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Theory and Practice of Characterization in Sidney's *Arcadia*

by

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Table of Contents

Theory of Characterization:

Ch. I: The Defence of Poesie ............................................. 1
Notes to Ch. I .................................................................. 24

Characterization in Arcadia:

Ch. II: Verisimilitude ......................................................... 28
Notes to Ch. II .................................................................. 45

Ch. III: Vraisemblance ........................................................ 49
Notes to Ch. III .................................................................. 84

Ch. IV: Universal Realism .................................................... 88
Notes to Ch. IV .................................................................. 107

Bibliography ..................................................................... 108
Chapter I: The Defence of Poesie

Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* has always held a particular interest for the student of literary criticism, for two reasons: it stands at the beginning of modern English criticism, and represents, in itself, the best its age had to offer. It is well known that Sidney's theory of poetry, true to its Renaissance origin, includes ideas from a variety of sources; the more specialized scholarship of recent years, however, has found one or another element dominant.

In his pioneer work on literary criticism in the Renaissance, J. E. Spingarn emphasizes Sidney's indebtedness to the Italian critics. The *Defence of Poesie*, he believes, is primarily an expression of Renaissance Aristotelianism, and marks the beginning of Aristotle's influence on English letters. But, Spingarn emphasizes, Sidney's source was not Aristotle himself but the *Poetics* as it was understood and modified by Renaissance Italy: although Sidney and the Italian critics agree that "the poet deals, not with the particular, but with the universal,---with what might or should be, not with what is or has been . . . [they go] farther than Aristotle probably would have gone." Or, as Atkins states with greater clarity, "Sidney's conception of the nature of poetry is not greatly at variance with that of Aristotle," except that Sidney "treats solely of 'things as they ought to be,' omitting all consideration of 'things as
they were or are, those particulars in which and through which the universal was represented according to Aristotelian theory. 3

Irene Samuel, on the other hand, specifically challenges the above point of view with an article which holds that "Plato's word is the main source of Sidney's Defense of Poetry." 4 Her position is apparently supported by C. S. Lewis and his emphasis upon the ideas of the Neo-Platonists: ". . . it is, in my opinion, the claim to inspiration and to limitless freedom of invention, and not the occasional Horatianisms about following Nature, that really provide the key to the Golden poetics." 5

These investigations of the Defense have been primarily concerned with its theoretical aspects, however, and, as Wellek has observed, as far as the history of criticism is concerned there is held "a view of literature which is substantially the same in 1750 as it was in 1550." 6 But Sidney's Defense is important for another reason to the student of Arcadia, as an aid to understanding his artistic efforts; for this purpose, one wants to know, not what he said, but what his theories meant to the practicing poet. His words have too often been taken at their face value and used as rules to interpret Arcadia by, without sufficiently distinguishing between the poet and the theorist, or even between the poet and the lawyer for the defense. It is on his own authority, for example, that his characters have
most often been called "images of virtue": "Aristotle says nothing of characters who are 'perfect patterns' of what is 'to be shunned' or 'to be followed.'" His plea "to believe with me, that there are many mysteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpose were written darkly" is part of Greenlaw's evidence that the Arcadia is allegory; the statement that Ulysses' hardships "are but exercises of patience & magnanimity" (III, 18) is the basis upon which Danby constructs the philosophical meaning of Arcadia. None but Myrick, however, has thoroughly examined the Defence for its relation to Arcadia; he has concentrated primarily on the views of the heroic poem expressed in the former and the heroic structure of the latter. This chapter will examine Sidney's ideas of imitation as they might determine his concept of character in art, and note whatever specific statements there may be concerning characterization.

One may agree with Lewis, that "Golden Poetics . . . are by no means free from confusion." Sidney's Defence, in particular, illustrates one aspect of that confusion which has not yet been sufficiently examined. Whether the Elizabethans did not share our interest in exact definition, or whether the individual critics chose poetic ambiguity for the value of its overtones, it is not Aristotle's authority which is followed in the matter of defining terms. As a recent article by Harold S. Wilson has shown, the word "nature," for example, is used by Renaissance critics in a
variety of senses, ranging from the total of God's universe to a minute physical fact, or simply added, unhampered by meaning at all, in justification of the point at hand.\textsuperscript{12} Broadly speaking, Sidney's view of imitation is that the poet is the creator of another nature. What he understood by this statement, however, as it might be applied to a practical situation, is as important as it is, initially at least, obscure.

To determine the meaning of "another nature" it is important to know, first, on which term he places the emphasis; that is, is the poet a creator of another nature, or of another nature? Apparently Sidney would admit both: "... onely the Poet disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature: in making things either better then nature bringeth forth, or quite a new, formes such as never were in nature: as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chymeras, Furies, and such like" (III, 8). But Sidney's lack of interest in the marvelous has been remarked by nearly all writers on Arcadia, and a near-following sentence in the Defence indicates clearly that he prefers to "let those things alone and goe to man." As Myrick has observed, in a passage of thirteen lines Sidney "gives but one to 'forms such as never were in nature,' merely illustrating them with a few concrete examples. But he lavishes all his eloquence on the poetry which shows the earth and man 'better
than nature bringeth forth"; "it is not the vates, or poet-seer, whose case he pleads in the Defence, but the poet who is a creative artist, a 'maker.' 13

But if the poet is creator of another nature, the things he produces will be "better than nature bringeth forth," which phrase raises the second essential question which must be answered: what does he mean by "better"? In the statement that the poet is not tied, as is the historian, to "what is, hath bin, or shall be, but ranges onely reined with a learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be" (III, 10), "what may be" is acceptable enough, but are we to understand that poetry's concern is with the moral "should" or the poetic "should"? The immediate answer will be, and has been, the moral "should," but there is room, I believe, for an examination of a possible poetic reading of "what should be"—that is, that poetry's function is to perfect nature in the Aristotelian sense of realizing the essential or universal reality rather than to record the accidental or external fact.

Before going into the question of what Sidney means by "should," it is perhaps necessary to show that in the Defence the word is used with various meanings. It can mean simply and unquestionably "would": "... as to a Ladie that desired to fashion her countenance to the best grace: a Painter shuld more benefite her to pourtrait a most sweete face, writing Canidia upon it, than ... etc." (III, 16); it can
mean something like "would have to": "... which [cumbersome grammar] I think was a piece of the Tower of Babilons curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learn his mother tongue" (III, 44); it can carry an apparent ambiguity which disappears when a common-sense reading is applied:

"If then a man can arrive to the childes age, to know that the Poets persons and dooings, are but pictures, what should be, and not stories what have bin ... ." (III, 29); and it can be definitely troublesome in a final example: "The Poet nameth Cyrus and Aeneas, no other way, then to shewe what men of their fames, fortunes, and estates, should doo" (III, 30). In this last case, Sidney could mean either what such men ought to do,\(^4\) or what they would do if they existed under the conditions of their fames, fortunes, and estates. The second alternative seems to me to be eminently the more reasonable, but a preference for it can be suggested only, and one's choice must ultimately depend upon one's view of the Defence as a whole; nevertheless, to read a moral obligation here (and in the foregoing example) is to see Sidney hammering away endlessly on his moral argument where it has no connection with the subject he is discussing in either case—an essentially crude and redundant technique at variance with the skill with which he has already defended poetry's moral value.

There is, of course, present in the Defence, the use of "should" where it clearly means "ought": "... Poesie,
which should be ἐἰκάστικα, which some learned have defined figuring foorth good things to be ἔφανταστικα: which doth contrariwise infect the fancie with unworthy objects . . . ." (III, 30).15

"Should be," it is evident, is only one of a group of related terms used throughout the Defence and under the same condition of ambiguity; the others are the already noted "better," "fit," "perfect," "good," and varying phrases which imply these ideas. All, of course, must be considered before a reasonable meaning can be inferred for any one of them.

It is too obvious to remark that a word can only be understood in relation to its context, but as an illustration of the fact that these particularly two-faced terms are easily misread, an example is in order of a case where "good" is wrongly taken to mean artistic excellence.

G. Gregory Smith, discussing Sidney's views on mingled genres, writes that "Sidney is somewhat inconsistent in his argument against mixed kinds, for he says in one passage that 'if severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtfull.'"16 Sidney's meaning is that if the heroical and the pastoral are each separately conducive to virtue, they can hardly lead to vice when combined. The completed quotation is as follows: ". . . but that [i.e., mingling] cometh all to one in this question, for if severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtfull" (III, 22; italics
mine). Sidney is here examining poetry's power to draw the mind to virtue, and "this question" clearly refers to poetry's teaching effect. He will take up "the other question" later, and find that the conjunction is not, however, artistically good, as Smith has noted.

Yet a single trivial slip is but an indication of the problem. Context, in its larger sense, implies something more important: that a word whose meaning is in itself imprecise (some will say all words) can only be understood in relation to other words, notably the word to which it is opposed. In particular, it is a fundamental of the Ramistic reorganization of logic that every word, thing, or idea implies its opposite. The implications of such a habit of thinking in contrarities have not been fully realized for their bearing on Sidney's Defence.

For by the very nature of the essay, most of the statements Sidney makes about poetry are to point out a distinction between it and something else, usually philosophy or history, and they must be so understood—as comparisons not as absolutes. Thus the description that poets "borrow nothing of what is, hath bin, or shall be" (III, 10) is to distinguish the poet as artist from the historian as reporter; it should not be taken as an isolated statement by which to determine Sidney's theory of what kind of artist. And it is just such a non-contextual reading which gives support to Atkins' statement that Sidney differs
from Aristotle because he "treats solely of 'things as they ought to be,' omitting all consideration of 'things as they were or are'..."17

Does he? Farther on in the Defence Sidney makes a more significant comparison of the historian and the poet: "... the Historian . . . is so tied, not to what should be, but to what is, to the particular truth of things, and not to the general reason of things . . ." (III, 14).

"What should be," here, is clearly "the general reason of things." In a later distinction between the poet and historian, Sidney uses the phrase, "what is fit to be," apparently synonymous with "what should be": paraphrasing Aristotle, he says that "Poesie dealeth with . . . the universal consideration, and the Historie with . . . the particular. Now saith he, the universall wayes what is fit to be said or done, either in likelihood or necessitie, which the Poesie considereth in his imposed names: and the particular onely marketh whether Alcibiades did or suffered this or that" (III, 16).

Not only does Sidney not say, even when comparing him to the historian, that the poet is not concerned with the particular, but when poetry is distinguished from philosophy it is exactly those particulars of nature which give poetry its power. The philosopher is limited to the "abstract and generall"; the poet, in contrast, "gives a perfect picture of it by some one, by whom he presupposeth it was done, so
as he coupleth the generall notion with the particular example" (III, 14). The question still remains, of course, whether the particular example is drawn from nature or is created as a symbol; that is, is it a human example, as Macbeth is, or is it in some way removed from the realm of the natural by being an abstraction of virtue or vice given, pro forma, a human name. The examples Sidney himself gives should make clear that he is primarily interested in human nature: to "know the force, love of our country hath in us . . . [by hearing] old Anchises, speaking in the midst of Troies flames" is not to be taught a virtue but to have revealed a perhaps untested truth of human life; to read of "Ajax on a stage, 18 killing and whipping sheepe and oxen" is to gain "a more familiar insight into Anger." Other examples imply the causative principle which is a fundamental of Aristotle's theory of poetry and emphasized by Sidney elsewhere: 19 "... the remorse of conscience in Oedipus; the soone repenting pride in Agamemnon; the self-devouring crueltie in his father Atreus; violence of ambition in the two Theban brothers; the sower sweetnesse of revenge in Medea." But Sidney goes further, and specifically answers the question as to what the particular example is to be: "... and finally, all vertues, vices, and passions, so in their owne naturall states, laide to the view, that we seeme not to heare of them, but clearly to see through them" (III, 14-15; italics, except proper
nouns, mine).

"Perfect" is another word which may refer to either artistic or to moral excellence (because in any sense it means completion), and it is interesting to see what Sidney means by it in the above quotation, where the "perfect picture" is the poet's combination of "the generall notion" and "the particular example." Immediately following this statement, Sidney defines his term for us: "A perfect picture I say, for hee yeildeth to the powers of the minde an image of that whereof the Philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pearce, nor possesse the sight of the soule so much, as that other doth." Sidney goes on to imply a good deal more about what kind of pictures he means:

For as in outward things to a man that had never seene an Elephant, or a Rinoeroes, who should tell him most exquisitely all their shape, cullour, bignesse, and particular marks, or of a gorgious pallace an Architecture, who declaring the full bewties, might well make the hearer able to repeat as it were by roat all he had heard, yet should never satisfie his inward conceit, with being witnesse to it selfe of a true lively knowledge: but the same man, assoon as he might see those beasts wel painted, or that house wel in modell, shuld straightwaies grow without need of any description to a judicial comprehendinge of them, so no doubt the Philosopher with his learned definitions, be it of vertues or vices, matters of publicke policy or privat government, replenisheth the memorie with many infallible grounds of wisdom, which notwithstanding lie darkes before the imaginative and judging power, if they bee not illuminated or figured forth by the speaking picture of Poesie (III, 14).

A beast well painted, for Sidney, would be a very real and natural-looking beast; a house well in model would be
accurately represented. It seems reasonable to suppose that the "true lively knowledge" which the poet gives in his particular example is to be also and equally true to life; that the reader is to see the general notions (which the philosopher himself got from nature) as they are.

How, then, are they perfect in the sense of being as they should be? In the same sense, I believe, in which Aristotle uses equivalent terms—-the particular things represented are not to be perfect, but the way in which they are ordered to reveal their meaning, is. Or, specifically, the characters are not to be perfect examples of virtue or vice but the plot where the workings out of nature's truths, etc., is to be perfect according to the poetic obligation to probability and necessity.

But does perfect in this, artistic, sense imply perfect also in a moral sense? It does, of course. The "perfect patternes" Sidney speaks of, although I think they are clearly not meant to refer to perfectly virtuous men (contrary to Myrick's assumption) but to the above workings out of causes and effects, are yet referred to as follows: "If the Poet do his part aright, he wil shew you in Tantalus Atreus, and such like, nothing that is not to be shunned; in Cyrus, Aeneas, Ulisses, each thing to be followed; where the Historian bound to tell things as things were, cannot be liberall, without hee will be Poeticall of a perfect patterne, but as in Alexander or Scipio himselfe, shew
doings, some to be liked, some to be disliked . . ." (III, 16-17). So far, Sidney seems to be saying, and emphatically, that heroes are perfectly good and villains perfectly bad, but if it is remembered that he is praising poetry for its teaching virtues against history, then the point he is making should not yet be taken for an absolute statement of characterization, for he goes on to say, "and then how will you discern what to follow, but by your own discretion which you had without reading Q. Curtius." The poet, then, will indicate by his ordering of experience according to cause and effect what things are likely to produce good outcomes and what evil, according to the laws of probability. These, of course, are not poetic, but natural or human or moral, laws; the three being synonymous for Sidney when they are dealt with on the plane of the eternal and outside the accidental, as they are for Aristotle; both men believe that poetry must not violate moral laws. Sidney, I think, says essentially this when he explains, "but if hee [a man] knowe an example onely enformes a conjectural likelihood, and so goe by reason, the Poet doth so farre exceed him [the Historian], as he is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable, be it in warlike, politicke, or private matters, where the Historian in his bare, was, hath manie times that which we call fortune, to overrule the best wisedome. Manie times he must tell of events, whereof he can yeeld no cause, and if he do, it must be poetically"
But if it is accepted that Sidney, in his *Defence*, nowhere says that characters in poetry should be morally perfect, there is a statement in the *Arcadia* which reveals that his intention was that they specifically should not. It refers to the heroine, Philoclea, and will doubtless come as a surprise to some. Sidney is describing her confusion after she discovers that Zelma is really the Prince Pyrocles, and says, in part, that she experienced "all the other contradictions growing in those mindes, which nether absolutely clime the rooke of Vertue, nor freely sine into the sea of Vanitie" (I, 260).

The underlying ambiguity of the *Defence* may be finally illustrated by an example which is valuable not only in itself, as the most specific instance of a comparison of good art, not with history or philosophy, but with bad art; but also in throwing into relief the basis of the confusion. Sidney is saying that "right poets" are like the more excellent sort of painters as opposed to the meaner sort. No artist would disagree with him here, I think, that if one wants to paint Lucretia, the point is not to "counter-feyt onely such faces as are set before [one]" (i. e., the model), but rather to depict the meaning of the subject, in this case, "the outward bewty of such a vertue"—unless, Sidney makes clear (III, 16), one wants a particular likeness of a particular person. In the same passage he uses
one of the terms here under examination, "fit." The more excellent painter "bestoweth that in colours upon you, which is fittest for the eye to see, as the constant, though lamenting looke of Lucretia, when she punished in her selfe anotheres faulte" (III, 10). "Fit," here, unquestionably refers to an artistic standard; yet it equally clearly carries an overtone of moral fitness (he could have chosen an example of right art which was not also edifying.)

Was Sidney, who as he tells us was "a piece of a logician," who is clearly aware of the differences between poetry and history, and philosophy, and rhetoric, who goes to considerable pains throughout his essay to clarify his meaning—was he unaware of the confusion which must result from the use of terms which obviously can be understood in two senses? There are two possible answers as to why he did not make himself clear. One is the fact that Sidney, like Aristotle, recognizes that there are two inseparable but distinct aspects of poetry, the esthetic and the moral; but even Aristotle, whose method was to concentrate on the esthetic in his Poetics, was not able to divorce poetry from its moral aspects, and his own terminology—"men as they ought to be," first and foremost, that [the characters] shall be good" (Poetics, 15)—wavers between the poetic and the moral realms. As Wimsatt has noted, the idea that poetry ought to be moral is really two ideas: in one sense, it is a tautology, "since moral is what all our
works ought to be." In another, of course, it means that it cannot be true poetry unless it is moral.

It is this contradiction which is expressed by the one unambiguous instance in the Defence where "should" clearly means "ought":

For I will not deny, but that man's wit may make Poesie, which should be ἐικαστική, which some learned have defined figuring forth good things to be ἀκτική: which doth contrariwise infect the fancy with unworthy objects, as the Painter should give to the eye either some excellent perspective, or some fine Picture fit for building or fortification, or containing in it some notable example, as Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac, Judith killing Holofernes, David fighting with Golias, may leave those, and please an ill pleased eye with wanton shewes of better hidden matters (III, 30).

Sidney's interpretation of these terms from Plato's Sophist (235-236) is a moral one, but not altogether; he gives three ways in which the artist may be "eikastical," or three definitions of the good things which should be figured forth —one beautiful, one useful, one instructive. In no sense does he imply that these are falsified. (In Plato, the "eikastic" artist is the one who reproduces the true proportions of the object, the "fantastic," the one who copies those that appear to be beautiful.) Puttenham seems to be defining these same terms when he speaks of the right sort of "phantasie" and the distorted sort.

Even so is the phantastical part of man (if it be not disordered) a representor of the best, most comely, and bewartiful images or apparances of things to the soule and according to their very truth. If otherwise, then doth it breede Chimeres & monsters in mans imaginations, & not onely in his imaginations, but also in all his ordinarie actions and life which ensues. Wherefore
such persons as be illuminated with the brightest irradiations of knowledge and of the veritie and due proportion of things, they are called by the learned men not phantastici but euphantasioti ... 23

Or, as Lewis remarks, "the assumption (to put it into our language) that the ethical is the aesthetic par excellence is so basic to Sidney that he never argues it." 24

But although to this extent the double meaning of the words used in praise of poetry in the Defence were probably not fully resolved by Sidney himself (if they have ever been by any critic who subscribes to a similar view of poetry), still Sidney has left an unnecessary amount of ambiguity. He permits himself the use to excess of terms which deliberately encourage a heavily moral meaning, and at the same time in other passages seems to contradict these meanings. That "perfect patternes" refer to the poetic working out of virtues, etc., rather than the heroes themselves, for example, is not only not immediately obvious, it is very nearly equivocation. Furthermore, Sidney's apparent insistence upon the poet as moral philosopher and the orator of virtue, although he is a long way from Rainold's enthusiastic, "O inexplicable power of poetry! O never sufficiently praised force! O, etc.," 25 is still not only unpleasantly didactic (if his "shoulds" refer to moral obligation) but hard to reconcile with the man who says, "But grant love of bevitie to be a beastly fault, although it be verie hard, since onely man and no beast
hath that gift to discerne bewty, . . . graunt I say, what they will have graunted . . . " (III, 30). Neither is it consistent with Sidney's remarks on poetry in a letter to his brother Robert, where, discussing the historian, he clearly defines the poet's function: "Besides this the Historian makes himselfe a discouerser for profite and an Orator, yea a Poet sometimes for ornament. An Orator in making excellent orations e re nata which are to be marked, but marked with the note of rhetoricall remembrances; a Poet in painting forth the effects, the motions, the whisperings of the people, which though in disputation one might say were true, yet who will marke them well shall finde them taste of a poeticall vaine, and in that kinde are gallantly to be marked, for though perchance they were not so, yet it is enough they might be so" (III, 131).

As an orator in defense of poetry, perhaps Sidney himself should be "marked with the note of rhetoricall remembrances." Myrick has written that the conflicting ideas about Sidney's theory of poetry arise from a failure to distinguish between the orator's pleas and his beliefs, and adds, from his own admirable sprezzatura, "Has exaggeration, one wonders, never been employed as a debator's device?" It is possible, I think, that Sidney was well aware of the double meanings of "should be" and related terms and deliberately used them in both their moral and their esthetic senses simultaneously, with the understanding
that the initiated would not take his gentleman’s essay
with undue seriousness, and, as for the moralist who is
"borne so neare the dull-making Cataract of Nilus, that he
cannot heare the Planet-like Musicke of Poetrie," let him
"beleeve with Clauserus . . . that it pleased the heavenly
deitie by Hesiod and Homer, under the vaile of Fables to
give us all knowledge, Logische, Rhetoriche, Philosophie,
naturall and morall, and Quid non?" Let us rather believe,
with Sidney, that there may be things "in Poetrie [and its
defense], which of purpose were written darkly, least by
profane wits it should be abused" (III, 45).

This is not to deny that Sidney concurs in the general
belief of poetry’s moral value; it is to distinguish him
from the undergraduate excess of such as Rainolds (who, his
ditor notes, represents the accepted academic position27)
and those who follow the Platonic idea of poetry as a divine
madness on the one hand, and, on the other, "the lowness
and myopia of professional moral grumblers"28 such as Gosson.
It is to say that although Sidney’s is a sincere defense of
poetry on grounds of its value to humanity, its morality is
not concerned with pedestrian or local issues; it is an
effective answer to Gosson and the like, but it is funda-
mentally an attempt by a poet and a philomousooi to rescue
beauty and delight from the grubby fingers and earth-creeping
minds of those who think "love of bewtie to be a beastly
fault." To credit Sidney with heavy moralising, with more
of a moral slant, in fact, than Aristotle, is to miss the whole tone of his essay—the facetiousness with which he answers the charge that poetry lies, the delight with which he pictures the philosophers' "sullain gravitie, as though they could not abide vice by day-light" (III, 12), and, finally, his concluding wish for those who persist in their blindness, which is wholly in the spirit of the sophisticated courtier, "that while you live, you live in love, and never get favour, for lacking skill of a Sonet, and when you die, your memory die from earth for want of an Epitaphe" (III, 46).

In his specific remarks about poetry, however, when he deals with "truth to life," Sidney is no longer concerned with Aristotle's universal. On the drama or on the speech of men, where he insists the poet follow nature, he limits himself to the doctrines of verisimilitude, closely following the line of argument of Scaliger, who writes as follows:

The events themselves should be made to have such sequence and arrangement as to approach as near as possible to truth, for the play is not acted solely to strike the spectator with admiration or consternation . . . but should also teach, move, and please. . . . Disregard of truth is hateful to almost every man. Therefore, neither those battles or sieges at Thebes which are fought through in two hours please me, nor do I take it to be the part of a discreet poet to pass from Delphi to Athens, or from Athens to Thebes, in a moment of time. Thus, Aeschylus has Agamemnon killed and buried so suddenly that the actor has scarcely time to breathe. Nor is the casting of Lichas into the sea by Hercules to be approved, for it cannot be represented without doing violence to truth.

The same sort of verisimilitude, apparently, is the standard when Sidney discusses speech: "Tully when he was
to drive out Catiline, as it were with a thunderbolt of eloquence, often useth the figure of repetition, as Vivit & vincit, imo in senatum, Venit imo, in senatum venit, &c. Indeed enflamed, with a well grounded rage, hee would have his words (as it were) double out of his mouth, and so do that artificially, which we see men in choller doo naturally" (III, 42). And, again: "Undoubtedly . . . I have found in divers smal learned Courtiers, a more sound stile, then in some professors of learning, of which I can gesse no other cause, but that the Courtier following that which by prac-
tise he findeth fittest to nature, therein (though he know it not) doth according to art, thogh not by art: where the other using art to shew art and not hide art (as in these cases he shuld do) flieth from nature, & indeed abuseth art" (III, 43).

Such a doctrine would lead to a considerably more narrow definition of the truth the poet imitates than Sidney has subscribed to previously in the Defence. Furthermore, the reason here given by the Italian critics is entirely foreign to Aristotle: the poet is to follow nature because this will please the audience, and the audience must be pleased before it will listen and learn the lessons of virtue contained in the poem. This is essentially Scaliger's modification of the Poetics. But Scaliger's system is based on the fact that for him poetry has no separate sphere; it is composed of things and words, and directed toward the
improvement of an audience, so except for prosody there is no difference between poetry and oratory. Thus, naturally, in his theory verse is essential for poetry. Scaliger's system inevitably leads to the abandonment of the priority of the plot (since he forsakes esthetic principles) and the substitution of character as the important element in the poem. Because the object of the poet is to produce good character in the audience, the primary factor in the poem will be the example of that character, with the plot reduced to a means of illustrating the character. "Thus character assumes its rank in the poem not from any internal necessity but from the inevitable conjoining (for Scaliger) of poetry with life."[31]

It will be seen that Sidney both follows and opposes Scaliger. Yet his divergence seems considerably more important, for, given his thesis that poetry moves men to virtue, he need have gone no further than Scaliger for his argument. But Sidney, even when arguing the moral value of poetry, declares emphatically for the esthetic side. The statement that the poet comes to you with a tale has no place in Scaliger's system. Nevertheless, what he did take from Scaliger—what, indeed, all the Renaissance critics included in their modification of Aristotle—was the importance of character and the doctrine of verisimilitude.

Yet it is exactly here that modern realism in characterization begins, in the gradual encroachment, in Tieje's
terms, of *vraisemblance* upon ideality. In Sidney's theory, both elements are present: ideality in the character of the poem (the moral choices expressed by the actions and speeches of the artistic work) and to some extent in the characters represented (the heroes, at least, will be good, though not perfect); *vraisemblance* in the techniques of characterization. Sidney's *Defence*, however, is not a theory of poetry and one can hardly criticize it as if it were. It contains enough to insure a production of artistic excellence, I think, if one followed it with talent and discretion. Although the very nature and purpose of the essay make its value for characterization largely negative, one can say that it does not rule out the best character of a Shakespeare (or a Sidney).
Notes to Chapter I


2Spingarn, p. 273.


6Rene Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950 (New Haven, 1955), I, 5. "This fact alone establishes something that many literary historians are reluctant to recognize: the deep gulf between theory and practice throughout the history of literature" (p. 6).


8The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Eng., 1912-1926), III, 45. All references to Sidney's writings are to this edition, and will subsequently be included in my text. I have expanded all contractions in quotations from Feuillerat's text.

9Edwin Greenlaw, "Sidney's Arcadia as an Example of Elizabethan Allegory," Kittredge Anniv. Papers (Boston, 1913), p. 327. To this Friedrich Brie, Sidney's Arcadia, Eine Studie zur Englisichen Renaissance, adds, in support of the same theory, the preceding clause: "... to believe, with Clauerus ... that it pleased the heavenly Deity ... under the veil of fables, to give us all knowledge, Logic, Rhetoric, Philosophy, natural and moral, and quid non?" (quoted in Myrick, p. 204). Myrick adds, "Thus the entire body of the evidence mustered by both Herr Brie and Greenlaw to prove Sidney's acceptance of the allegorical theory of poetry amount to just two sentences in the peroration. Neither of these scholars considers the context of the passages."

11 Lewis, p. 322.


14 About this passage, Lewis comments that this is the one place in the Defence where the danger of Sidney's theory becoming "too bleakly didactic" is momentarily realized. "The respectable theory that poetry is 'delightful teaching' is here ready to slip into the manifestly absurd theory that the scenes and persons of the poem are mere examples, in themselves as arbitrary and sapless as the symbols of algebra. But," he adds, "any such development is precluded by the whole nature of Sidney's thought" (pp. 345-346).

15 I have adopted the variant readings: εἰκαστικὰ (III, 383) for the obviously erroneous πικαστικὰ of Feuillerat's text.


17 Atkins, p. 118.

18 A slip Gregory Smith attributes to the circumstance that Sidney was reading the play, and uses stage to refer "to the dramatic situation generally" (I, 390). Myrick, however, convincingly objects that the error is rather due to Sidney's deriving his knowledge of the play second-hand from Minturno, and thus the statement is not to be taken as a contradiction of his later advice to "English dramatists to remember 'the difference betwixt reporting and representing'" (pp. 101-104).

19 Poetry, unlike history, treats of "the general reason of things" (III, 14); "... the Poet doth so farre exceed him [the historian] as hee is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable. ... Manie times [the historian] must tell events, whereof he can yeeld no cause, and if he do, it must be poetically" (III, 17).

20 Myrick, pp. 223-225. "Apparently Sidney ... like Tasso, thought the hero of an epic should be a man 'eminently good and just.'" "Not by showing the eternal laws of causation at work in human life will Sidney's poet produce an ethical impression, but by feigning idealized pictures of good and evil persons ... ."

22 Albert S. Cook, ed., The Defense of Poesy (Boston, 1890), pp. 102-103.


24 Lewis, p. 346.


26 Myrick, p. 195.

27 Ringler, note to 40.4, pp. 72-73. "Socrates, in Ion, 533, tells how poets differ from ordinary men because they are divinely inspired. . . . Ficino takes the dialogue at its face value as a panegyric on the divine origin and supernatural power of poetry." And cf. note to 38.22: "Ficino's interpretation was almost universally accepted in the sixteenth century." Sidney apparently accepted this reading of Ion, but not the sentiment: "Plato] attributeth unto Poesie, more then my selfe do; namely, to be a verie inspiring of a divine force, farre above mans wit, as in the forenamed Dialogue is apparent" (III, 34).

28 Wimsatt, p. 169.

29 Verisimilitude I am using in the sense defined by Lane Cooper: "The Italians erroneously supposed that art must observe, not merely the essentials, but the details, of life, as if poetry and the stage were not subject to laws of their own in the selection and treatment of detail" (The Poetics of Aristotle: its Meaning and Influence [Boston, 1923], p. 114). This doctrine was voiced by all the Italian critics, and is perhaps best illustrated by the following example from Cinthio, chosen both for its clarity and its interest in the light of Elizabethan dramatic practice: "It was said that the language of tragedy should be according to decorum and suitable, for these figurative and lofty modes of speech are little suited to persons who are weighed down with great sorrow, for it appears hardly true to life that a person crushed by grief could turn his mind to this kind of language" (Allan H. Gilbert, Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden [New York, 1940], p. 261).

30 F. M. Padelford, Select Translations from Scaliger's Poetics (New York, 1905), p. 60.
31 Bernard Weinburg, "Scaliger versus Aristotle on Poetics," MP, XXXIX (1942), 360. The preceding discussion of Scaliger is also based on this article, pp. 337-360.

32 Tieje, p. 9. 'Ideality' denotes a preference for characters that do not exist and never have existed—though men might well enough wish them to exist. . . . The force antagonistic to ideality and propriety was variously named; the French term, vraisemblance, is, perhaps, its most common appellation. Vraisemblance, though a more subtle thing by far than ideality and propriety, may for the moment be defined as 'probability of action and emotion on the part of fictional personages.'
Chapter II: Verisimilitude

For the purpose of analyzing the Arcadia itself for its characterization, I have separated from Tieje's term, vraisemblance, that factor in the reality it signifies which may be denoted by the term, verisimilitude. Verisimilitude, as previously stated, will mean that attention to external detail which produces an appearance of reality; vraisemblance, on the other hand, will imply what today we would call psychological realism—reality of the inner character, his emotions and his motivations. Sidney's characters will be considered under these two aspects in the next two chapters; in the final chapter they will be referred to a yet higher standard of reality, which may be termed the universal realism of Aristotle. The distinction here made between verisimilitude and vraisemblance is, of course, an artificial one—one might even say that verisimilitude is vraisemblance that failed. Yet the failure is as important as the success for an understanding of what Sidney was trying to do, and this, as far as characterization is concerned, still very much needs to be determined. Nor, considering the widespread opinion that Sidney's characters are mere abstractions given names, does it seem ill-advised to begin with what is most likely to be conceded—i.e., the very giving of names is at least an attempt at verisimilitude, for, as Sidney says, the poets name men "to make their picture the more lively" (III, 29).
In view of Sidney's express criticism of the drama for its absurdities of time and place, it is not surprising to find that when he revised *Arcadia* he consciously and deliberately recast his narrative according to the principle of verisimilitude.\(^1\) As Zandvoort has sufficiently detailed, when the simplicity of the Old *Arcadia* was abandoned for the complications of the New, "there is a proportionate gain in probability."\(^2\) The essentially artificial device of foretelling events is replaced by the artistically subtle one of dramatic hint, such as Gynecia's suspicion of the easy excuse given for the bear's and lion's escape. "Her conjecture will prove to be well-founded," Zandvoort writes, "but neither here nor elsewhere is the future anticipated by information that none of the actors could have had at their disposal, as is repeatedly the case in the Old *Arcadia*."\(^3\)

However, *verisimilitude* in narrative technique, one phase of which is represented by Sidney's insistence upon explaining everything by a natural cause, has been remarked by nearly every writer on *Arcadia*,\(^4\) and is perhaps best illustrated by an example wherein Sidney strains *verisimilitude* to the breaking point: it is, as M. S. Goldman has observed, "the account of the restoration of Parthenia's beauty, which comes as near to the miraculous as anything in the *Arcadia*, yet is one of the most telling evidences of Sidney's absolute determination to have no recourse to the supernatural . . . ."\(^5\)
But if verisimilitude in plot is hardly questioned, verisimilitude in character, too, may be dealt with rather briefly, the two being, if not inseparable, at least usually found together.

That the characters, as far as external detail is concerned, are real people is clear from the very beginning of Arcadia. Indeed, the scene is almost homely. Musidorus, nearly drowned, is pulled out of the water by the two shepherds: "... lifting his feete above his head, making a great deale of salt water to come out of his mouth, they layd him upon some of their garments, and fell to rub and chafe him, till they brought him to recover both breath the servant, & warmth the companion of living" (I, 8). Musidorus comes to, gets up "without so much as thanking them for their pains," and tries to throw himself back into the water. As they hold him, he says, "I pray you ... honest men, what such right have you in me, as not to suffer me to doe with my self what I list?" But their strength and, presumably, a reconsideration on his part, change his mind to a more practical course: "... since you take care of mee, I pray you finde meanes that some Barke may be provided, that will goe out of the haven, that if it be possible we may finde the body farre farre too precious a foode for fishes: and for the hire (said he) I have within this casket, of value sufficient to content them" (I, 9).

Verisimilitude, as Tieje has pointed out, is partly a
conscious revolt against the impossibilities of the chivalric romance—such things as drew the jibe of Cervantes that knights sleep standing up and are nourished on a few berries. Sidney's Musidorus seems to be a direct answer to a similar charge laid against the romance, expressed in Don Quixote's answer to the Innkeeper: "Not a Cross, reply'd the Knight, for I never read in any History of Chivalry that any Knight-Errant ever carry'd Money about him" (Pt. I, Bk. I, ch. 3). Besides hiring the fishermen, Musidorus attempts to pay the shepherds for their services (I, 16), takes a "good store of monie" with him when he goes in search of Pyrocles (I, 62), leaving the rest with Kalander—Kalander who, when he first saw the jewels, had "judged that his guest was of no meane calling; and there-fore the more respectfullie entertained him" (I, 16)—partly in return for his hospitality. Nor does he neglect to buy the clothes of his disguise from the shepherd Menalcoas, or hire him to go to Thessaly (I, 116).

Musidorus is in every respect a practical man, able to deal with whatever situation presents itself and to command others, and he has the usual impatience of such men with inefficiency. When the fishermen, awed at the sight of Pyrocles riding the broken-off mast and waving his sword above his head, sail right past unable to act, Musidorus' anger is immediate: "Dost thou live, and art well?" (I, 10). He shows the same impatience in his inability to relax at
Kalander's house; but he is not impulsive; he is the soldier who calculates the risks and takes the most practical course. When he learns that Glitophon, Kalander's son, is captured, he "could scarce heare out his tale with patience . . . ; therefore rising from the boorde, he desired the steward to tell him particularly, the ground, and event of this accident, because by knowledge of many circumstances, there might perhaps some waie of helpe be opened" (I, 30-31). After he hears the story, he puts on his armor and asks for a horse and guide, and goes to Kalander, "whom he found lying upon the ground, having ever since banished both sleep and food, as enemies to the mourning which passion perswaded him was reasonable. But Palladius [Musidorus] raysed him up, saying unto him: No more, no more of this, my Lord Kalander; let us labour to finde, before wee lament the losse . . . ; while there is hope left, let not the weaknesses of sorrow, make the strength of it languish . . . " (I, 38). He uses his head and, remembering his history, makes a plan in the best Greek manner which tricks the Helots into opening their gates.

Myrick has observed that "the traveling companions of Musidorus are real persons with a fine sense of tact." But Musidorus, also, is a real prince with a sense of his own position; the shepherd's anxiety not to offend him points up not only their good manners but also his natural authority. He is thinking of Pyrocles, of course, but he
also pays no attention to their chatter because they are shepherds. Gradually, unconsciously ("like one half asleep"), some of their words reach him, and he begins to listen, "then to marvel at such wit in shepheardes, after to like their company, & lastly to vouchsafe conference . . . ." (I, 13). His attitude toward Kalander is quite different: he immediately speaks to him as an equal, and to him repeats his surprise that shepherds should be intelligent (I, 27).

Throughout the book, Musidorus sees life from the point of view of the man of the world. To him, the luxuriance of Arcadia is a sign of prosperity rather than beauty, and he very sensibly asks Strephon and Claius, when they tell him of the country's peace and plenty, "What cause then . . . made you venture to leave this sweete life, and put your selfe in yonder unpleasant and dangerous realm?" (I, 14). The same attitude is revealed when, in contrast to Kalander who obviously loves and tends with care his garden with its summer house and statues, Musidorus wants to know who the people are who are represented in the portrait. And later, when Pyrocles, who has a highly developed esthetic sense, extolls the beauties of Arcadia, he receives this matter-of-fact answer from his friend: "But I marvell at the excessive praises you give to this countrie; in trueth it is not unpleasant: but yet if you would returne unto Macedon, you should see either many heavens, or find this no more then earthly" (I, 58).
Ideally, of course, *verisimilitude* and *vraisemblance* are merely two aspects of the same thing, in which case the details which fix the external reality of a character are at the same time indicative of his inner personality. In the characterization of Musidorus, it will be seen in the next chapter, the two are so merged.

If external reality is granted Musidorus, at least that much may be assumed for the other characters, since he is unanimously considered the most "wooden" of all. It remains to show, however, that this attempt at *verisimilitude* is deliberate on Sidney's part, which may best be done by considering those parts of the *Old Arcadia* which have been used, with changes, in the revision. An example is the speech of Clinias explaining the cause of the rebellion at the end of Book II, originally related by the author. In the revised *Arcadia*, the personality of the speaker has been added by significant insertions--merely added, in this case, to give *verisimilitude* not character, although the speech is appropriate enough for Clinias. Yet it should be noted how carefully Sidney analyzes his caricature of a coward: "This Clinias in his youth had bene a scholler so farre, as to learne rather wordes then maners, and of words rather plentie then order; and oft had used to be an actor in Tragedies, where he had learned, besides a slidingnesse of language, acquaintance with many passions, and to frame his face to beare the figure of them: long
used to the eyes and ears of men, and to reckon no fault, but shamefastnesse; in nature, a most notable Coward, and yet more strangely then rarely venturous in privie practices" (I, 319). Yet, as the Abbé Charnes said in 1679, "An author would say in vain at the commencement of his work that his heroine had the best esprit in the world; the reader would deny it every time that he did not find it in the rest of the book." It will be seen that the above character of Clinias is dramatically revealed through his own behavior. After Zelmane's speech, the rebels are somewhat pacified, and Clinias,

now perceiving the flood of their furie began to ebb, he thought it politic to take the first of the tide, so that no man cried lowder then he, upon Basilius. And som of the lustiest rebels not yet agreeing to the rest, he caused two or three of his mates that were at his commandement to lift him up, & then as if he had had a prologue to utter, he began with a nice gravitie to demand audience. But few attending what he said, with vehement gesture, as if he would teare the stars from the skies, he fell to crying out so lowde, that not onely Zelmane but Basilius might heare him. O unhappie men, more madde then the Giants that would have plucked Jupiter out of heaven, how long shal this rage continue? why do you not all throw downe your weapons, and submit your selves to our good Prince, our good Basilius, the Pelops of wisdom, & Minos of all good government? (I, 319-320).

Clinias' dramatics, pomposity, rhetoric for its own sake are plainly apparent. In the following extracts from the speech given him I have underlined the parts added in the revision (proper nouns excepted): "Bacchus (the learned say) was begot with thunder" ("they say" in the original); "At length your sacred person (alas why did I live to heare
it? alas how do I breathe to utter it? But your commandment doth not onely enjoiue obedience, but give me force: your sacred person (I say) fell to be their table-talke . . ." ("the Princes person" in the original);

"... disdainfull reproaches against so great a greatness, having put on the shew of greatness in their little mindes . . ." ("to great persons" in the original);

"... which God knowes thought their knowledge notable, because they had at all no knowledge to condemne their own want of knowledge" (I, 321--322).

In giving the speech to Clinias, then, Sidney has added two things: first, to the speech itself, two instances where the figure of repetition has been increased, so that we have "so great a greatness" substituted for the simple "great persons," and, in the same sentence, "God knowes" added to the already sufficient use of the word "knowledge." There is also the addition of the word "learned" to indicate his pedantry. Second, the personality of the speaker has been inserted in the declamatory, self-praising passages noted above.

Whether or not there is, in such portraits as these, or elsewhere, any influence of Theophrastus' Characters is uncertain. The suggestion was first made by Hoskins, writing in 1599-1600, but Hoskins' criticism of Arcadia and a discussion of the character sketch in general must be reserved for the chapter on vraisemblance. Boyce, who
has recently studied the question of the Theophrastan Character in England, uses Cremes as a test for Arcadia and finds that "there is really nothing here . . . that could not have been learned from wholly English books." But although Theophrastus may not be a direct source of Sidney's Arcadia, (as opposed, say, to the Roman verse satires, the various Greek and Roman rhetorics, or the native tradition of the character sketch), Boyce really begs the question. Taking Hoskins' "steadfast decency" to mean a "rigid decorum," he decides that "what Hoskins meant, apparently, was not that Sidney attempted to compose sketches in imitation of those of Theophrastus but rather that he loyally and persistently followed the rule of decorum as it was then interpreted." The Characters of Theophrastus, as Boyce notes (p. 56), have the virtue of vraisemblance, which probably accounts for his determination to relieve Hoskins' comment of its literal meaning, but even the degeneration of the character in Roman rhetoric may be credited with verisimilitude. It is perhaps impossible to show, by a few examples, that the external details of characterization in Arcadia do not stem from a rigid application of decorum but are an attempt at verisimilitude on Sidney's part, but I think a reasonably unprejudiced reading of Arcadia will secure the point. Cremes, it need hardly be said, is illustrative of almost nothing, and Boyce's other example, while it reveals a rare determination to withhold verisimilitude from Sidney's characteri-
zation, unwittingly shows how thoroughly *Arcadia* is grounded on realistic detail. Discussing Cecropia, Boyce states that "the steadfast decency" in her depiction, however, is at the expense of psychological probability and is spurious, for how could such a monster rear so brave and honorable a son as hers? Not only does the whole tragedy of *Amphialus* depend upon his being raised by Timotheus, but Sidney specifically answers Boyce's objection through Helen's story of his childhood: when Basilius marries Gynecia, "*Amphialus*" mother (a woman of beauty, hart, ... either disdaining, or fearing, that her sonne should live under the power of Basilius sent him to that Lorde Timotheus (betwene whom and her dead husband ther had passed streight bands of mutuall hospitality[1]) to be brought up in company with his sonne Philoxenus[2]" And, Helen continues, this was "a happie resolution for *Amphialus*, whose excellent nature was by this meanes trayned on with as good education, as any Princes sonne in the world could have, which otherwise it is thought his mother (farre unworthy of such a sonne) would not have given him" (I, 68). Presumably, the taking of a child at a tender age and giving him a "good home" for some fifteen to twenty years would be sufficient to satisfy even Boyce, though one is tempted to say that his modern environmentalist psychology tends to set up as rigid a decorum as the one he accuses Sidney of applying.

"The inevitable outcome of the belief in 'realistic'
vraisemblance," Tieje has observed, is "the discovery that no man ever loves one and only one woman." He adds that Furetière is the first to face this fact. Yet Sidney comes very close to it in his story of the relationship between the page Zelmane and Pyrocles (added in the revision). Pyrocles relates the story of Zelmane's love for him to Philoclea, and during the course of it naturally assures Philoclea that he did not return the love (I, 282, 290, 298). However, he adds, "yet somthing there was, which (when I saw a picture of yours) brought againe her figure into my remem-brance, and made my harte as apte to receive the wounde, as the power of your beauty with unresistable force to pearce" (I, 299). It is Zelmane, anticipating in reverse Pyrocles' disguise, who requested that the princes take the names, Daiphantus and Palladius; and Pyrocles, in spite of his protests to Philoclea, had already told Musidorus that he fell in love with Philoclea partly becuase she resembled "the Ladie Zelmane, whom too well I loved" (I, 84). Just how well Pyrocles loved Zelmane, and whether Sidney intened later to pick up this fascinating scrap of conversa-tion, no one can say; it is possible (I think, likely) that Sidney, who was himself aware that love usually gives the wound "not at first sight" (Astrophel & Stella, II), also saw the absurdity of the love-at-first-sight convention of the romance, and was here striving for greater verisim-ilitude in his hero's behavior.
To conclude this examination of truth to external detail in *Arcadia*, we may first see whether Sidney is consistent in this type of characterization, and finally, point out the general and perhaps obvious areas where *verisimilitude* is apparently lacking.

As Tieje notes, "[all fictionalists] . . . believed in the doctrine of consistency in character-portrayal,"¹⁹ and everyone who has read *Arcadia* has observed how carefully Sidney maintains the distinctions between the two princesses, "down to the difference of their toilets in prison."²⁰ Pyrocles and Musidorus are not so thoroughly or so relentlessly distinguished—contrast, particularly external contrast, can be overdone. To a careful reader, there is no confusion in their identities except in those matters which are a product of training (such as fighting, for instance, in which they both equally excel), or at those times (fewer than the politically-oriented scholarship of recent years would lead one to believe) when they are merely the vehicles for Sidney's own political ideas. Even the stories they tell are "in character": Musidorus concerns himself with political and military subjects in his conversations with Pamela; Pyrocles, talking to Philoclea, delights her with tales whose motif is love or, when fighting and kingship enter, concentrates on the aspects of them which deal with human relationships. The same consistency is found in the stories the princesses tell.²¹ But perhaps the most unusual
example of tale according with teller is Basilius and his story of Antiphilus, a man who loves against reason and believes that position brings boundless freedom, which story Basilius tells to Zelmane (Pyrocles). The appropriateness of the story to the Arcadian king's own situation is more than verisimilitude, however, and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Lack of verisimilitude, as Jonson observed long ago, is perhaps most obvious in the style of the speakers. What they say is individual enough, but how they say it is largely, though by no means completely, standard within the bounds of their social class. But the social classes, and the styles, are not just two, the noble and the vulgar. In between is the style of Clinias, the pedantic actor, already seen; of Anaxius, the nouveau-knight, with his slang and uncouth speech; and of Dido, the gentlewoman, neither common nor elevated.

The absence of verisimilitude lies in plain sight in two other places: the hero- heroine group are ideally beautiful; the shepherds are all poets and create answering verses on a moment's notice. Yet even in the poetry, where the major characters are concerned there is at least an attempt to lessen the artificiality; as Sidney revised, he carefully justified the inclusion of much of the poetry and tried to introduce it as naturally as possible. This, of course, doesn't make it "real," in many cases, but it
does indicate his effort to follow that which is "fittest to nature, [and therein]... according to art" (III, 43). These two things--ideal beauty and poetry--are important to the make-up of Arcadia, but not so important as (in a different sense) they have become. A realism different from Sidney's has exaggerated their "unreality"; they lie plainly on the surface to deter the reader at the outset; their superficiality is embarrassing to the sympathetic critic; and the scholar silently curses Sidney for laying his epic in Arcadia. Sidney's view of reality may be naive, or it may be simply broader than ours. Certainly his capacity for inclusion is enormous, and seems to defeat the modern mind as much when we try to interpret his meaning as, perhaps, it taxes the modern memory when we attempt to follow his plot.

The most offensive apparent departure from verisimilitude in Arcadia is the excessive (even for Elizabethan times) emotion of the men. Love is declared in extravagant phrases and accompanied by dire prophecies even by the level-headed Musidorus, and "vraisemblance," Tieje says, "frowns upon extreme sensibility." Tieje, no doubt, would frown upon a great deal more than Sidney would, yet I think the love-laments of Pyrocles and Musidorus in the first two books are clearly over-stated by Sidney. But, considering the obviously humorous intent of many passages describing excessive love—the mock-debate between Pyrocles and
Musidorus in Book I, over virtue and passion; the comment added to Basilius' commandment that Lamon sing a song "upon paine of his life (as though every thing were a matter of life and death, that pertained to his mistresse service)" (I, 348); the tournament organized by Phalantus—it is quite likely that the instances of "extreme sensibility" in Arcadia, instead of illustrating Sidney's failure at verisimilitude, rather point up our own defective sense of humor. Sidney might logically be expected to follow his own example of "Hercules, painted with his great beard, and furious countenaunce, in a womans attyre, spinning, at Omphales commandement, [which] breedes both delight and laughter: for the representing of so straunge a power in love, procures delight, and the scornefulnesse of the action, stirreth laughter" (III, 40). Myrick writes that "if I am not mistaken, . . . the incident of the lion and the bear, and the lovers' quarrel between Pamela and Musidorus, by which the prince is driven almost to madness" are exact pictures of this strange power of love.27 A second reading shows that he is not mistaken, indeed. The mock heroic tone, which either escapes the modern scholar (one can not yet say, reader) or is unappreciated by him, would be clear to the courtly reader of Sidney's circle, and would strike just the right note of urbane delight which Sidney himself had claimed for comedy. But although one suspects a touch of Myrick's own urbane irony when he says that Sidney's humor
is "rarely subtle, and frequently obvious," no one who
has enjoyed the playful self-ridicule of Astrophel "biting
his truant pen, beating himself for spite" can miss the
parallel smile at Musidorus composing his letter to Pamela:
"Pen did never more quakingly performe his office; never
was paper more double moistned with inke & teares; never
words more slowly married together, & never the Muses more
tired" (I, 356; quoted by Myrick, pp. 307-308).

However, although it is important for the history of
narrative fiction that these conscious attempts at verisim-
ilitude be duly noted, the real problem of characterization
in Arcadia does not lie in such truth to external detail.
As Mario Praz tellingly observes, "The question is not one
of verisimilitude. The people in Arcadia may even be
granted the epithet of real; but doubtless they are lanky."
Notes to Chapter II


2Zandvoort, p. 100. A typical example: the bare two lines in the Old Arcadia stating that "[the princes] did so muche with theyre incomparable value, as that they gatt into ye City, and by theyre prescence muche repelled Oteaves assault' . . . have in the New Arcadia been elaborated into ten, and the 'incomparable value' has been reduced to terms of practical warfare" (p. 98).

3Zandvoort, p. 85.

4This is not to say that probability in the Aristotelian sense or realism in the modern is accepted by these scholars. Verisimilitude here means the conscious attributing to natural causes events which, if not impossible, are frequently unlikely. S. L. Wolff (The Greek Romances in Elizabethan Prose Fiction [New York, 1912] and Myrick particularly emphasize that where Fortune is banished, Providence amply reigns in her stead. Yet it is interesting that M. S. Goldman has noted actual counterparts in Sidney's own life of several of the more improbable events, and has left the warning that what seems fantastic to us may have been the most extreme realism to his contemporaries (Sir Philip Sidney and the Arcadia, Ill. Stud. in Lang. and Lit. [Urbana, 1934], XVII, 168-185.

5Goldman, pp. 174-175. "Sidney, as every page he ever wrote proclaims, did not believe in fortune, weird, or fate" (p. 203).

6Tieje, pp. 34-36.

7This contrast between Kalander and Musidorus has been noted by Goldman (p. 162) as evidence of his view that Arcadia is primarily a celebration of the soldierly virtues. Almost all of his examples, however, are taken from Musidorus, not Pyrocles, who is alternately impulsive and listless.

8Myrick, p. 242.

9E. M. W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (London, 1954), p. 312, gives this passage as an example of the "close observation of nature, human and animal, [which] is constantly breaking in," but it also illustrates Musidorus'
proud awareness of his noble birth and consequent aloofness. This class pride seems to be absent in Pyrocles: it is interesting that it is Pyrocles who joins the Helots and makes himself one of them whereas Musidorus commands the forces of Kalander.

10 It is of course true that Pyrocles is here in love, and that Musidorus' remark is primarily a jibe at the resultant rose-colored distortion of his friend's vision. Yet the attitudes are consistent with what we know of both princes. I don't think there is any doubt that Sidney intends the princes to be differentiated along the lines here set down (later, Pyrocles will win his love through poetry and music; Musidorus impress his by horsemanship and fencing) but the differences obviously fail to come through for many a modern reader. Tillyard's view is standard: "... the two princes ... though differentiated up to a point, have both to be such impeccable soldiers and politicians and such faithful friends to each other that they end by lacking great individual emphasis" (p. 318). Danby, whom Tillyard partially accepts, differs only in seeing a greater degree of contrast between them, but it is a contrast of philosophical concepts rather than individuals.

11 It may be noted that Sidney distinguishes, by implication, between "acquaintance with passion," or the sort of thing that may be learned from rhetorical handbook exercises and which characterized the Greek novels at their worst, and understanding of passion.

12 Conversation sur la critique de la Princesse de Clèves (1679), p. 155; quoted in Tieje, p. 86.

13 Although there are doubtless those who take for granted the opinion expressed by Mario Praz, that "almost each sentence of the first draft has been subjected to a process of stucco decoration, until the once clear outline has disappeared behind the fashionable finery of a tortuous phraseology" ("Sidney's Original Arcadia," London Mercury, XV [March, 1927]; cited by Zandvoort, p. 49), yet in his careful comparison of the two versions, Zandvoort has shown, I think conclusively, that rhetoric for its own sake had no part in the revision.


15 Boyce, p. 89.
Boyce, p. 90.

Tieje, p. 40.

Goldman, p. 207. Goldman, who does not discuss characterization, mentions this incident as a parallel to Malory's lily maid of Astolot.

Tieje, p. 91.

Lewis, p. 338.

All the stories are told in Book II. Musidorus tells of their early training, of Euarchus, of their adventures with the kings of Phrygia, Pontus, and Pamphialgia (chs. 3, 6-10). Pyrocles relates his adventures with Dido and Pamphilus, and the stories of Andromena-Palladius-Zelmane and of the friends Tydeus and Telenor and their relation with Plexirtus (chs. 18-22). Philoclea begins the story of Erona and Antiphilus (chs. 12-13) and Pamela continues it (ch. 15).

Jonson's criticism is "that Sidney did not keep a Decorum in making everyone speak as well as himself" (Ben Jonson's Conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden, ed. R. F. Patterson [Glasgow, 1923], p. 2; quoted in Goldman, pp. 32-33).

Anaxius: "Tush (said Anaxius, speaking alowde, looking upon his brothers) I am onely sorte there are not halfe a dozen Kingses more about you: that what Anaxius can doo, might be the better manifested" (I, 440); "But I sought him all over Asia, following him still from one of his conyholes to another: Till . . . I heard of my friendes being besieged, and so came to blowe away the wretches that troubled him" (I, 506); "And as for you, Minion (said he) . . . " (I, 507).

Dido: "This man called Pamphilus, in birth I must confess is noble (but what is that to him, if it shalbe a staine to his deade auncestors to have left such an offspring?) in shape as you see not uncomely (indeed the fit maske of his disguised falshood) in conversation wittily pleasant, and pleasantly gamesome; his eyes full of merie simplicitie, his words of hartie companablenesse; and such a one, whose head one would not think so stayed, as to think mischievously. . . . And to conclude, such a one, as who can keep him at armes ende, neede never wish a better companion" (I, 266). No one, I think, would mistake this for Philoclea speaking; even disregarding the not very innocent point of view, such words as "gamesome," "Merie,"
and "hartie," as well as the undistinguished style, hardly suggest the royal family. The only discordant note is the repetition of the word "pleasant," which one rather suspects came from Sidney—unless, perhaps, Dido has been reading too many modern novels.

25 Zandvoort, p. 89.
26 Tieje, p. 25.
27 Myrick, p. 305.
28 Myrick, p. 309.
29 Quoted by Zandvoort, p. 49.
Chapter III: Vraisemblance

The most serious criticism of character in *Arcadia*—too basic, although it also applies there, to be discussed under verisimilitude—is that of Professor Raleigh: "To devise a set of artificial conditions that shall leave the author to work out the sentimental inter-relations of his characters undisturbed by the intrusion of probability or accident is the problem; love *in vacuo* is the beginning and end of pastoral romance proper."¹ It is not enough to re-iterate that *Arcadia* is not a pastoral romance; nor is it adequate, by pointing up the political, to state or imply that the love element is subordinate. Whether one likes it or not, the love-story is an integral, basic, and major factor in *Arcadia*, and it is primarily through the lovers' relationships with each other that their characters are developed. The question to be dealt with here, then, is, Are the characters involved in a real and human inter-action of emotion, or do they display a mere surface interplay of rhetorical and fashionable sentiment?

Since the opposition is between real and "rhetorical" emotion (for doubtless no one will deny that there is ample analysis of feeling in *Arcadia*) it may be well to discuss, first, the rhetorical background and its implications for characterization in Sidney's work. In his examination of the Greek romances, which he believes to be a product of rhetoric, Wolff has found that characterization in this genre is
dependent upon pathos, or the emotion appropriate to a "posited" situation, rather than upon ethos, or moral choice. The feelings or sentiments of the characters are revealed in set speeches deriving from well-established exercises in rhetoric, coupled with a sophistical analysis of the emotion emphasizing primarily the sensual and the particular. Although the intention was to engage the sympathy of the reader, this was, in effect, little more than a tug at the heart-strings; there was no attempt to appeal to the intellect, and, all too often, brilliance of style was upheld at the expense of logic.

Not only is this thoroughly damning, if true, for characterization in Arcadia, it seems to be exactly what Greg has in mind when he says that rhetoric is the "basis of composition" of Arcadia. And although Wolff in his analysis has found that "characterization in the 'Arcadia' is thus but slightly indebted . . . to the Greek Romances," it is clear that he does not intend this as a compliment, for he follows it with the observation that "where Sidney himself is somewhat meagre, he draws least from his source." Yet if Sidney's characterization is not based on the essentially empty rhetoric of the Hellenistic period, it still shows unmistakably rhetorical elements; whence do these derive? A likely source, I think, is Aristotle's Rhetoric itself, the first two books of which we know from Hoskins' statement that Sidney had translated. Considering the too-brief
and fragmentary nature of the *Poetics* of Aristotle, these two books, dealing as they do with the character and passions of men, must have been invaluable to a writer whose primary purpose was to imitate just those things.\(^7\) No one would deny, presumably, that characterization based on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* will be fundamentally true to human nature, and very different from that examination of sentiment for its own sake which was the specialty of later rhetoricians.\(^3\) Aristotle states that, in addition to reasoning logically, he who would persuade must be able to "understand human character and goodness in their various forms, and to understand the emotions—that is, to name them and describe them, to know their causes and the way in which they are excited" (*Rhetoric*, I, 2). The analysis which follows is valuable for the creator of character in two major ways. In the first place, it is an exhaustive and penetrating discussion of various types of men and their reactions and desires. But there is a passage in the *Rhetoric* which is yet more important, for the Elizabethan writer particularly; perhaps anticipating an excessive dependence upon the doctrine of appropriateness, Aristotle specifically warns against treating men solely in terms of their broad groupings, and emphasizes the fact that actions come from the inner emotions of the man: "Thus every action must be due to one or other of seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reasoning, anger, or appetite. It is
superfluous further to distinguish actions according to the doers' ages, moral states, or the like; it is of course true that, for instance, young men do have hot tempers and strong appetites; still, it is not through youth that they act accordingly, but through anger or appetite" (Rhetoric, I, 10).

Decorum, obviously, may work for or against realism. As the previous quotation from Jonson implies, Sidney is being criticized for lack of *vraisemblance* because he does not keep *decorum*. On the other hand, Boyce denies his characters reality on the ground that he does, all too much: "When a figure constructed with rigid *decorum* is set forth with other such creations to move about in life, the consequence will either be allegory or, in an Arcadian landscape of wooded hills and verdant meadows, a decorative design."9 (Sidney, it seems, will be wrong either way.) Yet even Boyce admits that "the critic who knew Aristotle might be more imaginative about appropriateness than were the merely Horatian critics."10 And since one may presume that the act of translating involves not only a careful reading of the material but an unusual interest in it, the assumption that Sidney held to the law of *decorum* as it was stiffened by the followers of Horace is totally gratuitous. Nor does the evidence of the *Defence* warrant anything of the kind; Sidney, in disparaging the fact that clowns are mingled with kings "to play a part in majesticall matters"
(III, 39), yet adds the qualifying, "not because the matter so carrieth it." His objection that they are "thrust in . . . by head and shoulders" is echoed by Hamlet's advice to the players to let "discretion be your tutor": "Let those that be your clowns speak no more than is set down for them," and not interrupt when there is "some necessary question of the play . . . to be considered" (Hamlet, III, ii, 1-48). 11

Hoskins' own comments on characterization in Arcadia, with his understanding of the use Sidney made of Aristotle's Rhetoric, are perhaps interesting enough to be quoted in full:

Men are described most excellently in Arcadia: Basilius, Plexirtus, Pirocles, Musidorus, Anaxius, etc. But he that will truly set down a man in a figured story must first learn truly to set down an humor, a passion, a virtue, a vice, and therein keeping decent proportion add but names and knit together the accidents and encounters. 12 The perfect expressing of all qualities is learned out of Aristotle's ten books of moral philosophy; but because, as Machiavel saith, perfect virtue or perfect vice is not seen in our time, which altogether is humorous and spurtimg, therefore the understanding of Aristotle's Rhetoric is the directest means of skill to describe, to move, to appease, or to prevent any motion whatsoever; whereunto whosoever can fit his speech shall be truly eloquent. This was my opinion ever; and Sir Philip Sidney betrayed his knowledge in this book of Aristotle to me before ever I knew that he had translated any part of it. For I found the two first books Englished by him in the hands of the noble studious Henry Wotton. But lately I think also that he had much help out of Theophrasti Imagines. For the web, as it were, of his story, he followed three: Heliodorus in Greek, Sannarius' Arcadia in Italian, and Diana [by] de Montemayor in Spanish.

But to our purpose—what personages and affections are set forth in Arcadia. For men: pleasant idle retiredness in King Basilius, and the dangerous end of
end of it; unfortunate valor in Plangus; courteous valor in Amphialus; proud valor in Anaxius (305); hospitality in Kalander; the mirror of true courage and friendship in Pirocles and Musidorus; miserableness and ingratitude in Cremes (188); fear and fatal subtlety in Clinias (299); fear and rudeness, with ill-affected civility, in Dametas (84). . . . But in women: a mischievous seditious stomach in Cecropia (251); wise courage in Pamela; mild discretion in Philoclea; . . . squeamish cunning unworthiness in Artesia; respective and restless dotage in Gynecia's love; proud ill-favored sluttish simplicity in Mopsa.

Now in these persons is ever a steadfast decency and uniform difference of manners observed, wherever you find them and howsoever each interrupt the other's story and actions.

And for actions of persons, there are many, rarely described. . . . Many other notable and lively portraits are, which I will not lay down to save you so sweet a labor as the reading of that which may make you eloquent and wise. Sir Philip Sidney's course was (besides reading Aristotle and Theophrastus) to imagine the thing present in his own brain that his pen might the better present it to you. Whose example I would you durst follow till I pulled you back.13

The question of Theophrastus' Characters as a possible source for or influence on Sidney's Arcadia needs scholarly attention, and it is regrettable that Boyce did not take the hint Hoskins offered and thoroughly examine Arcadia’s relation to the character sketch tradition. But whether Sidney used Theophrastus as a source or not, the similarities Hoskins saw are significant, for the purpose of this thesis, in revealing what Sidney's contemporaries thought of his characters. Hoskins, it will have been remarked, quite takes for granted that the men and women in Arcadia are not images of perfect virtue and perfect vice, and makes this assumption on the specific grounds that such perfection is untrue to life. The opposition he has set up is between
the real and the perfect, not between the individual and
the type. For the type has been and still is a mainstay
of literature and, in each individual case, it is up to
the artist to strike the proper balance between the qual-
ities peculiar to the man he has named and those this man
shares with the group to which he belongs.

There are, however, two kinds of characterization in
Arcadia, one for the minor characters and another for the
major ones. The minor characters, on the whole, are
character sketches rather than fully developed characters;
they are broadly outlined according to their dominant
traits and neither progress, nor, in acting, rise above
their group. According to the available evidence, the
character sketch tradition began with Theophrastus, a
philosopher and pupil of Aristotle's, who wrote his
Characters to illustrate the sections of the Rhetoric
and the Ethics which deal with the representative affec-
tions (pathos) and moral qualities (ethos) of men. The
tradition thus started continued as a rhetorical exercise
well into the seventeenth century (and, indeed, with modi-
fications, still persists), and Sidney, of course, need
not have known either Aristotle or Theophrastus to have
been influenced by one or another sort of character sketch.
Yet the suggestion of Hoskins that he did know Theophrastus
is important because, by Sidney's time, an over-emphasis upon
the doctrine of decorum so controlled the practice of the
genre that the characters produced were no more than lifeless formulae; the Greek characters of Theophrastus, on the other hand, had the virtue of vraisemblance in that they "vitalized the types" . . . by using concrete details that would call up the image of a special man as well as pictures of many others more or less like him." This, I think, is the Theophrastan element Hoskins found in the Arcadia; whether Sidney, by going behind the medieval and Roman tradition to Aristotle himself, succeeded because of Aristotle's own fluid and subtle analysis of character, or whether he was directly helped by Theophrastus, in such portraits as that of Clinias, already examined, he has drawn a representative of a group who at the same time is individualized so that one is not conscious of a narrow "type" but sees, instead, a general truth of human nature.

The question may be raised, however, that if Sidney has succeeded in so "vitalizing the type," why is Clinias included in the chapter on verisimilitude? As previously stated, the distinction made in this thesis between verisimilitude and vraisemblance is for analytical convenience; any such strict separation is clearly artificial. The minor characters of Arcadia, depicted by the essentially static devices of the character sketch, are illustrative of another point made earlier, that verisimilitude is frequently vraisemblance that failed. Furthermore, in any individual case, the decision that the details by which
this type is set forth are not external only but express an inner or psychological reality is, one suspects, unavoidably subjective. (For example, the characterization of Clinias is judged superficial because his ridiculously excessive pedantry and cowardice are felt to be incompatible with his role of dangerously clever politician; Anaxius, on the other hand, though his part is brief, is vividly realized and, I think, organically true to life. Yet Clinias as a serious threat has disappeared from our society, and one can only see in him the ineffectual demagogue of Union Square and Hyde Park, while Anaxius is still very much with us.)

Sidney's method of depicting the major characters, however, while it is not that of the character sketch, still exhibits certain similarities to the Characters of Theophrastus. For although Sidney develops his major figures to the point of human complication where they may be called individuals, at the same time he preserves the type, to a greater extent than Shakespeare, though not so much, perhaps, as Chaucer. His basic method of characterization, too, is much closer to that of Theophrastus than to the methods of either Chaucer or Shakespeare in that it is primarily intellectual. One does not find the apparent delight in human variety for its own sake in Sidney that is most striking in his two countrymen—where the latter seem to hit from the genius of insight, Sidney defines by the
brilliance of analysis. Furthermore, his analysis, like Theophrastus', is from a moral point of view; and, perhaps it is necessary to emphasize, as far as Sidney is concerned, God may be the final cause and end, but ethics is the efficient cause and means, of virtue. The ethics, of course, are Aristotelian, and virtue necessarily lies complexly in the mean, which rules out in advance a crudely black-and-white representation of hero or villain. And, since Sidney belongs to the Renaissance, virtue and vice are first of all things in this world; though the philosophers may be interested in abstract moral qualities, to Sidney ethical conduct is primarily important as it operates in the broadly political framework of society. Moreover, and perhaps even more important, not only must virtue be related to its social context, it yet needs to be defined. The political and social world of sixteenth-century England was in a state of flux; the old rules were outmoded, and new conditions brought new problems and new standards of conduct. Sidney, in particular, was very much alive to the contemporary instability of ethics and political behavior because of his own family's rather precarious position in the Elizabethan order; moreover, it should be emphasized, Sidney himself was a leader in the affairs of his time and shared the responsibility of re-interpreting the traditional ethical values. To interpret and to define, one must first examine. It does not seem far-fetched to suppose that
Sidney wrote *Arcadia* at least partly for this purpose—to work out and test the moral ideas of Aristotle and Christianity under imagined but pertinent conditions. Sidney's unquestioned intellectual honesty would prevent him from distorting the facts, and his practical understanding that human behavior depends upon the individual—his age, class, position, nature, knowledge, personal involvements, as well as the exact circumstances under which he acts—makes it necessary for him to analyze his characters in terms of the humanly concrete, and produces that quality which we call individuality, in spite of the fact that he is more interested in judging the results, while we are, perhaps, rather concerned with understanding the reasons.

The best example of Sidney's method and its success is Gynecia. She is a type (if one will) of high-spirited, beautiful, intelligent queen, heretofore virtuous and now ruled by lust. Her adultery, though incomplete, has both moral and political consequences, inextricably joined, for which Sidney wants to assign the exact degree of blame. (The political results are anticipated and partially, but not fully, realized in the unfinished revision.) It is clear that fully to examine the causes and circumstances, if he is to present a "speaking picture" rather than a philosophical discussion, should lead him to a portrait of a human being, as it does. Both by nature and by circum-
stance, Gynecia's desire is understandable. She is herself a passionate, strong-willed woman, "married in the flower of her age to a man who could never have been her equal in spirit and was now much too old," and she has lately been removed from the court where her energies had their natural outlet in her duties as a queen, to the vacuum of shepherdly society. In addition, the move has considerably lowered her respect for her husband, who finally tries her patience with his ridiculous fling at Zelmeane. Gynecia's sin, in the revised books, lies in her state of mind, and this Sidney examines first, so excellently that Jusserand has justly remarked that "with her, and for the first time, the dramatic power of English genius leaves the stage and comes to light in the novel." Since her virtue had been a self-conscious one, determined by her intelligence rather than a product of a natural modesty or an all-encompassing love for her husband, she is self-accusing and analytic. Her "great wit" lets her see the naked evil of her own state; her "vehement spirits" determine her to have her desire at any price; nor does she fail fully to realize the conflict between the two: "O imperfect proportion of reason," she says, "which can too much foresee, & too little prevent" (I, 146). Yet it is her reason which wins, profoundly, as she decides that her desire, "how unjust so ever it be" (I, 146), must be satisfied, whatever the cost. The cost is immediate; no longer having just enough virtue
left to see the deformity of her vice, she is led by her passion to sacrifice her love for her child. "It is my daughter I have borne to supplant me," she cries. "But if it be so, the life I have given thee (ungratefull Philoclea) I will sooner with these hands bereave thee of, then my birth shall glory, she hath bereaved me of my desires" (I, 146). After her parting threat to Zelmane—"force not the passion of love into violent extremeties" (I, 149-150)—she becomes ill from the "deadly . . . overthrow[given]to her best resolutions." Her human condition, the "bodie (where the field was fought)," is sick—an illness which is a physical expression of her mental state, and in which is included not only a symbol of passion and a preview of final death, but also the complementary healing power of death which in this temporary form of sickness preserves her from "the triumph of passion" and anticipates (if the incident is to remain) the later "death" of Basilius through which he was brought back to reason.19

"It is in his women," Lewis writes, "that Sidney shows himself a true maker."20 Pamela and Philoclea, though they do not share with Gynecia what seems to be the modern requirement for reality, are no less real than their mother. The contrast by which Sidney has skillfully individualized them is not a superficial or rhetorical decoration, but a basic difference in their characters, carefully explored. The well-known description of them by Kalander (I, 20)
established Philoclea as the child—innocent, dutiful, virtuous from "the not knowing of evill" (I, 169). She is naturally virtuous, but innocence belongs only in the child; the adult "cannot be good, that knowes not why he is good" (I, 26), and Philoclea will have to grow up. Her story in Arcadia is the story of the development of the child into the woman, and will be discussed as such in the following chapter. However, it may be noted here that the first step in this development, from childhood to adolescence, revealed in her growing feeling for Zelmane, is as psychologically true as it is subtly drawn. 21 As a young girl will imitate the peculiar habits of speech, movement, expression, of the older girl on whom she has a crush, so Philoclea

not onely . . . did imitate the sobernes of her countenance, the gracefulness of her speech, but even their particular gestures: so that as Zelmane did often eye her, she would often eye Zelmane; & as Zelmanes eyes would deliver a submissive, but vehement desire in their looke, she, though as yet she had not the desire in her, yet should her eyes answere in like pearcing kindnesse of a looke. . . . If Zelmane tooke her hand, and softly strained it, she also (thinking the knots of friendship ought to bee mutuall) would (with a sweete fastnes) shew she was loth to part from it. And if Zelmane sighed, she would sigh also; when Zelmane was sad, she deemed it wisdome, and therefore she would be sad too. Zelmanes languishing countenance with crost armes, and sometimes cast-up eyes, she thought to have an excellent grace: and therefore she also willingly put on the same countenance . . . (I, 170).

Philoclea's instinct, unguarded, responds with a decidedly sexual longing for this woman-friend. She begins to wish that they had been sisters; then, futilely, that
one of them were a man, "desiring she knew not what, nor
how, if she knew what" (I, 171). Her final decision comes
from her nature: she leaves herself to be guided by those
in authority. Because her mother loves Zelmane, too, it
could not be wrong; because Zelmane is wise and virtuous,
"away then all vaine examinations of why and how," she says,
embracing the earth where she lay, "O my Zelmane, governe
and direct me: for I am wholy given over unto thee" (I, 171).

Philoclea's virtue is that "sweet & simple breath of
heavenly goodnesse" and so "is the easier to be altered,
because it hath not passed through the worldlie wickednesse,
nor feelingly found the evill, that evill caries with it . . .
(I, 169). Later, Cecropia will recognize this, and not
doubt the "easie conquest of an inexpert virgin . . ." (I, 376).
Nevertheless, Philoclea does withstand Cecropia's persuasion,
and quite believably; I think the reason for this is in the
story of Plangus and Erona which she tells to the princes
in Book II. That Philoclea, herself a young girl lately
and strangely in love, should take special interest in Erona's
story is natural enough; her remarks during the story
(added in the revision) point up the fact that she is now,
perhaps, seeing Erona in a new light. The phrases added
particularly reveal her preoccupation with marriage as holy
and love which must be based on virtue. 22 It is she who
says that Erona, attacking Cupid, was "moved thereunto, by
esteeming that could be no Godhead, which could breed
wickedness . . ." (I, 232), (" . . . by the hate of that god . . ." in the original); who replaces "mariage" with "the holy title of matrimony"; who changes the decision of suicide from "to followe him" to " . . . to send her soule, at least, to be married in the eternall church with him" (I, 233). She shows her identification with Erona by adding that the Princes come to her aid to help the weaker side, "especially being a Ladie," and by inserting the comment, "then lo if Cupid be a God, or that the tyranny of our own thoughts seeme as a God unto us" (I, 234-235); and she expresses her own human sympathy, and perhaps a recognition of Zelmane's unknown birth, by qualifying the original statement that Antiphilus was "so meane, as that hee was but the sonne of her Nurse" with "without other desert" (I, 232). But it is Erona's plight, when faced with the choice of marriage to a man she hates or death of the man she loves, that is most movingly described by Philoclea, who vividly pictures to herself Erona's inner struggles:

What (said he of the one side) doost thou love Antiphilus, ó Erona? and shall Tirisdates enjoy thy bodie? with what eyes wilt thou looke upon Antiphilus, when he shall know that another possesseth thee? But if thou wilt do it, canst thou do it? canst thou force thy hart? Thinke with thy selfe, if this man have thee, thou shalt never have more part of Antiphilus then if he were dead. . . . Thinke this beside, if thou marrie Tirisdates, Antiphilus is so excellent a man, that long he cannot be from being in some high place maried: canst thou suffer that too?23 . . . His death is a worke of nature, and either now, or at another time he shall die. But it shalbe thy worke, thy shamefull
worke, which is in thy power to shun, to make him live to see thy faith falsified, and his bed defiled. But when Love had well kindled that parte of her thoughts, then went he to the other side. . . . O excellent affection, which for too much love, will see his head of. . . . Thou canst not abide Tiridates: this is but love of thy selfe. . . . thou shalt want him as much then; this is but love of thy selfe: he shalbe married; if he be well, why should that grieve thee, but for love of thy selfe: . . . twenty times calling for a servaunt to carry message of yeelding, but before he came the minde was altered. She blusht when she considered the effect of granting; she was pale, when she remembred the fruits of denial (I, 235-236).

Specifically, however, Philoclea learns from Erona's situation that love must be founded upon virtue, for she ends her story with a mention of Antiphilus' later treason, and says, blushing, "O most happy were we, if we did set our loves one upon another" (I, 237). But if her own inward questioning leads her to take a particular interest in Erona's dilemma now, her vicarious participation therein is even more important to her later, when she is strongly pressed to yield to a man other than the one she loves. Strengthened by her understanding of Erona, she bears Cecropia's torments "with silence and patience," and "the onely worldly thing, whereon Philoclea rested her minde, was that she knewe she should die beloved of Zelmane, and shoulde die, rather then be false to Zelmane" (I, 471-472).

A further stage in Philoclea's development is revealed in her visit to Pyrocles, who thinks her dead. Her poise as she defers the revelation of her identity to prolong her pleasure in his grief, is in contrast both to her childish
confusion when she first feels love (I, 169-174) and also to her ingenuous submission when she discovers that her friend is the Prince Pyrocles (I, 259-261). She has learned self-mastery so complete that she can even see the humor in the situation. Danby believes that the princesses learn the Christian virtue of patience in their captivity, but it is something more sophisticated than that, I think. Philoclea is to be a Renaissance queen, not a medieval Griselda. What she has learned is aristocratic dignity, expressed here as the feminine component of sprezzatura. She chides Pyrocles accordingly: "... for the most parte of this night I have hearde you ... and have hearde nothing of Zelmane, in Zelmane, nothing but weeke waylings, fitter for some nurse of a village ..." (I, 486). She shows her ability to take serious matters with grace and humor: "In truth (said she) you would thinke your selfe a greatly priviledged person, if since the strongest buildings, and lastingest monarchies are subject to end, onely your Philoclea (because she is yours) should be exempted." And her hard-won but casual smile at herself reveals the self-assured princess who can take her place in the world: "Alas how I pittied to heare thy pittie of me," she tells him when the game is over, "and yet a great while I could not finde in my hart to interrupt thee, but often had even pleasure to weep with thee: and so kindly came forth thy lamentations, that they inforced me to lament to, as if
indeed I had beene a looker on, to see poore Philoclea dye. Til at last I spake with you, to try whether I could remove thee from sorrow, till I had almost procured my selfe a beating" (I, 489-490).

The superb portrayal of Pamela as a woman of wit and spirit has been so generally appreciated that the present discussion will be limited to an examination of her relation to Musidorus. The appropriateness of the love-pairing has been discussed by Danby with a view to upholding the philosophical structure of Arcadia, but it may be re-stated as an indication of how far beyond previous fictional characterization Sidney has gone in his lovers. Love in Arcadia is not simply physical attraction as in the Greek romances nor is it idealized convenience as in the chivalric romances (out of every two kings a prince and princess respectively, of equal age and perfection); there is, on the contrary, a very real understanding that marriage must be based on suitableness of personality as well as of position. Pamela's proud dignity, her "kind of colde temper, mixt with that lightning of her naturall majestie," her strength of will by which "what is done, is for vertues sake, not for the parties; [she]ever keeping her course like the Sun, who neither for our prayses, nor curses, will spare or stoppe his horses" (I, 165)---Pamela is too completely in control of herself not to be impatient with the youthful instability of Pyrocles. She is, on the contrary,
attracted to Musidorus because of his masculine nobility, the qualities of positiveness of action, skill at horse-
manship and with the sword, physical grace and power; and, because she admires his strength, she will test it, with seeming disdain, haughtiness, and reserve.

Yet although Pamela has an intellectual bent to her mind (including a clear understanding of moral philosophy), and a fine awareness of her dignity as a person and as a princess, her majesty is not maintained at the expense of vraisemblance. No reader of Arcadia will forget the scene where Philoclea comes to spend the night with her sister and finds her crying. Pamela, maintaining a momentary reticence, is soon persuaded by Philoclea's affection: "Do you love your sorrowe so well, as to grudge me part of it? Or doo you thinke I shall not love a sadde Pamela, so well as a joyful?" (I, 176). Beneath her reserve, Pamela is a young girl in need of her sister's comfort; as they "impoverished their cloathes to inriche their bed," she takes off as well the garments of royalty, and, alone in the dark with Philoclea, chatters disconnectedly. "Ah (said Pamela) if you knew the cause: but no more doo I neither; and to say the trueth: but Lord, how are we falne to talke of this fellow? . . . Ah my Pamela (said Philoclea) I have caught you, the constantnes of your wit was not wont to bring forth such disjointed speeches: you love, dissemble no further" (I, 177). Immediately the need to confide is
uppermost and she becomes as voluble and enthusiastic
(and as self-centered: she does not notice that Philoclea,
too, is troubled) as any young girl in love for the first
time: "One time he danced the Matachine dance in armour
(O with what a gracefull dexterity?) I thinke to make me
see, that he had bene brought up in such exercises: an
other time he perswaded his maister . . . in manner of a
Dialogue, to play Priamus while he plaide Paris. Thinke
(sweet Philoclea) what a Priamus we had: but truely, my
Paris was a Paris, and more then a Paris. . . . Tell me
(sweet Philoclea) did you ever see such a shepheard? tell
me, did you ever heare of such a Prince?" (I, 180). In
neither of the sisters is love unexamined by reason,25 yet
the difference between Pamela and Philoclea may be clearly
seen in the similar sentiment they voice concerning their
parents. Each of them is justifying her feeling for the
man she loves, but where Philoclea asks the question, "Doo
I not see my mother, as well . . . as my selfe, love
Zelmane? And should I be wiser then my mother?" (I, 174),
Pamela states a decision: "But since my parents deale so
cruelly with me, it is time for me to trust something to
my owne judgement" (I, 180).

Musidorus, himself, is drawn to Pamela's proud, com-
manding beauty. Just as Pamela must be with difficulty
won—she later says to Philoclea, "then tell me, if a small
or unworthy assault have conquered me" (I, 180)—so it is
characteristic of Musidorus to value more the victory earned by battle. The soldier-like character of Musidorus, examined as external detail in the chapter on verisimilitude, is revealed as vraisemblance by his behavior in love. In contrast to Pyrocles, who wandered aimlessly for two months after he fell in love with Philoclea, and who remains unadvanced for some time longer, Musidorus no sooner sees Pamela than he puts his desire into action. He tricks the first shepherd he meets, gets himself admitted to Dametas' service, and soon finds means of revealing himself to Pamela. Pyrocles, who meets Gynecia's challenge that "she" is a man with only a weak denial, and is unable to cope with Basilius' subsequent declaration, is indecisive and dependent; "she longed to meet her friende Dorus; that upon the shoulders of friendship she might lay the burthen of sorrow" (I, 151-152). His self-indulgent complaint, that "time seemed to forget her, bestowing no one houre of comfort upon her;" is implicitly denounced by his big brother, Musidorus, who tells him that after he "founde, that a shepheards service was but considered of as from a shepheard," he too was about to despair until he remembered "that nothing is atchieved before it be throughlie attempted; and that lying still doth never goe forward: and that therefore it was time, now or never, to sharpen my invention, to pearce thorow the hardnes of this enterprise . . ." (I, 153-154). But Musidorus does not so much sharpen his invention
as he goes straight to the heart of the matter like the good soldier he is: "... remembering in my self that aswell the Souldier dieth which standeth still, as he that gives the bravest onset" (I, 158), he directly tells Pamela, under the thin cover of a tale, that he is really a prince.

It may have been noted, however, that although Musidorus and Pamela are similar in strength, he does not share her wit. It is impossible to prove that the above platitudes of Musidorus are intended as humor, but when one considers that he speaks in the same way in his advice to Kalander (I, 38; see above, p.32), and, further, that none of the other heroic characters has a tendency to old saws, but that Mopsa, Miso, and Dametas are partially characterized thereby, then I think it likely that Sidney deliberately lets the serious-minded Musidorus appear a little heavy at times. It is, at least, in this vein that he argues against love to Pyrocles (the mock debate of Book I, wherein humor is surely intended), and here his literal-minded earnestness: "... 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 yeld to it) it will not onely make him an Amazon; but a launder, a distaff-spinner; or whatsoever other vile occupation their idle heads can imagine, & their weake hands performe" (I, 78)—his, by his
own unconscious admission, "tedius but loving words"—is commented on by the lighter touch of Pyrocles' reply, that "if we love vertue, in whom shal we love it but in a vertuous creature? without your meaning be, I should love this word, vertue, where I see it written in a book," and his frank admission that "it likes me much better, when I finde vertue in a fair lodging, then when I am bound to seeke it in an ill favoured creature, like a pearle in a dounghill" (I, 80).

It may be, as Danby suggests, that in Pyrocles Sidney "would seem to be insisting that man is capable of a synthesis of qualities that includes the womanly yet avoids the hermaphrodite."26 Yet writers on Arcadia, thinking in terms of "heroes" rather than people, have credited Pyrocles with qualities which might be better explained by vrai-semblance than by philosophy or political theory. Certainly, he has the artistic temperament, whether one wants to call it feminine or not: he is musical,27 poetic, a lover of beauty, and emotional; when Musidorus claims that "the head gives you direction," and Pyrocles answers, "and the hart gives me life" (I, 81), I think this is more than mere rhetorical debate. The cousins are expressing their own dominant attitudes. Although both the princes are young—Musidorus presumably twenty-one and Pyrocles seventeen or eighteen28—Pyrocles is clearly the younger in character as well as in years. He alternatæ between high good humor
and listless self-pity; he is volatile—he draws his sword at Dametas and Amphialus with no real provocation; has a "zest for life"—he enjoys the situation set up by his disguise as Musidorus never does his; and undeniably charming: whether a modern reader feels it or not, the effect Pyrocles has on the rebel mob in Book II is truly remarkable (see I, 318), and, although Pamela loves Musidorus, Pyrocles is loved by Gynecia, Basilius, the page Zelmane, an unnamed farmer (I, 320), and Zoilus (I, 507), as well as Philoclea. Pyrocles' attempted suicide, therefore, may not be as philosophically significant as Danby suggests; it is less a conscious departure from any code than a natural outcome and expression both of his impulsiveness and of the importance of love to him.

The princes, then, are distinguished by verisimilar detail and further individualized according to vraisemblance—their actions, as above suggested, proceed from their inner natures and their emotions are true to their characters as presented; nevertheless, it is in the princes that vraisemblance in Arcadia breaks down. The idea has already been advanced (p.43) that the excessive lamentations of love may not be a departure from verisimilitude at all but rather a mock-heroic comedy on Sidney's part; but if this is true, they cannot then be regarded as vraisemblance.

One major reason for the intermittent collapse of characterization in Arcadia, I think, is that Sidney does not
always reconcile the characters he is portraying with his own sense of humor; when he lets his wit speak through Pyrocles and Pamela, he is successful, even when this makes us laugh at Musidorus; but when he himself stands off and, by exaggerating the language and sentiment, makes us laugh with him at Musidorus (or anyone else) the result is burlesque, howsoever delightful, and must be at the expense of characterization.

The uneven portrait of Basilius is an example of just this. He is no mere symbol of a shirking king; as Zandvoort pointed out, he is a patron of the arts, and shares with Pyrocles a love of poetry which, presumably to us as well as to Sidney, makes up for a great deal. And Basilius' actions are carefully motivated, both by the gentleness of his nature (he does not have the kingly temperament and at least partially, perhaps, listens to the oracle because he prefers the more pleasant life) and by his reliance on superstition rather than reason. Basilius himself is frequently and complexly human; but Sidney is not content to let Pyrocles laugh at him and Basilius reveal himself to us, but too frequently inserts the author's extra-artistic ridicule, which is all the more unfortunate as it is unnecessary. A mention was made in Chapter II (p.41) of the story Basilius tells to Zelmane; it illustrates, delightfully and pointedly, Basilius' own unwitting censure of himself through his criticism of another, and shows,
as well, what Sidney can do in letting characters speak for themselves. As it comes at the end of Book II, and as Book III exhibits an increasing advance in narrative skill and straightforward characterization, it indicates, I think, the direction in which Sidney's art was headed.

The story Basilius tells is of Antiphilus, who was no sooner made a king, than "like one caried up to so hie a place, that he looseth the discerning of the ground over which he is . . . , remembiring only that himselfe was in the high seate of a King, he coulde not perceive that he was king of reasonable creatures, who would quickly scorne follies . . . . But [he imagined] no so true propertie of sovereigntie, as to do what he listed, and to list whatsoever pleased his fansie . . . and all because he was a King" (I, 330). Antiphilus' fault, appropriately, is a foolish love of a woman who, "though she promised nothing, yet Antiphilus promised himselfe all that she woulde have him thinke" (I, 332), and his self-deception leads him to the incredible blindness (to Basilius) "that he could thinke such a Queene [Erona, his wife] could be content to be joined-patent with another" woman (I, 331). Antiphilus, Basilius says, is "like the foolish birde, that when it so hides the heade that it sees not it selfe, thinkes no bodie else sees it . . . ." (I, 331). This story, Basilius significantly tells his "mistress," illustrates the "straunge power of Love" (I, 338); he means that "she" should consider what is due
Love's authority, for his sake. It does, of course, so clearly reveal Basilius' own self-deception, as well as a mind which, uninfected, knows what a king should be, that it is near-impossible to suppose this is not part of Sidney's plan; he does not say so (as, artistically, he should not) and as Myrick has observed, as the art grows more perfect the proof becomes less easy. One can only point out Kalander's similar criticism of Basilius:

"... Basilius judgement, corrupted with a Princes fortune ..." (I, 26); "... the Prince (according to the nature of great persons, in love with that he had done himselfe) fancied, that his weaknesse with his presence would much be mended ..." (I, 22); "... the prince himself hath hidden his head ..." (I, 26). However, if the feigned example teaches as effectively as the true experience (and "so much the better, as you shall save your nose by the bargain" [III, 17]), as it did in Philoclea's case, it is worth considering whether this is not an imperfect parallel to David (III, 21) who condemns his own fault through the story of another, with the difference that in Basilius' case the irony will be longer sustained.

The second major way in which vraisemblance fails is illustrated by the portrait of Cecropia, yet here the reason for the failure is harder to determine. Tillyard feels that she is un-Aristotelian in her complete badness. Yet although Cecropia is doubtless evil, she does have a
redeeming feature; she is a mother, with the time-honored virtue of love and ambition for her son. If her love leads her to hurt the one she loves, so does Medea's; if her ambition is perverted to evil ends, so is that of Lady Macbeth. That she is not as successful as her Greek and Shakespearean counterparts may be admitted, but that Sidney attempts not only to understand her but to portray her as she understands herself is, I think, insufficiently acknowledged.

Cecropia is an essentially self-centered character, and therefore an artistically valuable one. One may too easily accept the idea that Sidney was interested in her only as a "perfect pattern" of what is "to be shunned"; there is evidence, I think, that Sidney not only recognized but carefully exploited her artistic value, as an experiment, perhaps, in character portrayal. Cecropia's character (in the Aristotelian sense) is developed entirely in her speeches, which are full of revealing detail and aptly, vividly phrased; they are, as the speeches of a self-centered person, naturally about herself. Caring only for the glory she once had, she re-lives her past as she talks, unaware that her audience does not see the same splendid picture that is in her mind. Although her plots have repeatedly miscarried, she can proudly claim that the failures were not due to any weakness of hers, and expect her strength to be applauded. And, remembering "what a
hart-tickling joy it is to see your own little ones, with awfull love come running to your lap, and like little models of your selfe, still carry you about them" (I, 379), she cannot know how cold this idea leaves Philoclea. Yet Cecropia, knowing no other kind, believes that her love is genuine, and the feelings she reveals in her speeches are too human to be labelled unmitigated badness. The following is in reply to Philoclea's statement that marriage must be a burdensome yoke:

Ah, deer neece (said Cecropia) how much you are deceived? A yoke indeed we all beare, laid upon us in our creation, which by mariage is not increased, but thus farre eased, that you have a yoke-fellow to help to draw through the cloddy cumbers of this world. O widow-nights, beare witnes with me of the difference. How often alas do I embrace the orfan-side of my bed, which was wont to be imprinted by the body of my deare husband, & with teares acknowledge, that I now enjoy such a liberty as the banished man hath; who may, if he list, wander over the world, but is ever restrained from his most delightful home? that I have now such a liberty as the seeled dov hath, which being first deprived of eies, is then by the falconer cast off? . . . My hart melts to thinke of the sweete comfortes, I in that happie time received, when I had never cause to care, but the care was doubled: when I never rejoiced, but that I saw my joy shine in anothers eies. What shall I say of the free delight, which the hart might embrace, without the accusing of the inward conscience, or feare of outward shame? and is a solitary life as good as this? then can one string make as good musicke as a consort: then can one colour set forth a beautie (I, 379-380).

Cecropia, of course, is trying to persuade Philoclea, and chooses this particular speech for its effect. Yet this is just the point: if Cecropia reveals her oratorical intention, she shows something more important about herself in her belief that these are persuasive arguments.
She has, in fact, advanced the warmest human feelings she knows, as the appeal of love, only to be incomprehensibly repulsed on the grounds of egotism.

Tillyard has noted and admired the passage in which Cecropia describes her glory as the first lady in the land: like Niobe, "she had not the least doubt that she had the right to all that she wants." But although the root of evil is present in her ambition which cares nothing for the means, the perfection of her evil is yet to come. The completion of her character, poetically speaking, will be the self-centering of her evil; the agent through which this is accomplished, her ambitious will. Cecropia as she "should be" emerges when the princesses, by thwarting her will, increase her hate; "her harte growing not onely to desire the fruite of punishing them, but even to de-light in the punishing them" (I, 472), she is consumed by her hate and the poison of her evil is centered in her own "cankred brest" (I, 474).

When Amphialus discovers her cruelty and rushes to accuse her, she does not repent; it would be unrealistic if she did. But she does suffer. "But when she sawe him come in with a sworde drawne, and a looke more terrible then the sworde, she streight was stricken with the guiltines of her own conscience: yet the wel known humblenes of her son somwhat animated her, till he, comming nearer her, . . . cries to her, Thou damnable creature,
onely fit to bring forth such a monster of unhappines as I am . . ." (I, 492). True to her self-love to the end, she thinks he has come to kill her, and "went backe so far, til ere she were aware, she overthrew her selfe from over the Leades, to receave her deathes kisse at the ground: and yet was she not so happie as presently to dye, but that she had time with hellish agonie to see her sonnes mischiefe (whom she loved so well) before her end . . ." (I, 492).

That Cecropia is too evil to fit Aristotle's require-
ments for the tragic hero is both plain and irrelevant. She is not, in fact, a hero; she is the agent of evil in the tragedy of Amphialus, just as Iago is in Othello. As such, she is "an instance of baseness of character" which is "required for the story" and which Aristotle, by implication, recognized (Poetics, 15). She is akin to Medea in her jealous egotism; akin, also, in her inability to understand human law or to feel pity for her cruelty. She shares with Lady Macbeth her domineering love for one individual (one man who, husband or son, is the necessary agent by which her worldly ambition may be effected), whom she will drive, persuade, comfort, chastise, and stop at nothing to remove the single man first, and then the others, who stand between her and the throne.

How, then, does Cecropia fail—or, better, why do Sidney's characters in general fall short of what we might
call Shakespearean perfection? (The term will not be defined.)
In the first place, I think it may be categorically stated that the fault does not lie in the conception; the men and women in Arcadia are conceived with a depth, vigor, and complexity which few poets of any age have reached. And (I hope) it has been shown that Sidney is capable of the dramatic realization of character with a fidelity to human nature which can only be called vraisemblance. Nor is it simply a question of style; Sidney's manner is well able to carry a wide and varied range of human emotion. Yet one may legitimately say, I think, that he is long-winded. His excessive explanations of his characters advance neither the plot nor our understanding of them; they are repetitive and fundamentally rhetorical from any absolute point of view. (This does not mean, of course, that Sidney's language is mere covering; it is the "fittest raiment" for the thought and in agreement with his own advanced Renaissance understanding of style.$^{34}$) But although Sidney's style adequately expresses his matter, there is not quite enough matter; it is a question of degree, or perhaps of balance: the characterization is subtle and varied, but the accompanying explanations of the characters do not, as they should, always penetrate yet more deeply, but too often merely repeat not only the explanation implicit in the action but frequently even the previous explanation itself. And, these explanations are much too positive. Sidney has
shown, in his treatment of Amphialus, Gynecia, and Basilius, his ability to see both sides of a question. He reveals this same ability in the dramatic representations of his other characters, heroes and villains, but when dealing with these he fails to carry over their human mixture into his intrusive commentary, which largely rests on praise or blame. The fault, I think, arises both from a lack of skill and from the influence of convention: although it undoubtedly never occurred to Sidney that anyone would object to vice being called vice, the tags he attaches to his characters are so much a part of the traditional epic literature that they must have been used largely unconsciously. On the other hand, the excessive explanation is probably due more to an incomplete mastery of artistic technique; the advance in dramatic presentation in the revision shows that Sidney was forsaking the method of intrusive commentary characteristic of the original Arcadia, and in all probability the partial failure of characterization in the revised version is the fault of an art not quite perfected.

Zandvoort has another explanation. He writes of Amphialus, and the remark may be extended to the other characters, that "somehow he just fails of being a truly tragic character. Perhaps it is the artificiality of the whole situation that makes us hesitate to place him in the class of tragic heroes." With his usual precision, Zandvoort has stated the case so succintly that one is tempted
to agree; yet, going no further than Shakespeare, not only the immediate example of *The Tempest*, but *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Othello*, make this explanation too simple. Nevertheless, I think it is true that the artificiality of situation, plus setting, plus style combine to produce a total effect of unreality which the characterization, in the not quite perfected stage of its development, is unable wholly to offset. Yet it is the nature of artificiality that it is primarily a relative thing, and one's sense of it depends upon what one is used to. It should not be forgotten how vehemently Sidney opposed the affectations of his own day: the exaggerated imitations of Petrarch, the alliteration and fantastic similes of Euphuism. Sidney's own artificiality (from our point of view), is only a surface one; as to one who can accept earrings it is obvious that "the fit and natural place" to wear them is in the ears, not through the nose and lips (III, 12), to one who can habituate himself to the surface ornaments in *Arcadia*, it soon becomes apparent that they are hanging on very real ears.36 This alone, I think, can explain the Elizabethan attitude of Hoskins and the modern echo of it in Edith Morley's statement that the characters in *Arcadia* "are passionate and and living men and women."37 The barriers may be less insurmountable to our own age, as a modern poet has suggested,38 than they were to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
Notes to Chapter III


2Wolff, pp. 1-236.

3Moses Hadas, A History of Greek Literature (New York, 1950), pp. 292-293. He adds that both in technique and in social and moral premises the Greek romances are very close to the modern motion picture (p. 298).

4Greg, pp. 151-152.

5Wolff, p. 334.

6John Hoskins, Directions for Speech and Style, ed. Hoyt H. Hudson (Princeton, 1935), p. 41. The translation is now lost, and there is no evidence as to whether Sidney translated from the Greek or a Latin text. Any decision must wait for a more conclusive investigation of Sidney's knowledge of Greek, which has been promised by Goldman. On preliminary evidence, however, Goldman thinks Sidney might have known Greek rather well. But since all that is necessary in my discussion is the general content of the Rhetoric, the exact version is not of major importance.

7Which is not to deny Sidney's debt both to the Ethics and to the Politics.

8Of course, Aristotle never intended "that flesh and blood character realizations in drama or story could be attained by this method" (Donald L. Clark, Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance [New York, 1922], p. 80).

9Boyce, p. 90.

10Boyce, p. 50.


12Hoskins need not be assumed an infallible judge of what went on in Sidney's mind.

13Hoskins, pp. 41-42.
The phrase, "vitalized the types," is borrowed from Kittredge, who applied it to the characters in Chaucer's Prologue. Boyce extends it to Theophrastus' characters.

Boyce states that although Aristotle's conception of virtue, as an ideal, "was popular among the Elizabethans . . . . ; they like their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, were in reality much better acquainted with the doctrine of their own religion that virtue and vice are two relentlessly opposed extremes" (p. 163). This is simply not true in Sidney's case.

If this attribution is thought excessive, it will be withdrawn, even with relief. There is certainly nothing mystical about Sidney, and when he becomes metaphysical he is, perhaps, only displaying a fondness for paradox, partly rhetorical.

For a detailed refutation of the charge by Mario Praz that this is "would-be psychology" see Zandvoort, pp. 78-80.

Zandvoort, pp. 96-99, has found in these changes an indication of Sidney's increased seriousness, but one can't escape their particular appropriateness to Philoclea and her present confusion.

This is not only a delightful insight into the mind of a young girl, but anticipates Philoclea's own feelings when she thinks she is about to die. In spite of "self-love," she can't help asking Pyrocles, "let me be thy last love . . . ." (I, 482).

As Wolff observes, although the Greek romances go to inordinate lengths to celebrate chastity, this is not so much love in our sense of the word as abstention from love in their sense of the word. . . . There is not a hint of spiritual companionship between [Theagenes and Chariclea]; not a hint that the character of each is to be rounded out by that of the other; not a hint that theirs is to be a "marriage of true minds!" (p. 165).
Goldman writes, "Even in the moment of Philoclea's surrender to Pyrocles, the head shares with the heart the command of her tongue" (p. 165).

Danby, p. 56.

He himself tells Musidorus that "as you know I ever delighted in music" (I, 186) and either plays the lute or writes poetry regularly (see pp. 86, 218, 253, 257).

Kalander remarks of Musidorus that he is "a man whose age could not be above one & twenty yeares" (I, 16); later Musidorus tells Pamela that he is "elder by three or foure yeares" (I, 190).

Zandvoort, p. 154. Compare Goldman, p. 161: "Like Basilius, Henri III of France was a great lover of poetry and dramatic scenes . . . ."

See I, 328: "... knowing well enough he might lay all his care upon Philanax, he was willing to sweeten the tast of this passed tumult, with some rurall pastimes."

Tillyard, p. 306.

Tillyard, p.

Danby's statement that "suicide—the very worst of fates—is reserved for Cecropia herself, when her attempts are finally proved futile . . . ." (p. 67), though perhaps not too important in itself, may be indicative of Arcadia's real merit that it can inspire such enthusiastic attempts to re-write it.

One of the best discussions of Sidney's style—his problems and his place in the rapid development of language in the Renaissance—is in Myrick's ch. §, "Ornament in the New Arcadia," pp. 151-193. And see also, Tillyard, pp. 302-305.

Zandvoort, p. 117.

An opinion which is very nearly unanimous. As Lewis says, the style, "even at its most elaborate . . . does not exclude reality, though it is usually a heightened reality" (p. 337).

The Works of Sir Philip Sidney (London, 1901); quoted from Zandvoort's bibliography, p. 205.
Willis Barnstone, "An Evaluation of Sidney's Arcadia as a Literary Genre in the Light of Its Historical Antecedents" (an unpublished paper written at Yale University, 1952). Mr. Barnstone believes that in our own day the works of Dos Passos, Stein, and Joyce introduce "the parallel practice of highly complicated plots interrupted by poetic passages, stylistic qualities for which the Arcadia has often been neglected in the past."
Chapter IV: Universal Realism

The term "universal realism" is used in this chapter to describe characterization which goes beyond the accurate representation of an individual emotion to illustrate something of the universally real and significant in human affairs. Since the term is Aristotelian, the first example perhaps should be a character whose story seems to be deliberately constructed according to Aristotle's discussion of tragedy in the Poetics. The story of Amphialus is the nearest thing to a tragedy in Arcadia, and Amphialus himself is very close to the tragic hero as Aristotle suggested him; it should not be surprising, therefore, to find at least the intention of universal realism in his characterization. Yet the incomplete tragedy of Amphialus is perhaps even more interesting, because it reveals, I think, that Sidney understood Aristotle very well indeed.

Amphialus is a good man, noble and admirable in many ways, but "not preeminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgment" (Poetics, 13). His initial mistake, which effects the first change in his fortunes, is the accidental murder of Philoxenus, the son of his benefactor and foster father; the immediate result is the death of Timotheus himself. Myrick believes that Amphialus is morally to blame: "One may be forgiven
for defending himself against a desperate man. But when one's life-long friend hurls such epithets as 'traitor and coward,' and offers blows, one who is not thinking too much of one's self will suspect that there is some misapprehension. But Myrick, I think, is reading Shakespearean characterization into Amphialus. The tragedy Sidney is writing is much closer to the Greek than Shakespeare's tragedies are, for although Sidney clearly understood that the character could not be perfectly good, the hamartia which caused his downfall was an act, not a mental state—an error committed in ignorance, passion, or in some way non-voluntary. Regardless of the fact that if Amphialus had not been thinking of himself he might not have killed Philoxenus, Sidney presents the act itself as involuntary and accidental. Moreover, it may be questioned whether Sidney's experience of physical combat left him with as fine a moral sense as Myrick has. Amphialus is morally culpable only in that he is human; he is a knight accustomed to combat, and his sincere refusal to fight and his attempt to calm Philoxenus may be considered sufficient by Sidney if not by Myrick. Whether or not the circumstances are unlikely, given them, Amphialus can hardly do other than defend himself, "nature prevailing above determination," when the other "would not attend his wordes, but still strake so fiercely at[him]." (I, 71). This act, certainly, is the accidental wrong which yet produces its consequences: it may be that one effect is
the turning in of Amphialus upon himself, in which melancholy the seeds of egotism are nourished; yet the result of the act for the plot is that it necessitates Amphialus' return to his mother.

He is ignorant of her previous actions and presented, as he arrives, with the fact of the princesses' capture. Through his reaction, his character, "that which reveals . . . moral purpose" (Poetics, 6), is skillfully and, in the ethical sense, for the first time, presented.

O mother (said Amphialus) speake not of doing them hurt . . . . For my part, I will thinke my selfe highly intitled, if I may be once by Philoclea accepted for a servant. Well (said Cecropia) I would I had borne you of my minde, as well as of my body: then should you not have suncke under base weaknesses. But since you have tied your thoughts in so wilfull a knot, it is happie I have brought matters to such a passe, as you may both enjoy affection, and uppon that build your soveraigntie. Alas (said Amphialus) my hart would faine yeeld you thanks for setting me in the way of felicitie, but that feare killes them in me, before they are fully borne. For if Philoclea be displeased, how can I be pleased? if she count it unkindnes, shal I give tokens of kindnes? perchance she condemnes me of this action, and shall I triumph? perchance she drownes nowe the beauties I love with sorrowful teares, and where is then my rejoicing? You have reason (said Cecropia with a feined gravitie) I will therefore send her away presently, that her contentment may be recovered. No good mother (said Amphialus) since she is here, I would not for my life constraine presence, but rather would I die then consent to absence (I, 366).

The outcome of Amphialus' story, from this point onward, closely follows Aristotle's discussion. His decision to maintain the fruits of his mother's evil is made with the expectation of gaining Philoclea's love; the result is quite the opposite, of course, and his
discovery, arising naturally out of the action, is "a change from ignorance to knowledge, and thus to . . . hate, in the person marked for . . . evil fortune" (Poetics, 11). The final action, in which Amphialus is the agent of his mother's death, arouses pity rather than horror, and is the kind of incident suggested by Aristotle: "Whenever the tragic deed, however, is done within the family—when murder or the like is done . . . [by] son on mother—these are the situations the poet should seek after" (Poetics, 14). The third element in the plot in Aristotle's analysis is suffering, which is contained in Amphialus' own remorse and self-inflicted wounds. (As Myrick has observed, "so dramatic is the material, that the poet could preserve the unities of time and place and have the horrible events occur off stage, as in the Greek drama."

The "Greek tragedy" of Amphialus does not, of course, "prove" that Sidney understood and used as a basis of his theory of poetry Aristotle's Poetics, yet it does show a mastery of Aristotle's discussion and some perhaps significant parallels, and, although Sidney's was not a dramatic talent, a sufficient interest in tragedy to create a character who is agreed by critics to be a truly Aristotelian hero. Nor is there any hint in the story of Amphialus, of Minturno's insistence that tragedy is valuable because it teaches a man to bear adversity; or of Scaliger's doctrine that "the aim of tragedy . . . is a purely ethical one", or that
"the poet teaches character through actions, in order that we should embrace and imitate the good and abstain from the bad." In this story the attention is not upon Amphialus' own faults, although they are clearly represented; and the intended effect of the final scene is plainly an emotional one of katharsis.

Myrick thinks that Amphialus "just fails of being a truly tragic character" because "Sidney, in harmony with his poetic creed, is not creating personalities like Hamlet or Cleopatra, but is 'faining notable images of vertues, vices, or what els.'" But the fact is that Sidney has created a personality; Amphialus just fails as a tragic character because Sidney has not--perhaps he could not--write the tragedy the material for which he here included; for this, the center of interest would have to be shifted from the princesses' heroism to Cecropia's torments. The reader has no sense of their undergoing any real physical torture, and this lack destroys the force of Amphialus' final speech tracing his deeds in ascending horror from his killing Philoxenus to Philoclea's being tormented in his castle. And, since we know Philoclea is not harmed but happily talking to Pyrocles, the final discovery is not of sufficient magnitude. Perhaps, in fact, the tragedy of Amphialus demands the real, not the feigned, death of Philoclea.

Yet in his portrait of Amphialus, Sidney has revealed his understanding of the universally human; particularly,
of the faults to which a noble nature is most prone: egotism growing out of a natural superiority, anger and pride bred by physical courage, the temptation to injustice created by power. Perhaps part of the success of this character stems from Sidney's personal cognizance of the excesses inherent in the very virtues of such as Amphialus. In any case, Sidney in this portrait has not resorted to explanation but has allowed Amphialus to unfold himself in the dramatic situation, in the course of which he is not only defined as a person but executes, himself, his own ultimate ruin.  

Universal truth is present in a more complex form in the character of Basilius. He is, in the first place, not only the king of Arcadia but the father of Pamela and Philoclea and, in one sense at least, the cause of the whole story. In accordance with his method Sidney must examine Basilius' character as it is revealed in each of these roles. Although it is highly probable that the concept of order which permeated the Elizabethan world view is implicit in the consideration of vice and virtue throughout Arcadia, this idea is most completely set forth in the portrait of Basilius. If Sidney shared the Elizabethan habit of reasoning by analogy, as there is evidence that he did, and if he saw in the maintenance of the political order the most vital question of his time, as it seems certain he did, he could hardly escape the correspondences between the king as
ruler of the state, the father as head of the family, and reason as the leader of man. In Basilius' case, he has worked out these similarities so that Basilius' initial error in consulting the oracle is simultaneously depicted as a failure on all three levels. With his original decision, Basilius steps outside the universal order; instead of accepting his condition as man, he seeks to penetrate the secrets of God by consulting the oracle. Yet Sidney does not emphasize this point; he was, himself, an essentially practical (though devoutly Christian) man, and as far as the results in this world are concerned, attempting to know the unknowable is stupid rather than evil. Certainly, belief in oracles is mere vain superstition. Basilius' fault, then, is more importantly represented as a failure within the human order, because he lets himself be ruled by fancy rather than by reason. He refuses the advise of Philanax and goes against logic: oracles either foretell what is true and cannot be avoided, or speak fancies which should be ignored. At the same time, Basilius ignores his duty as a king by retiring, and perverts his role of father by unnaturally isolating his daughters. It is a tribute to Sidney's skill, I think, that he has handled these common parallels so subtly; Sidney does not point out, but lets Basilius act out, his corresponding failures. From his initial wrong decision, Basilius progresses logically down the scale in the hierarchy of man as he abdicates, in turn,
his soul, perhaps,) his throne, his reason, his fatherhood, his position as husband, and his age, and ends up as near the animal as man can get, ruled by passion alone. His error, likewise, has important consequences on every level, the most vital being the complete disruption of the political order through Cecropia's rebellion. In fact, the actions of every major character in the book, where they are misguided, are seen to be in some way contingent upon Basilius' neglect of his responsibility as a leader.

Yet Sidney has effected a genuine artistic tour de force, I think, by presenting Basilius' serious breaches of the political and moral order not as wicked, and therefore perhaps tending to the wickedly attractive, but as ridiculous. The man who perverts his kingship does not become evil like Richard III; he finds, rather, that in giving up his reason he has relinquished the difference between himself and an animal, and is nothing more than an absurd spectacle to be laughed at as the inmates of Bedlam were laughed at. Basilius' fall is from manhood into childish foolishness: in his adulterous desires he even goes against his own sensible good; in dealing with the rebel mob he is not only incapable of leadership but impatient with its duties, and as eager as a boy to be let out to play (I, 328).

In partial contrast to her father, Philoclea's development is from childhood to maturity, and the means by which this growth is effected, or perhaps symbolized, is love
(paralleling Basilius' retrogression which is accomplished and symbolized by passion). In Kalander's original description of her, he includes the statement that "love plaide in Philocleas eyes . . ." (I, 20); for her, love was a toy, a mere amusement. The childish game of love is self-love, played in a secret retreat which was formed by a grove of trees, "so closed in the toppes togither, as they might seeme a little chappell" (I, 173); "there she had enjoyed her selfe often, while she was mistresse of her selfe" (I, 172), and there she had made her vow of virginity. After knowing Zelmane, however, she discovers that she has fallen away from her worship of chastity. She appeals to Diana to preserve her, but a cloud passes over the moon, and she wishes, with charming but unconscious irony, that it "were for ever thus darkned" (I, 174). Her decision, symbolized by her action of "embrasing the very grounde whereon she lay" (I, 175), is to accept her own nature.

Philoclea was too deeply rooted in childhood to be lifted out directly by a man; the devious method of a man disguised as a woman is necessary. This intermediate stage between self-love and adult love, of course, is adolescence. To suppose that Sidney understood as a human truth what subsequent psychology has stated as a formula is not, surely, anachronistic; on the contrary, Sidney's skillful handling of the development of Philoclea in love is a
tribute to his grasp of the humanly significant.

The final maturing of Philoclea's character occurs during her imprisonment, when from the torments of Cecropia she learns endurance and self-reliance. Faced with the last desperate threat of Cecropia, that she will kill Pamela, Philoclea is momentarily shaken: "... for where to all pains and daungers of her selfe, foresight with (his Lieutenant Resolution) had made ready defense; now with the love she bare her sister, she was driven to a stay, before she determined: but long she staid not, before this reason did shine unto her, that since in her selfe she preferred death before such a base servitude, love did teach her to wish the same to her sister. Therefore crossing her armes, & looking sideward upon the ground, Do what you wil (said she) with us: for my part, heaven shall melt before I be removed" (I, 475-476). As Goldman has observed, "The education of Philoclea in hercic virtue has been short, but it is complete."10

Early in Arcadia, Kalander describes Gynecia as "a woman of great wit, and in truth of more princely vertues, then her husband: of most unspotted chastitie, but of so working a minde, and so vehement spirits, as a man may say, it was happie shee tooke a good course, for otherwise it would have beene terrible" (I, 20). Zandvoort notes, as indeed Kalander (who begins to emerge as something of a gossip) has said, that "Pamela has 'her mothers wisdome,
greatnesse, nobilitie, but (if I can ghesse aright) knit with a more constant temper."

But even Zandvoort has not fully described, and other writers have ignored, the extent of the parallel between Pamela and Gynecia. That the daughter has her mother's "wisdome, greatnesse, nobilitie," is everywhere emphasized, but she also has her "vehement spirits"; Pamela is proud, passionate, and outspoken, as her quick anger at Cecropia's sophistry and at Anaxius' pawing insult attest. She is most like Gynecia, however, in her attitude toward Basilius. With obvious sarcasm, she tells her father exactly what she thinks of his choice of a "tutor" for her (I, 123); nor does she have her sister's dutiful nature: she upholds the idea, with characteristic political acumen, that the subject's obedience is not an arbitrary possession of the ruler, but an earned privilege. Yet in this very attitude, the difference between Pamela and Gynecia is emphasized. Gynecia allows her personal feelings free rein, with no thought of the political consequences. Although a queen's adultery may be sufficiently disrupting, in itself, to the social order, Sidney is concerned with the more far-reaching results of her willful passion. Like Basilius, she rejects her duties to the state; even though her fault is not as reprehensible as his because it is partially caused by his, her failure is serious. As a wife, Sidney hints, she might have brought Basilius back to reason; one night the cries
of her passion awaken her husband, who "tooke her in his
armes, & began to comfort her; the good-man thinking, it
was all for a jealous love of him: which humor if she
would a little have maintained, perchance it might have
weakened his new conceaved fancies" (I, 252). As a queen,
she not only does not oppose Basilius' emotional rule,
she is led by her own personal desires to reinforce his
folly. Interrupting the rational counsel of Philanax,
she "came running in amazed for her daughter Pamela, but
mad for Zelmane; & falling at Basilius' feet, besought
him to make no delay: using such gestures of compassion
instead of stopped words, that Basilius, otherwise enough
tender minded, easily granted to raise the siege . . ." (I, 468).

In contrast to her mother, Pamela does not let her
personal right to independence obscure her political
obligations. She knows that she is justified in opposing
the irrational stricture of her father; his arbitrary treat-
ment of her is both an insult to her personal dignity and an
obstacle to her well-being. Nevertheless, Pamela under-
stands very well that what is right in one situation is
wrong in another; she will give no inkling of her feelings
about Basilius where this might have political repercussions.
To Cecropia's argument that her father does not merit filial
respect, she answers, "If he be pevish . . . yet is he my
father, & how beautiful soever I be, I am his daughter; so
as God claims at my hands obedience, and makes me no judge of his imperfections" (I, 405). Pamela's political wisdom is matched only by awareness of her political responsibility; unlike her father, she never forgets that she is a princess; unlike her mother, she uses her passionate energy to uphold rather than to undermine the social order. Philoclea's reply to the plotted evil of Clinias is compassion for her cousin; Pamela, with royal outrage, attacks and destroys such treason. "Aske of her," she says to Cecropia, "& learne to know, that who do falsheode to their superiours, teach falsheode to their inferiours" (I, 438-439).

There is a corresponding similarity between Philoclea and her father, however, which has been overlooked. The younger sister is as much like Basilius as Pamela is like Gynecia (which, among other things, effects an interesting comment on Basilius): "... though [she] exceed not in the vertues which get admiration; as depth of wisdome, height of courage and largenesse of magnificence, yet is [she] notable in those whiche stirre affection, as trueth of worde, meekenesse, courtesie, mercifulnesse, and liberalitie" (I, 19).

There is the obvious fact, of course, that the children's resemblance to their parents is a general human truth, but these likenesses are important in yet other ways. Although the implications are naturally different for each, the fact that Basilius and Philoclea both fall in love with the same person is, in view of the similarities in their characters, interesting, at least. The combination of
beauty and strength attracts Basilius to the Amazon; she has dignity, a proud spirit, and a quick and noble intelligence—she has, in fact, as a woman, those same masculine virtues which characterize Gynecia. If Sidney may be credited with psychological acuteness, his portrayal of Basilius' love for Zelmane is evidence of no meagre insight. Basilius is essentially a gentle man, and yet a king. Perhaps all kings find submissiveness and obedience a bore in women, but Basilius particularly needs to conquer the more strongly fortified fortress not only for the greater glory, but also to prove his strength to himself. Implicit in the present situation is an ironic comment on the futility of proving this kind of strength, and, if the finale of Basilius' foolish love was to remain his "adultery" with his own wife, a further comment on the hollow victory won by such a strength. The psychological implications of Philoclea's love for Zelmane have already been noted, yet it may be added that she, both because of her essentially dutiful nature and because of her basic similarity to her father, falls in love with something similar to him—a woman first, and then a gentle man. The obvious contrast is between the fundamental rightness of her choice (by which she combines, in Pyrocles, both personal compatibility and the masculine strength she lacks) and the self-deceptiveness of her father's.

Sidney could have, of course, if he were interested
merely in drawing parallels for their teaching effectiveness, have done the same thing with Pamela and Gynecia and had the mother and daughter both fall in love with Musidorus, but to do so would have been to replace observable human nature with a formula. Gynecia had been married to Basilius for some time and was, we are led to believe, happy with him until Pyrocles appeared. She would love him, presumably, for those virtues of his "which stirre affection." Without over-psychologizing from a twentieth-century point of view, perhaps the most one can say is that the transfer of her sexual desires from Basilius to Pyrocles is felt to be instinctively true from what we know of her character; it is neither unbelievable nor cheap. For although her "adultery" is blameworthy, as Sidney has presented Gynecia her love for someone else is near-inevitable in the circumstances Basilius creates. The intrinsic dignity of her character is insisted upon, and one may gather from the changes made in her characterization during the revision that Sidney in no sense intends her to be debased, as she would be if she threw herself at Musidorus in the same way. Perhaps the disguise effects a temporary de-sexing of Pyrocles in the mind of the reader which saves her passion from becoming sordid.

The similarities of the sisters to their parents has yet another ramification, in the political sphere. Pamela's political integrity, which contrasts with and adversely
comments on her mother's self-centered passion, has already been noted. Yet Philoclea's actions express a criticism of Basilius even more damning; in spite of her childlike subservience and the absence in her of Pamela's intellectual weapon, she stands before Cecropia like a rock of reason in comparison with the vacillation of her father.

Since the political features of the *Arcadia* have been dealt with at length by modern scholars, there is no need to go over the ground again. But there is one aspect of the political element which has not been remarked; yet which, I think, is of primary importance in understanding Sidney's meaning—that is, that the political action is consistently set against the fundamental responsibility to be a moral human being. Ribner has pointed out that Sidney was a practical politician and shared a number of Machiavelli's beliefs, but if we may judge by *Arcadia*, there is a difference between Sidney and Machiavelli which is sufficiently basic to be, in fact, a direct criticism of Machiavelli's underlying assumption that personal virtue has nothing to do with political success. Sidney's understanding of life, I think, is not so compartmentalized. In the first place, no question of state is ever considered in an isolated political situation, but is carefully related to the human context of the persons involved; with the major political actions, this interdependence is emphatically insisted upon. The kingly failure of Basilius
is a case in point. In stressing Sidney's Aristotelianism one may go too far, and obscure the very practical nature of his sixteenth-century political activities, yet I think writers on Arcadia have not sufficiently taken into account the concept of balance. (There is, it should be emphasized, no single idea which dominates Sidney's work; the very number and variety of themes he has included is a part of his achievement.) Balance, however, does not only imply that virtue resides between two contradictory excesses. Pamela's excellent understanding of the political may be a result of her right adjustment to the various aspects of life. And Philoclea's love which includes reason can be seen as an expression of that equilibrium necessary for ethical conduct in any area, a balance which makes possible her victory in the battle with Cecropia. The imbalance Basilius has produced in his own nature by permitting his fancy to dominate, of course, leaves him at the mercy of the swollen member's exaggerated sensitivity; the voice of reason will not be strong enough to be effective in any case until he readjusts his human situation into more harmonious proportions.

The idea of balance is also present in the characterization of Amphialus. As a political leader and military organizer, he is clever and efficient; as a general he is not only brave but is himself an example of courage and endurance to his men. He is, however, egotistically proud.
He insists upon fighting Basilius' knights one by one; even as he lies sick with grief after killing Parthenia, Musidorus' challenge rouses his anger and he must accept it. But although this fight, or even the quality of egotism which makes the fight necessary, is the efficient cause of his downfall, the final cause is contained in the tragic action discussed earlier. The character of Amphialus is presented with a slight tilt due to his pride, but it is improbable that Sidney considers this disproportion extreme enough to affect his political ability. The point is perhaps important. The wealth of intellectual analysis in the Arcadia encourages just such a discussion of character in terms of concepts as the preceding one. The ideas are actually there, but an occasional example of Amphialus is valuable in illustrating the fluid and adaptable nature of Sidney's own ideas of virtue. Sidney does not demand perfection, as Amphialus reminds us.

Sidney's understanding that man is, broadly speaking, a political animal pervades Arcadia, and the success with which he has organized and intertwined the significant complexities of life within the state is one of the most remarkable things about this work. In particular, the result for characterization is a richness and variety which is unique in sixteenth-century prose fiction, and, in addition, an artistically controlled portrayal of character in which Sidney's skill may be recognized and applauded, however one
may judge the ultimate results.

The final impression of character in *Arcadia* is the intervolvement of human life. The quality of Sidney's mind which enables him to see the intricate relations of the parts simultaneously with their coherence in the whole is, I think, his major claim to greatness. He has an intellectual energy which, while it leads him into a frequent stylistic excess, at the same time reveals itself in that sustained force of will which Tillyard finds characteristically epic.
Notes to Chapter IV

1 Myrick, p. 253.

2 Humphrey House, Aristotle's Poetics (London, 1956), "Bywater and Rostagni agree on this point, and I think I can safely say that all serious modern Aristotelian scholarship agrees with them, that 'hamartia' means an error which is derived from 'ignorance of some material fact or circumstance'" (p. 94).

3 Compare Ethics, III, 1: "On some actions praise indeed is not bestowed, but pardon is, when one does what he ought not under pressure which overstrains nature and which no one could withstand."

4 Poetics, 16: "The best of all Discoveries, however, is that arising from the incidents themselves, when the great surprise comes about through a probably incident . . . ."

5 Myrick, p. 161.


7 Spingarn, p. 78.

8 Myrick, p. 254.

9 The apparent intention of Sidney to revive Amphialus in order to complete the story of Helen reminds us that he was writing an epico, not a tragedy. The discussion of Amphialus is based on the material-for-tragedy which Sidney included.

10 Goldman, p. 167. In general, I think Goldman's idea of heroic virtue is an element in Philoclea's achievement of maturity; in this particular example, the two are synonymous.

11 Zandvoort, p. 74.

12 "But since my parents deale so cruelly with me, it is time for me to trust something to my owne judgement" (I, 180).

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