AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN "AN APOLOGY FOR POETRY" AND "ASTROPHIL AND STELLA"

by

Ian Geoffrey Holter

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1972

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

English

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

August 1975

APPROVAL

Name: Ian Geoffrey Holter

Degree: Master of Arts

Title of Thesis: An Examination of the Relation Between "An Apology for Poetry" and "Astrophil and Stella"

Examining Committee:

Chairman:

Dr. Michael Steig

Joseph Gallagher
Senior Supervisor

F. Candelaria

J. Mills

Dr. Katherine Stockholder
External Examiner
U.B.C.

Date Approved: 27 Sept. 1975

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

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

Title of Thesis/Dissertation:

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN "AN APOLOGY FOR POETRY" AND "ASTROPHIL AND STELLA"

Author: [signature]
(signature)

IAN GEOFFREY HOLTER
(name)

Sept. 27/75
(date)

ABSTRACT

The seeming disparity between the poetic, which is articulated in "An Apology For Poetry," and the practice of "Astrophil and Stella" is the primary problem this thesis considers. Of secondary concern are the apparent contradictions within the sonnet sequence itself. The juxtaposition of poems overtly disclaiming any connection with conventional love poetry and poems clearly participating in that convention raises questions about Sidney's seriousness as a poet. Those questions conflict with the image of the poet which is projected in "An Apology For Poetry." This thesis is, therefore, as concerned with offering a consistent reading of the poetry as with tracing a relationship between that reading and "An Apology For Poetry."

The method of investigation used relies heavily on the two primary texts. This reliance is motivated by their availability and by the absence of other critical work following a similar approach to "Astrophil and Stella." Because of the existence of a well defined poetic in the "Apology," it is possible to locate more in the poetic metaphors of "Astrophil and Stella" than might be acceptable in another poet. Before analyzing those metaphors it is, therefore, necessary to understand the argument of the "Apology." Having achieved that understanding, "Astrophil and Stella" will be critically examined in light of it.

The location of a consistent poetic voice in "Astrophil and Stella" is difficult because of the apparent contradictions within the sequence. On the one hand it can be argued that a complete commitment to the physical is the basis for the poetry while, on the other, serious and sacred possibilities have to be acknowledged. In coming to terms with the dilemma thus posed the thesis splits the poetic voice. It will be argued that only by accepting a separation between the poet and the lover is it possible to grasp the complex experience of "Astrophil and Stella." This is not to suggest that such a conscious separation must occur in a reading of the poetry. Rather, it is providing a vocabulary which makes the poetic experience available for critical consideration.

Chapter One is a detailed rendering of the primary sections of "An Apology For Poetry." That presentation takes place against a background provided by conventions of love poetry and notes disparities between those conventions and Sidney's poetic. Chapter Two initiates consideration of the poems by examining the poems on poetry. It is primarily concerned with understanding how those poems relate to the poetic of the "Apology." Chapter Three continues the analysis of the poetry by considering the symbol of Stella. That consideration takes note of affinities between this symbol and certain religious traditions. Chapter Four examines the treatment of Astrophil. The description of his emotion allows for some consideration of the nature of love. Chapter

Five concludes the thesis by considering the impact of play upon the relationship between the "Apology" and the sequence.

By developing a relationship between "An Apology For Poetry" and certain religious and artistic traditions, an argument emerges from the essay which is expressed by the poetry. That relationship not only allows for a clearer understanding of the essay but provides a reading of the poetry which is philosophically and aesthetically consistent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Sidney wrote "An Apology For Poetry" sometime between 1580 and 1583.[1] In the summer of 1582 he wrote "Astrophil and Stella."[2] The relation of these two works is a subject of critical controversy which is encouraged by uncertainty as to which preceded the other. The difficulty in resolving the question of precedence, however, need not prevent the location of the "Apology's" ideas in "Astrophil and Stella." Those ideas may well have pre-existed their formal expression.

In "An Apology For Poetry" Sidney denigrates his own efforts as a poet:

> But I that before euer I durst aspire vnto the digniti I am admitted vnto the company of the ~~Paperlubbers~~ Paperblurrers doe finde the very true cause of our wanting estimation is want of deserte taking vppon vs to be Poetts in despight of Pallas now wherein wee want deserte weare a thancke worthy labor to express But if I knew I shold haue mended my selfe. But I as I neuer desired the title, so haue I neglected the meanes to come by it Onely ouermastred by some thoughts I yeelded an Incky tribute vnto them . . . (p. 40). 3

The possible application of this self-criticism to "Astrophil and Stella" is the one area where the relative dating of these two works is important. If "Astrophil and Stella" was written after "An Apology For Poetry" then we can assume that Sidney is referring to "The Lady of May" and some of

the "Arcadia" poems. If, however, the reverse was the case, then the criticism would include "Astrophil and Stella" and might justify the view that the poetry is inconsistent with the essay. There is presently no way of absolutely determining the order in which these works were written. However, much of the question can be resolved by a demonstration of philosophical consistency between the two. It will be the primary function of this thesis to provide a reading of "Astrophil and Stella" which locates and describes that consistency.

In "An Apology For Poetry" Sidney offers a justification for his art. That justification assumes a state of universal good in which man possesses "vertuous knowledge." It then argues that poetry is the most effective mover toward that knowledge:

> And so a conclusionn not vnfitly ensewe y^{t} as vertue is the most excellent restinge place for all worldly learninge to make his ende of: So Poetrye beinge y^{e} most familyare to teach it and most princely to moue towardes it, in the most excellent woorcke is the most excellent worckeman (p. 23).

To understand Sidney's view of poetry, then, it is necessary to gain some comprehension of what the possession of virtuous knowledge entails. That virtue must relate to a higher and nobler end beyond the experience of the immediate historical moment. The moment is but a small step toward the end:

> . . . euen as the saddlers nexte ende is to make a good saddle: But his further ende to serue a nobler facultye which is horssemanshippe. So the horssmanns to soldirye: And the soldier not onelye to haue the

> skill, but to performe the practise of a soldier (p. 11).

Undeniably, at one level Sidney is treating poetry as an educator toward virtuous action in this life. The sense of its ability to awaken nobleness in humanity suggests some form of ethical backdrop for the poetic experience. Achieving an ethical life should not, however, be seen as synonymous with the possession of "vertuous knowledge." The ethical life is itself an historical particular which serves as but a step toward the greater end of "vertuous knowledge." The limitations of language and of human experience, however, make it necessary for Sidney to describe the journey to "vertuous knowledge" in terms of the limited objective of an ethical life. Poetry's role as an educator toward this limited objective is the basis for its defence. That role, however, also allows access to the nature of the greater end.

Sidney discusses poetry's didactic function by comparing it to the other two "sciences," history and philosophy. It encourages ethical conduct more than these two because of its ability to unify both of them in an irresistable statement:

> The Philosopher therefore and the historiann are they which folde [sic] wine the goale, the one by precepte, the other by example. But both not haueing bothe; doe bothe halte. for the Philosopher setting downe with arguments the bare rule, is so harde of utteraunce and so mistie to be conceiued, that one that hathe no other guide but him shall waide in him till he bee olde before he shall finde sufficient cause to be honnest for his knoweledge stanndeth so vppon the abstracte and generall, that happy is that mann who

> maye vnderstannde him, and more happye that canne applie what he dothe vnderstande. One the other side the Historyann wayetinge, the precepte is so tyde not to what shoulde be; but to what is to the particulare truth of things; and not to the generall reasonn of things, y^{t} his example draweth no necessarye consequence: And therefore a lesse fruitefull doctrine. Now doth the peerelesse Poett performe bothe. for what soeuer the Philosopher saith shoulde be doone: He giueth a perfecte picture of it in som one by whome he presupposeth it was doone: So he coupleth the generall notion with the particulare example (pp. 13-14).

Poetry combines the philosophical precept with the historical example. It is firmly connected with both and is able to supplant both as a leader to the virtuous end. In comparing poetry to history and philosophy, then, Sidney is arguing for its efficacy in moving man toward the end of virtue in this life. It exceeds philosophy because it is able to present a tangible image for the human mind to grasp. It exceeds history because it transcends the isolated physical and particular and ties it to the abstract and reasonable. This argument assumes that at the root of human action there is a need for the simultaneous possession of the abstract and the concrete. That need is filled by poetry.[4]

Sidney describes man's use of poetry in his quest for "vertuous knowledge" as having certain God-like affinities.[5] That description dramatically illustrates the inadequacy of viewing an ethical life as synonymous with the end of "vertuous knowledge":

> . . . giue right honnor to the heauenly maker of that maker, who haueing made mann to his owne likenes sett him beyonde and ouer all the worckes of that seconde

> nature which ~~is more~~ in nothinge he sheweth somuch as in Poettrye when with the force of a devine breathe he bringeth things furthe surpassinge her dooeings with no small argument to the incrediculous of y^t^ first accursed fall of Adam; since our erected witt maketh us knowe what perfection is: and yett our infected will keepeth us from reacheing vnto it (p. 8).

The poetic act partially transcends the fall as it allows man to mirror the creative act of the divine archetype. Man's struggle to undo that fall, then, is the basis of the human need for "vertuous knowledge." There are definite limitations imposed upon man's achievement of "vertuous knowledge," even in poetry:

> The finall ende is to leade and drawe us to as high a perfection, as our degenerate soules, made worse by theyre clayey lodginges can be capable of (pp. 10-11).

That perfection is characterized by the perfect equipoise of the physical and the spiritual. Poetry is the most effective mover towards it because it partially accomplishes that same union and in so doing reminds man of his God-like affinities.

While favourably comparing poetry to philosophy and history by arguing its relation to the activities of God, Sidney repeatedly argues that it is of a significantly lower order than the Divine:

> Therefore compare wee the Poett with the historiann and with the morrall Philosopher. And if he goe beyonde them bothe, no other humaine skill ċann matche him. for as for the Diuine with all reuerence It is neuer to be excepted: not onelye for haueinge his scope as farre beyonde anye of theise: as Eternitie exceedeth a moment, but euen for passeinge eache of these in themselfes . . . (p. 13).

Sidney's use of the word "Divine" here refers to the corpus

of literature which is written either as the direct word of God or under His immediate inspiration.[6] Poetry, however, is a human skill, albeit possessed because of the spark of divinity within man. This distinction does not argue the complete separation of the two. Poetry offers the possibility of limited human participation in the Divine. It becomes the language through which the Divine takes on a temporally understandable dimension and man's use of it underscores his God-like image. To illustrate the similarity and connection between poetry and the Divine, Sidney cites a number of instances where the Divine is presented as poetry:

> And maye not I presume a litle further to shewe the reasonnablenes of this word Vates. And saie that the wholy Dauids Psalmes are a devine Poeme? (p. 5).

Later in the essay he cites Christ's use of parables as an act of poesy.[7] The point to note in Sidney's argument is that while he disclaims the possibility of any direct comparison between the Divine and poetry, he is constantly drawing the relation between the two. Poetry serves as a human analogue of the divine creative act and scripture is appropriately presented through the language of poetry. The connection is inescapable and has implications for all poetry. If Sidney's argument was simply proposing a similar form or vocabulary for scripture and profane poetry it would have a limited significance. As it is, however, he suggests much more than that in portraying the poetic act as comparable to divine creation. Poetry can be used to move man

towards "vertuous knowledge."

The achievement of an ethical life has been suggested as but a step along the road to the possession of "vertuous knowledge." That the poet should not be satisfied with the achievement of this life is suggested by several things. The first is the nature of ethical conduct itself. The achievement of an ethical or moral life is accepted as but a step toward perfect happiness in heaven. It is something of a God-like life upon this earth. Sidney's analogy of the saddler serving the nobler end of horsemanship, which was cited on page two, need not be limited by life. In a sense, the achievement of an ethical life serves the end of a return to God beyond life. Arguing that the movement towards "vertuous knowledge" is synonymous with the movement to a return to God allows for some understanding of Sidney's view of God. The essence of that view is suggested by his emphasis upon the doubleness in the poetic experience. It is man's ability to create poetry which best illustrates his God-like affinities:

> . . . giue right honnor to the heauenly maker of that maker, who haueing made mann to his owne likenes sett him beyonde and ouer all the worckes of that seconde nature which ~~is more~~ in nothinge he sheweth somuch as in Poettrye when with the force of a devine breathe he bringeth things furthe surpassinge her dooeings with no small argument to the increditulous of y^{t} first accursed fall of Adam; since our erected witt maketh us knowe what perfection is: and yett our infected will keepeth us from reacheing vnto it (p. 8).

The essence of poetry is its doubleness, its fusion of the particular of history with the general of philosophy. In

creating poetry man momentarily transcends the effect of the fall and recreates the serenity and peace of unfallen Eden. For Sidney, then, the ideal experience was a union of the particular and the general in perfect knowledge. That ideal is fully realized only in God.

Sidney's argument for poetry as an ideal mediator between the particular and the general, the concrete and the abstract, contains significant parallels with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. By arguing for the role of poetry in lifting man toward redemption, Sidney illustrates this connection. The parallel comes from Sidney's suggestion of something mysteriously divine in language; the sense that the word can create and redeem. In Christian theology it is the figure of Christ which fulfils the dual role of creator and redeemer. The Christic figure mediates between the divine and the human as it redeems mankind from the effects of original sin. In "The Gospel According to St. John," chapter one, verses one to five and fourteen, Christ is identified as the word at the source of all creation:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the
> Word was with God, and the word was
> God.
> The same was in the beginning with God.
> All things were made by him: and without
> him was not any thing made that was
> made.
> In him was life; and the life was the
> light of men.
> And the light shineth in darkness; and
> the darkness comprehended it not.
> . . . . . .

> And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt
> among us, (and we beheld his glory,
> the glory as of the only begotten
> of the Father,) full of grace and
> truth.

The idea of the Word or Logos[8] as capable of creating and redeeming is found at the source of Christian thought. Of course, doctrinally there is an infinite difference between the Logos and man's spoken word. Sidney's description of poetry, however, lays a limited claim to the functions of the Logos.

The location of eschatological implications in "Astrophil and Stella" is obscured by its identification with traditions of love poetry. Specifically, its relation to the works of Dante, Petrarch and Petrarchism has aided this obscuring. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to present a detailed analysis of these three traditions, there is one area in which their relation to Sidney will be particularly useful in this discussion. That area is the role of woman in the poetic experience which they present. In Dante Beatrice is a medium, she is the vehicle which transports the poet to the consummation of his quest for complete knowledge. Significantly, however, she does not participate in the final beatific vision:

> La forma general de paradiso
> già tutta mio sguardo avea compresa,
> in nulla parte ancor fermato fiso;
> e volgeami con voglia riaccesa
> per domandar la mia donna di cose
> di che la mente mia era sospesa.
> Uno intendea, e altro mi rispose:

credea veder Beatrice, e vidi un sene
vestito con le genti gloriose.
Diffuso era per li occhi e per le gene
di benigna letizia, in atto pio
quale a tenero padre si convene.
E 'Ou' e' ella?' subito diss'io.
Ond'e' elli: 'A terminar lo tuo disiro
mosse Beatrice me del loco mio;
e se riguardi su nel terzo giro
dal sommo grado, tu la rivedrai
nel trono che suoi merti le sortiro.'

Already my glance had taken in the whole general form of Paradise but had not yet dwelt on any part of it, and I turned with new-kindled eagerness to question my Lady of things on which my mind was in suspense. One thing I intended, and another encountered me: I thought to see Beatrice, and I saw an old man, clothed like that glorious company. His eyes and his cheeks were suffused with a glorious gladness, and his aspect was of such kindness as befits a tender father. And 'Where is she?' I said in haste; and he replied: 'To end thy longing Beatrice sent me from my place; and if thou look up to the third circle from the highest tier thou shalt see her again, in the throne her merits have assigned to her'.[9]

The final steps of Dante's progress towards the ecstasy of the beatific vision are taken without Beatrice. Her complex and allegorical role in The Divine Comedy is not one which makes her a part of the final experience. She is a preparatory agent which must be left behind in the flight to beatitude.

In Petrarch the role of Laura is difficult to assess because of the absence of definitive historical information on who she was. A logical division of Petrarch's sonnets separates those written before Laura's death from those written after. Even in the poems written before her death,

however, there is never any possibility of a physical consummation as she maintains the perfect standard of conduct. The respect with which the poet views her prevents him from ascribing any physical particularity to her. Laura remains a somewhat cloudy abstraction. After her death she is transfigured and becomes a companion of the angels:

Spinse amor e dolor ove ir non debbe,
La mia lingua aviata a lamentarsi,
A dir di lei per ch'io cantai et arsi,
Quel che, se fusse ver, torto sarebbe;

Ch'assai 'l mio stato rio quetar devrebbe
Quella beata, e 'l cor racconsolarsi
Vedendo tanto lei domesticarsi
Con colui che, vivendo, in cor sempre ebbe.

E ben m'acqueto, e me stesso consolo;
Né vorrei riverderla in questo inferno,
Anzi voglis morire, e viver solo:

Ché piú bella che mai con l'occhio interno
Con li angeli la veggis alzata a volo
A' pié del suo e mio signore eterno.

Sorrow and Love pushed astray my tongue
That to the way of grievances had turned,
Making it tell of her for whom I burned
Things that, if they were true, would be all wrong;

To my unhappy state she should bring quiet,
That blessed one, and my heart should grow firm
Seeing her now on such intimate term
With Him who in her life had her heart's right.

And I do become calm as a reward;
Nor would I like to see her in this hell,
But want to live alone till my farewell:

For fairer than before, my inner eye
Sees her soar up and with the angels fly
At the feet of our own eternal Lord. 10

The woman at the centre of Petrarch's personal and poetic experience is less of a physical being than an angelic

abstraction. The achievement of freedom from the bondage of flesh through death is an ideal to which the poetry aspires. Her being as a mortal woman does attract the physical desire of the poet, but it is only attracted to be denied. The love which Petrarch directs toward Laura is transformed into a love of the Virgin Mary:

> Vergine umana, e nemisa d'orgaglio,
> Del comune principio amor t'induca;
> Miserere d'un cor contrito, umile:
> Che se poca mortal terra cadusa
> Amor con sé mirabil fede soglio,
> Che dererò for di te cosa gentile?
>
> Virgin quite human and averse to pride,
> Let love of common origin move you;
> Have mercy on a heart contrite and shy:
> For if a little piece of earthly glue
> I can love with a faith that is so wide,
> What shall I do with you, thing of the sky?[11]

Underlying all of Petrarch's sonnets is a denial of the flesh and a desire to move towards the perfection of spirit.

The third love poetry convention with which "Astrophil and Stella" is often identified is Petrarchism. While the role of mortal woman in Petrarch's poetry is contained within a metaphysical structure which transcends the physical, the tradition of love poetry which took his name was not so disinterested in physical consummation. Woman as an object of earthly pursuit came to dominate the Petrarchan convention. In his attempt to glorify earthly beauty the Petrarchan sonneteer invoked all manner of metaphor. Ultimately, the assertion of superiority took the form of a denial of convention. The denial worked on the premise that the emotion of

conventional love poetry was stilted and controlled, that it lacked any of the spontaneity of deep passion. Underlying this premise is the assumption that the exciting cause of the emotion, that is the woman, is also confined by the convention and does not differ significantly from all the other women who have been treated in the Petrarchan poem. By asserting the lack of a conventional commitment the late Petrarchan poet asserted the spontaneity of his love and the unique and overwhelming cause of that love in the woman.[12]

Preceding Sidney, then, are two traditions of love poetry. The one, represented by Dante and Petrarch, transcends or denies the physical as it moves towards a beatific vision or a rest beyond life. The other, as represented by the conventional Petrarchan poet, uses the poetic medium to create a metaphysics which glorifies the earthly woman. The end of that glorification is the consummation of sexual love. In terms of Sidney's argument in "An Apology For Poetry," neither of these traditions would conform to the poetic ideal. That ideal offered poetry as a perfect teacher because of its ability to translate the abstraction of philosophy into the concretion of history and thereby to appeal to man's nature as both a physical and spiritual creature. The doubleness which this argument assumes and articulates disallows a denial of either the physical or the spiritual in man's movement towards perfection. If Sidney's love poetry conforms to these strictures, then, we would expect neither

a denial of the earthly, as in Dante and Petrarch, nor a complete preoccupation with the physical, as in Petrarchan love poetry. Rather, his poetry should mediate between these two traditions.

Before proceeding further with the argument of this thesis, it is necessary to devote some attention to the question of Sidney's relation to Astrophil. Of course the process of artistic creation involves significant and indefinable personal input from the poet. To assume, however, that the process of character creation ends with the mirroring of the artist is to lapse into a kind of subjectivism which ignores the complex poetic transformation of the literal. Sidney's own recognition of the transforming power of the poet's imagination is testified to in "An Apology For Poetry":

> Onely the Poett disdayninge to be tyed to any such subiection, lifted vpp with the vigor of his owne invention doth growe in effecte another nature in makeinge things either better then nature bringeth forthe or quiet a newe forme wuch as neuer were in nature: as y^e Heroes: Demigods Cyclopes. Chimeras furies and suche lyke: So as he goeth hand in hande with nature not inclosed with in the narrowe warrante of her gifts but freelie ranginge onely with the Zodiacke of his owne witt . . . (p. 7).

For the poet to record the literal as the end product of his art is to create history, not poetry. The abstract moral dimension, which poetry is able to move man towards, is denied in an art which confines itself to the factual. Such poetry could never move man towards the possession of "vertuous knowledge."

Even without "An Apology For Poetry" the argument for an equation of Sidney with Astrophil encounters difficulties. The archetypal name of Astrophil suggests a commitment to the universal rather than to the particular. His role in the poetry precludes the consistency necessary for a single and literal character. At one extreme he conspires to achieve an earthly and sexual union. At the other he recognizes and invokes affinities between Stella and the divine. The logical conclusion of this juxtaposition is to divide the figure of Astrophil in two, just as the experience of the poetry is divided; to assume that an earthly and literal figure is at the root of Astrophil and that the poetic imagination has transformed that figure in a way that only takes on significant meaning in the context of the completed sequence. It is the sequence, then, that conforms to the ideal of "An Apology For Poetry" as it utilizes a transformed particular to move the reader towards the end of "vertuous knowledge." For the sake of simplicity in the thesis, the two levels of the lover's being will be referred to as Astrophil and as Sidney. The first will designate that figure at the root of the character of Astrophil for whom Stella is a tangible and earthly objective and for whom the possession and use of metaphysical and ethical knowledge does not demand a genuine commitment to it. The second will designate that figure whose mind is joining the disparate elements in the experience of art and which, consequently,

genuinely sees in Stella metaphysical and archetypal elements. The interaction of these two levels allows the poetic experience to present a complex vision of art, life and final knowledge.

Proposing that "Astrophil and Stella" contains two poetic voices breaks with the orthodox view of the poet's relation to his art. Normally one poetic voice, which described the artistic experience, would be expected. In "Astrophil and Stella," however, the complexity of the lover's experience disallows such an approach. The attitude toward Stella is simultaneously earthly and sexual; spiritual and chaste. The balancing of these attitudes creates a tension which requires the continued assertion of each. That assertion is only accomplished by separating the personae. The poet achieves a kind of omniscience as he synthesizes the sexual reality with the spiritual. That the sexual is not overwhelmed, however, is assured by Astrophil's voice.

In conclusion, a discussion of "Astrophil and Stella" can best take place within the context provided by "An Apology For Poetry." That context bears a significant relation to other traditions of language and poetry. Understanding this relation is essential to the experience of "Astrophil and Stella." The complex union of opposites, which Sidney proposes as the essence of the poetic experience, separates his poetry from the conventions of Dante, Petrarch and Petrarchism. Only by understanding that distinction is

it possible to see in "Astrophil and Stella" a unified and cohesive statement which is directed at the serious end of leading man towards "vertuous knowledge." This distinction is best illustrated by locating and maintaining two separate poetic voices in the sequence. The remainder of this thesis will be devoted to a detailed consideration of how Sidney has applied the distinctive theory of "An Apology For Poetry" to "Astrophil and Stella" in a way that makes the one the artistic expression of the other.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The exact dating of "An Apology For Poetry" has never been established. It is generally conceded to have been written between 1580 and 1583, although certain critics extend the period of composition from 1580 to 1585. Such a critic is Lewis Soens in the Regents Critics Series. Lewis Soens, ed., Sir Philip Sidney's Defense of Poetry by Sir Philip Sidney, Regents Critics Series (Lincoln, 1970), p. xiv. Most, however, feel that it was concluded before 1583. Robert Kimbrough and William A. Ringler are examples of such critics. Robert Kimbrough, Sir Philip Sidney (New York, 1971), "Chronology," and William A. Ringler Jr., ed., The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney by Sir Philip Sidney (Oxford, 1962), p. xxxiv. The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, edited by William A. Ringler Jr., will be the primary text of "Astrophil and Stella" and "Certain Sonnets" used in this thesis. Its role as the definitive edition of the sonnets has long been established.

[2] Ringler, The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, p. xliv.

[3] Mary R. Mahl, ed., The Apology For Poetry: The Norwich Sidney Manuscript by Sir Philip Sidney, The Renaissance Editions, No. 1 (Northridge, California, 1969), p. 40. I have chosen to use The Norwich Sidney Manuscript as the primary text of "An Apology For Poetry" used in this thesis because of the likelihood of it being the earliest text of the "Apology" yet discovered. Evidence taken from the watermark on the manuscript indicates that it dates from 1585 and is likely only one step removed from Sidney's holograph. This dating puts the Norwich Sidney Manuscript ten to fifteen years before the Olney, Ponsonby and Penshurst editions. It should, however, also be noted that comparisons of the available editions have failed to locate any significant differences in the portions of the essay which are of primary importance to this thesis. The Olney edition of 1595, however, is entitled "An Apology For Poetry" and, therefore, I have referred to the essay as such throughout the thesis. Finally, in the absence of any title for the Norwich Sidney Manuscript the editor has entitled it "The Apology For Poetry."

[4] In Poetic Experience Thomas Gilbey attempts to describe a Thomistic aesthetic. Thomas Gilbey, Poetic Experience, second ed. (1934; rpt. New York, 1967). The significance of his book for this thesis comes from the similarity in its conclusions with those of "An Apology For Poetry." That similarity is in no sense a proof of influence of Thomistic thought upon Sidney. Such a proof would require much more than this one similarity and a much more detailed rendering of Thomistic thought than this thesis or Poetic Experience is prepared to offer.

What it does do, however, is suggest a systematic approach to the nature of that human need which is assumed in Sidney. The similarities in conclusion are so striking that it is a perfectly legitimate approach to understanding Philip Sidney.

Thomas Gilbey's rendering of St. Thomas suggests a quest for peace at the root of all human activity:

> . . . every appetite is for peace. And peace for the mind demands union, not only for the rational and animal desire by knowing consent, but also for the natural desire, physical presence as well as understanding (p. 82).

Because his argument exists in an overt and rigid theological framework, Gilbey is proposing a kind of undoing of the fall. The separation of mind from body, of man from nature, which that fall accomplished, creates unceasing unrest in mortal man. His life is dedicated to the return of an Edenic and God-like state in which there is serenity in perfect knowledge:

> At the summit of knowledge, in the divine mind, knower and known are one in complete simplicity. But every other mind aspires to draw as near to this as may be. There is an appetite in everything for the divine, and every mind desires to cleave to its object really and immediately, and contain it in an act of knowledge (p.26).

According to Gilbey's rendering of Aquinas, then, every human life is motivated by a quest for the peace which comes with the possession of perfect knowledge. That knowledge can be categorized as the simultaneous apprehension of the individual particular and the general abstraction, as a yoking together of the mind and the body. Only in God does that equipoise exist and the possibilities for man's mastery of it are limited.

Gilbey continues his argument to offer poetry as a kind of intimation of that divine knowledge, as a possibility of limited, human participation in complete knowledge. While the creation of mind, the poetic experience transcends the limited and cerebral and presents a paradoxical union of physical and spiritual:

> For this latter [poetic experience] appears, first, as intensely individual, not general: a sense of a single situation in its very uniqueness. Secondly, as concrete, not abstract: without formalisation, it seems an embrace of a thing in its indefinable wholeness. Thirdly, as real, not conceptual: a union too intimate to be explained by thoughts about its object. Fourthly, as complete in itself, not pedagogic: an experience that does not point a moral, but is felt to be worth having for its own sake; not a utility but a delight, and to that extent an

end, not a means. Finally, it comes as a moment of unpremeditated inspiration, an interruption to the calculating course of the reason (pp. 9-10).

The poetic experience, then, should be described as supra-rational as it gives an indefineable sense of possession of the knowledge which brings peace. It momentarily fulfills the need at the base of human striving. Poetic Experience completes its argument by discussing the role of love in the human quest. The force that impels mankind toward knowledge is a kind of love. Its characteristics are analagous to those of profane and sexual love:

> Love applies itself to the object. Love goes out to the thing, not the thought of the thing. "Ecstasy is when the mind forgets everything else and desire is borne away to a thing." Under the former respect, love disposes to ecstasy, under the latter, love directly causes it (p.44).

Love goes beyond reasoned thought in its insistence upon the particular and concrete. The knowledge which it seeks is more complete, more condusive to peace than any mere movement of mind:

> In our present state, love is simpler than knowledge, nobler too, and more powerful. Simpler, in neglecting the composition of abstractions for the sake of the undivided concrete; nobler, in resolutely reaching for the subsisting real; more powerful, in that its desire exceeds the instructions of reason (p.36).

The potential significance to Philip Sidney of seeing love as the force which drives man towards knowledge, with profane love used as an analogue of that larger movement, will be discussed in chapter three.

Gilbey's suggestion that poetry exceeds other forms of earthly knowledge because it combines the physical with the abstract significantly parallels Philip Sidney's argument for poetry as the best teacher. Sidney has distinguished poetry from philosophy by its ability to transform the precept into an easily graspable image. On the other hand, the poet exceeds the historian because of his ability to escape the limitations of the physical and the concrete. It is significant to note that poetry is an effective mover because it appeals to man's dual need for the concrete and the abstract. It recognizes his double nature. The similarity between this argument and Gilbey's is noteworthy.

[5] In Sir Philip Sidney, Robert Kimbrough, Sir Philip Sidney (New York, 1971), p. 53. Robert Kimbrough discusses the serious implications for this part of Sidney's poetic theory and relates it to other aesthetic theories:

> Nature is fallen and cursed, but man is only partially her creature, for he is created in the divine image, which sets "him beyond and over

all the workes of that second nature" (III, 8). He carries "the force of a divine breath" within him, which lifts him from nature. The poet exercises this ordering, creative power within him when he fashions his imitations of nature. From Sidney, the step to Coleridge's "repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am" seems short; but to Sidney the poet stands between God and second nature, whereas Coleridge gives nature the intermediary position. But the terminology is justly shared, as is both critics' return to the principle of architectonic.

[6] There is some ambiguity in Sidney's use of the term "divine." As with history and philosophy, he is simultaneously referring to both the literature and the writer. In this instance that would refer to holy scripture and the writer of that scripture. This distinction does not, however, seem to bear heavily on the argument and thus the acceptance of the reference to the literature.

[7] "Certainely euen our sauiour Christ coulde as well haue giuen the morrall comenn places of vncharitablenes and humblenes: as the devine narration of Diues and Lazarus: or of disobedience and mercye as that heauenly discourse of that lost childe, and the gratious father. But that his thorough searcheinge wisedome knewe the estate of Diues burninge in hell: and of Lazarus beinge in Abrahams bosome wolde more constantly (as it weare) enhabitt bothe the memorye and Iudgement." "The Apology For Poetry," p. 16.

[8] The Greek term "Logos" can be variously translated as "word", "speech", "discourse" or "reason." It plays a significant and complex role in a number of philosophic traditions. While these traditions all emerge from Rabinical or Hellenistic thought, they are sufficiently diverse that no single unifying source can be located. In Christian thought the word "Logos" is used to designate the word of God or the Second Person of the Trinity. Its principal use is in the Johanine writings of First John and "The Book of Revelation." Charles G. Hermann (and others), ed., The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1914), IX, pp. 328-330 and Editorial Staff of Catholic University of America, ed., The New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York, 1967), VIII, pp. 967-972.

[9] Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, translation and comment by John D. Sinclair (London, 1971), Canto XXXI, "Paradiso," lines 52 to 69.

[10] Petrarch, Sonnets and Songs, trans. Anna Maria Armi, second edition (1946; rpt. New York, 1968), Sonnet CCCXLV, p. 483.

[11] Petrarch, Sonnets and Songs, Song CCCLXVI, p. 521.

[12] Richard B. Young, Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton (Hamden, 1969), p. 7.

CHAPTER II

There are one hundred and eight sonnets in "Astrophil and Stella" of which nineteen take poesy as their subject. These nineteen can be broken into two groups according to their attitude toward the subject of poesy. There are poems asserting the naturalness and spontaneity of the experience behind "Astrophil and Stella." They do so by contrasting it with the experience suggested by the seemingly artificial styles of other love poets and by assuming that the conventional poem argues a lack of emotion through its carefully patterned and controlled structure:

> Let daintie wits crie on the Sisters nine,
> That bravely maskt, their fancies may be told:
> Or Pindare's Apes, flaunt they in phrases fine,
> Enam'ling with pied flowers their thoughts of gold:
> Or else let them in statelier glorie shine,
> Ennobling new found Tropes with problemes old:
> Or with strange similies enrich each line,
> Of herbes or beastes, which Inde or Afrike hold.
> For me in sooth, no Muse but one I know:
> Phrases and Problemes from my reach do grow,
> And strange things cost too deare for my poore sprites.
> How then? even thus: in Stella's face I reed,
> What Love and Beautie be, then all my deed
> But Copying is, what in her Nature writes.
>
> (sonnet #3)

There are also poems which suggest the inadequacy of the poetic medium to convey the idea at the core of the poet's experience:

My Muse may well grudge at my heav'nly joy,
If still I force her in sad rimes to creepe:
She oft hath drunke my teares, now hopes to enjoy
Nectar of Mirth, since I Jove's cup do keepe.
Sonets be not bound prentise to annoy:
Trebles sing high, as well as bases deepe:
Griefe but Love's winter liverie is, the Boy
Hath cheekes to smile, as well as eyes to weepe.
Come then my Muse, shew thou height of delight
In well raisde notes, my pen the best it may
Shall paint out joy, though but in blacke and white.
Cease eager Muse, peace pen, for my sake stay,
I give you here my hand for truth of this,
Wise silence is best musicke unto blisse.
(sonnet #70)

This argument is based upon the assumption that language is inadequate to describe the idea and that poetry, as a construct of language, must share that disability.

The overt intention of these two arguments is to inform the image of Stella as the central thematic preoccupation of the poetic sequence. From the point of view of the interior experience of the poetry, that is its sequential and thematic movement, this intention accounts for the poems' presence. However, from a larger perspective which views the sequence as a participant in the artistic experience of moving mankind toward "vertuous knowledge," it is inadequate. Despite the predominant symbol of Stella, we cannot escape the fact that these poems are as concerned with poesy as they are with her. That concern should not be lost sight of if we are to understand the inclusion of them in that larger experience.

In seeking the reason for the inclusion of these sonnets we may refer to Sidney's argument in "An Apology For Poetry." As was noted in Chapter I, the direct impact of

that argument upon "Astrophil and Stella" is affected by the problem of dating the two works. Although that problem seems unresolvable, the interests of this thesis are concerned less with the sequence of the two works than with their proximity. There is no reason to assume that Sidney's views on poesy took form while he was composing the essay. Whether "Astrophil and Stella" was written before or after the essay, then, we would expect some consistency between the art and the theory. Poesy, as Sidney defined it in "An Apology For Poetry," was an eminently reasonable activity, guided by the twin ends of teaching and delighting:

> Poesie therefore is an arte of Imitation; for so Aristotle tearmeth it in his word Μιμησις That is to saye a representinge counterfeitinge or figuringe furth to speake. Metaphorically; a speakinge picture with this end to teache and delight (p. 8).

For Sidney to be consistent with this aesthetic in "Astrophil and Stella," then, the use of sonnets on poesy must be dictated by a reasonable end. That these poems are concerned with poesy shows an artistic self-consciousness which hints at another concern in the poetry than the nature of Astrophil's love for Stella.[1] This self-consciousness shows a poetic sophistication in "Astrophil and Stella" which is consistent with that of "An Apology For Poetry" where the poet is fully conscious of the need to use his art to move mankind toward the end of "vertuous knowledge." The writer of "Astrophil and Stella," then, should be expected to use his art to move mankind toward some equally ennobling end as

the essay has proposed.

If "Astrophil and Stella" is to move mankind toward "vertuous knowledge," then its subject matter must bear some relation to that end. That matter can be roughly divided into Astrophil's love and his concern for an adequate poetic to express that love. As such, poesy becomes more than a tool or vehicle in "Astrophil and Stella." It takes on a symbolic significance which allows it to contribute to the experience of the reader. In a manner that is similar to other symbolic material in the poems it experiences an imaginative transformation in the minds of Sidney and the reader and in its metamorphosed state helps to move them towards the end of virtuous action. That material from poetry should serve as the basis for an imaginative transformation is suggested in "An Apology For Poetry":

> And therefore as in historye lookinge for truthe, they maye goe away full fraughte with falshood: So in Poesi looking but for fiction, they shall use the narration, but as an imaginatiue groundeplatt, of a profitable invention (p. 32).

If poems on Poesy are to move the reader toward virtue it is important to locate the base or ground out of which the symbol has emerged. That base will give some indication of the direction of the imaginative movement. In "An Apology For Poetry" Sidney has described poesy in a way that would make it a suitable subject for consideration:

> Neither lett it be deemed to sawcye a comparisonn to ballance the highest pointe of manns witt with y^{e} effecacye of nature; but rather giue right honnor to

> the heauenly maker of that maker, who haueing made mann to his owne likeness sett him beyonde and ouer all the worckes of that second nature which ~~is more~~ in nothinge he sheweth somuch as in Poettrye when with the force of a devine breathe he bringeth things furthe surpassinge her dooeings with no small argument to the incrediculous of y^t^ first accursed fall of Adam: since our erected witt maketh us knowe what perfection is: and yett our infected will keepeth us from reacheing vnto it (pp. 7-8).

The poet, then, mirrors the creative act of the divine archetype. Understanding and mastering that creative act would, in an important sense, make man like God and would, therefore, achieve the end of a virtuous life. This quasi-sacred view of the poetic act is prepared for in "An Apology For Poetry" by the historical context which Sidney establishes. He first cites the Roman view of the poet as a prophet:

> Amounge the Romanes a Poett was called Vates which is as muche as a deviner, [2V] forseer or Prophett as by his conioyned words Vaticinium and Vatieniari is maniefest: So heauenly a title did y^t^ excellente people bestowe vpon this harteravishing knoweledge (pp. 4-5).

Having raised the Roman view of the poet as a prophet, Sidney continues to note that the Greeks saw the poet as a maker:

> But now lett vs see howe the Greekes named it, and how they deemed of it. The Greekes called him a Poett which name hathe as the most excellent gon thorrowe other languages it commeth of this word ποιεη which is to make . . . (p. 6).

Greek and Roman civilizations are offered as the exemplary fountainheads of Sidney's world. Their view of the poet as in some sense divinely inspired significantly modifies Sidney's view. This is not to suggest that Sidney is arguing an exact and complete paralleling of his argument for poesy

with the Greek and Roman views of the poet and poetry. First, it must be recognized that Sidney's essay is in many ways a political document designed to meet the challenges hurled by his society. As in any society, the challenge to the artist is based upon his inability to quantify, to offer a functional justification for his existence. Sidney identifies the purveyors of this challenge as relying upon the dry and respectable arts or sciences of history and philosophy. In citing the Greek and Roman examples he is specifically responding to this challenge:

> But since the u authors of most of our sciences were the Romanes and before them the Greekes lett us a litle stande vppon theire authorityes; but euen furr as to see what names they haue given vnto this nowe skornned skill (p. 4).

By demonstrating a respect for poetry among the founders of his society's sciences, then, Sidney is hoping to respond to the value system of poetry's critics.

To write off the significance of Sidney's use of Greek and Roman examples as simply a political ploy, however, would be to misunderstand that use's role in shaping the "Apology's" argument. The connection between divine inspiration and the poetic act, which this historical example provides, should not be ignored. Sidney gives a clear suggestion that this is so in his development of the divine inspiration theme into the Christian (and Christic) use of poetry. This is not to suggest that there is some formal and rigid transfer of a theological framework into the

poetic experience. The connection which Sidney is illustrating is much subtler than that. In the sense of possession and inspiration, which the poet experiences in creating his art as a form of experience outside of the rational and apart from the definable, there is a sense of mystery analogous to that experienced in a conventional religious experience. The relationship between theology and poetry is only a part of Sidney's argument but it is a part which shadows all of his essay and is crucial to an understanding of the application of that essay to "Astrophil and Stella."[2] In "Astrophil and Stella" Sidney displays a consciousness of the absolute necessity to master the art of poesy. He uses the figure of Astrophil to display the antithetical possibilities of style but does not commit himself or the reader to the value judgements which Astrophil makes. Astrophil's preoccupation with poesy is motivated by his sexual quest for Stella. Sidney's is motivated by a concern outside of the thematic movements of the poetry as he recognizes poesy's cosmic implications.

Before proceeding any further with this consideration of "Astrophil and Stella," it is important to pay some attention to the question of the poet's professed intention in the sequence. Most of the problems around this issue are raised by sonnet number twenty-eight:

> You that with allegorie's curious frame,
> Of other's children changelings use to make,
> With me those paines for God's sake do not take:

I list not dig so deepe for brasen fame.
When I say "Stella", I do meane the same
   Princesse of Beautie, for whose only sake
   The raines of Love I love, though never slake,
And joy therein, though Nations count it shame.
   I beg no subject to use eloquence,
Nor in hid wayes to guide Philosophie:
Looke at my hands for no such quintessence
But know that I in pure simplicitie,
   Breathe out the flames which burne within my heart,
   Love onely reading unto me his art.

(sonnet #28)

Initially this sonnet would seem to be denying the possibility of seeing anything in "Astrophil and Stella" other than the record of an earthbound love. The line "With me those paines for God's sake do not take" goes even further than denying artistic complexity and begs, or demands, that the critic stand back. At the level of Astrophil's experience sonnet twenty-eight is a denial of symbolic complexity and an assertion of the earthly reality of his love for Stella. To him, she is and remains the object of his sexual desire. Suggestions of a metaphysical significance for Stella are emphatically rejected by Astrophil. That rejection has important implications for his attitude toward love as expressed in other sonnets. By demonstrating a commitment to the earthly and the sexual he shows that his use of metaphysical imagery in those sonnets is motivated by that commitment and, as such, becomes a device in his quest. As was noted in Chapter One, a distinction has to be made between Astrophil's possession of knowledge and his commitment to it. In sonnet twenty-eight, then, Astrophil clearly asserts the

uncomplicated image of a mortal woman at the centre of his experience.

It is at the level of the poet's ánd the reader's relation to the poems that greater complexity is both admissible and essential. Greater complexity is hinted at through the poet's use of the image of Stella in the sonnet. As has already been stated, Stella is and remains an uncomplicated woman to Astrophil. This simplicity is justified by Astrophil's emotion throughout this poem and the rest of the sequence. That emotion is desire for sexual consummation. When he refers to Stella, then, he must be referring to an object of sexual love. The emotion of the poem for a third party, however, is not so easy to locate. A sense of something more than mortal woman shadows the descriptions of Stella. As will be noted in Chapter Three, the very name "Stella" has metaphysical and archetypal implications.[3] When the poet says "When I say 'Stella', I do meane the same" there is a built in ambiguity in the assertion. That ambiguity is further developed by the process which universalizes Stella in lines like "Princesse of Beautie, for whose only sake/ The raines of Love I love, though never slake,". Admittedly, this type of description can be seen simply as the conventional hyperbolic treatment of an earthly woman. From Astrophil's point of view, this is exactly what the lines are. Through the eyes of a third party, however, there is the same ambiguity which attaches itself to other

descriptions of Stella.

To clear the way for the discussion of Stella, it is necessary to examine the other assertions in sonnet twenty-eight. As has already been noted, at Astrophil's level the denials of a metaphysical significance for Stella are perfectly straightforward and underscore the fact that she is simply an earthly woman to him. The suggestion has already been made, however, that at another level Stella does have a metaphysical significance. Rather than denying that significance, sonnet twenty-eight singles out allegory as one form of versifying that would itself be a denial: "You that with allegorie's curious frame,/ Of other's children changelings use to make,". Allegory requires the artificial transference of one form into another. It is a finite representation which works only as an abstraction. Allegory leads to a denial of the first form as it represents or images the second. In terms of the critical parameters which Sidney set up in "An Apology For Poetry" it is not poetry, as it is denied the medial role of poetic language.[4] The important factor of the poetic experience to Sidney is the simultaneous and supra-rational participation in the particular world of history and the general world of philosophy. Allegory is a system contained within the reason. Poesy is initiated and partially controlled by the reason, but finally transcends it. When Sidney continues in sonnet twenty-eight to argue that "Nor in hid wayes to guide Philosophie:/ Looke at

my hands for no such quintessence/ But know that I in pure simplicitie,/ Breathe out the flames which burne within my heart," he is being perfectly consistent with the aesthetic of "An Apology For Poetry." "Astrophil and Stella" is poetry not philosophy. For it to offer a hidden moral, which is contained within the reason, would deny it its poetic essence. There would be a denial of the reality of sensual feelings at the root of the experience and of the unified sensual and intellectual which the poetry offers in its final form.[5] That does not mean, however, that the experience of the poetry is limited to the world of sense. For it to be so would transform it into history. The experience of the poetry is both history and philosophy as it participates in, and transcends, both. The sum is greater than the two parts. In that experience, allegory is rightly viewed as the instrument of the cerebral and its application is seen as a limiting and stifling of poetic language.

Astrophil, whether he is based on Sidney or some other person, is the image at the base of one symbolic figure in the poetry. As has already been suggested, Astrophil cannot be located solely as an historic figure if he is to fulfil the artistic requirements of symbol. To contain him too rigidly within any biographical framework would make it impossible for "another nature" to develop out of the poetic experience. The necessary infusion of the ethical and abstract into the historical particular would be stopped.

For himself he is the earthbound and simple Astrophil just as his love and poetry are earthbound and simple. Each of these three images, that is, Astrophil, his love and his poetry, serve as the "imaginative groundplots" for the symbolic complications which cause the base images to assume cosmic implications. Sidney's comments on symbol in "An Apology For Poetry" provide the theoretical justification for this view:

> And therefore as in historye lookinge for truthe, they maye goe away full fraughte with falshood: So in Poesi looking but for fiction, they shall use the narration, but as an imaginatiue groundeplott, of a profitable invention (p. 32).

It is the poet and the reader who transform Astrophil through the "shaping power"[6] of their imaginations. As Astrophil obviously cannot exist as a symbol to himself, he, his love and his poetry suggest something much more complex to the third parties (that is the poet and the readers) than to himself.[7]

The heightening of complexity, which is accomplished through the presence and role of the sonnets on poesy, participates in the tradition of deliberately creating artistic obscurity. In "An Apology For Poetry" Sidney has argued the need for obscurity and in asserting the high claims for the poet, which were noted above, he gives an implicit recognition of that need. That recognition is made explicit in the essay's summation:

> To beleeue with mee y^{t} there are many misteryes in Poetry, which of purpose weare written darckely, least by prophane witts I shold be abused (p. 50).

The justification for obscurity is twofold. First, because the essence of poetry is its relation to divine mysteries, that essence must be veiled in obscurity to prevent profanation by the vulgar. Second, because the principal purpose of poetry is to educate, that purpose can best be accomplished by a slow and sweet unfolding or drawing in. Sidney describes the process in "An Apology For Poetry":

> . . . for not onely in time they [poets] hadd this prioritye (although in it selfe antiquitie be venerable) but went before them as causes doe to drawe with theire charmeinge sweetenes the wilde vntamed witts to an admiration of knoweledge. So as Amphion was said to moue stones with his Poetrye to builde Thebes And Orpheus to be listenned to by beastes, in deede stoanye and beastlye people (pp. 2-3).

and

> So that truly neither Philosopher nor Historiographer coulde at the firste haue entred into the gattes of populer Iudgements if the had not takenn a greate pasporte of poetrye which in all nations att this daye where learninge florrisheth not is plaine to be seene in all which they haue som feelinge of Poetrye (p. 4).

This movement has analogues in many other forms of ascent toward knowledge of a divine mystery. Sidney's obvious acceptance of the need for poetic obscurity ought to affect his practice of the art in "Astrophil and Stella."

As has already been noted, in "An Apology For Poetry" Philip Sidney describes poetry as a vehicle to lead mankind toward "vertuous knowledge." The presence in "Astrophil and Stella" of poems whose major concern is poesy raises the

problem of how that concern contributes to this movement. The answer is found in "An Apology For Poetry" in which Sidney draws a relation between poesis and the divine creative act. There is an important sense in which the artistic is invaded by the sacred. Because poetry can serve as the first intimation of, or step toward, knowledge, its subject, be it love or poesy, forms the basis for the imaginative movement into that knowledge. The poems on poesy in "Astrophil and Stella", then, serve both to underscore the ineffable nature of Stella and to illustrate the role of the form of poetry in the movement toward knowledge. By presenting the discussion of poesy through the striving for an adequate vehicle to describe Stella, the poet deliberately obscures one of the major concerns of his art.

As has been indicated, there are two general ideas in the poems on poesy. First there is the attack on the conventional type of love poetry through the assertion of a spontaneous and irrational form of love expressed in a plain style (sonnets 1, 2, 3, 6, 15, 28, 37, 50, 55, 74, 90, and 93). Second, there is a suggestion of the inadequacy of the poetic medium to express the idea behind the poem (sonnets 35, 50, 55, 70, and 93). There is obviously considerable overlapping of the sonnets containing these ideas.

It is worth taking a closer look at the two ideas which are noted above. First, the conscious attack on an "artificial" convention and the assertion of a natural style will

be considered. This attack can be divided into two categories according to the emphasis which it places. First there are those poems which focus on conventional love poetry and inform the uniqueness of the experience of "Astrophil and Stella" by attacking the "artificiality" of the other. A good example of this is found in sonnet number fifteen:

> You that do search for everie purling spring,
> Which from the ribs of old Parnassus flowes,
> And everie floure, not sweet perhaps, which growes
> Neare therabout, into your Poesie wring;
> You that do Dictionairie's methode bring
> Into your rimes, running in ratling rowes:
> You that poore Petrarch's long deceased woes,
> With new-borne sighes and denisend wit do sing;
> You take wrong waies, those far-fet helpes be such,
> As do bewray a want of inward tuch:
> And sure at length stolne goods do come to light.
> But if (both for your love and skill) your name
> You seeke to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,
> Stella beholde, and then begin to endite.
>
> (sonnet #15)

In the sense that has already been discussed, the central preoccupation of this sonnet is the symbol of Stella which is offered as a contrast to the insipid and artificial inspiration of the conventional poet. That inspiration leads to a poetry that is bound within the limits of traditional image patterns and rigid formal strictures. The poetic act expressed in this way is entirely under the control of the intellect. It bears no relation to the historical or biographical particular as it invokes a pattern of metaphor which is itself a denial of uniqueness in the love object. Consequently, it is unable to serve as an effective mover toward virtuous knowledge which demands the particular as

well as the general, which recognizes the human being as separate and definable. It has been suggested that the denial of similarity to the convention is, in fact, quite conventional. Late Petrarchism strove to deny its Petrarchan affiliations. By offering poetry which consciously differed from that which was normally identified with the convention, it was able to describe the woman as a source of inspiration beyond the others. The contrasting of poetry implied a contrasting of inspirations. It is not the metaphor but the objective which identifies the convention in this instance.

The suggestion that the poet is behaving in a very conventional way in his denials of convention must be treated seriously for it may have a profound effect upon the argument for a consistency between "An Apology For Poetry" and "Astrophil and Stella." If it can be established that these sonnets are completely consistent with the late Petrarchan convention, then they will be at odds with the "Apology's" aesthetic. What is of concern to "An Apology For Poetry" is not the form of the conventional poetry, but its subject:

> Theire thirde is how much it abuseth menns witt, trayninge it to wanton sinfullnes; and lustful loue; for indeede that is the principall, if not onely abuse I can heare alledge. They sayd the Comedies rather teache, then reprehende amourous conceites. They saye the Liricke is larded with passionate sonetts. . . . Graunte I saye what soeuer they will haue graunted, that not onely loue, but luste, but vanitye, but if the liste scurrilitie, possesseth many leaues of the poetts bookes: yett thincke I when this graunted they will finde theire sentence may with good manners put the last woordes formost, and not saye y^{t} Poettrye abuseth mannes witt, but that manns witt abuseth Poettry (p. 33).

If poetry revels in earthly beauty and passion for their sakes alone, then it fails to fulfil its principal function as a mover and educator. From the "Apology's" point of view, the objectionable aspect of traditional love poetry is its subject, not its form. It would, therefore, be possible for a poem to be written in a conventional form and escape much of the criticism of the "Apology":

> Queen Vertue's court, which some call Stella's face,
> Prepar'd by Nature's chiefest furniture,
> Hath his front built of Alabaster pure;
> Gold is the covering of that stately place.
> The doore by which sometimes comes forth her Grace,
> Red Porphir is, which locke of pearle makes sure:
> Whose porches rich (which name of cheekes endure)
> Marble mixt red and white do enterlace.
> The windowes now through which this heav'nly guest
> Looks over the world, and can find nothing such
> Which dare claime from those lights the name of best,
> Of touch they are that without touch doth touch,
> Which Cupid's selfe from Beautie's myne did draw:
> Of touch they are, and poore I am their straw.
> (sonnet #9)

The presence of a conventional form in some of the sonnets in "Astrophil and Stella" suggests a sensual preoccupation as part of the experience in that Sidney so clearly identifies the form with that preoccupation in the essay. There is, however, the possibility that poetry in a conventional form need not be solely preoccupied with base experience. That possibility is noted in the conclusion to the argument cited above:

> . . . yett thincke I when this graunted they will finde their sentence may with good manners put the last woordes formost, and not saye y^{t} Poettrye abuseth mannes witt, abut that manns witt abuseth Poettrye (p. 33).

The role of a conventional form in the poetry varies according to the persona involved. In Astrophil's case, the denial of convention is quite conventional as he asserts the supremacy of Stella's beauty through the subjective nature of his emotion and the naturalness of his verse. The first is the formal poetic pattern, the second the unbridled expression of natural emotion. Astrophil would be subject to the criticisms of "An Apology For Poetry." In Sidney's case, however, the denials of convention mask no conventional intention. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, the symbol of Stella is infinitely more complex for him than for Astrophil. The praise of earthly beauty is only one part of the artistic experience. Both participate in a complex vision of art and existence. In that his sole preoccupation in the poetry is not earthly beauty and sensual love, then, Sidney does not violate his aesthetic as laid forth in "An Apology For Poetry."

The second part of the attack on conventional love poetry is carried by those poems which assert that the experience of "Astrophil and Stella" is completely spontaneous and irrational. An example of this is found in sonnet number one:

> Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show,
> That the deare She might take some pleasure of my paine:
> Pleasure might cause her reade, reading might make her know,
> Knowledge might pitie winne, and pitie grace obtaine,
> I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
> Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertaine:

Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitfull showers upon my sunne-burn'd
braine.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's
stay,
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Studie's blowes,
And others' feete still seem's but strangers in my way.
Thus great with child to speake, and helplesse in my
throwes,
Biting my trewand pen, beating my selfe for spite,
"Foole", said my Muse to me, "looke in thy heart
and write".
(sonnet #1)

Although it is a little less straightforward than some of the others, this sonnet offers a juxtaposition of the artificial convention with the natural inspiration.[8] Once again it is possible to see this as but the expression of a late Petrarchan convention but also once again that possibility is modified by the role of the two personae. At one level, the love and poetic experience of the sonnet is Astrophil's and functions in a conventional pattern of enhancing one's own emotion by characterizing other's as artificial. From the point of view of an interest in poesy it provides the opening description of antithetical forms. The traditional love poet's approach is suggested in lines like: "Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertaine:/ Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow/ Some fresh and fruitfull showers upon my sunne-burn'd braine." This, in turn, is contrasted with Astrophil's experience as described in the final three lines: "Thus great with child to speake, and helplesse in my throwes,/ Biting my trewand pen, beating my selfe for spite,/ 'Foole,' said my Muse to me, 'looke in thy

heart and write'." Astrophil is concerned with the entire range of poetry as he utilizes it to satisfy his sensual quest.[9]

It is the central premise of this paper that, from Sidney's larger perspective, the experience of sonnet number one is more complex than from Astrophil's. That experience looks upon the poetry as a very complex form of art which transcends any commitment to the singular, either in form or experience. Astrophil, as a creation of the poetic imagination, is part of the base plot structure which the minds of the reader and artist must use in their movement beyond the temporal and physical to the experience of complete knowledge. His use of a conventional form is part of that experience, but only a part. As well, the poem is describing a love and a poesy that is more intense, more natural than that of the courtly lover. The balancing of antithetical possibilities in sonnet number one is continued throughout the poetry but never in a way that reduces the experience to a rote pattern. There is an uncertainty as to the emotion of the poetic voice, which the art encourages. This lack of commitment to a particular voice is introduced in the first sonnet where Sidney's concern for the entire range of poetry differs from Astrophil's as it is not motivated by a purely sensual quest. The possibility that this entire range is required because Sidney is seeking to describe the entire range of love, will be examined as this thesis develops.

Taking the experience of love as an analogue of the possession of complete knowledge, it is possible to argue a direct connection between Sidney's spanning of the range of love and the quest for final knowledge.[10] Such a connection denies any contradiction between Sidney's attack on contemporary love poetry in "An Apology For Poetry" and the complete experience of "Astrophil and Stella."

The suggestion that both Astrophil and Sidney are concerned with the entire range of poetry is borne out by the experience of the completed sequence. While sonnet one and eleven others criticize the convention and assert a type of poetic simplicity, many others artfully employ the rhetoric of Petrarchism:

> Queene Vertue's court, which some call Stella's face,
> Prepar'd by Nature's chiefest furniture,
> Hath his front built of Alabaster pure;
> Gold is the covering of that stately place.
> The doore by which sometimes comes forth her Grace,
> Red Porphir is, which locke of pearle makes sure:
> Whose porches rich (which name of cheekes endure)
> Marble mixt red and white do interlace.
> The windowes now through which this heav'nly guest
> Looks over the world, and can find nothing such,
> Which dare claime from those lights the name of best,
> Of touch they are that without touch doth touch,
> Which Cupid's selfe from Beautie's myne did draw.
> Of touch they are, and poore I am their straw.
> (sonnet #9)

While this sonnet employs the rhetoric of conventional love poetry, it is not committed solely to an earthly or sensual quest. From Astrophil's point of view, the sensual quest is dominant and the hyperbolic language participates in it. From Sidney's, however, the language of sonnet number nine

contains a deliberate doubleness which allows it to be experienced both as profane love poetry and as poetry describing something actually beyond the corporeal. Phrases like "Queene Vertue's court" and "this heav'nly guest" introduce and maintain an ambiguity in the poetic experience. The ignoring of the earlier disclaimers may pose an inconsistency for Astrophil who does not require a consistency in the artistic expression. In fact, for him to do so would detract from the sense of sexual urge which compels him in his quest. For him, that inconsistency can suggest an artfulness or a frustration in the romantic quest. For Sidney, however, rather than posing a contradiction, it suggests a doubleness in the poetic experience.

The second idea which is presented by the poems on poesy is the inadequacy of the poetic medium to convey the idea behind the poem. In a sense that idea can be summed up in the symbol of Stella so that the poems bewailing their inadequacy to describe her touch on the full range of ideas behind the poems. The doubleness, which has already been discussed in the form of the poetry, represents an attempt to describe the ineffable. At the level of contradiction or paradox, it offers the only possible description of the indescribable. The second approach to the ineffable is by negation, that is, by denial of similitude. Rather than participating in an inclusive movement, as is the case with the use of contradiction, this approach is accomplished

through exclusion. The movement is likewise infinite, but infinitely small until it contemplates a nothingness which, paradoxically once again, describes the ineffable. Sonnet fifty-five offers something of this approach:

> Muses, I oft invoked your holy ayde,
> With choisest flowers my speech to engarland so;
> That it, despisde in true but naked shew,
> Might winne some grace in your sweet skill arraid.
> And oft whole troupes of saddest words I staid,
> Striving abroad a foraging to go,
> Untill by your inspiring I might know,
> How their blacke banner might be best displaid.
> But now I meane no more your helpe to trie,
> No other sugring of my speech to prove,
> But on her name incessantly to crie:
> For let me but name her whom I do love,
> So sweete sounds straight mine eare and heart do hit,
> That I well find no eloquence like it.
>
> (sonnet #55)

The rejection of poetic multiplicity, coupled with the assertion that the only adequate vehicle to express the experience is Stella's name, is a poetic movement from the many to the one. It represents a microcosm of the rejection of all existence in an approach to an ineffable form and has existential as well as aesthetic implications. The movement which rejects multiplicity for simplicity in poetry is but one step away from lapsing into silence. The realization which must finally be faced is that the experience is incommunicable:

> My Muse may well grudge at my heav'nly joy,
> If still I force her in sad rimes to creepe:
> She oft hath drunke my teares, now hopes to enjoy
> Nectar of Mirth, since I Jove's cup do keepe.
> Sonets be not bound prentise to annoy:
> Trebles sing high, as well as bases deepe:
> Griefe but Love's winter liverie is, the Boy

> Hath cheekes to smile, as well as eyes to weepe.
> Come then my Muse, shew thou height of delight
> In well raisde notes, my pen the best it may
> Shall paint out joy, though but in blacke and white.
> Cease eager Muse, peace pen, for my sake stay,
> I give you here my hand for truth of this,
> Wise silence is best musicke unto blisse.
> (sonnet #70)

The echoing silence behind these lines accepts the real limitations on human accomplishment which "An Apology For Poetry" noted:

> The final ende is to leade and drawe us to as highe a perfection, as our degenerate soules, made worse by theyre clayey lodginges can be capable of (pp. 10-11).

At a certain point even poetry must lapse into silence.

As with the first argument, in this second of the poems on poesy the distinction between personae does not affect the form of the poetry. The difference between Astrophil's and Sidney's poetry is one of intention and commitment. Astrophil's assertion of the inadequacy of language to describe Stella is hyperbole seeking to consummate an earthly quest. A courtly compliment underlies each of his claims. For Sidney, however, the argument is much more in earnest. As will be shown in the next two chapters, the symbol of Stella for him is genuinely indescribable. Nothing in this life or in language is adequate to present it. Contradiction, paradox and silence are the only suitable poetic vehicles.

Philip Sidney's inclusion of a significant number of sonnets on poesy suggests an artistic self-consciousness which has implications beyond the thematic preoccupations of the poetry. It offers a detailed exploration of some major

aesthetic problems which is suggestive of concerns even beyond the art. A recognition of those concerns is dependent upon the separation between Astrophil and Sidney which allows a transcendence of the sequential thematic concerns of the poetry. By tying the subject matter of the sonnets to the argument of "An Apology For Poetry" it is possible to understand the concerns of love and poesy as capable of moving man toward perfection. The complex layering of personae, subject and form is partly justified by the stated need to obscure the sacred mystery at the core of the art. The sonnets on poesy, then, are perfectly consistent with the aesthetic of "An Apology For Poetry."

FOOTNOTES

[1]In The Sonets of Astrophel and Stella S. M. Cooper Jr. develops the argument for Sidney's sophisticated artistry. Sherod M. Cooper, Jr., The Sonets of Astrophel and Stella (The Hague, 1968), p. 21. His "Conclusion" sums this argument well:

> The range of Sir Philip Sidney's work--his translations, his criticism, his prose fiction, his poetry--makes him seem almost a one-man Pleiade. His interest in critical problems is not confined to the "Apologie", since statements and assumptions in his other works testify to his continuing concern with critical and stylistic matters. Consequently, his statement in sonnet I that the poet should "looke in . . . [his] heart and write" may be misleading unless one understands that the heart can provide only the material for love poetry, not the formal presentation. Once he has decided on a subject, the poet must consider the means by which he can most effectively present it. The art of poetry then comes into play. This study has been concerned with an analysis of various elements of Sidney's art in the sonnets of "Astrophel and Stella", and from this analysis a poet emerges who knew intimately the mechanics of verse, the resources of his language, the ways in which it could be manipulated to produce effective and ingenious statements. He was also adept in using his vocabulary, rhetoric, and imagery, not as decorative flourishes, but as the means by which an arresting statement could be evolved. Sidney may have looked in his heart for some of his ideas--how many is not quite clear--but when he began to write, he had the advantages of much study about technique and his early experimental verse to rest on. He also had the examples of at least his Italian, French, and English predecessors and contemporaries. Sidney, then, was a student of poetry and in his "Astrophel and Stella" he clearly demonstrated that English "is most fit to honor Poesie, and to bee honored by Poesie".

[2]Robert Kimbrough, Sir Philip Sidney (New York, 1971), p. 52. "Unlike Plato, Sidney denies the concept of the poet in a fine frenzy, but he is more 'Platonic' than Aristotle since Sidney shows less dependency on external nature. The reason is simple to find, Sidney was a Christian. . . . Regardless of personal orientation, we should be able to understand that for Sidney . . . the Bible contained literal truth. To them it was an established fact that man experienced a fall from grace, a separation from good, a loss of contact with perfection--and that his whole history has been a struggle to regain his former vision of wholeness. Because man's speculation remained inexact and fanciful until the Word was revealed, while his essential nature remained con-

stant since Adam, all myths found their true analogues in Scripture. To say that these myths were "replaced" by Scripture would imply a historic sense that the sixteenth century had not developed."

[3]See Chapter III, p. 22.

[4]Sidney's placement of poetry as medial is accomplished by his comparison of it with history and philosophy:

> Now doth the peerelesse Poett performe both. for what soeuer the Philosopher saith shoulde be doone: He giueth a perfect picture of it in som one by whome he presupposeth it was doone: So he coupleth the generall notion with the particulare example. "The Apology For Poetry," p. 14.

Poetry is not tied to the particular or to the general. Allegory's role in using the first to illustrate the second, without at the same time maintaining the identity of the two, denies the essence of poetry.

[5]Now doth the peerelesse Poett performe bothe. for what soeuer the Philosopher saith shoulde be doone: He giueth a perfect picture of it in som one by whome he presupposeth it was doone: So he coupleth the generall notion with the particulare example. A perfecte picture I saye: for he yeildeth the powers of the mynde an Image y^{t}, whereof the Philosopher bestoweth but a woordishe discriptionn; which doth neither strike, pearce, nor possesse the sight of the soul, so much as y^{t} others doth . . . "The Apology For Poetry," p. 14.

[6]Using a Coleridgean term to describe a response to this renaissance poetry is justifiable from a number of points of view. There is no denying that Coleridge and Sidney had radically different cosmic views and that the emphasis on didacticism in the "Apology" might prove particularly repugnant to Coleridge. Where the two meet, however, is in the view of symbol, regardless of the end to which the poet was striving. Even at the level of Sidney's didacticism, there is not as great a difference as may appear initially. The end to which the poet was striving need not be definable in strictly conventional and ethical terms. In that case the transformation sought offers a similar knowledge to the knowledge which Coleridge describes as attainable through the poetic experience.

Robert Kimbrough notes the affinities between Sidney's poetic and Coleridge's in Sir Philip Sidney. Kimbrough, Sir Philip Sidney, p. 53.

> "From Sidney, the step to Coleridge's 'repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am' seems short; but to Sidney the poet stands between God and second nature, whereas Coleridge gives nature the

intermediary position. But the terminology is justly shared, as is both critics' return to the principle of architectonic."

[7]The complex relation of poetic voice to the sonnets has led a number of critics to argue an unconventional separation between Astrophil and Sidney. The separation, which is being proposed in this thesis, bears an interesting relation to a number of those arguments. In Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression (Hallett Smith, Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 151), Hallett Smith argues for the role of Astrophil as a dramatic figure who discusses sonnets which do not appear in the sequence. Astrophil's description of his own poetry, then, would not refer to the poetry in which it was presented. In other words, the characterization of his poetry as basic or unconventional would not be contradicted by the conventional vehicles in which it was presented.

[8]David Kalstone notes the crucial role of this sonnet in defining and defending Sidney's poetic. David Kalstone, Sidney's Poetry (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 125.

> The sonnet opens Astrophel and Stella with a fanfare justifying Nashe's exuberant preface to the 1591 edition. It is a sonnet about style, the relation of style to matter, and it makes its declaration in splendid, controlled alexandrines, drawing the reader's attention immediately to the boldness of the sequence and to its capacity, at will, to vary from the accepted pentameter line.

[9]Astrophil's possible use of poetry in this way is noted by Neil L. Rudenstine. Neil L. Rudenstine, Sidney's Poetic Development (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 197.

> Part of the difficulty of these sonnets lies in the variety of functions they seem to serve and the different kinds of recommendations they seem to make. Since they are partially anti-Petrarchan in spirit, they can be used to support readings which prefer to emphasize what is plain, or Senecan, or 'sincere' in Sidney. At the same time, since anti-Petrarchan protests were common well before the 1580's, the Astrophel poems lend themselves equally well to the purposes of critics who wish to stress their conventional and strategical aspects. From this point of view, the poems provide Astrophel with a way of urging the claims of his 'real' love and mak available to him a convenient means of flattering Stella:

[10]In Poetic Experience, Thomas Gilbey, Poetic Experience, second ed. (1934; rpt. New York, 1967), Thomas Gilbey develops the idea of earthly love as an analogue of the

possession of final knowledge:

> Love applies itself to the object. Love goes out to the thing, not the thought of the thing. "Ecstasy is when the mind forgets everything else and desire is borne away to a thing. Under the former respect, love disposes to ecstasy, under the latter, love directly causes it" (p. 36).

Love goes beyond reasoned thought in its insistence upon the particular and concrete. The knowledge which it seeks is more complete, more conducive to peace than any mere movement of mind:

> In our present state, love is simpler than knowledge, nobler too, and more powerful. Simpler, in neglecting the composition of abstractions for the sake of the undivided concrete; nobler, in resolutely reaching for the subsisting real; more powerful, in that its desire exceeds the instructions of reason (p. 36).

CHAPTER III

The major concern of "Astrophil and Stella" is Stella. She serves as the motivation for Astrophil's expression and dominates and informs the artistic experience. It will be the purpose of this chapter to discuss this central symbol and to discover through an analysis of it how the poetry is shaped by it. The chapter will begin with a theoretical consideration of the nature of symbol. It will then look at the nature and role of Stella in "Astrophil and Stella" in light of this theoretical discussion. Finally, it will consider the tradition in which Stella-as-symbol functions.

Any theoretical discussion of symbol requires some understanding of the relationship between language and symbol. That relationship depends upon a particular view of language in which it does more than express or describe as it mysteriously embraces all reality. This view of language ties in with one aspect of the Christian tradition through the opening sections of the fourth Gospel. In it the Logos is placed as the primordial source of all knowledge and as the creative force behind the physical universe:

> In the beginning was the Word, and
> the Word was with God, and the word
> was God.
> The same was in the beginning
> with God.

> All things were made by him:
> and without him was not any
> thing made that was made.
> In him was life; and the life
> was the light of men.
> And the light shineth in darkness;
> and the darkness comprehended
> it not. 1

This view of language, which will be suggested as the antecedent of aesthetic language and knowledge, is part of a tradition as old as mankind which has only been disrupted in comparatively recent times.

As has already been indicated, several religious and philosophic traditions see the end of human life as peace through knowledge. For Sidney that course is repeatedly offered in "An Apology For Poetry":

> The finall ende is to leade and drawe us to as highe a perfection, as our degenerate soules, made worse by theyre clayey lodginges can be capable of. . . . But all one, and others, haueinge this scope to knowe: and by knoweledge to lifte vpp the mynde from the dungeon of y^{e} bodye, to the enioyeinge his owne devine essence (pp. 10-11).

The assertion of the singular ability of poetic knowledge to achieve the end of this human quest causes an equation between it and divine knowledge.[2] "An Apology For Poetry" assumes this equation throughout but there are several instances where it is pointedly asserted:

> Neither lett it be deemed to sawcye a comparisonn to ballance the highest pointe of manns witt with y^{e} effecacye of nature; but rather giue right honnor to the heauenly maker of that maker, who haueing made mann to his own likenes sett him beyonde and ouer all the worckes of that seconde nature which ~~is mere~~ in nothinge he sheweth somuch as in Poettrye when with

> the force of a devine breathe he bringeth things furthe surpassinge her dooeings with no small argument to the increditulous of y^{t} first accursed fall of Adam; (pp. 7-8).

Sidney's view of what divine knowledge encompasses, then, should be ascertainable from his assertions about poetry. He continues from this quotation to distinguish the poet from the philosopher and the historian. Both are unable to grasp complete knowledge, he asserts, because of the single dimension of their vision:

> But both [Philosophy and History] not haueing bothe; doe bothe halte. for the Philosopher setting downe with arguments the bare rule, is so harde of utteraunce and so mistie to be conceiued, that one that hathe no other guide but him shall waide in him till he bee olde before he shall finde sufficient cause to be honnest for his knowledge standeth so vppon the abstracte and generall, that happy is that mann who maye vnderstande him, and more happye that canne applie what he dothe vnderstande. One the other side the Historyann wayetinge, the percept is so tyde not to what shoulde be; but to what is to the particulare truthe of things; and not to the generall reasonn of things, y^{t} his example draweth no necessarye consequence: And therefore a lesse fruitefull doctrine (p. 14).

Poetry exceeds both history and philosophy because of its ability to incorporate them both in one complete statement. As an analogue of divine knowledge poetry must mirror its composition, that is, the simultaneous possession of the general with the particular must be a condition of the peace of final knowledge.

The relation between poetic knowledge and language has been prepared for by the discussion of the Logos as the primordial source of all knowledge. Poetic language becomes

the logical vehicle for the expression of divine truth. The connection between a fallen universe, redeemed by the Christic sacrifice, and a shattered sensibility, re-unified by the poetic experience, forms the basis for much of "An Apology For Poetry's" argument. The sacred and artistic traditions converge and become one.[3] This connection recurs throughout the essay's argument. The most obvious use of it is in the following quotation:

> Neither lett it be deemed to sawcye a comparisonn to ballance the highest pointe of manns witt with ye effecacye of nature; but rather giue right honnor to the heauenly maker of that maker, who haueing made mann to his owne likenes sett him beyonde and ouer all the worckes of that seconde nature which ~~is more~~ in nothinge he sheweth somuch as in Poettrye when with the force of a devine breathe he bringeth things furthe surpassinge her dooeings with no small argument to the incrediculous of yt first accursed fall of Adam . . . (pp. 7-8).

The other forms of knowledge are described in the "Apology" as history and philosophy. The first is the expression of the isolated particular while the second, the isolated general. Only the poetic brings the two together in a complete experience. In a sense, it serves to undo the error of human learning which has separated to control.

Language, as both the source and expression of poetic knowledge, uses symbols to convey that knowledge. The doubleness which informs poetic knowledge in its medial role between the sensuous and rational is mirrored in symbol. A symbol is achieved by the deliberate juxtaposition of contradictory or discordant parts. Underlying and informing this

doubleness must be a principle of unity, an idea which encircles the complete expression. Beauty, then, is found in the union of the seemingly diverse.[4] The poetic symbol is the formal expression of the unity. It actively participates in both the finite world of sense and the infinite realm of complete knowledge. It is both the vehicle and the end.

In "An Apology For Poetry" Sidney describes the art of poesy in a way that allows a particular view of symbol to be established. The end of poetry for him is the achievement of virtuous knowledge, to render man as similar to God as is possible:

> But all one, and others, haueinge this scope to knowe: and by knoweledge to lifte vpp the mynde from the dungeon of y^{e} bodye, to the enioyeinge his owne devine essence (p. 11).

The idea that poetry can lift man towards knowledge suggests that it is both a vehicle and an end. It draws upon the attitude toward language as the primordial source of all knowledge. Sidney expands upon this idea later in the essay by introducing the image of Christ as an example of one who combined the particular with the general to teach through poetry:

> Certainly euen our sauior Christ coulde as well haue giuen the morral comenn places of vncharitablenes and humblenes: as the devine narration of Diues and Lazarus: or of disobedience and mercye as that heauenly discourse of that lost childe, and the gratious father. But that his thorough searcheinge wisedome knewe the estate of Diues burninge in hell: and of Lazarus beinge in Abrahams bosome wolde more constantly (as it weare) enhabitt bothe the memorye and Iudgement (p. 16).

The all-encompassing divine knowledge portrayed here becomes the ideal of the poetic experience and is adequately expressed only by symbol. In addition, however, this description goes one step further in picturing Christ as a poet. The function of the poet is to transform the general into the particular and vice versa, to make the word the embodiment of a more tangible reality. The image of Christ in this role, then, is the expression of the poetic in metaphysical terms. Christ, as the second person of the Trinity, is the creative force of the fourth gospel:

> And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. 5

Christ as the "word made flesh" is the quintessential expression of the union of particular and general which the poem accomplishes. He is both the poem and the poet and his action of synthesizing experience extends from the limited sphere of human instruction to the cosmic expression of a unified heaven and earth.

Symbol, as the essence of poetic language, must participate in the doubleness which informs poetic knowledge. By placing poetry between philosophy and history Sidney has recognized the need to utilize both sensual and rational knowledge in poetic knowledge. The symbol, then, must also accept this doubleness and must move the perceiver out of the material world while paradoxically remaining a part of

it. That act is analogous to divine knowledge and, consequently, an element of supernatural influence is present:

> Neither lett it be deemed to sawcye a comparisonn to ballance the highest pointe of manns witt with y^e^ effecacye of nature; but rather giue right honnor to the heauenly maker of that maker, who haueing made mann to his owne likenes sett him beyonde and ouer all the worckes of that seconde nature which ~~is more~~ in nothinge he sheweth somuch as in Poettrye when with the force of a devine breathe he bringeth things furthe surpassinge her dooeings with no small argument to the incrediculous of y^t^ first accursed fall of Adam . . . (pp. 7-8).

In writing poetry man is both following the example of the creating godhead and acting under its inspiration.

Symbol is not to be confused with allegory. The first "partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible"[6] while the second remains outside as a representative of it. Allegory functions at the level of abstraction while symbol combines the abstract with the concrete. The relationship between allegory and the reality it seeks to represent must be understandable to the reason and must be subject to conventions of propriety. Symbol is beyond the rational as it attempts to provide an analogue to perception by the godhead. It recognizes and articulates the inter-relatedness of all creation and presents divine truths through the language of the temporal. Sidney's recognition and use of this distinction in "Astrophil and Stella" is illustrated by sonnet twenty-eight which was discussed in Chapter Two.

Sidney's idea of what complete knowledge of the godhead entails is suggested by his placement of poetry between

history and philosophy. As an analogue of that knowledge its experience must be analogous to the beatitude of complete knowledge. Poetry is the most effective teacher because of its ability to present the particular of history with the general of philosophy, to infuse the isolated moment with a moral content. Final knowledge of the godhead, then, must also combine the general with the particular in a paradoxical movement of omniscience.

Mankind's experience of poetry is both an intimation of, and a movement toward, the final knowledge of godhead. Symbol, as the essence of poetry, must serve as both an experience and a vehicle, it must combine the concrete of this world with the abstract of another. Participating in it man has a sense of beatitude.

Much of the criticism of "Astrophil and Stella" has focussed on the problem of locating the historical referrent for Stella. This approach encounters the same difficulty which critics attempting to locate Astrophil in Sidney have come up against. Once again, it ignores Sidney's own strictures on poetic creation and attempts to turn the poetry into history. It should not, however, be assumed that there is no need to view Stella in many significant ways as a real woman. Given the objective of poetry as a movement toward knowledge which encompasses both the particular and the general, Stella's presence as a mere concept would fail to fulfil the requirements of symbol. Referring back to

Sidney's categories, the poetry would become philosophy which is as unsatisfactory as history in achieving the goal of poetry.

For Stella to fulfil the requirements of symbol she must exist at one level of the poetry as an uncomplicated and earthly woman. Within the context provided by Astrophil's quest for sexual consummation, which forms the thematic basis for the sequence, her relation to the ineffable is extravagant language used by the frustrated lover in his quest. Astrophil never escapes his total preoccupation with her sensual presence and his poetry invokes all manner of metaphor to glorify that presence:

> The wisest scholler of the wight most wise
> By Phoebus' doome, with sugred sentence sayes,
> That Vertue, if it once met with our eyes,
> Strange flames of Love it in our soules would raise;
> But for that man with paine this truth descries,
> While he each thing in sense's ballance wayes,
> And so nor will, nor can, behold those skies
> Which inward sunne to Heroicke minde displaies,
> Vertue of late, with vertuous care to ster
> Love of her selfe, takes Stella's shape, that she
> To mortal eyes might sweetly shine in her.
> It is most true, for since I her did see,
> Vertue's great beautie in that face I prove,
> And find th' effect, for I do burne in love.
> (sonnet #25)

In this sonnet Astrophil is doing more than asserting the supremacy of Stella's earthly beauty over "vertue." By arguing for a conformity between that beauty and "vertue" he informs the image of profane Stella beyond any contrasting description. This argument allows for a kind of facile assertion that there is a perfect conformity between

Astrophil's love and a virtuous life. As sonnet twenty-five develops there is the possibility that the sensual love at the root of the experience will be forgotten as Astrophil transcends earthly beauty and possesses knowledge of the ineffable. This denial of metaphor, however, is deliberately undermined in the final assertion of the sonnet as the irreverent voice of an earthly lover is heard: "And find th' effect, for I do burne in love." The use of metaphysical imagery, then, serves only to underscore, albeit outrageously, the sensual attraction of Stella. It is one other tool in the quest of Astrophil for sexual consummation. That Astrophil is not seriously arguing for a conformity between virtue and Stella is illustrated by several other sonnets which use the difference between them to describe Stella's sexual attraction:

> It is most true, that eyes are form'd to serve
> The inward light: and that the heavenly part
> Ought to be king, from whose rules who do swerve,
> Rebels to Nature, strive for their owne smart.
> It is most true, what we call Cupid's dart,
> An image is, which for ourselves we carve:
> And, fooles, adore in temple of our hart,
> Till that good God make Church and Churchman starve.
> True, that true Beautie Vertue is indeed,
> Whereof this Beautie can be but a shade,
> Which elements with mortal mixture breed:
> True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made,
> And Should in soule up to our countrey move:
> True, and yet true that I must Stella love.
> (sonnet #5)

and

> A Strife is growne between Vertue and Love,
> While each pretends that Stella must be his:
> Her eyes, her lips, her all, saith Love do this,

Since they do weare his badge, most firmely prove.
But Vertue thus that title doth disprove,
That Stella (O deare name) that Stella is
That vertuous soule, sure heire of heav'nly blisse:
Not this faire outside, which our hearts doth move.
And therefore, though her beautie and her grace
Be Love's indeed, in Stella's selfe he may
By no pretence claime any maner place.
Well Love, since this demurre our sute doth stay,
Let Vertue have that Stella's selfe; yet thus,
Thus Vertue but that body graunt to us.
(sonnet #52)

Astrophil's argument for a consistency between his love and virtue in sonnet twenty-five, then, is but a sophisticated form of the descriptions of Stella's earthly glory. It goes beyond those poems which describe that glory by putting it in opposition to virtue and offers the ultimate courtly compliment in apotheosizing Stella and equating her with the final state of "vertuous knowledge." In a way that is central to the experience of the completed sequence, Sidney plays on a doubleness of language in sonnet twenty-five. The image of burning is the signal example of this playing as it simultaneously refers to the chaste and asexual burning in Plato and to Astrophil's burning in sensual love.

The deliberate use of ambiguous language in "Astrophil and Stella" serves at least two functions. From Astrophil's point of view it is a useful tool in constructing a courtly compliment. He plays with language to further his quest for a sexual consummation. From the point of view of a third party, however, Stella exists as a poetic symbol and her role as an earthly woman is only one part of the total symbolic experience. From that position, she participates in

both the realm of sense and of reason. The combination of the two places her with poetic knowledge which is an analogue of divine knowledge. Her physical being as a real woman becomes the "imaginative groundplot" for the poetic experience. The importance of Stella as a real woman is heightened by the nature of the movement toward knowledge which was discussed in Chapter One. The description of love as the most powerful mover toward divine understanding suggested the use of profane love as a symbol of the larger movement. The experience of earthly love is a possession, an attempt at total union which strives for the particular and the concrete. Stella, then, must have a concreteness for the experience of the love to participate in a larger love which is the supra-rational movement toward knowledge. Both Stella and the profane love are symbols which participate in both higher and lower forms. They serve as both a means of ascent and as the end of that ascent.

Whether Stella is based on Frances Walsingham, Penelope Rich or some other woman is, therefore, immaterial for the central concern of the poetry. What is important is that she be based on a real woman who was able to give the poet some sense of love as an "intimation of immortality." There is, however, one sense in which the historical identity of the woman is important and that is the possibility of the "Rich" sonnets[7] referring to her as Penelope Rich. While this need not drastically affect the sonnets' major concerns, it would

introduce an element of play which would modify the experience. That possibility will be considered in detail in Chapter Five.

To understand the nature of symbol in its medial role between rational and sensual knowledge it is necessary to consider those two other forms of knowledge. In the case of Stella-as-symbol, attention must be paid to Stella-as-profane woman and Stella-as-abstraction. Each participates in the composite of symbol. The role of either of these views of Stella is modified by the perceiver. In both cases there are two points of view, Astrophil's and Sidney's. Stella-as-profane woman is the immediate object of Astrophil's sensual quest. His view of her is dominated by her physical presence and his drawing of spiritual affinities with that presence is the expression of a sophisticated amorous pursuit. The single dimension of Astrophil's view is illustrated by his recognition of the incompatability of a virtuous life and his love:

> Your words my friend (right healthfull caustiks) blame
> My young mind marde, whom Love doth windlas so,
> That mine owne writings like bad servants show
> My wits, quicke in vaine thoughts, in vertue lame:
> That Plato I read for nought, but if he tame
> Such coltish gyres, that to my birth I owe
> Nobler desires, least else that friendly foe,
> Great expectation, weare a traine of shame.
> For since mad March great promise made of me.
> If now the May of my yeares much decline,
> What can be hoped my harvest time will be?
> Sure you say well, your wisdome's golden mine
> Dig deepe with learning's spade, now tell me this,
> Hath this world ought so faire as Stella is?
>
> (sonnet #21)

The denial of the previous argument in the final line is characteristic of many of the sonnets in "Astrophil and Stella."[8] Particularly in the case of those asserting the need for a virtuous life, the emotional intensity of that final line overturns the carefully developed structure of the preceding thirteen lines and leaves the poem dominated by the power of earthly love. In sonnet twenty-one that process of overturning is used by Astrophil to once again illustrate earthly beauty and love. The sense of his frustration underlying the poem contributes to the reasoned position which the first thirteen lines develop. That position invokes standards of art, philosophy, birth and society to weigh against Stella. Having established the emotion of frustration and the standards of propriety, Astrophil devastatingly illustrates the power of sensual love by overturning them in one line. To Astrophil, then, Stella is entirely a profane woman and the quest for her love is incompatible with a virtuous life.

To Sidney, Stella-as-profane woman is less complete. That image is modified by the relation between her and higher forms of being and conduct. The effect of the final, turning line for Sidney is not the obliteration of the preceding argument but rather offers a balance to the rational structure. By placing that line at the end of many of the sonnets, Sidney is able to keep the earthly present before us. Its emotional intensity is recognized by him and is

consequently balanced against thirteen other lines which are antithetical to it. A further example of this structure is found in sonnet seventy-one:

> Who will in fairest booke of Nature know,
> How Vertue may best lodg'd in beautie be,
> Let him but learne of Love to read in thee,
> Stella, those faire lines, which true goodnesse show.
> There shall he find all vices overthrow,
> Not by rude force, but sweetest soveraigntie
> Of reason, from whose light those night-birds flie;
> That inward sunne in thine eyes shineth so.
> And not content to be Perfection's heire
> Thy selfe, doest strive all minds that way to move,
> Who marke in thee what is in thee most faire.
> So while thy beautie drawes the heart to love,
> As fast thy Vertue bends that love to good:
> "But ah," Desire still cries, "give me some food."
> (sonnet #71)

The effect of this turning for Astrophil, that is the overwhelming of the earlier idea, has already been discussed. For Sidney, however, the effect of the final line is not this same overwhelming. The difference between his experience and Astrophil's results from their different points of view. Just as for the entire sequence, Astrophil experiences the emotion of the individual sonnet sequentially. There is a time pattern which he is a part of as he pursues the uncomplicated image of earthly woman. Stella's literal presence as a sensual object informs his response. For Sidney, however, that pattern is not binding because his experience is not circumscribed by the image of a physical woman. To him it has an effect only insofar as it controls Astrophil's quest. That quest is part of the symbolic structure which Sidney participates in. Sidney, therefore, views Stella-as-

profane woman and the earthly love connected with her as but one part of a symbolic configuration. Through his art he transforms that part from the particular of history into the complex experience of poetic symbol.

The role of Stella as an earthly woman is established in two ways. First, she is posited as the exciting cause of a sensual passion. Second, she is described in explicitly physical terms in a number of the sonnets. There are many sonnets in the sequence which describe Astrophil's earthly love for Stella. One relatively straightforward example is sonnet fifty-nine:

> Deare, why make you more of a dog then me?
> If he do love, I burne, I burne in love:
> If he waite well, I never thence would move:
> If he be faire, yet but a dog can be.
> Litle he is, so litle worth is he;
> He barks, my songs thine owne voyce oft doth prove:
> Bid'n, perhaps he fetcheth thee a glove,
> But I unbid, fetch even my soul to thee.
> Yet while I languish, him that bosome clips,
> That lap doth lap, nay lets, in spite of spite,
> This sowre-breath'd mate taste of those sugred lips.
> Alas, if you graunt only such delight
> To Witlesse things, then Love I hope (since wit
> Becomes a clog) will soone ease me of it.
>
> (sonnet #59)

The outrageous juxtaposition of Astrophil's love for Stella with the affection of a lap dog underscores its earthly nature. Admittedly the effect is one of contrast but the nature of the metaphor is such that it yokes the two experiences together.

The physical descriptions of Stella are generally ambiguous in a way that will be discussed later in the

chapter. Astrophil consistently uses a Petrarchan hyperbole to describe the beauty of her body:

> Queene Vertue's court, which some call Stella's face,
> Prepar'd by Nature's chiefest furniture,
> Hath his front built of Alabaster pure;
> Gold is the covering of that stately place.
> The doore by which sometimes comes forth her Grace,
> Red Porphir is, which locke of pearle makes sure:
> Whose porches rich (which name of cheekes endure)
> Marble mixt red and white do enterlace.
> The windowes now through which this heav'nly guest
> Looks over the world, and can find nothing such,
> Which dare claim from those lights the name of best,
> Of touch they are that without touch doth touch,
> Which Cupid's selfe from Beautie's myne did draw:
> Of touch they are, and poore I am their straw.
> (sonnet #9)

The excessive layering of metaphor in these lines hints at a significance beyond the corporeal as part of the experience. However, the systematic description of Stella's face, hair, mouth, lips, cheeks, teeth and eyes emphasizes the presence of a physical woman at the root of the symbol. The possibility of the hyperbole obscuring that fact is accounted for by the phrases "which some call Stella's face" and "(which name of cheekes endure)." The first is placed in the first line while the second is exactly half-way through the sonnet in line seven. Their effect is to invoke the physical at two crucial points in the poem. The emphasis on Stella's body reappears in a number of sonnets and is particularly important in sonnet fifty-two which is quoted above. The earthly woman, then, is very present in the poetic sequence. For Astrophil her physical presence is the overwhelming fact of the experience. For Sidney it is an important but limited

part of a complex symbol.

The role of the second type of knowledge, that is Stella-as-abstraction, also depends on the perceiver. As has already been indicated, Astrophil's experience is dominated by the physical presence of Stella and any awareness of her existence as an abstraction in him is used to form a conventional metaphor. His discussion of her in the light of principle serves to heighten the intensity of his love and power of her corporeal beauty. Astrophil sees no need for a combination of the physical and the abstract as his life is dominated by the physical quest. His use of extravagant metaphor participates in the convention of asserting the uniqueness of a woman's beauty through the public rejection of conventional forms. Those forms are, however, used on a number of occasions to describe Stella, as in sonnet nine which is quoted above. There is no significant contradiction between the use of these forms in some poems and their overt denial in others as both contribute to the quest for sexual union. As was discussed in Chapter Two, for Sidney the criterion used was its subject, not its form. For him, Astrophil's public denial of it on the one hand and his use of it on the other, would both be examples of abused poetry used to further a sensual quest. The criticism of Astrophil, which this attitude proposes, does not denigrate him in a way that destroys his effectiveness in the poetic experience. In that experience he is primarily a lover, not

a poet, and Sidney's use of him does not intend to set him up as a standard against which to measure the "Apology." His limitations in the realm of art do not demand a denial of the sensual and earthly which he represents. Rather, it posits them as an essential part of a larger experience which only poetry can present.

Sidney's use of the courtly convention in the poems differs significantly from Astrophil's. As is noted above, Astrophil's would be subject to the criticisms of "An Apology For Poetry" in its sole preoccupation with sensual love. Sidney's, on the other hand, uses the conventional form to describe more than the physical. First, through Astrophil the conventional preoccupation is present as part of a larger symbolic configuration. Second, the use by Astrophil of a conventional form allows for a deliberate ambiguity of language when the poetic experience is divorced from a sensual preoccupation. That ambiguity traces a relation between Stella and higher orders of experience, which accomplishes a conformity between the achievement of the poetry and the didacticism of the "Apology."

In many ways Stella's role as an abstraction parallels the image of a transcendent divinity. As will be shown shortly, the image patterns which are used to describe her can have an explicitly sacred connotation. Before examining those patterns, however, it is worth pausing to consider the method of description of Stella. As was noted in Chapter Two

there are a number of poems which bewail their inadequacy to express the experience of Stella. Despite this attitude, however, they do proceed to describe her whether by the creation of paradox or by a denial of similitude. Paradox is created by a deliberate doubling of the form and the content of the poetry. Conventional love poetry is combined with its covert denial and sexual, bawdy and profane images are juxtaposed to others that are chaste, proper and sacred. Viewed as a whole, the sonnet sequence becomes all inclusive as it spans the range from poetic simplicity to sophistication and from sensual earthly love to a love of divinity. This seemingly paradoxical union of "discordant parts" defies rational parameters and allows for a knowledge which partakes of the divine. The poetic expression of that knowledge is symbol.

Description of an ineffable is also possible by a progressive denial of similitude to all other existence. It systematically itemizes and discards each possible analogue until it contemplates a nothingness. Although this movement is expressed in many sonnets, the clearest example of it is found in sonnet fifty-five:

> Muses, I oft invoked your holy ayde.
> With choisest flowers my speech to engarland so;
> That it, despisde in true but naked shew,
> Might winne some grace in your sweet skill arraid.
> And oft whole troupes of saddest words I staid,
> Striving abroad a foraging to go,
> Untill by your inspiring I might know,
> How their blacke banner might be best displaid.
> But now I meane no more your helpe to trie,

Nor other sugring of my speech to prove,
But on her name incessantly to crie:
For let me but name her whom I do love,
So sweete sounds straight mine eare and heart do hit;
That I well find no eloquence like it.
(sonnet #55)

The poetic implications of this movement from the many to the one have been discussed in Chapter Two.[9] In addition, however, this movement infers an existential judgement shadowing the poetry. The idea that language is able to contain reality is another expression of the view of the Logos as the primordial source of all knowledge. The assertion that Stella's name is able to contain all knowledge, to express the ineffable as a symbol, has elements which suggest a connection between Stella and the Logos at this level of the poem.

The distinction between Astrophil and Sidney, which this thesis is asserting, significantly affects the impact of these arguments upon the poetry. Through the words of Astrophil, the use of paradox and denial of similitude participates in a conventional pattern with the end of glorifying earthly Stella. Through the words of Sidney, they are used to describe a genuinely ineffable object and experience. The two levels interact as the earthly love of Astrophil is part of the experience which makes up the symbol. That love is particularly appropriate as the legitimate parallel of the higher movement of love towards knowledge. Astrophil's use of convention would once again be subject to Sidney's criticism in "An Apology For Poetry." There is no denying

that Astrophil is aware of the difference between divine and profane love and that he frequently articulates that difference in the poetry. As was discussed in Chapter One, however, there is a clear distinction to be made between Astrophil's possession of knowledge and his commitment to it. Unless the poetry is to degenerate into a series of inconsistent and isolated expressions, his attitude toward the conflict between these loves must be tempered by his absolute commitment to the profane. Sidney's criticism, however, is abrogated in the total experience of the poetry as we see the convention as but one part of a larger pattern which contributes to complete knowledge. Through the voice of Sidney, the convention changes from a profane to a sacred form.

Discussing Stella as an abstraction requires a consideration of the image patterns which are used to describe her. The first thing to consider is her name, Stella. While a reasonably ordinary name, the word Stella is also the Latin noun for star.[10] In selecting this name for his heroine, Sidney appears to be deliberately playing on the doubling which has been suggested throughout the poetry. At this level that doubling allows for an ambiguity which informs both the abstraction and the woman:

> Stella, the onely Planet of my light,
> Light of my life, and life of my desire,
> Chiefe good, whereto my hope doth only aspire,
> World of my wealth, and heav'n of my delight.
> Why doest thou spend the treasures of thy sprite,
> With voice more fit to wed Amphion's lyre,
> Seeking to quench in me the noble fire,

Fed by thy worth, and kindled by thy sight?
And all in vaine, for while thy breath most sweet,
With choisest words, thy words with reasons rare,
Thy reasons firmly set on Vertue's feet,
Labour to kill in me this killing care"
O thinke I then, what paradise of joy
It is, so faire a Vertue to enjoy.

(sonnet #68)

Obviously, in the voice of Astrophil these lines are but the expression of a courtly convention. The hyperbolic effect of describing Stella as a heavenly body is perfectly consistent with that tradition. From Sidney's point of view, however, there is something more than hyperbole being used in them. While recognizing that Stella is an earthly woman, Sidney also literally sees her as participating in higher orders. The doubleness is accomplished both by deliberately ambiguous language and by a doubling of orders in the descriptions of Stella: "Light of my life, and life of my desire" and "World of my wealth, and heav'n of my delight." The paralleling of a transcendent with a corporeal order in these images allows Stella to reach from one to the other. This paralleling is concentrated in an image like "noble fire" which suggests profane, sexual activity purified by its relation to another order.

Sidney's procedure of drawing a relation between Stella and heavenly bodies is followed in many of the sonnets. The significance of the name "Stella" in the poems may be further developed by the role of a star in Christian theology. In the "Gospel According to St. Matthew" chapter two, verses nine and ten, the star is described as guiding the three

magi to the infant Christ:

> When they had heard the king they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.
> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Christ, as the second person of the Trinity, is the word made flesh of the "Gospel According to St. John" which was cited earlier. The star reveals the word made flesh or the Logos to the magi. As the Logos is the primordial source of all knowledge, the star can be seen as illuminating that knowledge. In using the name "Stella" to describe the central symbol of the sequence, then, Sidney is allowing it to participate in profane and sacred traditions. Stella can be viewed as simply a profane woman who is described by Astrophil's use of exaggerated hyperbole. On the other hand, she can be seen as a heavenly body revealing to Sidney and his readers higher forms of knowledge as attributed to the Logos:

> Stella soveraigne of my joy,
> Faire triumpher of annoy
> Stella starre of heavenly fier,
> Stella loadstar of desier.
> (from the Eighth song)

By using a poetic symbol to accomplish this purpose, Sidney invokes both of the conventions and makes the symbol the repository of, as well as the guide to, complete knowledge. This movement toward knowledge is complete and irresistible. Behind it is the force of love which strives for the

particular as well as the concrete.[11] Stella, as the "load-star of desire," is the irrational force which draws man towards divine understanding while, at the same time, being that understanding herself.

The second thing to consider at this level of the poems is the idea of virtue. It recurs throughout them and is often linked with Stella:

> Vertue alas, now let me take some rest,
> Thou setst a bate betweene my will and wit,
> If vaine love have my simple soul opprest,
> Leave what thou likest not, deal not thou with it.
> Thy scepter use in some old Catoe's brest;
> Churches or schooles are for thy seate more fit:
> I do confesse, pardon a fault confest,
> My mouth too tender is for thy hard bit.
> But if that needs thou wilt usurping be,
> The litle reason that is left in me,
> And still th' effect of thy perswasions prove:
> I sware, my heart such one shall shew to thee,
> That shrines in flesh so true a Deitie,
> That Vertue, thou thy selfe shalt be in love.
> (sonnet #4)

and

> Queene Vertue's court, which some call Stella's face,
> (from sonnet #9)

and

> The wisest scholler of the wight most wise
> By Phoebus' doome, with sugred sentence sayes,
> That Vertue, if it once met with our eyes,
> Strange flames of Love it in our soules would raise;
> But for that man with paine this truth descries,
> While he each thing in sense's ballance wayes,
> And so nor will, nor can, behold those skies
> Which inward sunne to Heroicke minde displaies,
> Vertue of late, with vertuous care to ster
> Love of her selfe, takes Stella's shape, that she
> To mortal eyes might sweetly shine in her.
> It is most true, for since I her did see,
> Vertue's great beautie in that face I prove,
> And find th' effect, for I do burne in love.
> (sonnet #25)

and

> O Eyes, which do the Spheares of beautie move,
> Whose beames be joyes, whose joyes all vertue be,
> Who while they make Love conquer, conquer Love,
> The schooles where Venus hath learn'd Chastitie
> (from sonnet #42)

and

> Soule's joy, bend not those morning starres from me,
> Where Vertue is made strong by Beautie's might.
> (from sonnet #48)

Like the name Stella, the idea of "virtue" is ambiguous. It can refer to a "conformity of life and conduct with the principles of morality," particularly in connection with ideas of chastity and sexual purity. At the same time, however, it can also refer to "the power of operative influence inherent in a supernatural or divine being." Connected with this second meaning is the use of "virtue" to describe one of the bodies of the celestial hierarchy which is an embodiment of that supernatural power.[12] There is obviously a connection between virtue's role in describing sexual chastity and supernatural power. The first is an expression of the second as it infuses a Christian ethical structure into mortal man.

Utilizing the connection between earthly morality and divine power through poetry does not necessarily indicate an understanding of that connection. The mortal lover, bound up with the goal of sensuous pleasure, feels none of the awe which is inspired by a real sense of divine immanence. For him, the idea of virtue is entirely described by a denial of

the sexual for limited and social justifications. Astrophil is such an earthly lover and his idea of Stella's virtuousness relates to his perception of her as a physical being and describes her sexual purity. That idea is tied in his poetry to higher forms of being connected with virtue, but this relation is once again an invoking of hyperbole to describe earthly excellence. The identification of the Platonic burning in virtue with the burning of sexual desire, which sonnet twenty-five accomplishes, is a signal example of Astrophil's sophistry as he pursues Stella: "It is most true, for since I her did see,/ Vertue's great beautie in that face I prove,/ And find th' effect, for I do burne in love." The pretended identification of virtue with profane love of Stella, which sonnet four attempts, complicates Astrophil's argument considerably. In this sonnet he argues that Stella's beauty transcends or overpowers sexual purity. There is a deliberate ambiguity as we do not know whether Stella represents a higher form of virtue or whether her profane beauty excites sexual desire even in "vertue." Both possibilities exist and both participate in Astrophil's courtly compliment.

For Sidney, however, the role of "virtue" in the poetic sequence is much more complex. In "An Apology For Poetry" he holds out the idea of "vertuous knowledge" as the goal which poetry strives towards:

> And so a conclusionn not vnfitly enswewe y^{t} as vertue is the most excellent restinge place for all worldly learninge to make his ende of: So Poetrye beinge y^{e} most familyare to teache it and most princely to moue towardes it, in the most excellent woorcke is the most excellent woorckeman (p. 23).

The exact nature of this "vertue" has been discussed in Chapter One. Poetry's role as existing between history and philosophy allows it to convey virtuous knowledge. The essence of history is its ability to describe the historical particular, while the essence of philosophy is its ability to present the abstract, the general. Neither can, in themselves, present virtuous knowledge. Only poetry, existing between them, has that ability. Poetry's facility arises from being able to present the general without denying the particular; to offer both in a form of complete vision. Virtuous knowledge, as capable of presentation only by poetry, must also participate in both the general and the particular:

> Soule's joy, bend not those morning starres from me,
> Where Vertue is made strong by Beautie's might,
> Where Love is chastnesse, Paine doth learne delight.
> And Humblenesse growes one with Majestie.
> (from sonnet #48)

The seemingly antithetical or contradictory elements which are combined in this description utilize the convention of describing the ineffable through paradox. In addition, however, they express the indescribable and seemingly discordant nature of a knowledge which brings peace. The motivating force which attains this knowledge is love:

Who will in fairest book of Nature know.
How Vertue may best lodg'd in beautie be.
Let him but learne of Love to read in thee;
Stella. those faire lines. which true goodnesse show.
(from sonnet #71)

The vehicle for the attainment of virtue. which is proposed in the "Apology," is poetry. As a poetic symbol Stella conforms to the strictures of the "Apology" in containing and moving men toward. virtue.

The third image to consider in discussing the symbol of Stella is light. Although much of the light imagery relates to Astrophil's response to Stella and will be the subject of Chapter Four, some of it is used to directly describe Stella. The major source of light in the poems is Stella's eyes:

When Nature made her chiefe worke. Stella's eyes,
In colour blacke, why wrapt she beames so bright?
Would she in beamie blacke, like painter wise,
Frame daintiest lustre, mixt of shades and light?
Or did she else that sober hue devise,
In Object best to knit and strength our sight,
Least if no vaile those brave gleames did disguise,
They sun-like should more dazle then delight?
Or would she her miraculous power show,
That whereas blacke seemes Beautie's contrary,
She even in blacke doth make all beauties flow?
Both so and thus, she minding Love should be
Placed ever there, gave him his mourning weed,
To honor all their deaths, who for her bleed.
(sonnet #7)

This sonnet contains many of the ambiguities which are raised by the image of light in the poems. At the level of Astrophil it utilizes hyperbole to describe Stella's eyes in a conventional pattern. The central preoccupation is Stella only in a circuitous way. All of the arguments of the poem

profess to concern themselves with the problem of why nature has combined beauty in black in Stella's eyes. The first three answers all pretend to ignore Stella's sexual role and work in the field of aesthetics or metaphysics. In the final argument, however, Astrophil repeats the procedure of other sonnets by crashing the metaphysical structure down to the level of an irreverent, earthly lover. The final assertion emphasizes Stella's role as a mortal woman and turns the esoteric arguments of the rest of the sonnet into a praise of earthly beauty. This conclusion contains the expected plaintive note of the rejected lover which, although it does not specifically refer to Astrophil, has a bitterness which informs his relation with Stella. The extent of that bitterness is heightened by the hyperbolic description of her which the rest of the sonnet has provided.

Through Sidney's eyes, however, these image patterns suggest a connection which is infinitely more complex than the profane love of Astrophil. The repetition of those patterns in songs and sonnets throughout the entire sequence suggests their centrality in the experience of "Astrophil and Stella." To understand the complex role of light imagery it is necessary to acknowledge some traditional associations which light has had in both eastern and western thought. Ideas of lightness and darkness have been used to describe a cosmic view, particularly the relation between the natural and the supernatural. In classical mythology images of

dazzling light are used in descriptions of the gods. The effect of the light on mortals is of significance to this consideration.[13] Plato used the traditional connection between light and divinity and Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists expanded on this idea by connecting light with divinity and darkness with corporeal existence.[14] It is difficult to trace the exact source of these ideas but their role in Zoroastrian teaching is significant.[15] Perhaps through Zoroastrianism, the idea of light and dark as describing the two orders of being was used by the Manichean heresy to inform the doubleness in their view of existence.[16] Predating and contributing to the Manichean heresy, was Gnosticism which argued that the visible world was created by the Demiurge and not by God and that the universe was the realm of darkness and evil while the transcendent order was the realm of light.[17] Lest it be thought that these views of light are important only to pagan and heretical teachings, it is worth considering the quotation from "The Gospel According to St. John," Chapter One, verses one to five, again:

> In the beginning was the Word, and
> the Word was with God, and the
> word was God.
> The same was in the beginning with
> God.
> All things were made by him; and
> without him was not anything made
> that was made.
> In him was life; and the life was the
> light of men.
> And the light shineth in darkness; and
> the darkness comprehended it not.

The connection between light and divinity is central to

orthodox Christian theology.

It is probably not possible to show that Sidney was consciously drawing upon any one of the doctrines cited above in his use of light imagery in "Astrophil and Stella." As a representative renaissance man, we can safely assume his awareness of them but the evidence of his poetry would suggest a mingling of some of the major ideas rather than a commitment to any one. Sidney's Christianity is tempered by Platonism and that obviously would encourage the use of light imagery in his descriptions of a religious experience.

The suggestion that we are dealing with another order of light than that associated with the burning of profane love recurs throughout the sequence in references to the paradoxical coldness of the light:

> Love borne in Greece, of late fled from his native place,
> Forc'd by a tedious proofe, that Turkish hardned hart,
> Is no fit marke to pierce with his fine pointed dart:
> And pleasd with our soft peace, staid here his flying race.
> But finding these North clymes do coldly him embrace,
> Not usde to frozen clips, he strove to find some part,
> Where with most ease and warmth he might employ his art:
> At length he perch'd himself in Stella's joyfull face,
> Whose faire skin, beamy eyes, like morning sun or snow,
> Deceived the quaking boy, who thought from so pure light,
> Effects of lively heat, must needs in nature grow.
> But she most faire, most cold, made him thence take his flight
> To my close heart, where while some firebrands he did lay,
> He burnt unwares his wings, and cannot fly away.
> (sonnet #8)

The bitter view of the light as cold in this sonnet is mainly a consequence of Astrophil's conventional role as a dejected

lover. He implies that a warm, passionate light would be more desirable. The coldness does not obliterate the dazzling beauty which is acknowledged early in the sonnet: "Whose faire skin, beamy eyes, like morning sun or snow." Astrophil's disappointment at Cupid's rejection does, however, dominate the poem. This negative view of the "pure light" is not allowed to inform the entire sequence:

> Those lookes, whose beames be joy, whose motion is delight,
> That face, whose lecture shewes what perfect beautie is:
> That presence, which doth give darke hearts a living light:
> That grace, which Venus weepes that she her selfe doth misse:
> (from sonnet #77)

The distinction between the light of Venus, then, and the light of Stella functions very much to glorify Stella as other than a sensual woman. By using the word "grace" as a synonym for the "living light" Sidney introduces a specifically Christian echo which will be discussed shortly. These lines describe a being beyond the bounds of earthly love or beauty. The absolute perfection of the beauty and love is suggestive of a transcendence which contains the end of all questing. The coldness which Astrophil initially ascribes to the light from this being is belied by the remainder of sonnet forty-two:

> O Eyes, where humble lookes most glorious prove,
> Only lov'd Tyrants, just in cruelty,
> Do not, o, do not from poore me remove,
> Keepe still my Zenith, ever shine on me.
> For though I never see them, but straight wayes
> My life forgets to nourish languisht sprites;
> Yet still on me, o eyes, dart downe your rayes:
> And if from Majestie of sacred lights,

> Oppressing mortal sense, my death proceed,
> Wrackes Triumphs be, which Love (high set) doth breed.
> (from sonnet #42)

For mortal man to have an unveiled view of dazzling divinity guarantees his obliteration. There are both Christian and pagan sources for this view[18] and Sidney's use of it argues for a connection between the light and the divine.

While further developing the courtly compliment to the earthly woman, Astrophil continues the ambiguity of metaphor in sonnet eighty-eight:

> Out traytour absence, darest thou counsell me,
> From my deare Captainesse to run away?
> Because in brave array heere marcheth she,
> That to win me, oft shewes a present pay?
> Is faith so weake? Or is such force in thee?
> When Sun is hid, can starres such beames display?
> Cannot heavn's food, once felt, keep stomakes free
> From base desire on earthly cates to pray?
> Tush absence, while thy mistes eclipse that light,
> My Orphan sense flies to the inward sight,
> Where memory sets forth the beames of love.
> That where before hart loved and eyes did see,
> In hart both sight and love now coupled be;
> United powers make each the stronger prove.
> (sonnet #88)

Sidney's use of star and sun images in this sonnet allows for a complex relation of the two layers of the poem. By referring to the other women as stars compared to Stella as the sun, he suggests a direct relation between earthly and heavenly beauty. It is possible that in using the sun image Sidney is deliberately playing upon the alchemic use of the sun to signify God.[19] Within the context of a sequence which describes heavenly beauty through the image of a star, this relation is made explicit. The connection between

Stella and a Christian divinity is particularly suggested by the poet's response while absent from her. Although denied the immediate vision of an incarnate godhead, the spark of faith imparted through grace sustains him: "Tush absence, while thy mistes eclipse that light,/ My Orphan sense flies to the inward sight,/ Where memory sets forth the beames of love" (from sonnet eighty-eight). There is an undeniable echo of a Christian view of fallen mankind redeemed by the Christic sacrifice, in these lines. The important role of memory in that view is noted and utilized by the poet. His use of words like "faith" to describe his love and "heavn's food" to describe Stella's influence emphasizes the connection between her and a Christian divinity.

Stella's cosmic implication is hinted at by the description of her eyes as the repository of "pure light." The paradoxical nature of that enfolding of the light in their blackness is a subject of much meditation. The Christian implications of that paradox will be discussed shortly. Those implications aside, however, Stella's eyes become an image of the night skies:

> Though dustie wits dare scorne Astrologie,
> And Fooles can thinke those Lampes of purest light,
> Whose numbers, wayes, greatnesse, eternitie,
> Promising wonders, wonder do invite,
> To have for no cause birthright in the skie,
> But for to spangle the blacke weeds of night:
> Or for some brawle, which in that chamber high
> They should still daunce to please a gazer's sight.
> For me, I do Nature unidle know,
> And know great causes, great effects procure:
> And know those Bodies high raigne on the low.

> And if these rules did faile, proofe makes me sure,
> Who oft fore-judge my after-following race,
> By only those two starres in Stella's face.
> (sonnet #26)

Although the reference to stars spangling the night sky is not directly to Stella, its use in a sonnet devoted to the influence of her eyes as stars makes an obvious connection between the two. In addition, the suggestion of purposiveness behind the stars attacks, by implication, the blindness of those who see Stella as only a profane woman. Through Astrophil's eyes that attack is part of the elaborate game in which he glorifies the earthly Stella. Through Sidney's, however, it is based on a much broader view which recognizes Stella as somehow genuinely participating in higher orders. The idea of Stella's presence as universal is further expanded in the Seventh song:

> Heare then, but then with wonder heare; see but adoring see,
> No mortall gifts, no earthly fruits, now here descended be:
> See, do you see this face? a face? nay image of the skies,
> Of which the two life-giving lights are figured in her eyes:
> Heare you this soule-invading voice, and count it but a voice?
> The very essence of their tunes, when Angels do rejoyce.
> (from the Seventh song)

As well as the phrase "image of the skies," the other descriptions of Stella in these lines obviously make a direct and persistent reference to something beyond an earthly being. Phrases like "No mortall gifts, no earthly fruits, now here descended be:", "two life-giving lights." and "soule-invading voice" all suggest something much more

than conventional hyperbole. Echoes of several theological traditions can be heard behind them.

The distinction between Stella and her eyes is not one which is rigidly adhered to in all of the poetry. "Eyes" often becomes singular and the transfixing beams occasionally originate from Stella's face:

> Flie, fly, my friends, I have my death wound; fly
> See there that boy, that murthring boy I say,
> Who like a thiefe, hid in dark bush doth ly,
> Till bloudie bullet get him wrongful pray.
> So Tyran he no fitter place could spie,
> Nor so faire levell in so secret stay,
> As that sweete blacke which vailes the heav'nly eye:
> There himselfe with his shot he close doth lay.
> Poore passenger, passe now thereby I did,
> And staid pleasd with the prospect of the place,
> While that blacke hue from me the bad guest hid:
> But straight I saw motions of lightning' grace,
> And then descried the glistring of his dart:
> But ere I could flie thence, it pierc'd my heart.
> (sonnet #20)

The connection between a "heavenly eye" and the godhead has ancient antecedents. A primitive view likened God to an all-seeing eye. In describing Stella as a "heavenly eye," then, Sidney may well be drawing on this tradition. This sonnet also illustrates another aspect of the eye-symbol which reappears throughout many of the poems, that is, the idea of Cupid concealing himself in the eye and being the instrument of man's enthrallment. Although at the level of Astrophil this simply extends the metaphor of the beams from Stella's eyes as arrows which excite earthly love, at the more complex level it plays on the role of love in motivating mankind toward divine knowledge. The seeming playfulness of using

the pagan figure of Cupid to describe this force simply complements the poetic pluralism referred to in Chapter Two. The two types of love inform each other and contribute to a movement which is both physical and spiritual. Love is excited by the perfection of beauty and while this may be imaged through the figure of Cupid by Astrophil, it is perfectly understandable in the context of Stella's pure beauty which has already been described.

The paradoxical union of light in darkness, which characterizes Stella's eyes, is used to further inform the mystery of her beauty. Sonnet seven (which is quoted above) is primarily concerned with discussing the possible reasons for that union. The structure of that discussion is of importance to this consideration of the nature of the light. First, Sidney asks "Would she in beamie blacke, like painter wise/ Frame daintiest lustre, mixt of shades and light?". This question suggests artifice in earthly beauty but it also raises the complexity of artistic symbol. The nature of that symbol is a union of the seemingly discordant to present a comprehensive whole. Second, he asks "Or did she else that sober hue devise,/ In object best to knit and strength our sight,/ Least if no vaile those brave gleames did disguise,/ They sun-like should more dazle then delight?". This is an obvious reference to the dazzling and destructive effect of an unimpeded view of divinity on mortal man. It is the same argument discussed around sonnet forty-two.

Third, Sidney asks "Or would she her miraculous power show,/ That whereas blacke seemes Beautie's contrary,/ She even in blacke doth make all beauties flow?". This question raises one of the possible approaches to divinity, that is the all-inclusive movement which sees it as describable only through a union of the seemingly antithetical. Finally, Sidney asserts "Both so and thus, she minding Love should be/ Placed ever there, gave him this mourning weed,/ To honor all their deaths, who for her bleed." In placing this as the final argument of the poem, Sidney invokes Astrophil's argument which has shadowed the sonnet throughout. There is an explicit acknowledgement of the doubleness in the artistic and religious experiences in the phrase "Both so and thus" which yokes the profane and sacred together in each.

To understand Sidney's use of the light-in-darkness symbol it may be useful to acknowledge the Christian antecedent of the idea of divine mysteries shrouded in darkness. In "The First Epistle of Paul The Apostle to The Corinthians," Chapter Thirteen, verses eleven and twelve, St. Paul makes the following statement:

> When I was a child, I spake as a child,
> I understood as a child, I Thought
> as a child: but when I became a man,
> I put away childish things.
> For now we see through a glass darkly;
> but then face to face: now I know
> in part; but then shall I know even
> as also I am known.

The movement from darkness to light is the same and the final state is characterized by the possession of knowledge.

It is a knowledge which grasps both the particular and the general.

The fourth thing to consider while discussing Stella as an abstraction is the recurrence of the word "grace" in connection with her. Reference has already been made to its appearance in sonnet number seventy-seven but, in addition, the word "grace" appears in at least twenty of the other sonnets and two of the songs. Generally it is used to describe the power and favour which radiates from Stella:

> Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show.
> That the deare She might take some pleasure of my paine:
> Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know.
> Knowledge might pitie winne, and pitie grace obtaine.
> (from sonnet #1)

and

> Queene Vertue's court, which some call Stella's face,
> Prepar'd by Nature's chiefest furniture,
> Hath his front built of Alabaster pure;
> Gold is the covering of that stately place.
> The doore by which sometimes comes forth her Grace,
> Red Porphir is, which locke of pearle makes sure:
> (from sonnet #9)

and

> Her heart, sweete heart, is of no Tygre's kind"
> And yet she heares, yet I no pitty find;
> But more I crie, lesse grace she doth impart.
> (from sonnet #44)

and

> Sweet swelling lip, well maist thou swell in pride,
> Since best wits thinke it wit thee to admire;
> Nature's praise, Vertue's stall, Cupid's cold fire,
> Whence words, not words, but heav'nly graces slide.
> (from sonnet #80)

and

> Stella is sicke, and in that sick bed lies
> Sweetnesse, that breathes and pants as oft as she:
> And grace. sicke too, such fine conclusions tries,
> That sickenesse brags it selfe best graced to be.
> (from sonnet #101)

There is obviously a contrived ambiguity in the use of "grace" in these lines. That ambiguity is possible because of the various meanings of the term "grace." They range from "[a] pleasing quality, gracefulness" to "seemliness, becomingness, favourable or creditable aspect" to "[a] favour" to "a courtesy-title now only given to a duke, a duchess or an archbishop" to "the free and unmerited favour of God as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowing of blessings" to "the divine influence which operates in men to regenerate and sanctify, to inspire virtuous impulses, and to impart strength to endure trial and resist temptation."[20] At the level of Astrophil's courtly compliment to Stella, the use of the word "grace" suggests her beauty, charm and sense of propriety. The quotations from sonnets number one, eighty and one hundred and one emphasize this level of interpretation. Sonnet number nine, however, suggests a more complex intention in its "The doore by which sometimes comes forth her Grace." There is, of course, a continuation of Astrophil's courtly compliment here but there is also a suggestion of the form of address to an archbishop. That, in turn, raises the specifically theological reading of the term which is "the unmerited love and favour of God toward man" or "divine influence acting in man to make him pure and

morally strong." An emphasis on this latter reading of "grace" would seem appropriate in the quotations from sonnets seventy-seven and forty-four which have been cited above. By suggesting a theological interpretation of the word "grace" we can relate it to the poetic transformation which has already been discussed. Grace is imparted to mankind through Christ, the second person of the Trinity or Logos. Christ, in redeeming fallen mankind through the power of grace, allows an approximation of divine knowledge in this life and an assurance of it afterwards. The poetic symbol in joining the particular and the general accomplishes the same end and, in fact, shares in the Christic image through the Logos. By suggesting that Stella emanates a kind of Christian grace, then, Sidney is arguing for her ability to redeem mankind as a sacred and poetic symbol.

As well as the images of Stella's name, light, virtue and grace there are numerous references in "Astrophil and Stella" which suggest a connection with divinity. A number of them have been included in earlier quotations but some others are:

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

and

> For beautie beautifies,
> With heavenly hew and grace,

The heavenly harmonies;
And in this faultless face,
The perfect beauties be
A perfect harmony.
(from Seventh song)

and

Stella soveraigne of my joy,
Faire triumpher of annoy,
Stella starre of heavenly fier,
Stella loadstar of desire.
(from Eighth song)

and

Love moves thy paine, and like a faithfull page,
As thy lookes sturre, runs up and down to make
All folkes prest at thy will thy paine to 'swage,
Nature with care sweates for her darling's sake,
Knowing worlds passe ere she enough can find
Of such heaven stuffe, to cloath so heavenly mynde.
(from sonnet #101)

and

What if new beauties see,
Will not they stir new affection?
I will thinke theye pictures be,
(Image like of Saints' perfection)
Poorely counterfeting thee.
(from Eleventh song)

Admittedly, each of these quotations contains references to Stella which can be justified by the courtly convention. The description of her as perfect beauty and as Astrophil's sovereign participates in the expected responses of the earthly lover to the woman. What is of particular interest, however, is the persistent use of metaphors which bear a direct relation to theological readings. The number of references to Stella in the sequence which do not contain this ambiguity is relatively small. This suggests a concern with something more than profane love working here.

For Sidney, then, Stella mirrors divinity as a complex symbol. The tradition of using the figure of a woman to manifest divinity has ancient pagan and Christian antecedents. The idea of a feminine element in the godhead is traceable through many traditions stemming from Greek and Hebrew sources.[21] Platonism utilized the idea of a Venus Coelestis to describe that feminine element as the "intelligence of the Angelic Mind"[22] while Cabalist teachings dwelt on the idea of the Shekinah as somehow an indwelling feminine part of the godhead. Out of both traditions emerged the idea of the Sophia as the repository of wisdom in the godhead and the visible manifestation of it. The connection between the Sophia and the Logos is obvious when we recall that the Logos is the primordial source of all knowledge. Through the Logos as the word, poetic symbol also participates in the tradition of wisdom. In using a woman to symbolize divinity, then, Sidney was participating in a tradition which allowed him to unify the aesthetic of "An Apology For Poetry" with the experience of the poetry. The end of the poetic quest is the acquisition of virtuous knowledge which suggests a comprehensive union of both particular and general. The Sophia, as the image of wisdom in the godhead, represents the knowledge and so is the end of the quest. Stella, as a poetic symbol and a woman, participates in the tradition of wisdom through both the Sophia and the Logos. She becomes the conclusion of a metaphysical quest.

Poetic symbol is able to describe a view of reality which asserts a unity or oneness in all existence. The symbol of Stella, however, goes one step further in directly drawing the relation between the poetic and the sacred in symbol. A cosmic expression of the relation of particulars is the relation of the particular to the general in complete knowledge which is possessed by the godhead. The idea of complete knowledge possessed by the godhead, however, is not one which allows separation. The godhead not only possesses complete knowledge, it is complete knowledge which is expressed through the Logos. Godhead, then, is both general and particular and consequently, is informed by a doubleness. Poetic symbol expresses a view of the doubleness of all being from the corporeal particular to the image of God, which is itself a symbol. It offers a "unity in multeity."

The idea of a doubleness in all existence does not stop short of the forces which affect mankind in this life. Love has already been identified as the major such force and its double role has been indicated through the poetry. Although the figure of Venus is used specifically in the sonnets to suggest earthly, sensual love her role as a conventional figure is more complex than that. As was indicated above, she too participates in the doubleness informing the nature of love. Venus traditionally remains a virgin despite frequent sexual encounters. Her love is simultaneously sensual and chaste and, as such, is similar to the complete and

higher love which motivates man in his movement toward God. By using an earthly woman and a profane love affair as the base for his poetic sequence, Sidney was participating in a tradition which sees love in its metaphysical context.

Where the idea of a union of opposites to describe the godhead originated is not precisely ascertainable. It is possible, however, to trace a particular line of such thought in the Renaissance. Nicolaus Cusanus had propounded the view that the visible manifestation of the One must be manifold. His thought was introduced into Elizabethan England by Giordano Bruno.[23] In de Gli Eroici Furori,[24] which is dedicated to Sidney, Bruno argues for a union of opposites in perception of the One:

> Mar. You see then, Cesarino, how this frenzied one is right in resenting those who reprove him as captive of a base beauty to which he offers vows and tablets. For his captivity does not make him a rebel against the voices which call him to a higher beauty, inasmuch as ignoble objects derive from lofty objects and are dependent upon them, and it is from these base objects that he is able to have access to those higher objects in due degree. Those objects, if not God, are things divine and are living images of God. . . . 25

and

> Ces. God, the divine beauty and splendor, shines and is in all things; but to me it does not seem erroneous to admire him in all things according to his mode of communication. 26

The suggestion here of divinity shadowing itself forth through earthly existence would seem to imply more than the Platonic doctrine of physical beauty as a kind of mirror of the divine. There is actually the suggestion of participation by the

divine in this beauty. All existence, then, participates in godhead. Bruno goes on to single out the experience of earthly love. Because of its obvious relevance to "Astrophil and Stella," it is worth quoting this passage at length:

> Mar. Because in this discordant life all our consolations are accompanied by discomforts which are equally abundant. For example, the fear of a king in the peril of losing his kingdom is greater than the fear of a beggar who risks the loss of ten farthings; the solicitude of a prince for his republic is more urgent than the care of a shepherd for his flock of sheep; but the pleasures and delights of the king and the prince are perhaps greater than the pleasures and delights of the shepherd. Therefore to love and aspire higher is accompanied by the greater glory and majesty, but is also accompanied by the greater care, sadness and pain. I mean that in our present state where one contrary is always joined to the other, the greatest contrariety is always found in the same genus, and, consequently, with respect to the same matter, even though these contraries may not exist simultaneously. And similarly, in proportion one can apply to the love of superior Cupid those things which the Epicurean poet affirms of vulgar and animal love when he says,
>
> Fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum,
> Nec constat quid primum oculis manibusque fruantur
> Quod petiere, premunt arte, faciuntque dolorem
> Corporis, et dentes inlidunt saepe labellis
> Osculaque adfigunt, quia non est pura voluptas
> Et stimuli subsunt qui instigant laedere id ipsum,
> Quodcunque est, rabies, nude illa haed germina surgunt.
>
> Sed leviter paenas frangit Venus inter amorem,
> Blandaque refraenat morsus admixta voluptas;
> Namque in eo spes est, unde est ardoris origo,
> Restinqui quoque posse ab eodem corpore flammam.[27]
>
> It is by these enticements, then, that nature's power and skill cause one to be consumed by the pleasure of what destroys him, bringing him content in the midst of torment and torment in the midst of every contentment. for nothing results from an absolutely uncontested principle, but everything results from contrary principles through the triumph and conquest of one of the contraries. 28

This union of contraries, then, may go a long way to explain the ecstasy and the agony of "Astrophil and Stella." A

doubleness informs all experience and it is only through that doubleness that one can approximate to a vision of the ineffable. This doubleness, however, should not be confused with that proposed by Gnosticism or Manichaeism.[29] It shares none of the moral taint attached to the world of darkness and matter and argues instead for a divinity immanent in all existence. It is not possible, of course, to trace a direct relation between Bruno's views and those of Sidney but the dedication to de Gli Eroici Furori argues for some contact and exchange between the two.[30] In addition, the coincidence of ideas contained in de Gli Eroici Furori and "Astrophil and Stella" suggests, at the very least, a mutual participation in a number of theological traditions.

The justification for seeing more in "Astrophil and Stella" than the conventional expression of a pedestrian love affair comes from "An Apology For Poetry." In it Sidney systematically itemizes his view of what the "right poet" should be and argues for the use of poetry to move mankind toward divinity (in the sense of knowledge). As a reading of the poems is available which conforms to his major poetic strictures and which relates to significant thought currents in Elizabethan England, there is no reason to assume a disjuncture between his poetic as articulated in the essay and as practised in the poetry. The argument for a serious reading of "Astrophil and Stella," which has ontological implications, is further developed through the role of Astrophil in the poems. That role will be the concern of Chapter Four.

[1] "The Gospel According to St. John," The Holy Bible (King James Version), Chapter I, verses 1 to 5.

[2] Robert Kimbrough comments on these lines in Sir Philip Sidney. Robert Kimbrough, Sir Philip Sidney (New York, 1971), p. 47. "Sidney assumes--and it would be hard to fault him on philosophical, theological, or psychological grounds, in his age or ours--that the end of life is the fullest, richest development of the human being. In his terms 'the finall end is, to lead and draw us to as high a perfection, as our degenerate soules made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of.' The means of fulfillment is through 'purifying of wit . . . enriching of memorie, enabling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit,' all of which he simply calls learning. Regardless of the number of disciplines dedicated to learning, all have the same end: 'to know, & by knowledge to lift up the minde from the dungeon of the bodie, to the enjoying his owne divine essence.' Although most branches of learning end only in specialized knowledge, they still subserve 'the highest end of the mistress knowledge [,] by the Greeks [called] Arkitecktonic, which stands as I thinke, in the knowledge of a mans selfe, in the Ethike and Politique consideration, with the end of well doing, and not of well knowing onely.' In sum, 'the ending end of all earthly learning being vertuous action, those skils that most serve to bring forth that, have a most just title to be Princes over al the rest'."

Kimbrough's pre-occupation with the structure of the "Defence" prevents him from exploring the seminal role of these lines in relation to other than their most explicit and overt meaning. Only by exploring the nature of "vertuous knowledge" is it possible to see more in them than a prescription for an ethical life.

[3] Thomas Gilbey develops the relation between the poetic and the sacred in Poetic Experience. Thomas Gilbey, Poetic Experience, second ed. (1934; rpt. New York, 1967), p. 109. "He [the saint] must act, be the greater poet, the maker of sacrifice, or rather the sharer. His love embraces the cross on which the Logos of all creation was crucified to save everything human. He joins in the work which gathers all the fragments so that nothing is lost."

[4] Samuel Taylor Coleridge provided an expression of this same artistic principle two hundred years later:

"And what then is the beautiful? What is beauty? It is, in the abstract, the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse; in the concrete, it is the union of the shapely (formosum) with the vital. In the dead organic it depends on regularity of form, the first and lowest species of which is the triangle. . ." Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "On Poesy or Art," English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins (New York, 1967), p. 493.

[5] "The Gospel According to St. John", Chapter I, verse 14.

[6] Chapter II, pages 7-10.

[7] The "Rich" sonnets being numbers 37 and 24. For a more detailed discussion of the role of these sonnets in "Astrophil and Stella", see Chapter V, pages 8 and 9.

[8] Many sonnets in "Astrophil and Stella" experience this "inversion" in their final line. Several of the more noteworthy are sonnets 5, 6, 52 and 71.

[9] Chapter II, pages 20 and 21.

[10] "stella -ae f. star; constellation;" John C. Traupman, ed., The New Collegiate Latin & English Dictionary (Philadelphia, 1966), p. 294.

[11] In Poetic Experience Thomas Gilbey discusses the role of love in the movement toward knowledge. Gilbey, Poetic Experience, p. 36. "In our present state, love is simpler than knowledge, nobler too, and more powerful. Simpler in neglecting the composition of abstractions for the sake of the individual concrete; nobler, in resolutely reaching for the subsisting real; more powerful, in that its desire exceeds instructions of reason."

[12] The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1961), vol. XII.

[13] Perhaps the best known example of the effect of an unimpeded view of the gods by mortals is found in "The Story of Semele" in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Ovid: Metamorphoses, ed. R. Humphries (Bloomington, 1969), pp. 64-66.

[14] "[matter] . . . obscures the light which shines upon the soul, by mingling its own darkness with it." W. R. Inge, The Philosophy of Plotinus (New York, 1968), p. 131.

[15] Bulfinch's Mythology (London, 1967),pp. 224-225 and S. Runciman, The Medieval Manichee (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 171-179.

[16] Runciman, The Medieval Manichee, p. 173.

[17] Runciman, The Medieval Manichee, p. 173.

[18] The pagan example of this kind of encounter is noted in footnote 14. In Judao-Christian teaching a similar encounter is found between Moses and God in "Exodus."

[19] The relation between the sun and God in alchemy was drawn to my attention by Sheila Roberts.

[20] The Oxford English Dictionary, vol. IV.

[21] Frank Manley, ed., John Donne: The Anniversaries (Baltimore, 1963), p. 19.

[22] Erwin Panofsky, Studies In Iconology, second ed. (1939; rpt. New York, 1962), p. 142.

[23] Giordano Bruno was in England from 1583 to 1585.

[24] Giordano Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, translated by Paul Engene Memmo, Jr. (New York, 1966).

[25] Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, p. 185.

[26] Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, p. 185.

[27] Lucretius, De rerum natura iv. 1077-1087:
". . . The passions of lovers fluctuate in wavering uncertainty and they cannot agree what things to enjoy with their eyes and hands. For as they seek their joy they press the object of love so tightly that they bring pain to the body. And they kiss so hard that their teeth drive into their lips, because their desire is not unmixed. They are goaded on by an instinct to injure what ever sprouts forth from this germinating madness. But in love Venus lightens the penalties she imposes, and moderates the anguish by blending pleasure with pain; for in love there is the hope that the flame of passion may be quenched by the same body that fanned it. . ." Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, pp. 186-187.

[28] Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, pp. 186-187.

[29] "The condemnation of the flesh, which is now viewed by some as characteristically Christian, is in fact of Manichaean and 'heretical' origin." Denis DeRougemont, Love in the Western World, translated by Montgomery Belgion (New York, 1956), p. 82.

[30] "Dedicated to the Most Illustrious Sir Philip Sidney" Giordano Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, p. 59.

CHAPTER IV

Chapter Three has proposed that the ambiguities that pervade "Astrophil and Stella" are part of a symbolic doubleness which is the central principle of the sequence. Its approach has been to analyse the metaphors used to describe Stella and to trace a deliberate ambiguity in them. This chapter will continue the argument for a doubleness but will do so through Astrophil's experience in the sequence. Inevitably, that experience will further contribute to the symbolic nature of Stella but will also allow some consideration of the emotion of love.

One of the first problems confronting critics of "Astrophil and Stella" has been the description of the nature of Astrophil's infatuation as presented in sonnet number two:

> Not at first sight, nor with a dribbed shot
> Love gave the wound, which while I breathe will bleed:
> But knowne worth did in mine of time proceed,
> Till by degrees it had full conquest got.
> I saw and liked, I liked but loved not,
> I loved, but straight did not what Love decreed:
> At length to Love's decrees, I forc'd, agreed.
> Yet with repining at so partiall lot.
> Now even that footstep of lost libertie
> Is gone, and now like slave-borne Muscovite,
> I call it praise to suffer Tyrannie;
> And now employ the remnant of my wit,
> To make my selfe believe, that all is well,
> While with a feeling skill I paint my hell.
>
> (sonnet #2)

The infatuation is reluctant and painful. Only slowly does

the power of Stella transfix Astrophil and, once it is accomplished, he bewails his entrapment. The movement is one from freedom to imprisonment and is devoid of any joy.

In the courtly convention we expect a somewhat different approach to love. The lover is dazzled by his lady's first appearance, instantly transfixed by her eyes, slain at a glance. Astrophil's response, however, does not conform to this. It is only at the end of a slow and painful process that he acknowledges his love and then in terms which suggest extreme misery. This seeming lack of convention, however, may argue a very conventional pattern. Astrophil's use of the courtly convention may be the later form discussed in the previous chapters. In it, the courtly lover denies the conventional pattern to assert the uniqueness of his love. Astrophil's assertions in sonnet two are not explicit in their denial of convention. He does not cite other love poets and show his love, by contrast, standing apart in its purity. Once again, however, reference must be made back to "An Apology For Poetry." In it, Sidney criticizes conventional love poetry because its objective is earthly passion.[1] The form is immaterial and, in fact, can be used by the "right poet" to move towards virtuous knowledge. Astrophil's quest in "Astrophil and Stella" is for a physical possession of Stella. Numerous other sonnets in the sequence justify this view. Given this objective, therefore, the relationship at the base of sonnet two is a conventional one. It is

proper to conclude that Astrophil's seemingly unconventional approach is conventional in its intent and that in its "uniqueness" it is attempting to elevate this love relationship beyond those presented through a conventional form. That elevation would serve to raise Stella as the object of a "unique" emotion.

Describing Astrophil as solely a conventional lover, however, runs the risk of ignoring the complexity of his character as demonstrated by his use of metaphor throughout the sequence. That use is dictated by the enveloping doubleness of the sequence but, nevertheless, has important character formation implications for Astrophil. Sonnet two may well be a conventional poem seeking to praise an earthly love but its placement in the sequence argues something more with respect to Astrophil's entry into love. Applying a kind of historical reality to Astrophil makes him subject to all of the aberrations of the flesh which Christian man is subjected to. His falling in love, then, would not be a sweet unfolding, a pleasant drawing in. Rather it would be fraught with conflict and dismay precisely because of the very physical nature of the attraction. Once the commitment was given, however, the lover would be freed of the initial torment to express his love through the poetic sequence.

Much of sonnet two is written in retrospect. It is, therefore, both the retelling of a painful entrance into love and a conventional celebration of that love. That the

final sextet of the sequence reverts to the present tense and characterizes Astrophil's state as hellish, simply illustrates his role as a complex figure still subject to social and personal pressures. His physical love for Stella overcomes those pressures as the sequence develops.

It is, however, the argument of this thesis that in Sidney's case the conventional objective of earthly union is a limited part of a complex experience of knowledge and, consequently, the unorthodox description of the infatuation suggests something more than a later use of convention. To locate the nature of that "something" requires an examination of the emotion behind the poem. Given the inadequacy of conventional patterns to explain Sidney's comments,[2] the emotion of the poem must be taken as a genuine expression of his state of mind without reference to any ulterior motive. The intensity of that emotion is striking and is illustrated by lines like "Love gave the wound, which while I breathe will bleed:" and "To make my selfe beleeve, that all is well,/ While with a feeling skill I paint my hell." Images of bleeding, life-long pain and suffering, which have a curious eschatological ring, dominate these lines. Reference to the argument of Chapter Three may make it possible to understand the intensity of these metaphors. Man's condition separates him from divinity in a way that must cause suffering in this world. The idea of the light of the human soul cut off from divine light and longing to return to it is a traditional

conception.[3] Suffering results from knowledge in which mankind is made aware of divinity. As noted in Chapter Three, love is the principal force which makes man aware of the need for beatitude in divine knowledge. The line "Love gave the wound, which while I breathe will bleed," then, suggests much more than the profane love of a pagan Cupid. By using the image of bleeding, Sidney echoes the Christic sacrifice which was an act of love and which, once again, made it possible for man to possess the knowledge which brings peace.

The use of an image of hell underscores the agony of man once he is made aware of his separation from divine light. The connection between love, the Logos and poetry, which was traced in Chapter Three, suggests that it is poetry which imparts an intimation of divine knowledge. That suggestion informs the phrase "While with a feeling skill . . ." which argues a combination of the rational and sensual. The "feeling skill" is the cause of Sidney's dissatisfaction with this imperfect state, which he characterizes as hell. The inadequacy of poetry to finally transcend that condition is made clear in the line "Yet with repining at so partiall lot." Poetry awakens an awareness of man's comparative condition and provides the motivation for an unceasing quest for "virtuous knowledge." In orthodox Christian terms, that quest could be described as the Christian life. The paradox of free Christian man's relation to divinity is described in

the line "I call it praise to suffer Tyrannie." Bondage accepted in the service of Christ is to be welcomed and yet the free will of reasonable man feels its burden.[4]

It should not, however, be felt that the poems contain a consistent rejection of the physical. The complete understanding that is sought is of both the abstract and the concrete and the "feeling skill" of the poet is the only means to approximate it. The hell results not from man's imprisonment in matter but from his incomplete synthesis of the matter with the light.[5]

Reference to "An Apology For Poetry" further helps to understand the structure of sonnet number two. In the "Apology" Sidney characterizes the didacticism of poetry as a slow and sweet unfolding, a luring of savage man into sophistication:

> And First truly to all them that professinge learninge inveighe against Poettrye maye iustly be obiected, y^t^ theye goe verye neere to vngratefullnes, to seeke to deface that which in the noblest nations and languages that are knowne hathe bine the firste lightegiuer to Ignoraunce, and first nursse to whose milke by litle and litle enhabited them to feede afterwardes of tougher knoweledges (p. 2).

In the context described in these lines, then, the gradual nature of Sidney's infatuation becomes more understandable. The slow working of the poetry or love moves man towards the divine understanding:

> Till by degrees it had full conquest got.
> I saw and liked, I liked but loved not,
> I loved, but straight did not what Love decreed:
> At length to Love's decrees, I forc'd agreed.
> (from sonnet #2)

Admittedly, the process is not described as a sweet unfolding but the progress is gradual and irresistible. Astrophil's "unconventional" infatuation, then, is paralleled by the conventional movement of man through poetry to virtuous knowledge.

In "Astrophil and Stella" there are a number of sonnets which discuss Astrophil's suffering in terms of light imagery:

> I might, unhappie word, o me, I might,
> And then would not, or could not see my blisse:
> Till now, wrapt in a most infernal night,
> I find how heav'nly day wretch I did misse.
> (from sonnet #33)

and

> Soule's joy, bend not those morning starres from me,
> Where Vertue is made strong by Beautie's might,
> Where Love is chastnesse, Paine doth learne delight,
> And Humblenesse growes one with Majestie.
> What ever may ensue o let me be
> Copartner of the riches of that sight:
> Let not mine eyes be hel-driv'n from that light:
> O looke, o shine, o let me die and see.
> (from sonnet #48)

and

> She comes, and streight therewith her shining twins do move
> Their rayes to me, who in her tedious absence lay
> Benighted in cold wo, but now appeares my day,
> The onely light of joy, the onely warmth of Love.
> She comes with light and warmth, which like Aurora prove
> Of gentle force, so that mine eyes dare gladly play
> With such a rosie morne whose beames most freshly gay
> Scortch not, but onely do darke chilling sprites remove.
> But lo, while I do speake, it groweth noone with me,
> Her flamie glistring lights increase with time and place;
> My heart cries 'ah', it burnes, mine eyes now dazled be:
> No wind, no shade can coole, what help then in my case,
> But with short breath, long lookes, staid feet and walking hed,
> Pray that my sunne go downe with meeker beames to bed.
> (sonnet #76)

and

> Now that of absence the most irksome night,
> With darkest shade doth overcome my day;
> Since Stella's eyes, wont to give me my day,
> Leaving my Hemisphere, leave me in night,
> Each day seemes long, and longs for long-staid night,
> The night as tedious, wooes th' approach of day;
> Tired with the dusty toiles of busie day,
> Languisht with horrors of the silent night,
> Suffering the evils both of the day and night,
> While no night is more dark then is my day,
> Nor no day hath lesse quiet then my night,
> With such bad mixture of my night and day,
> That living thus in blackest winter night,
> I feele the flames of hottest summer day.
> (sonnet #89)

From Astrophil's point of view these sonnets simply describe the plight of the earthly lover. Describing Stella's physical beauty in terms of light and his dejection in terms of dark is a fairly conventional pattern. The suggestion that the lights are life sustaining participates in the hyperbole which characterizes all of Astrophil's descriptions of the relation.

For Sidney, however, the choice of images of light has a particular significance. The connections between light and divinity and dark and physical existence were discussed in Chapter Three. Sidney's characterization of his absence from Stella as being "hel-driv'n from that light" invokes this connection. The heavenly nature of that light is developed in sonnet seventy-six where a metaphor of the sun is used.[6] In it and other of the sonnets there is the explicit recognition of the inability of mortal man to sustain an unimpeded view of heavenly light. The ambivalent role of

man is pictured in sonnet eighty-nine with the lines "That living thus in blackest winter night,/ I feele the flames of hottest summer day." The memory of the pure light excites Sidney's dissatisfaction with its absence and creates the burning desire in the midst of a life in death. His paradoxical simultaneous burning and freezing portrays the anguished position of a man with partial knowledge. The emotion of these sonnets can only be properly understood by relating it to the consistent theological metaphor which is used to describe it. It is the position of all men who are capable of aesthetic knowledge and the cries mirror their awareness of the enormity of the question before them. Aesthetic knowledge, however, cannot divorce itself from the physical. Because the two combine in the theological metaphor, Sidney's paralleling of profane love suffering with metaphysical suggestions is not inappropriate. The physical must always be kept before us.

One other significant use of light imagery to describe the effect of Stella on Astrophil is found in sonnet forty-seven:

> What, have I thus betrayed my libertie?
> Can those blacke beames such burning markes engrave
> In my free side?
>
> (from sonnet #47)

The idea of Astrophil enslaved through a wound inflicted in his side by Stella's eyes. contains a Christic echo. The image of a spear thrust through the side of the crucified Christ as part of the atonement, forms a background for

Sidney's wounding.[7] It is through the atonement that man is capable of once again attaining divine knowledge and, consequently, is dissatisfied with the incomplete state of present knowledge. This connection, that is between Sidney's wounding and Christ's, forms a part of the symbolic configuration which makes up the total poetic experience.

The doubleness, which has been asserted throughout, is continued in the other descriptions of Astrophil's response to Stella:

> Late tyr'd with wo, even ready for to pine
> With rage of Love, I cald my love unkind;
> She in whose eyes Love, though unfelt, doth shine,
> Sweet said that I true love in her should find.
> I joyed, but straight thus watred was my wine,
> That love she did, but loved a Love not blind,
> Which would not let me, whom she loved, decline
> From nobler course, fit for my birth and mind:
> And therefore by her Love's authority,
> Willd me these tempests of vaine love to flie,
> And anchor fast my selfe on Vertue's shore.
> Alas, if this the only metall be
> Of Love, new-coind to helpe my beggery,
> Deare, love me not, that you may love me more.
> (sonnet #62)

This sonnet contains two forms of love; that of earthly passion and that of a higher being. One is the particular and the other is the general. What the poem fails to do is to synthesize the two and consequently the inadequacy of each is illustrated. The love which Astrophil seeks is sexual and pays no attention to spiritual affinities which love or Stella might have. The love which Stella offers Astrophil is empty of earthly passion. As a consequence it fails to adequately present the knowledge which brings peace. In the

sense that Sidney described philosophy in "An Apology For Poetry,"[8] this love is a pure abstraction which fails to meet man's need for the particular as well as for the general. Astrophil's rejection of it at the conclusion of the poem does not voice an objective understanding of why the love is unsatisfactory but rather expresses a sense of inadequacy behind it: "Alas, if this the only metall be/ Of Love, new-coind to helpe my beggery,/ Deare, love me not, that you may love me more."

The lack of understanding which the poem ascribes to Astrophil does not implicate Sidney in the same way. For him, both loves are a part of the poem and the combined experience of all of the sonnets offers a kind of synthesis. The emotional weight of Astrophil's plea disallows a complete and peaceful synthesis of the two but there is, at least, a recognition of the need to somehow combine them. The poem is the formal expression of that recognition.

As is illustrated above, in suggesting that the juxtaposition of opposites presents a vision of manifold divinity, it should not be felt that that awareness brings peace. The experience of this kind of beatific vision can only be presented through images of torment, dissatisfaction and agony. Man is a microcosm of the larger unity and the union of contrarieties excites tension and conflict in this life. Perfect beatitude may be attainable only in death when a perfect equipoise can be reached through participation in

godhead. "Astrophil and Stella" concludes with a sonnet which underscores the agony of this life:

> When sorrow (using mine owne fier's might)
> Melts downe his lead into my boyling brest,
> Through that darke fornace to my hart opprest,
> There shines a joy from thee my only light;
> But soone as thought of thee breeds my delight,
> And my yong soul flutters to thee his nest,
> Most rude dispaire my daily unbidden guest,
> Clips streight my wings, streight wraps me in his night,
> And makes me then bow downe my head, and say,
> Ah what doth Phoebus' gold that wretch availe,
> Whom iron doores do keepe from use of day?
> So strangely (alas) thy works in me prevaile,
> That in my woes for thee thou art my joy,
> And in my joyes for thee my only annoy.
> (sonnet #108)

The balance which is achieved between joy and despair in this sonnet summarizes the earthly state of man after he has had an intimation of divinity. The placement of this sonnet at the conclusion of the sequence suggests the utter denial of peace in life. By becoming aware of Stella in the rest of the poems the poet has excited dissatisfaction with the human condition. That dissatisfaction has an analogue in the longing of earthly love which is Astrophil's experience. Dominating the poem is a sense of agonizing pain which is introduced by the first three lines. In those lines, images of darkness and burning echo a conventional view of hell. Line four, however, turns the poem by introducing a radiant image of light and joy: "There shines a joy from thee my only light;". Lines five and six extend the idea of lightness but do so in a way that qualifies its effect and acknowledges the presence of matter. The human response to

that presence is despair which comes in line seven. Despair is a consequence of the inability of the light to escape the darkness. Specifically, the image of wings suggests the butterfly or psyche and soul.[9] In other words, despair results from the inability of the soul to free itself from matter. Line ten introduces the important image of "Phoebus' gold" as a reference to Stella. In alchemy "Phoebus gold" is the philosophers' stone.[10] the substance that brings all existence to perfection. As well as bringing individual particulars to perfection, "Phoebus gold" was believed to be capable of restoring Eden. In using this image to describe Stella, then, Sidney relates the woman to the Logos and the poetic symbol. The one redeems fallen mankind and allows the possession of a knowledge which brings peace, while the other reunifies a fractured sensibility and provides an expression of complete understanding. Sidney's use of "iron doors" in the next line describes matter as the imprisoning force which denies the soul the perfection which it longs for in union with the godhead. The final three lines suggest a puzzlement at the condition of mankind and a reassertion of the ambivalence of that condition:

> So strangely (alas) thy works in me prevaile,
> That in my woes for thee thou art my joy,
> And in my joyes for thee my only annoy.
> (from sonnet #108)

That puzzlement is crucial to understanding this sonnet in relation to the entire sequence. The mind which bewails the soul's entrapment is an earthly mind, a mind incapable of

finally apprehending the role of matter in complete knowledge and which naturally inclines towards the rational and the abstract. Its use of images of "Phoebus' gold" and "iron doores" contains a deliberate irony. Rather than rejecting matter, the perfection of Eden perfects it. "Phoebus' gold" is the force which leads to that perfection and iron images imperfect matter. Astrophil-Sidney's cry is for a rejection of all matter. The experience of the complete sequence, however, is suggesting something much more complex in its deliberately ironic use of the phrase "Phoebus' gold" in this context. Stella, as that "Phoebus' gold," will lead to the perfection of matter and the equipoise between it and spirit in perfect knowledge. That condition, however, may not be attainable in this life and Stella's role here is to move man towards it beyond life. By awakening the sleeping spirit, she creates the tension which longs for a stasis in synthesis and which, therefore, motivates man towards the virtuous knowledge. The final two lines of the sonnet picture that tension and, thus, provide a microcosm of the condition of all sensitive men who have received an intimation of divinity through symbol and the poetic experience.[11]

In "Astrophil and Stella" there are a number of poems which assert the power of socially dominant values against Astrophil's concern with Stella. Three of them of particular significance are sonnets nineteen, twenty-one and fifty-three:

On Cupid's bow how are my heart-strings bent,
That see my wracke, and yet embrace the same?
When most I glorie, then I feele most shame:
I willing run, yet while I run, repent.
My best wits still their owne disgrace invent:
My verie inke turnes straight to Stella's name;
And yet my words, as them my pen doth frame,
Avise themselves that they are vainely spent.
For though she passe all things, yet what is all
That unto me, who fare like him that both
Lookes to the skies, and in a ditch doth fall?
O let me prop my mind, yet in his growth
And not in Nature for best fruits unfit:
'Scholler', saith Love, 'bend hitherward your wit.'
(sonnet #19)

and

Your words my friend (right healthful caustike) blame
My young mind marde, whom Love doth windlas so,
That mine owne writings like bad servants show
My wits, quicke in vaine thoughts, in vertue lame:
That Plato I read for nought, but if he tame
Such coltish gyres, that to my birth I owe
Nobler desires, least else that friendly foe,
Great expectation, weare a train of shame.
For since mad March great promise made of me,
If now the May of my yeares much decline,
What can be hoped my harvest time will be?
Sure you say well, your wisdome's golden mine
Dig deepe with learning's spade, now tell me this,
Hath this world ought so faire as Stella is?
(sonnet #21)

and

In Martiall sports I had my cunning tride,
And yet to breake more staves did me addresse:
While with the people's shouts I must confesse,
Youth, lucke, and praise, even fild my veines with pride.
When Cupid, having me his slave descride
In Marse's liverie, prauncing in the presse:
'What now sir foole,' said he, 'I would no lesse,
Looke here, I say.' I look'd, and Stella spide,
Who hard by made a window send forth light.
My heart then quak'd, then dazled were mine eyes,
One hand forgott to rule, th' other to fight.
Nor trumpets sound I heard, nor friendly cries;
My Foe came on, and beat the aire for me,
Till that her blush taught me my shame to see.
(sonnet #53)

Sonnet nineteen continues the description of the dilemma facing the earthly lover. From Astrophil's point of view, it further describes Stella's overwhelming beauty which leads to a neglect of other responsibilities. For Sidney, however, the experience of the sonnet relates to the encompassing doubleness in some significant ways. In "An Apology For Poetry" Sidney uses the "star gazer" image which he repeats in sonnet nineteen:

> But all one, and others, haueinge this scope to knowe: and by knoweledge to lift vpp the mynde from the dungeon of ye bodye, to the enioyeinge his owne devine essence. But when by the ballance of experience, It was founde, that the ~~A~~ Astronomer, lookeing to ye starrs might fall in a ditche. . .Then loe, did proofe the ouerrule of opinions make manifest, that all theise are but serueinge sciences, which as they haue eache a pryuate ende in them selues (p. 11).

Sidney goes on to argue that the true end of knowledge must be well doing as well as well knowing. The astronomer image's presence in both the essay and the poetry would seem to be more than a coincidence. Astrophil's name suggests a "star gazer" which, in the context of these comments from the "Apology," intimates that he possesses only partial knowledge. As has already been demonstrated, that partial knowledge can be either of the physical or the spiritual. The objective of the poetic quest, however, is a synthesis of the two in an approximation of divinity. "An Apology For Poetry" continues from the comments quoted above to argue that the right poet accomplishes just this. Sidney's use of the "star gazer" image in both the essay and poetry, then, suggests his

awareness of the limitations which a simple view of Stella has. His role as a "right poet" is to guide mankind beyond that simplicity.

In sonnet twenty Astrophil-Sidney continues the balancing between the demands of this world and the dazzling nature of Stella. By systematically itemizing the objections to his affection for Stella, the poem asserts the earthly presence. Stella's power, of course, is underscored by the typical turning action of the last two lines. In Astrophil's case, that turning pits Stella's profane beauty against social demands. It illustrates Astrophil's weakness and makes him liable to the criticisms of "An Apology For Poetry." In Sidney's case, the assertion of Stella's power at the end of the sonnet also underscore's the limited nature of his earthly perception. The enormous attraction of the realm of light and divinity causes a forgetting of the earthly real in this sonnet. There is, however, a certain balance created by the twelve lines which precede the final turning. That balance is further developed in sonnet fifty-three where the need for it is given a kind of divine sanction. Sidney's ignoring of the worldly demands brings a disapproving blush from Stella. Contemplation of the pure light from afar is clearly incapable of achieving the sought after peace. Significantly, Stella remains a profane woman as the base of the symbol and her blush is a physical manifestation of a conventional shame. The assertion of these three sonnets,

then, is for the needed equipoise between the world of spirit and the world of flesh. Although it acknowledges the transfixing nature of the dazzling divinity it rejects this as a satisfactory final state. At the same time, it rejects the earthly admonitions which argue for a rejection of the abstract, and suggests a middle road. The middle road is provided by the poetry as aesthetic knowledge.

In conclusion, the descriptions of Astrophil's emotional state further describe the need for a coincidence of opposites in complete knowledge. The projection of this argument from the particular to the general is partially accomplished by the archetypal nature of Stella's and Astrophil's names. The force which allows mankind to move towards divine knowledge is love. Consequently, it is possible to illustrate that movement through the analogue of profane love. There is, however, a serious danger in yoking the two types of love together. Sidney shows his awareness of that danger in sonnet fourteen:

> Alas have I not paine enough my friend,
> Upon whose breast a fiercer Gripe doth tire
> Then did on him who first stole downe the fire,
> While Love on me doth all his quiver spend,
> But with your Rubarb words you must contend
> To grieve me worse, in saying that Desire
> Doth plunge my wel-form'd soule even in the mire
> Of sinful thoughts, which do in ruine end?
> If that be sinne which doth the maners frame,
> Well staid with truth in word and faith of deed,
> Readie of wit and fearing nought but shame:
> If that be sinne which in fixt hearts doth breed
> A loathing of all loose unchastitie,
> Then Love is sinne, and let me sinfull be.
>
> (sonnet #14)

Most editors have assumed that the image patterns of the first three lines can be adequately accounted for by reference to the legend of Prometheus. Undoubtedly, a Promethean influence is working here and warns of the dangers facing those who aspire beyond the level allotted to mortal men. In addition, however, there is a further important image. The poet distinguishes himself from Prometheus by asserting his greater pain. The mythic figure who suffers a fate similar to Prometheus and whose pain is greater is Tityus. Tityus, as one of the four great sinners, is chained to a rock in Hades where his liver is eternally devoured by a vulture.[12] His crime is that he raped Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana, and his liver is devoured because it was considered the seat of the sexual passions. Sidney's acquaintance with this myth is verified by his reference to it in "An Apology For Poetry":

> . . . is the poore pipe disdained w^{ch} somtimes is out of Moelibeus mouth can shewe the miserye of people vnder harde lordes, or raveninge soldiers? And againe by Titirus what blessednes is deryved to them that lye lowest from the goodnes of them that sitt highest? (p. 24).

The penalty for the assertion of profane love against the sacred is a denial of all love. The consummation of love requires the simultaneous experience of the physical and of the spiritual. The possession of the first at cost of the second denies any final satisfaction. The earthly lover is perpetually driven to further conquests as he attempts to satisfy the desire for complete union which he can neither

understand nor satisfy. In "Astrophil and Stella," then, an inability to recognize the divine in Stella will lead to a plunging of "my wel-form'd soul even in the mire" and a denial of the peace of final knowledge.

FOOTNOTES

[1] "Theire thirde is how much it abuseth menns witt, trayning it to wanton sinfullnes; and lustfull loue; for indeede that is the principall, if not onely abuse I can heare alledge. They sayd the Comedies rather teache, then reprehende amourous conceites. They saye the Liricke is larded with passionate sonetts. The Elegiacke weepes the wante of his mistres: and that euen the Historicall Cupid hath ambitiously climed. Alas loue I wolde thou couldest as well defende thy selfe, as thou canst offende others: I woulde those one whome thou dost attende coulde either put thee awaye or yielde good reason why they keep thee. But graunte loue of beauty to be a beastely faulte although it be verye harde, since onely mann and no beaste hathe that gifte to discerne beautie. Graunte y^{t} louely name of loue to deserue all hatefull reproches: Although euen som of my maisters y^{e} Philosophers spent a good deale of theire lampe oyle in settinge furthe the excellencye of it. Graunte I saye what soeuer they will haue graunted, that not onely loue, but luste, but vanitye, but if the liste scurrilitie, possesseth many leaues of the poetts bookes: yett thincke I when this graunted they will finde their sentence may with good manners put the last woordes formost, and not saye y^{t} Poettrye abuseth mannes witt, but that manns witt abuseth Poettrye." "The Apology For Poetry" , p. 33.

[2] This hypothesis is advanced on the strength of the "Apology's" argument. The assumption is that there is some significant internal consistency in Sidney's work and that the value-laden function described for poetry in the "Apology" would not be deliberately and directly abrogated in the poetic practice of "Astrophil and Stella."

[3] Whether this idea finds expression in a Christian view of fallen man cut off from the paradise of Eden or in the specific use of light imagery in dualist thought is immaterial for the purposes of locating a source for the tradition. The refinements of these traditions in their attitude towards the body is of significance only in underscoring Sidney's obvious Christian orientation.

[4] The drawing of parallels between the poetry and the Christian tradition is justified by the argument of "An Apology For Poetry." In it, Sidney constantly asserts poetry's didactic role in leading man towards "vertuous knowledge" which is, itself, given a specifically Christian emphasis. This should not, however, obscure the immediate context which is a profane love of Astrophil for Stella. The argument, which Sidney advances in the "Apology" about the nature of poetic language compels us to maintain the

profane as the root of the symbol which transforms it into a metaphysical, and perhaps sacred, expression. The obligation on the reader, then, is to recognize the affinities between the profane particulars and archetypal experiences.

[5]The use of the profane as the root of the poetic experience illustrates both the crucial role of the physical in complete knowledge and the dilemma posed for man by that role. The alternating responses of joy and despair provide the details of that dilemma.

[6]Sonnet seventy-six:

She comes, and streight therewith her shining twins do move
Their rayes to me, who in her tedious abscence lay
Benighted in cold wo, but now appeares my day,
The onely light of joy, the onely warmth of Love.
She comes with light and warmth, which Aurora prove
Of gentle force, so that mine eyes dare gladly play
With such a rosie morne, whose beames most freshly gay
Scortch not, but onely do darke chilling sprites remove.
But lo, while I do speake, it groweth noone with me,
Her flamie glistring lights increase with time and place;
My heart cries 'ah', it burnes, mine eyes now dazled be:
No wind, no shade can coole, what helpe then in my case,
But with short breath, long lookes, staid feet and walking hed,
Pray that my sunne go downe with meeker beames to bed.

[7]"The Gospel According to St. John," The Holy Bible (King James Version), Chapter nineteen, verses thirty-three and thirty-four:

> But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:
> But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

[8]"for som that thought this felicitye principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so highe or heauenly as acquaintance wth the starrs gaue them selues to Astronomie. Others perswading themselues to bee demi-godds if the knewe the causes of things, became naturall and supernaturall Philosophers, Some, an admirable delight, drewe to Musicke. And som the certainetye of demonstration, to the Mathematickes. But all one, and others, haueing this scope to know: and by knoweledge to lifte vpp the mynde from the dungeon of y^{e} bodye, to the enioyeinge his owne devine essence. But when by the ballance of experience, It was founde, that the ~~A~~ Astronomer, lookeing to y^{e} starrs might fall in a ditche: That the inquiringe Philosopher

might be blinde in him selfe. And the Mathematician might drawe furthe a streight line with a crooked hearte. Then loe, did proofe the ouerrule of opinions make manifest, that all theise are but serveinge sciences, which as they haue eache a pryuate ende in them selues. So yett are they all derected to the highest ende of the mistress knoweledge by the Greekes calla[illegible]which stands (as I thinke) in y[e] knoweledge of a mans selfe in the Ethicke and Politicke consideration, with the ende of weldoeinge, and not of well knoweinge onely:"
"The Apology For Poetry", p. 11.

[9] "Psyche; the soul or spirit, as distinguished from the body; the mind . . . In later Greek Mythology, personified as the beloved of Eros (Cupid or Love), and represented in works of art as having butterfly wings, or as a butterfly;" The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1961), vol. VIII.

[10] "Phoebus Gold" is the Philosophers' Stone or the substance in alchemy which would bring everything to perfection. C. A. Burland, The Arts Of The Alchemists (New York, 1968), p. 46.

[11] There has developed a critical convention which argues that "Astrophil and Stella" is incomplete and which suggests the addition of poems from "Certain Sonnets":

Thou blind man's marke, thou foole's selfe chosen snare,
Fond fancie's scum, and dregs of scattred thought,
Band of all evils, cradle of causelesse care,
Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought;

Desire, desire I have too dearely bought,
With price of mangled mind thy worthlesse ware,
Too long, too long asleepe thou hast me brought,
Who should my mind to higher things prepare.

But yet in vaine thou hast my ruine sought,
In vaine thou madest me to vaine things aspire,
In vaine thou kindlest all thy smokie fire;

For vertue hath this better lesson taught,
Within my selfe to seeke my onelie hire:
Desiring nought but how to kill desire.
"Certain Sonnets," sonnet number 31.

and

Leave me o Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou my mind aspire to higher things:
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
What ever fades, but fading pleasure brings.

Draw in thy beames, and humble all thy might,
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedomes be:
Which breakes the clowdes and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold, let that light be thy guide,
In this small course which birth drawes out to death,
And thinke how evill becommeth him to slide,
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.
Then farewell world, thy uttermost I see,
Eternall Love maintaine thy life in me.
"Certain Sonnets", sonnet number 32.

This convention assumes that completion can only come with a resolution which rejects the love of Stella or which somehow consummates it. J. W. Lever, The Elizabethan Love Sonnet (London, 1956), p. 282. As I have just indicated, such a resolution would be quite inappropriate. Sonnet 108 provides the only conclusion possible as it offers a microcosm of the coincidence of contrarieties which informs the entire sequence.

[12] Erwin Panofsky, Studies In Iconology, second ed. (1939; rpt. New York, 1962), p. 216.

CHAPTER V

Any reading of "Astrophil and Stella" which proposes a serious intention behind the sequence must finally come to terms with the seemingly irreverent frivolity which pervades it. The presence of that frivolity appears incompatible with the reading which is being offered in this thesis and therefore will be the major concern of this final chapter. Rather than denying the frivolity, which would be difficult at best, the chapter will consider the possible relation between this playful wit and the serious or sacred experience which informs the poetry. Implicit in that consideration will be the tacit acceptance of the presence of frivolity as an intended part of the poetic experience. Invoking Sidney's criteria for the "right poet" makes it necessary to demonstrate how this frivolity contributes to the movement toward virtuous knowledge.

In Homo Ludens[1] J. Huizinga discusses the nature of play as an historical and social phenomenon. The psychological basis for that phenomenon is not precisely describable as it pervades and controls the language even of modern psychology. Huizinga proposes, however, that play is a universal which influences all living creatures and is distinguishable in the human being only through the particular

form which it takes. That form is shaped by the human intellect which is capable of perceiving its own final inadequacy to possess complete knowledge. The sense of something irrational or supra-rational at the base of all being pervades this perception. Huizinga's closing lines in Homo Ludens suggest this experience:

> Surveying all the treasures of the mind and all the splendours of its achievements we shall still find, at the bottom of every serious judgement, something problematical left. In our heart of hearts we know that none of our pronouncements is absolutely conclusive. At that point, where our judgement begins to waver, the feeling that the world is serious after all wavers with it. 2

Seriousness is justified by the presumption that the riddle of existence is solvable by the human mind. It is only when that confidence is stopped, when the rational falters, that the irrational can be asserted through laughter. Laughter, however, is only one part of the playful experience.

In a sense, play is an assertion of the human mind against the "absolute determinism of the cosmos."[3] It suggests an ability to contain complete understanding and utilizes a kind of metaphor to comprehend that understanding. That metaphor is a language which mysteriously contains all meaning.[4] Language is a peculiarly human construct and asserts the independence of the human being from the cosmos. The play of language is only possible in human life and the sense of an abyss which defies and pervades even language elicits laughter. Laughter, however, should not be seen as a fear relieving tension release. Rather, it is an experience

beyond the rational which allows mankind to participate in the unknowable. In some theological traditions mankind is posited as God's plaything and all human life, then, must be seen as a playing for the benefit of God.[5] The sense of a response to the ineffable pervades all such views of play and laughter.

Play bears a direct relation to man's longing for a knowledge which brings peace. The idea of language as the repository of that knowledge participates in the tradition of the Logos as the primordial source of all knowledge. Play, therefore, forms a part of a serious theological tradition.

The three forms of knowledge, which have been posited in this thesis, are rational, sensual and aesthetic. Aesthetic knowledge has been suggested as the repository of, and vehicle toward, supra-rational understanding. Its participation in the ineffable allows a partial apprehension of divinity. There is, however, a sense in which even aesthetic knowledge is inadequate to encompass divine mystery and is only able to hint at it. That sense elicits laughter which is a part of the experience of play. Aesthetic knowledge itself, as a parallel of a higher reality, is a form of play. It is the invasion by the human mind of a seemingly incomprehensible universe. Play shadows all three forms of knowledge as they attempt to complete human understanding. It both provides the form of each and underscores the inadequacy of that form. None of the three can isolate and define play

for, while it is a part of them, it is also outside and beyond their reach.

In "Astrophil and Stella" Sidney deliberately and inevitably participates in the tradition of play. The poetic sequence, as it uses language to construct another reality, is a form of play. Therefore, even before the specific examples of frivolity or wit enter into the sequence, it is an important form of play. The form that Sidney uses for his poetry emphasizes its connection with the playful. Huizinga describes the two significant characteristics of play as "agonistic aspiration" and "glorious exhibitionism."[6] "Astrophil and Stella" is characterized by the pairing of voices as Astrophil argues with Stella and the lover with conventional reality. This pairing automatically establishes an agonistic structure and the form which the poetry takes, which is a continual debate between the pairs, emphasizes that structure. "Glorious exhibitionism" is applied to the sequence in the poet's use of hyperbole and obvious mastery of language. The use of language to attain and demonstrate knowledge is the experience of "Astrophil and Stella" and, as such, it is play. As play seeking to provide absolute or sacred knowledge, "Astrophil and Stella" must invoke deliberate mystification.[7] The aura of secrecy thus created both contributes to the experience of play as play and participates in the aesthetic convention of deliberate obscurity. Even prior to a consideration of Sidney's wit in "Astrophil

and Stella," then, a significant role for play is justified by the poetic form of the expression, the agonistic structure of the sequence and the deliberate use of mystification as a part of its experience. That role is to be emphasized in a Renaissance artist. J. Huizinga stresses the role of play in the Renaissance:

> If ever an elite, fully conscious of its own merits, sought to segregate itself from the vulgar herd and live life as a game of artistic perfection, that elite was the circle of choice Renaissance spirits. 8

He goes on to stress the ideal nature of court life for play as a higher or perfected form of the play which all human beings perform. Sidney as a Renaissance courtier and poet would naturally participate in a sophisticated and complex form of play.

This chapter will not attempt a detailed analysis of all of the particular elements of play in the sequence. Rather, it will consider four broad categories of play which bear a direct relation to the above theoretical discussion. The first of these categories is the agon or verbal contest. The overall structure of the sequence has already been described as agonistic but this form is particularly illustrated in several of the sonnets:

> Come let me write, "And to what end?" To ease
> A burthned hart. "How can words ease, which are
> The glasses of thy dayly vexing care?"
> Oft cruel fights well pictured forth do please.
> "Art not asham'd to publish thy disease?"
> Nay, that may breed my fame, it is so rare:
> "But will not wise men thinke thy words fond ware?"
> Then be they close, and so none shall displease.

"What idler thing, then speake and not be hard?"
What harder thing then smart, and not to speake?
Peace, foolish wit, with wit my wit is mard.
Thus write I while I doubt to write, and wreake
My harmes on Ink's poore losse, perhaps some find
Stella's great powrs, that so confuse my mind.
(sonnet #34)

The dialogue form of this sonnet works towards the demonstration of superior power and mastery. Whether the two voices are the poet's or the poet's and prosaic society's is immaterial as they represent antipodal attitudes regardless of their source. The sonnet is as concerned with the power of language as with the emotion of love. When the poet asserts that words are capable of easing earthly pain he is suggesting their ability to create a new and higher reality: "'Art not asham'd to publish thy disease?'/ Nay, that may breed my fame, it is so rare:". The later reference to "wise men" suggests a distinction between them and sensitive men which justifies mystification: "'But will not wise men thinke thy words fond ware?'/ Then be they close, and so none shall displease." Finally the power of language to contain and express absolute knowledge is asserted through an authoritative voice which silences the critic: "Peace, foolish wit, with wit my wit is mard./ Thus write I while I doubt to write, and wreake/ My harmes on Ink's poore losse, perhaps some find/ Stella's great powrs, that so confuse my mind." Significantly, the poet acknowledges the possibility that language is finally incapable of containing absolute knowledge in his use of the word "perhaps." Nevertheless, the assertion of the final

quatrain is one of triumph for poetry through the sheer power of the knowledge which it is striving to contain.

Further examples of an agonistic structure are found in sonnets number fifty-four and one hundred and four. In the Eleventh song that structure is continued in a dialogue between Astrophil and Stella:

> "Who is it that this darke night,
> Underneath my window playneth?"
> It is one who from thy sight,
> Being (ah) exild, disdayneth
> Every other vulgar light.
>
> "Why alas, and are you he?
> Be not yet those fancies changed?"
> Deere when you find change in me,
> Though from me you be estranged,
> Let my chaunge to ruine be.
>
> "Well in absence this will dy,
> Leave to see, and leave to wonder."
> Absence sure will helpe, if I
> Can learne, how my selfe to sunder
> From what in my hart doth ly.
>
> "But time will these thoughts remove:
> Time doth worke what no man knoweth."
> Time doth as the subject prove,
> With time still th' affection groweth
> In the faithfull Turtle dove.
>
> "What if you new beauties see,
> Will not they stir new affection?"
> I will thinke theye pictures be,
> (Image like of Saints' perfection)
> Poorely counterfeting thee.
>
> "But your reason's purest light,
> Bids you leave such minds to nourish."
> Deere, do reason no such spite,
> Never doth thy beauty florish
> More then in my reason's sight.
>
> "But the wrongs love beares, will make
> Love at length leave undertaking."
> No, the more fooles it do shake,

In a ground of so firme making,
Deeper still they drive the stake.

"Peace, I thinke that some give eare:
Come no more, least I get anger."
Blisse, I will my blisse forbeare,
Fearing (sweete) you to endanger,
But my soule shall harbour there.

"Well, be gone, be gone I say,
Lest that Argus eyes perceive you."
O unjustest fortune's sway,
Which can make me thus to leave you,
And from lowts to run away.
(Eleventh song)

This song represents the other dualism which the poetry uses, that between Astrophil and Stella. Although there is no clear victory for either party in this exchange, the emphasis is upon the intensity of the love. The opening couplet of each of the stanzas offers a qualification to the love which is systematically answered and overwhelmed by the remaining three lines. If nothing else, the order of the lines assures this effect. Language-as-play is used to assert the power of the love which it is expressing. That assertion leads to a kind of agonistic triumph.

The second category of play, which will be considered, comes out of the role of obscurity or mystification in play. The particular embodiment of mystery in language is the riddle.[9] Sidney participates in this tradition throughout "Astrophil and Stella" but it is made explicit in sonnet number thirty-seven:

My mouth doth water, and my breast doth swell,
My tongue doth itch, my thoughts in labour be:
Listen then Lordings with good eare to me,

For of my life I must a riddle tell.
Towardes Aurora's Court a Nymph doth dwell,
    Rich in all beauties which man's eyes can see:
    Beauties so farre from reach of words, that we
Abase her praise, saying she doth excell:
    Rich in the treasure of deserv'd renowne,
Rich in the riches of a royall hart,
Rich in those gifts which give th' eternall crowne;
Who though most rich in these and everie part,
    Which make the patents of true worldly blisse,
    Hath no misfortune, but that Rich she is.
(sonnet #37)

The mysterious knowledge at the centre of the sequence is symbolized by Stella. Throughout, the riddle of her nature dominates the poetry. In sonnet number thirty-seven, however, that riddle is stated explicitly in a way that stresses the complexity of the symbol. It is obviously referring at one level to an earthly woman and the possibility of Penelope Rich cannot be ignored. In this context the riddle also embraces the agon, which is hinted at as Lord Rich, as the opponent to the love. The riddle that is being posed here, however, is not satisfied with the answer of Penelope Rich. As a poetic symbol Stella is much more complex than that and escapes precise definition. The lines describing her in this sonnet acknowledge that fact: "Rich in all beauties which man's eye can see:/ Beauties so farre from reach of words, that we/ Abase her praise, saying she doth excell:". While attempting to describe the ineffable, the poet maintains a consciousness of the corporeal woman at the root of the symbol. That fact participates in the enveloping doubleness of the poetic experience but, particularly in sonnet number thirty-seven, it elicits a laugh. Laughter is an

irrational or supra-rational response to the enormity of the gap between the known and the unknown, the physical and the spiritual. It is almost an acknowledgement of the futility of the human intellect's ability to span that abyss.

The sense of a riddle at the centre of the poetry is continued throughout. In the First song it is made explicit once again:

> Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes entendeth,
> Which now my breast orecharg'd to Musicke lendeth?
> To you, to you, all song of praise is due,
> Only in you my song begins and endeth.
>
> Who hath the eyes which marrie state with pleasure,
> Who keepes the key of Nature's chiefest treasure?
> To you, to you, all song of praise is due,
> Only for you the heav'n forgate all measure.
>
> Who hath the lips, where wit in fairenesse raigneth,
> Who womankind at once both deckes and stayneth?
> To you, to you, all song of praise is due,
> Onely by you Cupid his crowne maintaineth.
>
> Who hath the feet, whose step all sweetnesse planteth,
> Who else for whom Fame worthy trumpets wanteth?
> To you, to you, all song of praise is due,
> Onely to you her Scepter Venus granteth.
>
> Who hath the breast, whose milk doth passions nourish,
> Whose grace is such, that when it chides doth cherish?
> To you, to you, all song of praise is due,
> Onely at you all envie hopelesse rueth.
>
> Who hath the haire which, loosest, fastest tieth,
> Who makes a man live then glad when he dieth?
> To you, to you, all song of praise is due:
> Only of you the flatterer never lieth.
>
> Who hath the voyce, which soul from sences sunders,
> Whose force but yours the bolts of beautie thunders?
> To you, to you, all song of praise is due:
> Only with you not miracles are wonders.
>
> Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth,
> Which now my breast orecharg'd to Musicke lendeth?

To you, to you, all song of praise is due:
Only in you my song begins and endeth.
(First song)

Of course we continue to doubt to whom this song is addressed. The extraordinary doubling of metaphor throughout it contributes to an hyperbolic effect beyond the reaches of ordinary description. Except for the first and the last, each of the stanzas begins with a reference to part of an earthly and particular woman; eyes, lips, feet, breast, hair and voice. However, following that reference, each universalizes the body part described. That universalization allows the body to assume metaphysical implications and to echo the idea of an ineffable godhead. The elevation of this profane love poem to a sacred level is hinted at in the two enveloping stanzas which, in their "Only in you my song begins and endeth," touch on lines from "The Book of Revelation," Chapter One, verse eight:

> I am the Alpha and Omega, the
> beginning and the ending,
> saith the Lord, which is, and
> which was, and which is to
> come, the Almighty.

Once again, the poet is using language as a game, as an expression of all knowledge. Only by turning finally and directly to the godhead can man escape that game: "Only in you my song begins and endeth."

The third category of play to consider is presented by sonnet number sixty-three:

O Grammer rules, o now your vertues show;
So children still reade you with awfull eyes,
As my young Dove may in your precepts wise
Her graunt to me, by her owne vertue know.
For late with heart most high, with eyes most low,
I crav'd the thing which ever she denies:
She lightning Love, displaying Venus' skies,
Least once should not be heard, twise said, No, No.
Sing then my Muse, now Io Pean sing,
Heav'ns envy not at my high triumphing:
But Grammer's force with sweet successe confirme,
For Grammer sayes (o this deare Stella weighe,)
For Grammer sayes (to Grammer who sayes nay)
That in one speech two Negatives affirme.
(sonnet #63)

In a way, this argument represents a playing with play. The poet is demonstrating his mastery of the playful and mysterious medium of language. There is a sense in which the awful seriousness of language is mocked in the sonnet but, at the same time, there is a recognition of its role. The line "So children still reade you with awful eyes," indicates that recognition, particularly when we recall that Sidney argues for a childish attitude toward language in other of the poems and "An Apology For Poetry."[10] The tyranny of language over mankind is underlined by the line "For Grammer sayes (to Grammer who sayes nay)." There is a childish faith in the ability of the reality of language to transcend and transform any other. It is the same faith which one must have in the temporary reality of play. The practice of demonstrating one's skill with language is a traditional form of showing possession of knowledge which brings power. The note of irreverence in the sonnet is simply one other part of the play experience as the sense of the final

inadequacy of language elicits the supra-rational response of laughter.

The fourth category of play to be considered is personification. Huizinga characterized it as an innate and playful human response to the universe.[11] Sidney's use of personification is most explicit in sonnet number eighty-three:

> Good brother Philip, I have borne you long,
> I was content you should in favour creepe,
> While craftily you seem'd your cut to keepe,
> As though that faire soft hand did you great wrong.
> I bare (with Envie) yet I bare your song,
> When in her necke you did Love ditties peepe;
> Nay, more foole I, oft suffered you to sleepe
> In Lillies' neast, where Love's selfe lies along.
> What, doth high place ambitious thoughts augment?
> Is sawcinesse reward of curtesie?
> Cannot such grace your silly selfe content,
> But you must needs with those lips billing be?
> And through those lips drinke Nectar from that toong;
> Leave that sir Phip, least off your necke be wroong.
> (sonnet #83)

Addressing a sparrow as a rival in love is obviously outrageously playful. The personification which it entails, however, is a characteristic human response. There is the assumption implicit in the sonnet that language is capable of embracing all existence and consequently capable of bridging the gap between Astrophil and a sparrow. The rules of the play, which is the poetic sequence, insist upon the reality of Phip's rivalry and, while we are in the play circle, those rules are absolutely binding.[12] Laughter echoes in the background once again.

Play is an integral part of the experience of "Astrophil and Stella." That this should be so is neither anoma-

lous for poetry dealing with serious and sacred matters, nor reductive of the poetry to the level of a vacuous game. By using the medium of poetry, Sidney participates in a higher form of play than that which characterizes all human life. It should not be felt, however, that there is any sort of a conscious play directed toward some external end. Play and laughter are an inseparable part of human life. Huizinga uses the metaphor of birth to characterize this relation:

> . . . civilization is, in its earliest phases, played. It does not come <u>from</u> play like a babe detaching itself from the womb: it arises <u>in</u> and <u>as</u> play, and never leaves it. 13

Any experience conveyed through poetry must be shaped by, and contain significant elements of, play. The creation of a poetic symbol is itself an act of play which reaches for an apprehension of higher reality. Stella's role in "Astrophil and Stella" is playful as she simultaneously shadows forth divinity and profane woman. The enormity of that imaginative leap elicits laughter which is a kind of participation in the supra-rational. As has been indicated, deliberate mystification is central to the experience of play. In that this poetry seeks to reveal divine truths, that obscurity is doubly needed. At one level the play becomes a kind of veil protecting the divine truth from profanation and asserting, as a by-path, the reality of a physical woman. Finally, this discussion of "Astrophil and Stella" has argued a deliberate doubling of contrarieties as the informing principle behind the poems. Play is a part of that doubling

process and, when it is projected onto the scale of all other human activity, it becomes the doubling itself. The elements of frivolity and seeming irreverence in "Astrophil and Stella," then, are an integral part of its expression of a serious existential position.

In conclusion, Sidney's poetic as practised in "Astrophil and Stella" is perfectly consistent with the aesthetic of "An Apology For Poetry." The relation between the two informs the experience of each. Sidney's appeal at the end of the "Apology" becomes much more understandable in the light of this reading of "Astrophil and Stella":

> I conjure you all y^{t} haue hadd the evill lucke to reade this incke wasting toye of myne, even in the name of the nyne muses no more to scorne the sacred misteries of Poesie: No more to laughe att the name of Poetts as though they weare next inheritors to fooles: no more to iest att y^{e} reverent title of a rymer. But to beleeue with Aristotle that they weare the auncient treasurers of the Grecians Divinitie. To beleue with Bembus that they weare first bringers in of all Civilitie. To beleeve with Scalliger that no Philosophers precepts cann sooner make you an honnest mann the the reading of Virgill. To beleeue with Clauserus the translator of Cornutus y^{t} it pleased the heauenly deitie by Hesiod and Homer vnder the vaile of fables to geue us all knoweledge. Logicke, Rethoricke, Philosophy naturall, and morall; and Quid non? To beleeue with mee y^{t} there are many misteryes in Poetry, which of purpose weare written darckely, least by prophane witts I shold be abused. To beleeue with Landin that they are so beloued of the Godds y^{t} what soeuer they wryte proceeds of a divine furye. Lastely to beleeue themselues when they will tell you they will make you Immortalle by theire verses (p. 50).

This plea has often been viewed with scepticism. The assumption that in it Sidney is only half-serious has been used to limit the effect of the entire essay's argument. To take

such a position, however, is to ignore the subtle texture of the argument which has preceded these lines. The call to believe is an echoing of the needed imaginative transformation which is necessary to participate in the poetic experience. In the final plea Sidney calls upon mankind to believe the poet when he says he will provide immortality. The belief is a necessary precondition but once it has been entered into, the experience of the poetry lends mankind immortality through its intimation of "vertuous knowledge" in divinity. As a "right Poet" Sidney offers that immortality through the experience of "Astrophil and Stella."

FOOTNOTES

[1] J. Huizinga, Homo Ludens (Boston, 1970).

[2] Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 212.

[3] Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 3.

[4] Chapter III, p. 1.

[5] Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 27.

[6] Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 146. By describing the criteria for play as "agonistic aspiration" and "glorious exhibitionism," Huizinga illustrates the role of play in man's quest for knowledge. The one conveys it, while the other demonstrates it. The need to demonstrate one's prowess with language allows for the use of word play and grammatical contortion to show mastery of the medium and thus of the knowledge.

[7] Even if the conscious intention of the poet were not to move mankind toward sacred knowledge, mystification would continue to fill an important role in the play experience. A recognition of the serious significance of play justifies that role. If play of language can move man toward sacred knowledge then obviously it must be shrouded in mystery to prevent profanation. Mystification, then, is a significant part of the play experience.

[8] Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 180.

[9] The object of human questing is complete knowledge and play participates in that quest. By developing language, mankind offers a form of play which directly relates to its quest. Because knowledge conveys power, the mastery of language is a sign of power which leads to a specific form of word game, the riddle. The possession of a riddle which nobody can answer is a sign of absolute power and knowledge. The demonstration of that knowledge requires a contest or agon where the objective is to provide an unsolvable riddle (except for yourself) and an exhibition of one's prowess with it. J. Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 109.

[10] "What childe is there that cominge to a playe, and seeing Thebes written in great letters vppon an olde Doore doth beleeue y^{t} it is Thebes? if then a mann can aryue to that childes age to know y^{t} ye Poetts personns and doeings are but pictures what shoulde be, and not storyes what haue bin, they will neuer giue the lye to things not affirmatiuely, but allegorically, and figuratiuely writtenn." "The Apology For Poetry," p. 32.

[11] Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 140.

[12] Huizinga offers six formal characteristics for any form of play. First, participation in the play must be voluntary. Second, it must take place within a limited time and space which separates it from other realities. Third, the rules of play must be freely accepted but are then absolutely binding. Fourth, the play must be an aim in itself. Fifth, it must be accompanied by a competitive tension which provides the dynamic for its movement and sixth, the participant in the play must be conscious of its difference from "ordinary" reality.

[13] Huizinga, Homo Ludens, p. 23.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alighieri, Dante. "III Paradiso," The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, ed. John D. Sinclair. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Atkins, J. W. H. English Literary Criticism: The Renascence. New York: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1968.

Bate, W. J., ed. Criticism: The Major Texts. New York: Harcourt Brace Javonovich, 1970.

Burland, C. A. The Arts Of The Alchemists. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968.

Castiglione. "The Courtier," books I and IV, Tudor Poetry and Prose, ed. William J. Hebel, Hoyt H. Hudson, Francis R. Johnson, A. Wigfall Green and Robert Hoopes. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953, 681-717.

Cooper, S. M. Jr. The Sonets of Astrophel And Stella. The Hague: Mouton, 1968.

DeRougemont, Denis. Love In The Western World, trans. Montgomery Belgion. New York: Random House, 1956.

Dowlin, Cornell M. "Sidney's Two Definitions of Poetry," Modern Language Quarterly, III, (1942), 573-581.

Editorial Staff of Catholic University of America, ed. The New Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Edwards, Paul, ed. Encyclopedia of Philosophy. New York: MacMillan, 1967.

Gilbey, Thomas. Poetic Experience. New York: Russell and Russell, 1967.

Hamilton, A. C. "Sidney's Idea of the 'Right Poet'," Comparative Literature, IX, (1957), 51-59.

Hermann, Charles G. (and others), ed. The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1914.

Huizinga, J. Homo Ludens. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.

Hyman, Virginia Riley. "Sidney's Definition of Poetry," Studies in English Literature, X, (1970), 49-62.

Inge, W. R. The Philosophy of Plotinus. 2 vols. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

Kalstone, David. Sidney's Poetry. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1965.

Kimbrough, Robert. Sir Philip Sidney. New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1971.

Kolve, Verdel. The Play Called Corpus Christi. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966.

Krouse, F. Michael. "Plato and Sidney's 'Defense of Poesie'," Comparative Literature, VI, (1954), 138-147.

Lever, Julius Walter. The Elizabethan Love Sonnet. London: Methuen and Company, 1956.

Mahoney, John F. "The Philosophical Coherence and Literary Motive of 'Astrophel and Stella'," Duquesne Studies: Philological Series, V, (1964), 24-37.

Manley, F., ed. The Anniversaries. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1963.

Memmo, Paul Eugene Jr., ed. The Heroic Frenzies. New York: Garrett Publishing Co., 1966.

Montgomery, Robert L. Jr. Symmetry and Sense, The Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961.

Ovid. Ovid: Metamorphoses, ed., R. Humphries. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969.

Panofsky, Erwin. Studies In Iconology. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962.

Perkins, D., ed. English Romantic Writers. New York: Brace & World, Inc., 1967.

Petrarch. Sonnets & Songs, translated by Anna Maria Armi. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968.

Plato. The Dialogues of Plato, ed. R. M. Hare and D. A. Russell, translated by Benjamin Jowett. London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1970.

Richards, I. A., ed. The Portable Coleridge. New York: The Viking Press, 1970.

Rossiter, A. P. English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans. London: Hutchinson University Library, 1966.

Rudenstine, Neil L. Sidney's Poetic Development. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1967.

Runciman, S. The Medieval Manichee. Cambridge (Eng.): At The University Press, 1967.

Seznec, Jean. The Survival of the Pagan Gods, translated by Barbara F. Sessions. New York: Harper & Bros., Inc., 1961.

Sidney, Philip. Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Robert Kimbrough. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

Sidney, Philip. The Norwich Sidney Manuscript: The Apology For Poetry, ed. Mary R. Mahl. Northridge (Calif.): San Fernando Valley State College - Renaissance Editions, 1969.

Sidney, Philip. Astrophil and Stella, ed. M. Putzel. Garden City: Anchor Books, 1967.

Sidney, Philip. The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. William A. Ringler. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962.

Sidney, Philip. "Sir Philip Sidney's Defense of Poesy," Regents Critics, ed. L. Soens. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970.

Smith, Hallett. Elizabethan Poetry. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1966.

Tannenbaum, S. A. Elizabethan Bibliographies, Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1967.

Traupman, John C. The New Collegiate Latin and English Dictionary. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1966.

Turnbull, G. H. The Essence of Plotinus. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.

Wind, Edgar. Pagan Mysteries In The Renaissance. London: Faber and Faber, 1968.

Yates, Frances A. Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Young, Richard B. Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton. Hamden: Yale University Press, 1969.

The Holy Bible. King James Version. London.

The Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961.

_____. "The Songs in Astrophil and Stella," Studies In Philology, LXVII, (1970), 178-200.

_____. "Bruno, Sidney and Spenser," Studies In Philology, XL, (1943), 128-144.

_____. "Sir Philip Sidney and 'Poore Petrarch's Long Deceased Woes'," Journal of English and German Philology, LXIII, (1964), 21-32.

_____. Bulfinch's Mythology. London: Spring Books, 1967.