except for one play of Euripides taken from Italian--is a commonplace."¹⁷ The one play is not, of course, the Hippolytus. In Seneca's Hippolytus, however, the death of Phaedra is a prominent feature, and it takes place on the stage. Phaedra hurls herself against her own sword after confessing to Theseus that

False forged tales I told with shame, I fayning that did lye,
Which I of spite imagined, when raging breast did swarve:
Thou father falsly punisht hast him that did not deserve.
The youngman chast is cast away for myne uncestuous vice,
Both bashful he and guiltles was, now play thy wonted guyse.¹⁸

The myth of Bellerophon is told in Book Six of the Iliad, but since Chapman's translation of the first seven books did not appear until 1598, Sidney is just as likely to have read the myth in one of the Renaissance handbooks as he is to have read the Iliad in a Latin translation. He might possibly have read both. Conti's account seems to synthesize all of the major features of the myth provided by Homer's Iliad, Hesiod's Theogony, and Pindar's "Olympian Ode XIII." According

¹⁷Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, new rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), p. 44. Kenneth Myrick, however, in Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 107, says that "the works of Euripides were available [to Sidney] in a Latin translation, issued at Basle as early as 1562, which he could easily have picked up during his wide travels on the Continent."

¹⁸Seneca, The Fourth, and Most Ruthful Tragedy of L. Annaeus Seneca Entitled Hippolytus, trans. Jhon Studley, in Seneca His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English (1581), ed. Thomas Newton (1932; rpt. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 181.

to Conti, Bellerophon, banished from Corinth, visited the court of King Proetus of Argos, whose wife Anteia, sometimes known as Sthenoboea, tried to seduce him, just as Phaedra had tried to seduce Hippolytus. When he refused, her love turned to hate, and she told the king that the young man had forced himself on her. Since the code of hospitality forbade the premeditated killing of those whom a host had feasted, Proetus sent the young man to the court of his brother-in-law, Iobates, "with sealed letters," offering Iobates a price to kill Bellerophon. Iobates, however, neglected to open the letter until after he, too, had feasted Bellerophon, so he determined to punish the offender obliquely by assigning him a series of impossible tasks, one of which was to kill the Chimaera. Conti here quotes from Book Six of Homer's Iliad Glaucus' account of that portion of the Bellerophon myth that begins with Anteia's infatuation and ends with Iobates' opening the letter from Proetus.¹⁹ Since Conti's own narrative matches that of the quoted passage, it is unimportant whether Sidney read about the lascivious older woman in Homer or in Conti.

Conti tells the rest of the story in his own words, about the seemingly impossible tasks assigned and about Bellerophon's miraculous achievements. None of these accounts parallels anything in the Hippolytus

¹⁹See Noel le Comte, Mythologie: c'est á dire, Explication des Fables, cōtenant les genealogies des Dieux, les cerimonies de leurs sacrifices, Leur gestes, adventures, amours, et presque tous les preceptes de La Philosophie naturelle & morale (Rouen: Jean Osmont, Manassez de Preauix & Jacque Besongne, 1611), p. 792. Id est Natale Conti.

myth, and only the killing of the Chimaera seems related to events in the Arcadia. Bellerophon was able to kill the Chimaera because the gods "gave to him the Pegasus" that Athena had "trained by her hand."²⁰ In short, divine intervention enabled Bellerophon to escape the harsh punishment requested by the queen, whereas divine intervention on the part of Neptune resulted in the dismemberment of Hippolytus. Iobates, in fact, came to admire Bellerophon's "valor and magnanimity" so much that he "gave to him in marriage his daughter Philonoe" ²¹ Anteia, however, in Conti's account, ended, like Phaedra, by taking her own life. "As the innocence of Bellerophon was known by everyone, the wife of Proetus could not live with such blame and infamy; she drank hemlock and died."²²

Although Bellerophon avoided being punished for refusing a queen, he did later receive, for a different crime, a punishment that somewhat resembles the banishment of Hippolytus and his death on the rocks, brought about by bolting horses. Conti reports that Bellerophon's prosperity

made him so proud that he undertook to fly up to the heavens by means of the winged Pegasus: which arrogance Jupiter, severe

²⁰Le Comte, pp. 792-93: "luy donnerent le Pegase volant . . . dressé de sa main"

²¹Le Comte, p. 793: "sa valeur & magnanimité, luy donna en mariage sa fille Philonoe"

²²Le Comte, p. 793: "comme l'innocence de Bellerophon fut connue par tout le monde, la femme de Proete ne pouant viure avec tel blâme & infamie, elle beut de la ciguë, & mourut." The death of Anteia is not given in the Iliad.

avenger of all boldness, judging that he ought not leave this unpunished, drove this horse mad, throwing his rider below²³

Bellerophon did not die from the fall, but he spent the rest of his life "roaming madly around that country until finally he died of hunger and of poverty" ²⁴ Pegasus, of course, returned to heaven without him. Bellerophon's fall resembles Hippolytus' terrible crash, but Jupiter's wrath seems to correspond to the wrath that Jupiter directed toward Aesculapius in the Hippolytus myth. Whereas Diana did succeed in immortalizing Hippolytus, Bellerophon was never resurrected. In any event, both myths involve an older woman, a lie, an angry king, a fall, one or more horses, and an angry god.

C. Plangus, Erona, and Pyrocles as Types of Hippolytus and/or Bellerophon

Just as Hippolytus' body "was bruised and broken to pieces,"²⁵ so Sidney seems to have scattered features of the myths of Hippolytus and Bellerophon throughout the Arcadia. For example, Erona, like Hippolytus, fails to offer due reverence to Venus. Hippolytus, however, had merely neglected the goddess of love, whereas Erona commits an overt offense,

²³Le Comte, p. 793: "l'enorgueillit si fort qu'il entreprit de voler iusques aux cieux par le moyen du Pegase ailé: laquelle arrogance Jupiter tres seure vangeur de toute temerité, iugeant ne deuoit laisser impunie, enuoya la rage à ce cheual, lequel iettant son cheuaucheur à bas"

²⁴Le Comte, p. 793: "tracassant parmi cette campagne tant que finalement il mourut de faim & de pauvreté"

²⁵Le Comte, p. 131: "en fut froissé & mis en pieces."

for, at age nineteen, the Lycian princess, "seeing the countrie of Lycia so much devoted to Cupid, as that in every place his naked pictures & images were superstitiously adored . . . procured so much of her father, as utterly to pull downe, and deface all thos statues and pictures."²⁶ Like Hippolytus, she is punished for her irreverence; her punishment consists of falling in love with the unworthy Antiphilus, whereas Hippolytus' punishment consisted of having Phaedra fall in love with him. Plangus, rather than Erona, receives the unwelcome advances of a stepmother, Andromana, and Pyrocles receives the unwelcome advances of his future mother-in-law, Gynecia. Plangus, like Hippolytus, is punished for this repulse by a father who is too quick to believe the false accusation of the stepmother. He is banished from Iberia, just as Hippolytus was banished from Athens, but his horses do not bolt and he is not dismembered. Moreover, Andromana's accusation differs from Phaedra's, for she tells Plangus' father that Plangus is encouraging a popular uprising in an attempt to seize the throne.

Although Pyrocles and Plangus are both punished for repulsing Andromana, Pyrocles is not punished at all for repulsing Gynecia. She threatens to tell Basilius that he is not a woman if he refuses to gratify her desire, but Pyrocles outwits her by sending her own husband to the assignation in the cave. He is sentenced to death, not by Basilius, but by his own father, Euarchus, who has no wife and who has heard nothing at all from Gynecia. Like Theseus, however, Euarchus

²⁶Sidney, I, 232.

pronounces too harsh a sentence on his own son, and Pyrocles might, like Hippolytus, have been crushed to death on rocks had Basilius not made a miraculous recovery (which corresponds somewhat to the miraculous resurrection of Hippolytus effected by Aesculapius).

Pyrocles, however, had earlier been subjected to the unwelcome advances of Plangus' stepmother, thus effectively tying together the two parts of the plot that parallel the same myth. While Pyrocles and Musidorus were guests at the court of Iberia, Andromana attempted to seduce each of them, and each in turn repulsed her. Again, her accusation was not of attempted rape but of attempted sedition, and again the king was too quick to believe her. Pyrocles and Musidorus were not banished like Plangus and Hippolytus; instead, they were imprisoned. But Andromana, like Phaedra, killed herself, in this case because her own son, Palladius, had been killed while helping the men who repulsed her make their escape, whereas Phaedra had killed herself in order to punish herself because she had caused Hippolytus to be killed. Palladius, unlike Hippolytus, is not resurrected, and at the close of the 1593 Arcadia Plangus, although still banished, is still alive. Unlike Phaedra, Erona, Pyrocles, and Gynecia are also still alive; and Gynecia, who now becomes Pyrocles' mother-in-law, displays all the repentance that Phaedra displayed.²⁷ It is as though her pangs of conscience

²⁷Seneca has Phaedra kill herself out of remorse (see p. 198, above), whereas Euripides has her kill herself out of shame and spite, at being rejected. Sidney is most likely to have been familiar with Seneca's version, but in either case, the suicide itself, not the motive, is the essential feature.

sufficed to sustain mythological consistency, for Andromana died unrepentant.

One last feature of the Hippolytus myth has its parallel in Sidney's Arcadia: Theseus had just returned from a journey to Hades when he heard Phaedra's false accusation and prayed to Neptune to destroy his son, and Basilius had just returned from a descent into a cave and appeared to be a corpse at the time that his proxy, Euarchus, sentenced his own son, Pyrocles, to be hurled from a tower. The Hippolytus myth, then, has been scattered and modified, but reassembled in recognizable form in the Arcadia.

The myth of Bellerophon differs from the myth of Hippolytus mainly in that the performance of impossible tasks is substituted for a death penalty. Bellerophon's defeat of the Chimaera has a counterpart in the Arcadia when Pyrocles defeats the monster with all the most formidable qualities of a rhinoceros, elephant, lion, leopard, and tiger. It was the real Zelmane, Plexirtus' daughter, who had, with her dying breath, assigned Pyrocles this impossible task. Her intention had been not to punish him but to beg from him this one last favor, which he freely granted, despite his own distaste for the evil Plexirtus and the chagrin of the honest old knight who had imprisoned Zelmane's father. Pyrocles modestly reports to Philoclea that only divine intervention enabled him to kill the monster, although he does not, of course, specify a flying horse.

So was my weakness blessed from above, that without dangerous wounds I slewe that monster, which hundreds durste not attempt:

to so great admiration of many (who from a safe place might looke on) that there was order given, to have the fight, both by sculpture and picture, celebrated in most parts of Asia. And the olde nobleman so well liked me, that he loved me; onely bewayling, my vertue had beene employed to save a worse monster then I killed²⁸

Similarly, Iobates, in spite of himself, had to admire and respect Bellerophon for killing the Chimaera. When Bellerophon became so honored, Anteia, the would-be seductress, killed herself, as Andromana and Phaedra had done. The hubris of Bellerophon, in attempting to scale Mount Olympus while mounted on Pegasus, has no counterpart in the careers of either Plangus or Pyrocles.

Since Erona was a Lycian princess in the Arcadia and Iobates a Lycian king in the myth of Bellerophon, Sidney may have expected his readers to recall the myth of Bellerophon. If the selection of Lycia was deliberate, not coincidental, then perhaps Sidney intended, in his revision, to have Erona reverse her negative attitude toward Plangus when he had displayed his true valor. Possibly, too, Plangus' father might have regretted his harsh treatment of his eldest son. In any event, the myth of Bellerophon seems in several ways to be associated with the careers of Erona, Plangus, and Pyrocles, and some of the allegorical readings that mythographers have assigned to the myth should transfer successfully to the Arcadia.

²⁸Sidney, I, 301.

D. Cosmological Exegesis

Cosmological interpretations of the myths of Hippolytus and Bellerophon are meager, simply because the Renaissance mythographers tended to retell these two myths as moral lessons. The medieval mythographers, who in this case have more to offer, provide natural, astrological, and theological readings, but, typically, nothing at the cosmological level, for cosmological interests returned with the Renaissance. To compound the problem, the story of Plangus, who is, after all, the primary Hippolytus/Bellerophon figure, is incomplete in the Arcadia. How it might have ended is matter for conjecture, and while such conjecture can be based on the outcome of the story of Pyrocles, Pyrocles is only secondarily a type of Hippolytus and Bellerophon. Although the full implications of the story of Plangus and Erona can only be surmised, some partial implications may be useful.

Conti, who finds cosmological significance in Bellerophon's battle with the Chimaera, holds that Pegasus represents the sun, because "the air [is] agitated by the force of the sun" ²⁹ Bellerophon, then, "is only the vapor raised by the movement of the sun" ³⁰ Pegasus, the winged horse, was given to Bellerophon by Athena specifically to enable him to conquer the Chimaera. The Arcadia contains only the faintest hint of a Pegasus, when Pyrocles tells Philoclea that, in

²⁹Le Comte, p. 793: "l'air estant agité par la force du Soleil"

³⁰Le Comte, p. 793: "n'est autre chose que l'humeur eleuee par le mouuement du Soleil"

his battle to free Plexirtus from the monster, "my weakness [was] blessed from above" ³¹ Conti cautions that it is "Pegasus, not Bellerophon, who brings the day," ³² and he points out that only "the most subtile part" of the moisture "rises to the region of air," whereas "the grossest was by Jupiter sent down below." ³³ Here, of course, Conti has reference to Bellerophon's fall when he attempted to enter heaven on Pegasus' back. The fall, for Conti, represents the separation of the elements when God created the universe, the air and fire rising, water and earth sinking. Although Pyrocles really displayed no hubris, this explication still seems appropriate, for Pyrocles overcomes one chimerical monster only to encounter additional ordeals at other times. His greatest accomplishments are not sufficient to effect a total purification, and even at the end of the book he has not become "deified," although he has gained an insight into what a "subtler" existence might consist of.

Neither Plangus nor Erona has acquired such an insight at the close of the Arcadia, nor has Plangus defeated a monster. His complaints have not gained for him any divine intervention. No Pegasus is at hand to enable him to free Erona from the evil Artaxia, who may, for him, comprise a chimerical beast. Perhaps in this context Erona, who did,

³¹Sidney, I, 301.

³²Le Comte, p. 793: "que le Pegase, non pas Bellerophon, porte le iour"

³³Le Comte, p. 793: "que la plus subtile partie monte a la region de l'air . . . que la plus grossiere fut par Jupiter deuallee ca`bas."

after all, blaspheme the God of Love, may represent the grosser aspect of moisture, that sinks to the earth, which is a prison. Had Sidney completed his revision, he might have shown Erona in prison, as he showed Pyrocles and Musidorus in prison. Undoubtedly she would have had to learn something about the spiritual implications of love before she could be released from her gross, earthly prison. When Erona could stop mourning for Antiphilus and when Plangus could defeat Artaxia, they might then have been ready for a marriage that contained in it some of the "subtile part" of the moisture, the mistier part, intensified with air. Their union might then have conformed to Sidney's conception of the ideal earthly marriage, which he exemplified in the marriage of Musidorus to Pamela.

E. Natural Exegesis

Abraham Fraunce offers a meaning for Pegasus that is somewhat circular:

Allegorically, by Pegasus borne of the blood of Medusa, we may understand immortalitie and everlasting fame. For, vertue overcumming all terrible things, figured by Gorgon, breedeth fame: and fame is eternified by the sounding voyce of Poets: which was the cause that the learned well, was said to be opened by the horse of Pegasus, striking the Parnassian mount.³⁴

If the rider of Pegasus is Virtue, then Pegasus himself is Fame, and when Virtue triumphs over Vice by riding on Fame, then Virtue wins

³⁴Abraham Fraunce, The Third Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch: Entituled, Amintas Dale (1592; MLA Rhotograph Series No. 75), sig. 28^v.

Fame, or eternal renown. The circularity, however, is not inappropriate to the battle that took place in the Arcadia between Pyrocles and a chimerical monster. Pyrocles, already famous for his virtue, shows himself once more to be worthy of that fame. The fight itself is immortalized "both by sculpture and picture,"³⁵ and immediately thereafter all of the people that Musidorus and Pyrocles had assisted in their travels assembled in Pontus to honor them before they embarked for Greece. It is even possible to think of their renown as divinely bestowed, for it stems from a virtue divine in origin. Hence, Pyrocles could say, "so was my weakenes blessed from above, that without dangerous wounds I slewe that monster" ³⁶

As for the Chimaera, Fraunce terms it "the type of inordinate lust [which] first inuadeth men fiercely like a Lyon, then wantonly and lasciuiously like a Goate, afterwards brings poysoned sorrow and repentance figured by snakes and serpents."³⁷ Fraunce may have borrowed his interpretation of the Chimaera from Fulgentius, who had already equated the three heads with the three stages of love, adding that the very name Chimaera comes from "cymeron, that is, the surge of love."³⁸ Pyrocles,

³⁵Sidney, I, 301.

³⁶Sidney, I, 301.

³⁷Fraunce, sig. 28^v.

³⁸Fabius Planciades Fulgentius, The Mythologies, in Fulgentius the Mythographer, trans. and ed. Leslie George Whitbread (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971), p. 83.

however, had repulsed Andromana shortly before he battled a monster, and not too many months after the battle he would find himself repulsing Gynecia. It seems unnecessary for him to have to prove himself, then, by vanquishing a Chimaera of lust before he can free Plexirtus (who really belonged in prison). Plangus, on the other hand, if he returned to Armenia, might have had to overcome a chimerical monster before he could free Erona. The sin of lust was not as remote from him as it was from Pyrocles, since Plangus had been Andromana's lover before her first husband died. He had, in fact, so praised Andromana's virtue to his father that his father married the lady as soon as she became a widow. Plangus, like Erona, had used love wrongly.

Christine de Pisan seems to have consolidated the myths of Bellerophon and Hippolytus, identifying Bellerophon as "a knyghte of righte grate beaute and ful of trouth," whose "stepmoder loued him so wel & so hooted that sche requyred it of him and, because he wolde not consente to hir wille, sche did so moche that he was condempned to be deuoured with feers bestis; and he had more lust to chese deth than to do untrouth."³⁹ This interpretation, unlike Fraunce's, might apply to Plangus as well as Pyrocles, for although Plangus had not yet confronted a chimerical monster, he had repulsed Andromana, choosing exile (not death) over adultery with his father's wife, which Christine terms

³⁹ Christine de Pisan, The Epistle of Othea Translated from the French Text of Christine de Pisan by Stephen Scrope, ed. Curt F. Buhler, The Early English Text Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 46.

"untrouth." The word "trouth" in this context might mean true to his father (loyal), or it might mean according to orthodoxy (moral).⁴⁰ In either event, a plot in which a knight representing Truth undertakes to free a lady named Erona seems paradoxical, but Plangus, too, had originally been in error about love and only later had he learned, or become, Truth in both senses. Had Sidney completed his revision, perhaps Erona would also have been transformed, so that she might marry, or become a part of, Truth. That is, she might have learned to love in the right way and to return the loyalty of the deserving Plangus.

The battle between Pyrocles and his chimerical monster lends itself readily to a conflict between truth, in the sense of loyalty, and untruth, or disloyalty, for he was keeping his word pledged to the dying Zelmane that he would fight the monster in order to free her father. He says plainly that "my word was past, and truely," and he adds that "the jorney of high honor lies not in plaine wayes."⁴¹ The ugly monster that he fought might have represented his own desire not to fight for the freedom of Plexirtus. Had he not overcome this monstrous desire, disloyalty or "untrouth" would have triumphed over him. Yet Pyrocles had to overcome one monster of "untrouth" only to release another, for Plexirtus was surely a type of disloyalty, first to his father, the King of Paphlagonia, then to his brother, Leonatus, and finally to Pyrocles, who freed him from captivity. It was Plexirtus,

⁴⁰See the OED under "troth" and "truth."

⁴¹Sidney, I, 301.

after all, who arranged to have Pyrocles murdered on his voyage across the sea to Greece.

F. Astrological Exegesis

Astrological exegeses of the myths of either Hippolytus or Bellerophon are few. Lucian, in his Astrology, says, "Concerning Bellerophon also I am of this opinion: that he had a volatile as horse I do not at all believe, but conceive that he pursued this wisdom and raised his thoughts on high and held conversation with the stars, and thus ascended unto heaven by means not of his horse but of his wit."⁴² Lucian says nothing about Jupiter's wrath at Bellerophon's ascent and the subsequent fall. Conti also says nothing about a fall, and he cites Lucian's Astrology but somewhat distorts the interpretation, claiming that according to Lucian "Bellerophon, having an old-fashioned spirit for high enterprises, had the reputation for having mounted on a winged horse," and adding that, since the influence of the stars enabled him to defeat the Chimaera, then "the rumor went about that he rose to heaven."⁴³ Both readings are compatible with Pyrocles' victory over the monster, for Pyrocles acknowledges that his "weakenes

⁴²Lucian, Astrology, in Lucian, trans. A. M. Harmon, The Loeb Classical Library (1936; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 359.

⁴³Le Comte, p. 794: "Bellerophon ayant le courage ententif à de hautes entreprises, eut la reputation d'estre monté sur un cheval ailé . . . le bruit courut qu'il monta au ciel."

[was] blessed from above."⁴⁴ Stellar influence may well have helped to bring about the defeat of the rhinoceros-elephant-lion-leopard-tiger. The victory had indeed won him a reputation for high enterprises, as evidenced in the assembly that met in Pontus to honor both Pyrocles and Musidorus before they embarked for Greece.

So as in those partes of the world, I thinke, in many hundreds of yeares, there was not seene so royall an assemblie; where nothing was let passe to doo us the highest honors, which such persons (who might commaund both purses and inventions) could perfourme. All from all sides bringing unto us right royall presents (which we to avoide both unkindnes, and importunitie, liberally received,) not content therewith, would needes accept.⁴⁵

Astrologically interpreted, then, stellar influence contributed to the victory that enabled Pyrocles' reputation as a hero to rise to the heavens by means of Pegasus/Fame.

G. Theological Exegesis

At the theological level, Fulgentius and Christine de Pisan both deal with the repulsion of the amorous stepmother, which is common to the stories of Bellerophon, Hippolytus, Plangus, and Pyrocles. Fulgentius equates Anteia (who might just as well have been Phaedra, Andromana, or Gynecia) with not only lust but also with the Antichrist, "for antion in Greek means opposed, as we say Antichrist for evantion tou christou, that is, opposed to Christ."⁴⁶ A young man who resists a

⁴⁴Sidney, I, 301.

⁴⁵Sidney, I, 302.

⁴⁶Fulgentius, p. 82.

type of Anteia has, then, won a great spiritual victory over an ultimate temptation. Plangus succeeded on the second try, Pyrocles on the first. Each has now demonstrated his spiritual worth and has gained the full approval of the reader, despite past errors on the part of Plangus and questionable tactics on the part of Pyrocles (he does, after all, resort to lies and deceit to gain access to Philoclea). Fulgentius goes on to find that Bellerophon is also "good counsel," mounted on a Pegasus that represents "an everlasting fountain" of wisdom, for the name Pegasus comes from "pegaseon, that is, an everlasting fountain. The wisdom of good counsel is an everlasting fountain."⁴⁷ Such wisdom for Fulgentius, of course, would be doctrinal wisdom, or Christianity, and if his interpretation of Bellerophon is applied to Plangus and Pyrocles, it follows that Pyrocles has access to the fountain through grace, for his "weakenes" was "blessed from above."⁴⁸ Plangus, on the other hand, has not yet received a Pegasus and not yet won his victory.

Christine de Pisan finds a parallel between Bellerophon, who "wolde not consent to hir [Anteia's] wille,"⁴⁹ and Christ, in Matthew 4:10, who would not consent to love the kingdoms of the world and, resisting Satan, said "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." If this interpretation is applied to the

⁴⁷Fulgentius, p. 82.

⁴⁸Sidney, I, 301.

⁴⁹Christine de Pisan, p. 46.

Arcadia, then the significance of Andromana's overtures is greatly magnified. She is Satan (or Evil) incarnate, and Plangus, Pyrocles, and Musidorus, by refusing, have at the very least shared in some way in the nature of Christ. Andromana's total depravity provides some justification for reading a theological meaning into this part of the plot. Pyrocles describes her to Philoclea as an example of

an evill minde in authoritie, [which] dooth not onely folow the sway of the desires alreadie within it, but frames to it selfe new desires, not before thought of. For, with equall ardour she affected us both: and so did her greatnes disdain shamefastnes, that she was content to acknowledge it to both. For, (having many times torne the vaile of modestie) it seemed, for a laste delight, that she delighted in infamy. . . . But her first degree was, by setting foorth her beauties, (truely in nature not to be misliked, but as much advanced to the eye, as abased to the judgement by arte) thereby to bring us (as willingly-caught fishes) to bite at her baite. . . . But when she found, that we were as deaf to them, as dumb to her; then she listed no longer stay in the suburbs of her foolish desires, but directly entred upon them; making her self an impudent suter, authorizing her selfe very much with making us see that all favor & power in that realm, so depended upon her, that now (being in her hands) we were ether to keep, or lose our liberty, at her discretion⁵⁰

Since this is the episode that fuses the Plangus-Erona subplot with the central action, Andromana is undoubtedly a pivotal figure and possesses thematic importance. She is sufficiently satanic to comprise a kind of test. Christine also includes in her discussion of Bellerophon a quotation from St. Augustine denouncing "all ydolatrie."⁵¹ Loving a woman like Andromana would be, of course, cupidity as opposed to charity.

⁵⁰Sidney, I, 278-79.

⁵¹Christine de Pisan, p. 46.

It is difficult, however, to see Gynecia as a second type of Satan in the book, for although she, too, attempts to seduce a younger man and threatens to expose him if he refuses, she does in the end repent and beg for punishment. The meanings of the names "Andromana" and "Gynecia" may provide a basis for drawing a distinction between them at the theological level, for Andromana means "man-crazy," whereas Gynecia simply means "womanhood." Perhaps Gynecia can be seen as a lesser temptress, as a type of Eve, who tempted Adam only after she herself had been tempted. She seems to embody St. Jerome's conception of womanhood, that had so infuriated the Wife of Bath. Unlike Andromana, she was at least redeemable, and ironically, by deceit and trickery Pyrocles managed to save her from sin.

* * *

When the fragments of the story of Plangus and Erona are isolated from the main plot and reassembled in chronological order, the mythological parallels and their implications stand out more clearly. As types of Hippolytus, Plangus and Erona have misused love; as a type of Phaedra, Andromana has attempted to reduce love to mere sensuality. As a type of Bellerophon, Pyrocles has risen above gross earthly desires, and as a type of Phaedra, Gynecia has repented her adulterous desires. The foreconceit that underlies this secondary groundplot in the Arcadia seems to be that a deficiency of love (Erona's distaste for Cupid) and excessive desire (the promiscuous behavior of Andromana and Gynecia)

are equally destructive, and that ideal human love strikes a balance between the two extremes. In a proper marriage, as Sidney has pictured it in the final union of Pyrocles with Philoclea, there will be just proportions of ardor, just proportions of restraint. If Philoclea is regarded as a human counterpart to Hebe, cupbearer to Jupiter, then Pyrocles, allegorically, has resisted fleshly temptations extended by Gynecia and Andromana, to wed himself to a servant of God. Plangus and Erona have yet to achieve a comparable state of balance.

VI. CONCLUSION

In his Defence of Poesie Sidney says that the poet invents "an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description: which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soule so much as that other doth."¹ Poet and philosopher alike are concerned to present an "Idea or fore conceit,"² but the poet presents it in an image that conveys the idea "Allegorically and figuratively written."³ If a poem succeeds, the image will also be moving, and its ultimate effect will be the moral improvement and spiritual enlightenment of the reader. Hence, it is imperative that the foreconceit not be irrecoverable beneath the veil of allegory. Sidney complains in the Defence that most of the poems his contemporaries are writing could not be paraphrased, because "it will bee founde, that one Verse did but beget an other, without ordering at the first, what should bee at the last, which becomes a confused masse of words . . . barely accompanied with reasons."⁴ A poem, then, like an argument, needs to present a

¹Sir Philip Sidney, The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (1912; rpt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963-1968), III, 14.

²Sidney, III, 8.

³Sidney, III, 29.

⁴Sidney, III, 38.

logical and well-organized statement. Yet Sidney also invites the reader to "beleeve, with me, that there are many misteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpose were written darkly, least by prophane wits it should be abused" ⁵ In other words, the mystery has to do with divinity, and the allegory prevents this divine truth from being immediately apparent to everyone.

Hence, the mystery behind the allegorical veil should be sufficiently transparent for all but the irreverent. Those who read Sidney's own heroic poem, lest they count themselves among the profane, should seek the single foreconceit which supports a convoluted main plot, an uncompleted subplot, and a number of isolated episodes. The groundplot of the Arcadia supports the foreconceit that, for a prince, the active life and the contemplative life are complementary; that loving a woman and ruling a populace are necessary corollaries to the contemplation of Truth. Presented so baldly, stripped of all subtleties, the foreconceit may at first seem unworthy of the inventions that support it. Yet the narrative itself is enriched by the hidden presence of this idea, and the sixteenth-century reader who knew to look for it may have taken pleasure in the search itself. To wonder what will happen next is enjoyable, but to wonder what the happenings mean is also enjoyable.

There is, in fact, no other satisfying way to read the Arcadia, for it appears an artistic failure to those who seek in it an Aristotelian

⁵Sidney, III, 45.

imitation of a single probable action. The adventures of Pyrocles and Musidorus that take place before their arrival in Arcadia follow one another with little or no causal relationship; Zoilus, Lycurgus, and Anaxius appear at Cecropia's castle somewhat abruptly; Euarchus' arrival in Arcadia is a bit too timely; and Basilius' miraculous recovery strains the imagination of any realist.⁶

On the other hand, the Arcadia can be equally disappointing to the reader who misunderstands what Sidney meant by the "golden"⁷ world invented by the poet, which contains only "what may be and should be,"⁸ for in this Arcadia kings and queens are sometimes licentious, princes and princesses sometimes deceitful, stepmothers sometimes cruel, servants sometimes irresponsible, and knights sometimes unchivalrous. Clearly the "golden" world is not the exclusive habitation of good men, gentle animals, and spring flowers. When Sidney speaks of what "may be and should be," he seems to have something else in mind. The golden world

⁶William Nelson, in Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), says that even the Old Arcadia "is not designed to create an illusion of reality," and that causation was unimportant to Sidney in both versions. "If this sequential quality is indeed a virtue," says Nelson, "Sidney thought so little of it as to abandon it almost completely in his revision . . ." (p. 70). Nelson concludes, however, that "Sidney is so much more interested in writing admirably than in telling his story that his artifice deliberately rejects the world as it is" (p. 71). I agree with Nelson that Sidney had little interest in presenting a probable action, but I disagree with him about Sidney's motivation. I do not find the Arcadia a virtuoso performance, but, rather, a serious embodiment of a foreconceit, as the following pages will attempt to explain.

⁷Sidney, III, 8.

⁸Sidney, III, 10.

that the poet invents is, for Sidney, a world in which human actions are consistent with cosmic actions, planetary actions, and divine actions. The mystery, then, and the foreconceit are the layers of meaning that accompany the human actions in the Arcadia. These events are what "should" be, providing the cosmic correspondences still hold in a post-lapsarian universe.

If Sidney had eschewed mythological parallels and started with a whole new set of characters, he could have treated them as personifications of virtues and vices and invented a plot that would teach a moral lesson. Lady Lust, for example, might forestall the marriage of Princess Youth to Prince Honor. Such a poem would have been allegorical or figurative, it would be paraphraseable, and it might move the reader to practice the virtues in actual life. It would not, however, contain a mystery. The spiritual and religious dimension could only be provided if the characters were more than themselves, if they were types of larger entities. To this end, Sidney did what Apuleius and others had done before him: he identified his characters with mythological beings. As a result, their actions reverberated with meaning on three additional levels.

For the reader to get at Sidney's foreconceit, then, he needs to equate Basilius with Saturn, Pyrocles with Hercules, Musidorus with Apollo, and Plangus with Hippolytus and Bellerophon. Once these connections are made, the foreconceit that underlies each part of the plot can be established. For example, the story of Basilius, who is a type

of Saturn, can be given the following "wordish description": When a ruler gives himself exclusively over to contemplation, neglecting altogether his obligation to participate in the active life, then winter, melancholy, and discontent will temporarily overpower his family and his subjects and will ultimately overpower the ruler himself. Instead of transcending his physical self, he will find himself totally dominated by his sensual desires. The activity of his heirs and their suitors, however, by ascending the ladder of love, will restore the generative process, spring will return to the world, contentment to the subjects, and the monarch will regain his intellectual insight, moral equilibrium, and political effectiveness.

The stories of Pyrocles, as a type of Hercules, and Musidorus, as a type of Apollo, together embody the foreconceit that a reasonable amount of time spent in retirement enables a future ruler to learn how and what to love, for to be effective a prince will have to govern not only the bodies but the minds and, in a sense, the spirits of those he rules. The right kind of love, whether practiced by ruler or subject, will not only repopulate the world, it will also enable the individual soul to overcome vice, to perfect and complete the souls of others, to comprehend immortality, and to receive God's grace. The story of Plangus as a type of Hippolytus and Bellerophon, though incomplete, seems to be based on a corollary foreconceit: that the wrong kind of love imprisons the soul in the body, precluding a rise to a higher mode of being. The completed story would probably have made a clearer statement about the benefits to be derived from temptation overcome.

If there is an overriding unity in the theme or foreconceit of the Arcadia, it must reside at a point where the ladder of learning and the ladder of love converge. The Neoplatonists in Sidney's circle of acquaintances would have had no difficulty in locating this point. Basilius needed not only to heed the oracles of the God of Truth but also to serve his state; Pyrocles and Musidorus needed not only to acquire an insight into divine Truth but also to establish good governments throughout the world. At the end, the king and the two princes have each achieved a state of balance. They have learned to combine the contemplative life with the active life, for philosopher and lover alike have earthly responsibilities. Pico della Mirandola, in his Oration on the Dignity of Man, recommended the study of philosophy as a way of purifying the soul to prepare it for "the knowledge of things divine."⁹ He cautioned, however, that the soul which ascends must also descend, and he illustrates his point with the image of Jacob's ladder, which is "divided in a series of many steps, with the Lord seated at the top, and angels in contemplation ascending and descending over them alternately by turns."¹⁰ Mortals, like angels,

⁹Pico della Mirandola, Oration on the Dignity of Man, trans. Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in The Renaissance Philosophy of Man, eds. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr., Phoenix Books (1956; rpt. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 229. The Oration, written in Latin in 1486, was published posthumously in 1495 and available in Italy in numerous editions throughout the sixteenth century. Kristeller, in his "Introduction" to this selection, notes that the Forbes translation, completed in 1944, is the first published English translation of Pico's Oration (see pp. 216-17).

¹⁰Pico, p. 229.

shall sometimes descend, with titanic force rending the unity like Osiris into many parts, and we shall sometimes ascend, with the force of Phoebus collecting the parts like the limbs of Osiris into a unity, until, resting at last in the bosom of the father who is above the ladder, we shall be made perfect with the felicity of theology.¹¹

Basilius, who worshipped Apollo until he became infatuated with Zelmane (who was really Pyrocles), had ascended several rungs before the onset of this misdirected love, only to descend, through lust, into duplicity. His integrity was shattered. Pyrocles and Musidorus never fell so far, but they had difficulty learning to love without lust, and they, too, had rended their "unity like Osiris into many parts"¹² Hence, Pyrocles had to become Daiphantus and then Zelmane before he was sufficiently perfected to become Prince Pyrocles again. Similarly, Musidorus had to become Palladius, then Dorus, before recovering his unity as Prince Musidorus. The fall, in each case, was not a final fall, however, and the story had a happy ending (for all but Plangus and Erona). Pico imagines God informing Adam that

We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.¹³

In this sense, Sidney's Arcadia figures forth the dignity of man, his freedom of choice, and the possibility of regeneration and redemption.

¹¹Pico, p. 230.

¹²Pico, p. 230.

¹³Pico, p. 225.

Concealed behind a veil of political strife and amorous adventures, there are abstract truths about virtues and vices, about the creation of the physical universe, about the influences of the stars, and about the Divine Mind. The reader who penetrates the veil to discover these mysteries might be moved to accept his human responsibilities and to love God.

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