THE INFLUENCE OF GIORDANO BRUNO ON THE WRITINGS OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

A Dissertation

by

JESSICA JEAN WARNLOF

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Approved as to style and content by:

R.W. Barnak
(Chairman of Committee)

Harrison E. Kirth
(Head of Department)

E.E. Stoker Jr.
(Member)

Harrison E. Kirth
(Member)

Jack K. Campbell
(Member)

Manuel M. Davenport
(Member)

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ABSTRACT

The Influence of Giordano Bruno on the Writings of Sir Philip Sidney. (August 1973)

Jessica Jean Warnlof, B.A., Centenary College

M.A., Trinity University

Directed by: Dr. R. W. Barzak

The relationship between Sir Philip Sidney, renowned Elizabethan courtier and writer, and the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno has not been satisfactorily established, nor has the effect of that relationship on Sidney's thought and writings. This study explores the nature of the relationship and the influence it had on Sidney's literary work.

Bruno spent some twenty-eight months in England--from 1583 to 1585--and became a member of an intellectual circle that included Sidney. The two men came from different countries, social backgrounds, and religious persuasions, but they shared a common intellectual milieu which could account for many similarities in the works of the two men. Bruno, however, was unique in Elizabethan England. He was a brilliant but erratic philosopher, who launched from the Copernican theory his own cosmological philosophy

based on his concept of an infinite universe. A self-defrocked priest, Bruno longed for a world united under a "natural" religion, a sort of pagan pantheism known as Hermetism. Sidney was the ideal courtier, versatile and talented. He shared with Bruno the ideal of a re-united Christendom, but Sidney's efforts--at least prior to his meeting with Bruno--were directed toward establishing a Protestant League. Traces of Bruno's uniqueness, verbal and ideological, in Sidney's writings, then, would suggest influence.

The writings of the two men offer the most fruitful source of evidence for a friendship and for influence. The dedications Bruno addressed to Sidney reveal the Italian's affectionate admiration for Sidney and suggest a strong intellectual link between the two men. Sidney's prose works, The Defence of Poesie and the New Arcadia, give persuasive evidence of this link. A comparison of these works with Bruno's Lo spaccio and Eroici furori yields many verbal parallels. The tone of a personal exchange of ideas, which is especially strong in the Defence and in a significant disputative dialogue in the New Arcadia, is also presented as evidence. And, finally, the topical and ideological parallels existing between both of Sidney's prose works and Bruno's special and, often, almost exclusive

interests and ideas make convincing contentual evidence. The final piece of evidence is Sidney's translation of the Hermetic essay On the Trewness of the Christian Religion. Although the essay in general is in agreement with Bruno's Hermetic convictions, the distinctions were--to a man like Sidney--so vital that he felt the need for their promulgation. In this last literary undertaking Sidney seems to have given a final and conclusive testimonial of Bruno's influence.

Based on the evidence presented in this study, the opinion of this writer is that Bruno influenced Sidney in the finest literary tradition. He stimulated Sidney to creative, original productivity. Under this fascinating Italian's spell, Sidney became keenly interested in areas he had been familiar with but had shown no special interest in--the principles of poetry, visual epistemology, the literary emblematic technique, Neoplatonic love, the concept of the heroic, cosmology, and the Hermetic tradition. These interests are reflected in The Defence of Poesie and the New Arcadia and attest to the influence of Giordano Bruno on the thought and writings of Sir Philip Sidney.

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CHAPTER I

A RENAISSANCE ENIGMA

Of all Renaissance Englishmen, none is more roundly praised as the epitome of the Elizabethan virtues of courtliness and courage than Sir Philip Sidney. His is "a name to conjure with for all who admire virtuous strength."[1] His admirers, both in his lifetime and after his death, created a legend that grew as the centuries passed. His chivalry, his diplomacy, his valor, his erudition, and his literary talents have been recorded in glowing phrases in literary and historical annals. It is as a Renaissance ideal as well as a writer that his name lives on today.

Sidney's literary career was brief, beginning around 1578 and lasting only until his untimely death in 1586 at the age of thirty-one. In a literary sense, the years from 1583-1585 seem to have been particularly productive: two of the three works on which Sidney's fame rests[2]--his prose romance Arcadia and his critical essay the Defence of Poesie--were in progress during

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The citations on the following pages follow the style set forth in PMLA.

this time.[3] Such a fruitful period has, naturally, been closely scrutinized by Sidney's biographers and critics. Remaining one of the fascinating enigmas of these years, however, is Sidney's friendship with the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno.

Almost every biographical and critical study of Sidney touches on the subject, but no one has probed this area of Sidney's life and career to any depth. There is, moreover, a wide divergence of opinion as to the extent of the relationship between Sidney and Bruno and its significance and influence in the life and work of this eminent Elizabethan. Opinion ranges from a belief that the two were mere nodding acquaintances to a conviction that they were warm friends; and from a belief that Bruno had no influence whatsoever on Sidney to a conviction that the Italian had a definite influence on the Elizabethan. Even those critics who take a positive position have not defined the nature of the influence. Regardless of their position, however, the critics seem to be intrigued. Commenting on Bruno's sojourn in England, John Buxton expresses an idea reflected by several critics: "The presence of so lively and stimulating a mind in London must have had some effect. . . ."[4] To determine just what the relationship between the two men was and what effect

Bruno may have had on Sidney is the purpose of this study.

At first glance, even a casual friendship between these two seems incongruous--out of character for both. Roger Howell is only one of many who find it puzzling that this staunchly Christian Englishman of "an apparently critical and non-superstitious mind" chose as "a friend and intimate" a "bizarre" man like Bruno[5]--a man who was one of that ancient but suspect group of philosophers associated with the occult. Sidney was a man of aristocratic background, a courtier and diplomat; Bruno was of humble origins, a penniless renegade priest. Sidney was Protestant; Bruno was Catholic, and in a time when religious differences were dangerous and explosive issues. Sidney, tolerant and charming, made friends with almost everyone he met and often kept them for life; Bruno attracted people, but his intolerance and outspokenness often drove them away. Sidney was a man of ideas, well-educated, talented, and literary; but he was not a profound or original thinker; Bruno was one of the most brilliant men of his age, a daring and creative philosopher. Even at the end, the manner of their deaths reflects the contrast of their lives: Sidney died a hero's death; Bruno died a heretic's death at the stake.[6]

In spite of these apparent differences, there was a common intellectual temper which makes an association of mutual admiration and interests credible. It may also provide a key to the enigma of their friendship. The intellectual temper which Sidney and Bruno seemingly shared was partially inherent and partially developed by outside forces. Both had what has been called a "restless curiosity."[7] One of Sidney's acquaintances and biographers, Thomas Moffett, reports that Sidney desired to press "into the innermost penetralia of causes,"[8] and Bruno's thirst for knowledge was equally insatiable. Both were keenly interested in the "new sciences," though to a different degree: Bruno crusaded all his adult life for the acceptance of Copernicus' revolutionary theory,[9] whereas Sidney's interest in science was that of a knowledgeable dilettante. Both were literary men, writers of drama, philosophical prose, and poetry. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, they shared an intense interest in philosophy and religion. Though they were both professed Christians, both boldly questioned the religious institutions of their day, and both sought to restore unity and peace to a bleeding Christendom. The intellectual affinity of Sidney and Bruno, then,

makes a close friendship between the two not improbable at all and an influence quite possible.

Influence is not, of course, contingent upon friendship, nor does evidence of friendship necessarily constitute evidence of influence. In this particular enigma, however, there is a peculiar relationship between the friendship and possible influence which will be explored in the course of this study. In The Art of Literary Research, Richard Altick warns us that "the complex and elusive quality of literary influence" should restrain dogmatic and positive answers, but he reminds us at the same time that "it is far from idle to raise such questions." Understanding "the aura of emotional and ideological association" attending the creation of a literary work is always a worthwhile research goal.[10] The particular focus of this study, although not exclusively, is on Bruno as an "influence" rather than as a "source." Recognizing the fact that these words are often used synonymously, this study adopts Altick's distinction between the two. Altick thinks of influence as a broader, less precise effect, "more profound, more subtle and intangible."[11]

To explore this problem of friendship and influence, the methods used in the first part of this study will be examination, evaluation, and, of

necessity, some conjecture. Chapter II will provide the background necessary to this study. Certain aspects of the intellectual milieu will be briefly explored. The overlapping areas of religion, philosophy, science, and education were of interest to most educated men of the Renaissance, and Bruno and Sidney were not exceptions. It was their common interest and participation in these areas that provided a basis for a friendship. Those particular forces which shaped the minds and personalities of the two will also be scrutinized. Although their activities and accomplishments prior to their meeting will be given some attention, the emphasis will be on intellectual temperament. Chapter III will present the evidence of their association, evidence which suggests a warm and friendly relationship between the men. This chapter will also recreate, partially by conjecture and speculation, the social and intellectual setting in which they moved. The activities and the literary works of Bruno during the period 1583-1585, while he was living in London, will be emphasized in order to provide as background the ideas and attitudes which may have influenced Sidney.

Next, an analytical approach will be employed in this study. Chapters IV and V will be analyses of

Sidney's works written or in progress after his meeting with Bruno. These works will be examined for evidence of a friendship and of the influence of Bruno on the thought of Sidney. The final chapter will be a brief review of Sidney's final literary project, a summation of the evidence, and a final evaluation of the nature of the relationship between the two and the extent of any influence by Giordano Bruno on Sir Philip Sidney.

An exploration of the Renaissance milieu and the forces that shaped these men's minds will be presented in Chapter II. This examination will, hopefully, throw some light on this interesting Renaissance enigma--the relationship between Sidney and Bruno.

NOTES

[1]William Schofield, Chivalry in English Literature (1912; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 132.

[2]The sonnet sequence Astrophel and Stella is the third work on which Sidney's fame rests.

[3]Walter Jackson Bate dates the composition of the Defence of Poesie in 1584, Criticism: The Major Texts (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1952), p. 82. William A. Ringler, Jr., ed. The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney (Oxford: University Press, 1962), dates the beginning of the revision of the Arcadia as late as 1584, p. xxxvi.

[4]John Buxton, Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954), p. 165.

[5]Roger Howell, Sir Philip Sidney, the Shepherd Knight (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), pp. 220-221.

[6]Most of the factual material concerning Sidney's life was taken from Malcolm Wallace, The Life of Sir Philip Sidney (Cambridge: University Press, 1915). Facts about Bruno's life were taken for the most part from Dorothea Singer, Giordano Bruno: His Life and Thought (New York: Henry Schuman, 1950).

[7]Kenneth O. Myrick, Sidney as a Literary Craftsman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 18.

[8]Thomas Moffett, Nobilis or A View of the Life and Death of a Sidney, trans. Virgil Heltzel and Hoyt Hudson (San Marino: Huntington Library Press, 1940), p. 75.

[9]Lawrence Lerner and Edward Gosselin have suggested in a recent study that Bruno was not interested in the work of Copernicus, per se, but that he used it as a metaphor of his own philosophy, "Giordano Bruno," Scientific American 228 (1973), 86-92, passim.

[10]Richard D. Altick, The Art of Literary Research (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), pp. 101, 80.

[11]Ibid., p. 98.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD OF SIDNEY AND BRUNO

Although Sidney and Bruno were of different nationalities and social rank, they were exposed to many of the same shaping influences. There was a cohesiveness and unity to their world that provided them with a somewhat similar background. This chapter will briefly explore those areas and issues and forces of the sixteenth century milieu which are of significance to this study--education, philosophy, theology, science, and literature. Unfortunately, these subjects cannot be easily isolated for examination. To discuss one issue, one must, of necessity, bring in one or more of the other subjects. Nor is it possible--or even desirable--to separate from this background the particular forces or influences that helped shape the minds and personalities of these men.

The sixteenth century was a blend of both old and new, full of contrasts, paradoxes, and contrarieties. It was, in many ways, still the medieval world,[1] a Christian world that retained traces of a pagan antiquity. The Christian temper was a part of the medieval heritage that was carried over into the modern world.

The universal acceptance in Western Europe of one religion provided it with at least a facade of unity. The classical strains had been partially inherited from the medieval world, since much that was pagan had been absorbed into the Christian world, but some of the classical elements had been newly uncovered and revived during the Renaissance. Though of different nationalities, social backgrounds, religious persuasions, and educational opportunities, Sidney and Bruno were members of a Christian brotherhood which was imbued with classical traditions.

Carried over from the Middle Ages but originating in classical antiquity was a philosophical tradition composed primarily of Aristotelianism and Platonism. Aristotelianism had gradually become dominant in the worlds of education and theology, becoming the pedantic system, Scholasticism. Paul Kristeller thinks the late medieval Aristotelianism was characterized "not so much by a common system of ideas as by a common source material, a common terminology, a common set of definitions and problems, and a common method of discussing these problems."[2] But though Aristotelianism had gained precedence, Platonism was by no means dead. These two strains of philosophical thought from the classical world had co-existed during the Middle Ages

and would continue to do so throughout the Renaissance. Kristeller observes that the two are not incompatible; they were but "two different poles of philosophical orientation, without being entirely exclusive of each other."[3] Both Sidney and Bruno were imbued with this philosophical mixture, and their writing reflected the tension they felt between the two strains.

During the fifteenth century new, fresh colors had been added to the decaying medieval scene, lightening and enlivening it. This revitalizing process, which had begun in Bruno's native land of Italy during the fourteenth century, was the Renaissance--that complex movement defined and interpreted in many ways but recognized by all as "one of the great creative periods of history."[4]

England did not witness the flowering of the Renaissance until late in the fifteenth century. The seeds of the movement were brought into the country dramatically. English scholars--John Colet, Thomas Linacre, and William Grocyn--visited and studied in Italy during the last decade of the fifteenth century and returned to England filled with enthusiasm about the "new learning" they had observed and studied there--the "humanities." This "humanism," as the movement was later called, is defined by Kristeller as

"the general tendency of the age to attach the greatest importance to classical studies, and to consider classical antiquity as the common standard and model by which to guide all cultural activities."[5] The classical revival was eagerly embraced by the early English humanists, and the new studies and ideas were quickly introduced into the English secondary school system and into the English universities. Later, others carried on the tradition established by the brilliant leadership of the earlier group.[6] As scholars and as literary men, Sidney and Bruno, though physically separated by many miles, shared this common, enriched intellectual milieu.

The particular wellspring of the English Renaissance was Florence. Those first English humanists brought back more from the Italian city, however, than theories and methods of education. They also brought back from the Italian city a melange of philosophical ideas being promulgated by the Neoplatonists Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. To be sure, the Florentine philosophy was not pure Platonism but rather a curious synthesis of centuries of interpretations of Plato's philosophy, colored by other rather exotic strains of thought.[7] Kristeller warns against labeling the Renaissance as Platonic. "The Renaissance," he

declares, "is still in many respects an Aristotelian age. . . ."[8]

And just as Aristotelian philosophers through the centuries had labored for a synthesis of pre-Christian ideas and Christian theology, so Ficino and Pico, "true heirs to Scholastic philosophers," tried to achieve a synthesis that was palatable to Renaissance men.[9] Their Neoplatonism found many admirers among intellectuals and humanists; to the English mind it seemed "authentic and exemplary."[10] Certainly, Sidney would find it so--just as his Italian friend Bruno did.

One of the paradoxes typical of the Renaissance was the co-existence of skepticism--yet another heritage from the classical world--and credulity, a paradox epitomized in both Sidney and Bruno. By the middle of the sixteenth century the tide of skepticism was threatening the entire structure of Scholasticism.[11] It was a tide, too, that exerted an influence on Sidney and an even greater one on Bruno. Though it was an age of rising skepticism, from a modern point of view it was also an era of great credulity.

Madeleine Doran cautions the modern reader against "a patronizing spirit."[12] The Elizabethans were probably as conscious of credulity as any other generation and, like others, disclaimed it.[13] George Sarton,

however, says that the superstition that permeated English society of that time was "the worst disease of the day."[14] Nor was it a malady of only the ignorant and the uneducated alone. Denis Saurat believes that the intellectual life of cultured society during the Renaissance "was pervaded by occult traditions."[15]

The atmosphere of credulity provided a climate favorable for a revival of many types of medieval occultism, an area in which Bruno became increasingly involved during his career. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries philosophy embraced much that was later ridiculed. At this time, however, occult philosophy was an honored, if theologically suspect, study, embracing astrology, alchemy, numerology, and magic. This loosely defined body of lore had developed from Neoplatonism, Jewish Cabalism, and a philosophical strain known as Hermetism, a system of ideas which would greatly interest Sidney, and even more so, Bruno. The Hermetic writings were thought to be of great antiquity and divinely inspired, having allegedly been written by an Egyptian priest named Hermes Trismegistus of the Mosaic period. Over the centuries, a large body of Hermetic literature in Greek developed, respected by occultists and theologians alike.[16]

The acceptance of this Hermetic tradition by the leading Church Fathers established its validity, and it was unquestioned for centuries. Of great significance to Christians were several passages which seemed to prophesy the coming of Christ, thereby linking this Egyptian and Greek wisdom lore to Christian dogma. It was thought, too, that the ancient writings would provide a key for better understanding of the scriptures[17] and ultimately bridge the rift in Christianity. The Hermetic tradition had filtered into medieval Europe from Byzantium and Arabia,[18] but the writings themselves were brought to Florence about 1460. They were translated by Ficino and quickly became a part of the synthesis of Christian theology and wisdom lore he and Pico were attempting to effect.[19]

Another strain of wisdom lore which was absorbed into Hermetism was the work of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite. The mystic Dionysius was supposed to have been a friend of St. Paul. Dionysius' vision of the angelic hierarchies had been accepted by Thomas Aquinas and incorporated into Christian theology. Dionysius, too, was eagerly embraced by Ficino and Pico to strengthen their blend of Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian thought,[20] and the Dionysian strain became a part of the Hermetic tradition. In a time distressed

by bitter religious conflicts, the occult philosophies based on this ancient lore seemed to offer a means of uniting all beliefs into a natural world religion. It was Hermetism which had a special appeal for Christians--both Catholics and Protestants--during the last half of the sixteenth century. It was also, perhaps, one of the most compelling interests shared by Sidney and Bruno.[21]

In their efforts to synthesize the religions of the world Ficino and Pico became interested in the more occult aspects of this ancient lore--as Bruno would become a century later. Church approval of the Hermetic tradition seemed, to many, to sanction the practice of natural magic and to crown the magician, the magus, with a Christian halo. The belief in magic was widespread in Europe and England during the sixteenth century.[22] This ancient art was based on a concept widely accepted during the Renaissance, the existence of occult "sympathies" between the earthly and the celestial spheres. It was assumed that the gifted, enlightened man--the magus--could by various means engage and manipulate the natural powers of the universe. According to this belief, the magician did not work miracles; he simply utilized the natural sympathies that link all things in the universe.[23]

Pico, especially, experimented in the art of magic, and his disciples established an active occult movement in Italy that was still flourishing during Bruno's lifetime.[24] Following in Pico's footsteps was the German occult philosopher and mathematician Cornelius Agrippa. This Christian magus wielded a great influence on the intelligentsia of Europe and England during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries--among them Sidney and Bruno. These occultists played a dual role, however. They were also among the first Renaissance scientists. The lines of distinction between alchemy and chemistry, numerology and mathematics, and astrology and astronomy had not yet been drawn.[25]

Some scholars deny that there was any renaissance in science at all, but there was, undoubtedly, change, and not a little conflict.[26] The most exciting and significant conflict of Renaissance science was the cosmological one that began in the 1570's, the one in which Bruno would play so outstanding a role.

Renaissance cosmography had been inherited from the Middle Ages. Since the fourth century Western man had envisioned the universe as two spheres. He saw the earth as a tiny sphere suspended at the center of a larger, rotating sphere which held the stars. This Ptolemaic cosmography perfectly complemented the

Aristotelian and Christian concept of a finite, static universe.[27] Along with other elements of Aristotelianism, however, this concept came under attack late in the sixteenth century. Although the issues involved both theology and science, the battle was waged largely in the philosopher's study. The opening sally was Copernicus' revolutionary statement, published in 1543, that challenged, albeit cautiously, the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmography. The intelligentsia of the West probably read or heard about Copernicus' De revolutionibus, but it did not shake the philosophical foundations of the Western world until later.

Still medieval in his attitude in this regard, sixteenth century man, for the most part untroubled and unquestioning, assumed with perfect confidence that the stars were immutable and eternal. Thus, when a super nova appeared in the heavens in 1572, theologians were shaken, and astronomers were excited.[28] This phenomenon--clearly not a comet, those familiar portents of disaster--seemed to contradict the orthodox concept of a static, closed universe. The natural order that reflected the Divine Will and governed every animate and inanimate object in the universe was suddenly called into question. And, indeed, this heavenly spectacle was a portent of doom for the Ptolemaic image of the

universe, and the coup de grace was to be delivered by Giordano Bruno with his concept of an infinite universe.[29]

This was not a new idea. Almost a thousand years earlier Greek scientists had envisioned the universe as infinite and filled with an infinite number of atoms moving in all directions. The earth, those early Greeks decided, was but one of many similar bodies, all composed of atoms, all circling suns. This concept, however, had been discarded as too incredible, and the two-sphered Ptolemaic system had been adopted. In the fourteenth century Nicholas of Cusa had cautiously suggested a universe similar to the ancient Greek one. Then, in the sixteenth century, Copernicus made his dramatic statement. In all of these concepts of the universe, order was a constant; there were, however, important distinctions. The concept of order had changed gradually from the specific and anthropocentric order of the classical world to the mystic and theocentric order of the Middle Ages and, finally, to the abstract and ideal concept of order of Copernicus. But whereas the learned men of the Renaissance saw this order reflected in mathematical precision and terms, the average Renaissance man's awareness of universal order was on a more elementary level.[30] Everything,

animate and inanimate, had its place in the intricate "ladder of creation" that extended from the basic elements, to animals, to man, to the angels, and finally to God--a ladder that would later be termed "a chain of being."[31]

This concept of the chain of being was reflected in England's clearly stratified social hierarchy. The chain extended from the monarch to the nobility and on down to the lowliest subject. As Divine Law governed the Great Chain of Being, so the law of Decorum governed England's social hierarchy. Decorum, yet another concept provided by the classical world, was "a rational response to life," and the Renaissance had developed a veritable passion for rationality.[32] This law of Decorum set forth for society time-honored rules for behavior, based on the highest principles of Christian and classical tradition.

The contemporary world of the Renaissance, however, also provided models and ideas for attitudes and behavior. Literary works such as Castiglione's famous courtesy book Il Cortegiano and Sir Thomas Elyot's The Governour presented models for the ideal nobleman, an important link in the Chain of Being. The prime requisite of this ideal courtier was virtuous action.[33] Civic duty and Christian piety were basic elements of

his character, but various other traits and abilities were also a part of his make-up. He was proficient in physical feats and sports; he was skilled in artistic pursuits--literature, dance, and music; he was accomplished in the social graces--conversation, debate, and letter-writing;[34] and in his personal relationships he was always conscious of the Neoplatonic ideal of love, seeking always the spiritual Reality behind the physical manifestations of friendship or romantic love.[35]

This ideal of the perfect courtier flowered at the court of Elizabeth, finding there the perfect atmosphere.[36] And, in the judgment of Edmund Spenser and countless others, the realization of the ideal of the perfect courtier--"the Presidente of nobless and of chivalrie"--was Sir Philip Sidney.[37] He was, however, no mere stereotype of an ideal courtier. The Sir Philip Sidney who became "the friend and intimate" of Giordano Bruno was no robot or puppet, conditioned to act and react by the rules of Decorum. He was a product of his age, and he reflected the same contrasts, paradoxes, and contrarieties that characterized Renaissance life. These paradoxical elements make Sidney, in the opinion of Frederick Boas, "all the more a, perhaps the, representative Elizabethan."[38] These

elements may also provide the key to understanding and evaluating Sidney's friendship with Bruno.

The world of Sidney and Bruno which provided the broad backdrop for this relationship has been only briefly described. Only those areas relevant to this study have been included--areas in which the two had a special interest or which would provide insight into their relationship. Just as Sidney and Bruno were products of and participants in this broad intellectual milieu, so, too, they shared many of the same particular intellectual influences and experiences. The remainder of this chapter will focus on some of the shaping forces that helped mold the minds of the two men up to the year of their meeting, 1583.

There were three forces in the lives of Sidney and Bruno that seem to have been principally influential in shaping the intellectual temper which would make a friendship between the two plausible: formal education; education of a more informal sort derived from travel, career, and friendships; and, finally, their literary interests and talents.

The educational process--one that never really had a beginning or an end--was a powerful shaping influence on both Sidney and Bruno. Their years of formal education had several tangential points of similarity.

educational systems of all western Christendom during the Middle Ages between centers of learning. Sidney and Bruno, then, were both exposed to a common background of learning, a background still largely Scholastic although increasingly infused with humanistic elements. And both, though to varying degrees, rebelled against the dogmatism and pedantry of the outmoded system.

Sidney matriculated at Christ Church at Oxford in 1567 or 1568, a time when the University's reputation was in a state of decline. Oxford had been able to assimilate the Florentine Platonism very easily because the University had retained its early medieval Platonic tradition even while Aristotelianism was gaining ground elsewhere. With the upheaval of the English Reformation, however, the Platonic tradition came to be regarded as "wicked." In a wave of suppression, Oxford became the victim of an increased Aristotelian rigidity.[39] It was this kind of pedantry that Bruno inveighed against so vehemently in his writings, and it was this same pedantry that Sidney had in mind when he spoke of Ciceronianism as "the chief abuse of Oxford."[40] In spite of deficiencies, however, Oxford was undoubtedly, as Malcolm Wallace claims, responsible for "the genuine scholarship, and the eager thirst for

knowledge and for deeds of high emprise" that are a part of the Sidney legend.[41] Wallace also believes the "stimulating intellectual atmosphere" of the school is "responsible in no small measure for the absorbing interest in history and literature" that preoccupied Sidney's mind.[42]

Like Sidney, Bruno, too, was strongly influenced by his years of formal education. Paul Kristeller believes Bruno owed much to his "humanist education and scholastic training."[43] When he was seventeen, he entered the Dominican monastery in Naples--in the words of his biographer Dorothea Singer, "the gravest mistake in a career that was uniformly unfortunate."[44] It is generally agreed that Bruno did not have a genuine religious vocation; he entered upon this path as a means of getting the education he so thirsted for and, being a boy without means, could get no other way.[45] The curriculum at the monastery was quite broad, and the monastery library held a wide range of both modern and ancient writers.[46] Besides his prescribed studies, Bruno developed other interests during this time which would have a bearing on his later career--astronomy, mythology, occult philosophy, and mnemonics.[47]

The period of formal education and scholarly seclusion in the cloisters of monastery and university

was followed by a period of wandering for both Sidney and Bruno, a period filled with people and experiences that would further shape these men. For over two years after he left Oxford in 1572 Sidney traveled from one country to another in Europe. During his first stop--a visit to Sir Francis Walsingham, ambassador to France--Sidney met a man who was to be a great influence, Hubert Languet, a well-known Protestant scholar and diplomat. Though Languet was some thirty years older than Sidney, he quickly formed an intense "avuncular love" which almost amounted to "adoration" and lasted till Languet died in 1580.[48] It was probably during this visit, too, that Sidney met Plessis du Mornay, another Huguenot scholar, who was to become a life-long friend. These two men would share with Sidney an intense and devout dream of a reunited Christendom, a dream Sidney would also come to share with Bruno.

Though Sidney did not write Languet as often as the older man thought he should nor did he always do as Languet advised, the young man showed remarkable forbearance and tolerance toward his often old-maidish, overly-possessive friend. It was an early demonstration of an inherent trait in Sidney that was to serve him well in the future--especially during his friendship

with Bruno--the ability to get along well with "difficult" people. During those years of travel and, to a lesser extent, after Sidney's return to England, Hubert Languet was undoubtedly a major influence in the shaping of Sidney's mind.[49] Languet was a Renaissance man, astute and aware of his world and the way it worked. Like Sidney's parents, devoted civil servants to Elizabeth, Languet was imbued with the doctrine of duty, and his untiring devotion to the cause of peace and his personal warmth and generosity made up somewhat for the Machiavellian attitude he occasionally expressed. Whatever their weaknesses and deficiencies, for the people who most strongly influenced Sidney in his youth--his parents and Hubert Languet--"Noblesse oblige" was not a hollow phrase. Summarizing Languet's role, John Buxton says that Languet's "practical intelligence, his devotion to the Protestant cause, and his unrivalled knowledge of Europe made him the ideal mentor for Sidney. . . ."[50]

Sidney's stay in Italy was filled with varied and interesting activities, some of which were undoubtedly significant to his later career and interests. He visited Venice, where he studied the "sphere," or natural astronomy as opposed to astrology, an interest he would come to share with Bruno. Next, he moved on

to Padua, where he associated himself with the city's famous university. Though he may not have been officially enrolled, he attended lectures in astronomy, geometry, philosophy, and Greek.[51] That such a young man, virtually unsupervised and unrestrained, engaged himself in such pursuits certainly indicates his keen interest in these subjects. Though a serious student, Sidney was by no means a recluse. The young Englishman was a welcome attraction in fashionable circles. Sidney's charm and intellect made him doubly popular. In all these cities, he met, and afterward continued to correspond with, men who, like himself and Languet, wanted peace in Europe, peace that could only come after the religious conflict had been settled.

In May of 1575 Sidney once more turned toward England. He had been away nearly three years, and had seen and learned much. He had left a boy and returned a man of the world. It is generally agreed that the twenty-one-year-old Sidney had fully matured and was a man in every respect.[52] But now, his education having been completed, Sidney returned to England with high hopes and ambitions. As James Osborn says, Sidney's "star now stood high in its ascendant."[53]

Bruno's hegira did not even begin until the year after Sidney's European sojourn was completed. Since

he had become increasingly intolerant and independent in his thinking, he had found himself in conflict with the monastic authorities. Twice he was charged with insubordination, but the charges were dismissed. Finally, he was accused of heresy. To escape trial Bruno defrocked himself, and in 1576 he set out on the wanderings that would eventually bring him to England and into a friendship with Sidney.[54] He would wander seven years before arriving in London. We can imagine that he walked streets where Sidney had undoubtedly passed and moved in circles that Sidney had known. Many of the experiences that had helped shape Sidney's mind would now help shape Bruno's.

Like Sidney, Bruno visited Venice and Padua. In Milan, he later said, he first heard of the brilliant young Englishman Sir Philip Sidney.[55] Bruno moved often, sometimes in monk's habit, sometimes not. His guise was probably determined by economic necessity or for reasons of personal security.[56] He supported himself by lecturing and teaching when and where he could--astronomy, philosophy, geometry, or the art of memory.[57] He attracted attention in Geneva in 1579 when he published a scathing attack on a learned professor at the University of Geneva who had made, according to Bruno, twenty errors in a single lecture.

Bruno was arrested and brought before the theological consistory, where he angered and alienated his listeners by his attitude and his remarks. Forced to apologize to the lecturer, Bruno, angry and bitter, turned his back on Geneva.[58] His later attitude toward pedants in general and the Oxford scholars in particular may be a result, at least partially, of this traumatic experience. Lyon and Toulouse--where he earned a doctorate--attracted him briefly. Then he turned toward Paris and entered what was perhaps the most influential period in those years of wandering.

On his arrival in Paris in 1581 Bruno followed a pattern of behavior that had now become familiar to him and one he would follow later in London: he issued a vaunting challenge to the intelligentsia of the city in the form of public lectures.[59] In Paris, however, he had a success he had never before achieved. Bruno's stay in Paris was crucial in the shaping of his thought. It was a stimulating time and place; intellectual circles in the French city seethed with ideas. The anti-Aristotelian philosophy of the Frenchman Peter Ramus was all the rage, but Bruno labeled Ramus as "that arch pedant of a Frenchman who has brought his scholasticism to the liberal arts, and who has very eloquently displayed his ignorance."[60] Such a

criticism was made in spite of the fact that Bruno shared Ramus' attitude toward Aristotelianism.[61] Yet another stimulating influence was the work of Louis le Roy, a French Platonist, whose emphasis on religious tolerance seems to have found fertile soil--if, indeed, this concept was not already a part of Bruno's thought. Frances Yates thinks the French poet Ronsard and the French philosopher Pontus de Tyard were also major influences in the development of Bruno's thought.[62] His important writing would not begin until he reached England, but Miss Yates firmly believes that even before he left France Bruno's developing philosophy was "basically Hermetic."[63]

Roger Howell agrees that Hermetism is "the central component of Bruno's thought."[64] It was not the Hermetism practiced by the Christian magus Agrippa nor the non-magical kind of Hermetism embraced by Catholic and Protestant reformers, but it was perhaps the "purest" kind of Hermetism. Bruno's prose works and a play, Il candelaio, written in Paris, reflect, if only indirectly, his new ethic and philosophy.[65] Miss Yates believes that, even while he was in Paris, Bruno was already "a Hermetic magician of a most extreme type."[66] Ernst Cassirer also emphasizes the role of magic--most often associated with Hermetism--in Bruno's life and

thought. "One cannot distinguish," he says, "between magic and philosophy"; in fact, Cassirer thinks that Bruno's preoccupation with Natural Magic "threatens to stifle the speculative-philosophical problems."[67] For the source of much of this aspect of Bruno's thought we must look to Pico and Ficino. Not only ideas but imagery as well was drawn from these Neoplatonists.[68]

Though Christian Hermetism had carefully dissociated itself from the magical elements of the original Hermetism,[69] the goals of that religious movement could have found approval from a magus such as Bruno. Modern scholarship has shown a steady movement in Bruno's philosophy toward a universal, natural religion, one that would embrace all sects and creeds, a sort of pantheism.[70] The ideal of peace through religious unity was one that Bruno shared with many Christians of the time. Lawrence Lerner and Edward Gosselin see Bruno's purpose as "nothing less than the establishment of a Christian commonwealth, guided by his philosophical principles. . . ."[71] Bruno's desire for unity may be one reason why he seemed to prefer "the organicism of Catholicism to the fragmentation of Protestantism," even while he satirized, often sharply, many aspects of the Church.[72]

Because of differences between Bruno and other intellectuals or between his students and himself, he prepared in 1583 to leave Paris for England. Undoubtedly, as they had done for Sidney, Bruno's travels had broadened and enriched him and had been instrumental in shaping the mind and the man. As a man Bruno was seemingly a "difficult" person. He had always had, and would continue to have, difficulty in maintaining friendships and harmonious relationships. In this area of life, in the opinion of Dorothea Singer, he lacked wisdom.[73] He was extremely intense, argumentative, and volatile, and again and again he displayed a lack of sensitivity surprising in one of his intelligence. He was quick to spot hypocrisy and quackery, and he was just as quick to denounce them wherever and whenever he found them.

On the other hand, Bruno knew how to be charming and ingratiating, as he would prove many times over in England. One of his students in Paris, John Nostitz, testified many years later that Bruno had been an attractive, magnetic, and popular teacher.[74] Some of his fascination may be attributed to the robe of the outcast which he wore as a renegade priest or to his reputation for Faustian knowledge. But though these things might attract some people, they could alarm

others. Some such alarm and anxiety appears in the terse message that heralded Bruno's imminent arrival in England. The British ambassador in Paris, Sir Henry Cobham, wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham on 28 March 1583: "Dr. Jordano Bruno Nolano, a professor in philosophy, intendeth to pass into England whose religion I cannot commend."[75]

What had Sidney been doing in the years since his return to England after his lengthy Continental stay? Although only twenty-one when he returned in 1576 he had taken his place at court, confident of acquiring some position of importance. However, Sidney spent months engaged "in a succession of official ceremonies in court, castle, and cathedral," before finally in 1577 he received his first public commission--ambassador to the Emperor Rudolph.[76] It was perhaps, as Mona Wilson says, "a mission of ceremony, . . . of no political importance,"[77] but it is of significance to this study. It was also probably the most significant experience of this entire period to Sidney himself. It quite literally placed him in the role in which Languet and other Protestant leaders had begun to see Sidney--as leader of a crusade which they hoped would firmly establish Protestantism in Europe.[78] The real

purpose of the mission was to test the political and religious temper of the Empire.

The balance of power, which Elizabeth constantly strove to maintain and control, was uncertain in 1576, and Walsingham had repeated a proposal he had made in 1571--that England form a Protestant League. It was probably Walsingham also who proposed Sidney as envoy, but it was not a biased or unreasonable choice. Sidney knew personally the Protestant leaders as well as the rulers of the different countries; he knew the political and religious situation in each country intimately; and he had the maturity and diplomacy to handle such a delicate mission. Elizabeth agreed to the proposal and gave explicit instructions to Sidney, as she herself expressed it, "to explore the possibility of forming a Protestant League to oppose future aggression by the Pope and the Kings of Spain and France."[79] Two of Sidney's closest friends, Fulke Greville and Edward Dyer, were in the party that accompanied him; Daniel Rogers, Sidney's closest literary friend, was also in the company, a valuable and knowledgeable companion. Perhaps it was to learn what the portents for the mission were, or perhaps it was to find out what weather conditions the little party could expect, that took Sidney, Dyer, and Greville, accompanied by

Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, to Mortlake, the home of Dr. John Dee, the most famous astrologist and alchemist in England and a close friend of Sidney.

Sidney's friendship with Dee is important and significant, not as an influence on Sidney, but rather in establishing a precedent for his ready acceptance of Bruno and in revealing a proclivity toward the world of the occult. For, like Bruno, Dee had one foot in the scientist's laboratory and one in the occult philosopher's magic circle. One of the most learned men of his time, Dee, like so many others of his day, mixed the "mystical and esoteric" with the more purely scientific.[80] His paradoxical interests and attitudes are found in many Elizabethans, and to ignore or patronize his occult interests and activities is to be "both misled and misleading."[81] Dee was a brilliant mathematician, but this fact simply added fuel to the flames of wrath and suspicion directed against men like these on the part of the uneducated masses. Mathematics was "deemed cousin to the black arts."[82] Nor did the fact that Dee was a favorite of royalty protect him from mobs who branded him "a conjurer of damned spirits and a companion of hell-hounds."[83] Both the Queens, Mary and Elizabeth, called upon Dee's services as astrologer, and Elizabeth honored him with her

personal friendship and patronage. She encouraged her courtiers to visit Dee at Mortlake, but most, like Sidney, needed no urging. Sidney and his friends often visited the old magus and even studied chemistry under his tutelage. Like all enlightened Elizabethans who knew Dee, Sidney respected his amazing erudition, even though he may have had some reservations about some of Dee's more esoteric pursuits.[84]

So, like many educated and important Elizabethans, Sidney's little party paid a visit to Mortlake on the eve of their departure for the Continent. And whatever Dee's warnings or predictions were, no doubt Sidney set sail with a keen sense of destiny. Arrived at their destination, the little party began to fulfill their dual mission--to engage in polite superficial amenities and to explore the formation of a Protestant League. As time passed and conversations continued, Sidney must have felt a mounting frustration and anxiety. In a report to the Queen Sidney complains of the rulers he has talked with who were interested only in "how to grow riche and to please their senses. . . ."[85] In Count Casimir of the Palatinate, brother of the Elector Ludwig, however, Sidney found a friend enthusiastic enough to buoy his flagging hopes. Armed with Casimir's pledges and his own carefully

written reports, Sidney started on his return voyage, going by way of the Netherlands, where he also enlisted the aid and support of William of Orange.

The mission was declared an unqualified success. Praise for the young diplomat was on everyone's lips, those he had dealt with abroad and those in high places at home who had observed from afar. The Queen and the Council were so impressed that they decided to send immediately an "experienced negotiator, Daniel Rogers, to turn the proposed League into an actuality."[86] Rogers was the particular choice of the Queen; she thought it better to send "some one of no more consequence . . . so that the matter may be arranged the more secretly."[87]

Quite aside from the secrecy, however, she could hardly have made a better choice. Rogers, an Englishman who had spent much of his life on the Continent, was devoted to peace and religious unity. In Paris he had been active in ecumenism of a Hermetic nature as a possible means of drawing Catholics and Protestants together, not as an ecumenical movement which would merely strengthen the Protestant faction.[88]

After the first flush of excitement and activity had passed, however, Elizabeth began to have second thoughts. Negotiations dragged on; no firm commitment

was forthcoming from Elizabeth. The letters from Rogers began to reflect the defeat he now foresaw for their plan. In October, when he wrote to Walsingham that the Elector Palatine opposed the League, Elizabeth dropped the plan entirely. Months of work and planning and fervent hope had ended in frustration and failure.

Perhaps it was the disappointment over the fate of his dream that brought to the surface a trait that may have had some bearing on Sidney's career. It was a trait that Bruno also possessed--to a much greater degree--but their sharing it may well have added to a mutual understanding and a mutual acceptance. Surprisingly, the "ideal courtier," the charming, poised Sir Philip Sidney, displayed at times a rash, impulsive anger and a tendency to over-react with haste and a lack of judgment. Even the adoring Languet commented in a letter to Sidney on his young protege's hasty temper when he felt he had been wronged or slighted. The most serious of several incidents was a letter Sidney wrote in August, 1579, to the Queen expressing his strong disapproval of her proposed marriage with the French suitor Alencon, a letter Wallace describes as "amazingly frank and direct."[89] Perhaps, as Wallace suggests, Elizabeth was "amused by the naivete of such a letter,"[90] but Sidney was

perhaps well-advised to take the course he followed--self-exile from the court for a period of more than a year.

Something else was to surface during this time, something else Sidney would have in common with Bruno--his literary interests. Already Sidney had acquired a reputation as a literary patron.[91] Books had been dedicated to him--as later would be two of Bruno's finest works. During the year of self-exile from the Court, this literary interest flowered and he began his own literary production. One of the important shaping influences on Sidney's literary talent was his sister Mary Herbert, now the Countess of Pembroke and mistress of the beautiful estate Wilton, where Sidney took refuge in 1580. The Countess shared her brother's interests in many things and many people. Like Sidney and his little circle of close friends, she, too, was interested in chemistry and maintained at Wilton a laboratory and a chemist in residence. According to John Aubrey, a sometime guest at the estate, "Wilton House was like a College, there were so many learned and ingenious persons. . . ."[92] Well-educated and talented herself, Mary shared Sidney's literary interests, and it was perhaps only natural that, with

her encouragement and inspiration, Sidney would begin to write.

Sidney's earlier literary activities had been scant. In 1578, he had written a masque, The Lady of May, as a part of the entertainment for one of the Queen's visits to Leicester. During Sidney's extended stay at his sister's home, he conceived the idea for and began the pastoral romance Arcadia, a work he would revise a few years later--after his meeting with Bruno. Sidney's poetry, which he began experimenting with during this time, falls outside of the range of this study. The famous sonnet cycle, Astrophel and Stella, for which Sidney is acclaimed as one of the finest poets of the Renaissance, was probably composed in 1582, the year before Bruno's arrival in London.[93]

Common literary interests seem to have been for some years the basis for Sidney's contacts with many of his old school companions, such as his boyhood friend Fulke Greville. Edward Dyer and Daniel Rogers were later acquaintances, but they, too, were deeply interested in the literary activities of the day, and there is some evidence of a small literary coterie that centered around Sidney.[94] The exact nature of the group and the names of its members are undetermined, but the evidence is substantial enough to consider it

as one of the shaping influences in Sidney's intellectual life, one that Sidney and Bruno shared. It is likely that it was similar to the Platonic Academy established by Ficino in Florence in the previous century. Since that first loosely organized group had gathered around the table of the Renaissance prince Lorenzo d'Medici and discussed literary, theological, and philosophical questions, almost every Italian city had had its academy.[95] Groups of this sort were also popular in France, the most famous being the Pléiade. Like its Florentine model, this group's interests were broad. Members of the Pléiade were particularly interested in a Hermetic type of ecumenism.[96]

James Phillips has found evidence of links between the French and English coteries. One such link was Sidney's friend Daniel Rogers. During his years in Paris Rogers was in intimate contact with the Pléiade, and he brought at least a "pattern of interest" to the English circle.[97] Sidney's close friend Mornay was also a link between the French and English groups. The early tie between Sidney and Mornay was Languet, for the two Frenchmen were devoted friends. When Mornay was sent to England in 1577 on an extended diplomatic mission, however, he and Sidney also became good friends. It was during his stay in England that

Mornay began his essay On the Trewness of the Christian Religion, a Christian Hermetic statement of belief. It was this essay that Sidney would translate in the closing months of his life.[98] In France, Mornay was well known to members of the Pléiade and shared their views on Hermetic ecumenism.[99]

Howell believes that it was in the company of Rogers and the other members of the Sidney circle that Sidney was first introduced to Hermetic ecumenism, a broader and more pacific concept than the plan for consolidating Protestant forces to oppose the Church.[100] Phillips agrees that, like the Pléiade, Sidney's group was concerned with matters other than literature, although this was certainly one of their interests.[101] So important were these matters that Rogers does not even mention literary concerns in a letter to Sidney. Referring to the English coterie, Rogers writes, "With these men you discuss great points of law, of God, of moral good, when time permits. . . ."[102]

It was into this group that Edmund Spenser was introduced when he arrived in London in 1579. In correspondence between Spenser and Gabriel Harvey, certainly a "member," the group is referred to as the "Areopagus." Harvey writes his friend Spenser that "the Areopagus is better than two hundred Dionsii

Areopagitae."[103] This cryptic remark has caused speculation among scholars. Although F. E. Faverty believes the name was used facetiously,[104] James Phillips interprets the phrase as evidence for the real nature of the group and their common interest in Hermetic reform. He links the allusion to Dionysius the Areopagite, the patron saint of Hermetism, as proof of his hypothesis.[105] An examination of Harvey's marginalia shows profuse references to the Hermetic writings and an unquestioning acceptance of their validity and value.[106] Certainly, then, whether Phillips' hypothesis is entirely true or not, members of the group were interested in Hermetism.

Of course, ideas and plans for a unified Christian brotherhood may have been topics of conversation and debate at gatherings of Sidney's friends whether they were formally organized or not. According to Sidney Lee, the group dissolved after a year, sometime in 1580,[107] but Faverty believes it was quite possibly still intact in 1581.[108] Evidence strongly suggests, furthermore, that it was, in fact, still in existence in some form in 1583 when Bruno was in London and that it made up the company of the famous Ash-Wednesday supper Bruno describes in his La cena de le ceneri.[109]

Busy and preoccupied as Sidney was with his literary activities and his role--even though unfulfilled--as leader of religious unity, he was still discontent. Hopes for peace appeared more remote than ever. He moved restlessly in a number of directions, trying to find a place or position suitable to his talents, interests, and ambitions. In 1581 he secured a seat in the House of Commons, but his great hopes for fame and fortune seemed doomed. Like his father before him, Sidney waited in vain for some recognition from the Queen. Elizabeth Cohen thinks Sidney's credulity made him "a dangerous ambassador,"[110] but Roger Howell suggests that Sidney's conspicuous virtue made the Queen hesitate to utilize him in the devious game of Renaissance politics and diplomacy. This scholar thinks the Queen had hints that Sidney was "a potentially troublesome young man."[111] But whatever the reason, Sidney was, in effect, a "gentleman in waiting." Perhaps, as Symonds says, he was "forever seeking to escape."[112] Ireland, Wales, the Netherlands, all briefly attracted him; exploration of new lands and water routes fascinated him--as they did many Elizabethans.

Long months of enforced idleness and extreme financial distress made him more insistent. He

presented a suit to the Queen for employment in the service of the Earl of Warwick, Master of Ordnance, but even this rather mediocre commission was not granted him for over two years, years of mounting frustration. He was given an unimportant, subordinate position under Warwick while awaiting the Queen's pleasure, but it was not commensurate with his abilities or expectations. He had the experience and the qualifications for a career of responsibility and some prestige, but the career had not materialized. It was at this time, in the summer of 1583, that a dynamic, brilliant man came into Sidney's life. This man was Giordano Bruno.

The influences that had shaped Sidney and Bruno over the years prior to 1583 were broadly similar--formal education, career, and a wide variety of personal experiences and interests. The sixteenth century intellectual milieu had provided them with some common ideas and interests. The potential for a compatible relationship had been created. The following chapter will consider the activities of Sidney and Bruno during the months Bruno spent in England and the evidence for their friendship.

NOTES

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[21]Howell, Sidney, p. 223.

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[23]Lynn Thorndike, The Place of Magic in the Intellectual History of Europe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1905), p. 28.

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[27]Paul Kocher, Science and Religion in Elizabethan England (San Marino: Huntington Library Press, 1953), p. 403.

[28]Ibid., pp. 176, 187.

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[35]Joseph B. Collins, Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age With its Background in Mystical Methodology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), pp. 113-117.

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[69]James E. Phillips, "Daniel Rogers: A Neo-Latin Link Between the Pléiade and Sidney's 'Areopagus,'" Neo-Latin Poetry of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Los Angeles: Clark Memorial Library Press, 1965), p. 23.

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[72]Symonds, "Bruno," p. 65.

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[74]Boulting, p. 20.

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[86]Osborn, p. 494.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Phillips, passim.

[89]Wallace, p. 216.

[90]Ibid., p. 219.

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[92]John Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. Oliver L. Dick (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), p. 138.

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[96]Phillips, p. 6.

[97]Ibid., pp. 7, 23.

[98]Sidney's translation of the Mornay essay will be discussed and documented in Chapter VI of this study.

[99]Yates, Bruno, pp. 176-180.

[100]Howell, pp. 161-162.

[101]Phillips, passim.

[102]Quoted in Phillips, p. 21.

[103]Quoted in Phillips, pp. 26-27.

[104]F. E. Faverty, "A Note on the Areopagus," Philological Quarterly, 5 (1926), 279.

[105]Phillips, p. 27.

[106]Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia, ed. G. E. Moore-Smith (Stratford-upon Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913), passim.

[107]Sidney Lee, Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 87.

[108]Faverty, pp. 278-280.

[109]Boulting, p. 27.

[110]Cohen, p. 175; Robert Kimbrough believes Sidney was "too independent in his thinking," Sir Philip Sidney (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), p. 29.

[111]Howell, pp. 25, 51.

[112]Symonds, Sidney, p. 45.

CHAPTER III

THE EVIDENCE FOR A FRIENDSHIP

Through the years scholars have expressed their opinions about the existence of a friendship between Sidney and Bruno. The opinions vary widely from adamant rejection to total acceptance. Mona Wilson doubts that there was anything more than one or two casual meetings between the two men.[1] Many critics, however, seem willing to accept--in varying degrees--Bruno's presence in the orbit of Sidney's circle of friends and Bruno's personal testimonials as believable evidence for a friendship. Symonds, Howell, and Buxton speak of the association between Sidney and Bruno as such. Buxton says Sidney was "both the first and the most consistent of Bruno's English friends";[2] Howell goes further in saying that in spite of denials he believes that "the evidence is reasonably clear" that there was "meaningful contact."[3] This chapter will present this evidence to establish the historical possibility of a friendship and to examine the circumstances which have created such a divergence of opinion.

The lack of a confirmatory statement by Sidney or some reliable, objective witness seems to be the

basis for denying the existence of a personal association or friendship. It is regrettable, of course, that Sidney did not leave any explicit mention of Bruno, but this should not really surprise us. Sidney was a very "private" person. He kept no diary or journal. Many famous and interesting people whom he met in his travels and in his role of Elizabethan courtier earn no mention in his writings--literary or personal. Sidney's literary works offer no explicit mention of Bruno either, but, again, this should not surprise us. William Ringler comments, in discussing Sidney's poetry, that Sidney's work is remarkable for what he did not write about. Any personal expression concerning the things he felt most deeply about--religion, politics, soldiering, friendship, the role of the courtier--is absent.[4] Such a comment as Ringler's could apply, however, to more than his poetry.

The evidence for the hypothesis that Sidney and Bruno enjoyed a close friendship between April, 1583, and October or November, 1585, the time Bruno was in England, must be pieced together from a few isolated accounts. We have only a few contemporary references to Bruno's presence in London which would constitute historical evidence for even an acquaintance--a report by a university official, a marginal notation, a bit

of satire, a confused account by an Italian scholar, and an off-hand allusion. This chapter will take this material into account, but the emphasis will be upon the personal testimonials of Bruno himself. The things he wrote in the two dedications addressed to Sidney make up revealing and significant evidence for friendship. And though friendship is not a prerequisite to establishing influence, in the case of Sidney and Bruno there seems to be a connection between the two. Occasionally in Sidney's writings there is a tone--sometimes of agreement, sometimes not--that suggests a personal relationship. This tone seems to be echoed in Bruno's works, too. The evidence, then, for friendship and for influence, to some extent, may overlap. This chapter will examine the statements of Bruno and his contemporaries, statements that make up an important part of the total evidence for friendship and influence.

Two events of Bruno's visit, which he himself has described, can be documented and traced with a fair degree of certainty--his visit to Oxford and a supper party given at the home of Fulke Greville. The first occurred shortly after Bruno's arrival in England in April, 1583. Fortunately for Bruno, his visit came at a time when Italians, who had been looked on with disdain and suspicion a few decades earlier, were

enjoying a vogue of popularity.[5] To add to his prestige, Bruno also came highly recommended. He brought letters of introduction from Henri III to the French ambassador to London, Michel de Castelnau, Marquis de Mauvissiere. This "humane, tolerant, and intelligent" Frenchman added Bruno to his suite in the capacity of a secretary.[6] It seems likely that his connection with Mauvissiere gave Bruno a certain diplomatic immunity that protected him from repercussions that might well have descended on his head otherwise. If, as Frances Yates believes, Bruno's visit was a political-religious mission encouraged by Henri III,[7] Mauvissiere would most certainly have tried to extend him that protection. It can be said with more assurance, however, that, through the ambassador's influence and prestige, Bruno had entre into "a brilliant circle in which scientific and philosophical ideas were being canvassed."[8]

Bruno arrived in England sometime in April and, almost immediately, he was at Oxford. What happened to him there is significant to this study because it indirectly establishes the attitude of Sidney and his friends toward Bruno. There are several opinions as to how Bruno came to be at Oxford and just what his role or position there was. Some scholars have decided

that he held a series of lectures there; others think it highly unlikely that he was ever given any official position at the University.[9] It seems clear, however, that before he settled down in the home of the French ambassador--perhaps before he had even presented himself to Mauvissiere--Bruno spent a few months, from April to June, at Oxford.[10]

It is also likely that, even before Bruno was invited or simply appeared at Oxford, his name was well-known among the scholarly residents. As he had done in other cities where he visited, he seems to have announced his arrival by means of a challenge. Such a challenge does exist, but exactly how it was made, or when, is not clear. The document itself is important, however, since it helps reveal the image which Bruno projected on his arrival in England, the image that Sidney as well as the Oxford dignitaries responded to. Bruno introduced himself in a letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford in his customary fashion, one completely lacking in modesty or diplomacy, as "Giordano Bruno of Nola, the God-loving, of the more highly-wrought theology doctor, of the purer and harmless wisdome professor." He was, he claimed, "in the chief universities of Europe known, approved and honourably received as philosopher." He asserts that he

is a stranger "nowhere save among barbarians and the ignoble. . . ." He seems to see himself as a Socratic gadfly: "The awakener of sleeping souls. The trampler upon presuming and recalcitrant ignorance, who in all his acts proclaims a universal benevolence toward man, . . . whom only propagators of folly and hypocrites detest, whom the honorable and studious love, whom noble minds applaud."[11]

The letter of introduction, which ended in an eager challenge to debate anyone and everyone, appeared as the preface to Triginta sigillorum, a work primarily concerned with the art of memory, which Bruno published soon after his arrival in England in 1583. It is not known definitely whether the letter was first presented in this manner, or whether the letter had actually been sent to the Chancellor and had simply been copied and used as the preface.[12] If Bruno did address the Oxford scholars in such terms, Oliver Elton was correct when he wrote: "The dust of his advance and the flaming and creaking of the axles of his chariot are hardly credible."[13] It is not difficult to understand John Owens' epigram in which he says to Bruno, ". . . For a plague like you; / Your country disclaims that she ever knew."[14]

Whether Bruno had been invited or had invited himself, his visit to Oxford coincided with that of another foreign visitor, this one officially invited. The Polish prince, Albertus Laski, was paying an official visit to Elizabeth in the spring and summer of 1583. Laski, described by William Camden as a "man of graceful figure, with a very long beard, in decorous and beautiful attire. . . ,"[15] was interested in the Protestant movement, as well as all aspects of the occult. Elizabeth especially desired that Laski, or Alasco as he was also called, be treated well and entertained royally. She carefully selected as members of his escort party men of intellect and diplomatic aplomb. Sidney's presence in this party is verified by Anthony à Wood in his Athenae Oxienses.[16] During the course of his visit, Laski, a learned man, wished to visit Oxford, and plans were made accordingly. John Dee's diary gives us some idea of the honor shown the visitor. Dee writes that Laski "was very honorably used and enterteyned. He had in his company Lord Russell, Sir Philip Sydney, and other gentlemen: he was towed by the Quene's men, he had the barge covered with the Quene's cloth, the Quene's trumpeters, &."[17] The guest was housed in Sidney's old alma mater, Christ Church. According to Anthony à Wood, dramatic

presentations, banquets, and special disputations were arranged.[18]

One of these disputations is of special interest to this study, for Bruno was one of the disputants and Sidney one of the observers. Angelo Pellegrini believes that Bruno was not formally invited to speak. This is possible, since these affairs were quite informal--sometimes even rowdy--and anyone in the audience could easily insinuate himself into the argument.[19] However the occasion developed, the discussion was heated. Sidney, as a member of Laski's escort party and the Chancellor Leicester, as host to such an important and honored guest, were almost certainly in attendance. There were besides, according to Wood, "many other considerable persons."[20] Albericus Gentilis, a famous Italian scholar, wrote to a friend from Oxford where he was staying about one lecture by Bruno which he had attended. His remarks reflect the fascination exercised by Bruno on his audiences and also the bewilderment and confusion created by Bruno's novel and unorthodox views: "I heard from the greatest of men assertations strange, absurd and false, as of a stony heaven, the sun bipedal, that the moon doth contain many cities as well as mountains, that the Earth

doth move, the other elements are motionless and a thousand such things."[21]

In his La cena de le ceneri, published in 1584, Bruno has given us his own colorful--if perhaps biased--description of the occasion. The Oxford scholars, he writes, "were clad in velvet, and one of them had two chains of shining gold on his neck, and the other, per dio, twelve rings on two fingers of his precious hand, like a jeweller. . . ." No doubt they were a bit pompous and, in Bruno's eyes, patronizing. He shows his contempt for their manner or appearance with his remark that "they showed acquaintance with beer as well as with Greek."[22] Bruno's debate was, according to a brief allusion to "Jordanus Neopolitanus" in Gabriel Harvey's marginalia, with a "Doctore Underhil."[23] Bruno's exaggerated style suggests a small boy trying to reassure himself of a questionable victory:

> Go there and let them tell you of what befell the Nolan, when he publicly disputed on theology with those doctors, before Prince Alasco the Polack, and others, noblemen of England. Hear how they could answer his reasonings, and how that unhappy doctor stuck fifteen times, like a chicken in the stubble, amidst the fifteen syllogisms he propounded to us as Coryphaeus of the University on that momentous occasion! Hear how rudely and discourteously that swine went on, and how humanely and patiently

> spoke that other, showing he was indeed Neopolitan born and reared under a kinder sky.[24]

Though Bruno may have overreacted, he probably had some justification for his indignation. Even though the average Elizabethan may not have been interested in philosophical speculations, Bruno could have expected attention and tolerance at a school famous for philosophy. Such, however, was not to be. In addition to his attack on the pedantic and rigid Aristotelianism at the school, which alone would have angered the audience,[25] there was another bone of contention between them. The scientific tradition imbued in the Franciscan empirical methodology was in conflict with his own Dominican philosophical scientific bent.[26] Perhaps, however, the confrontation was just what he had been seeking. Judging from his behavior before and after his visit to England--he would spend eight years before his execution trying naively and fruitlessly to convert the Inquisition to his beliefs--he may have welcomed this skirmish.

We do not know how long a time lapsed between Bruno's doubtful victory and subsequent episodes, consisting of at least two or three lectures. These occasions, in all likelihood, terminated finally and dramatically all connections between Bruno and Oxford.

A religious tract, published in 1603 by George Abbott,[27] later the Archbishop of Canterbury but at the time a school official, contains a description of the entire affair. Abbott writes with a mixture of amusement and irritation:

> When that Italian Didapper, who intituled himselfe, Philotheus Iordanus Brunus Nolanus, magis elaborata Theologia Doctor, &, with a name longer then his body, had in the traine of Alasco the Polish Duke, seene our University in the yeare 1583. his hart was on fire, to make himself by some worthy exploite, to become famous in that celebrious place. Not long after returning againe, when he had more boldly then wisely, got up into the highest place of our best & most renowned schoole, stripping up his sleeves like some Iogler, and telling us much of chentrum & chirculus & circumferenchia (after the pronunciation of his Country language: he undertooke among very many other matters to set on foote the opinion of Copernicus, that the earth did goe round, and the heavens did stand still; whereas in truth it was his owne head which rather did run round, & his braines did not stand stil.[28]

Next, Abbott accuses Bruno of plagiarism. He tells how one of the scholars in the audience recognized Bruno's materials and, on checking, found that two of his lectures had been taken "almost verbatim" from the works of Ficino. After testing Bruno again on what appears to be a third occasion and finding him "continuing to be ide Iordanus," the university officials denounced him, and, concludes, Abbott, "there was an end of that matter."[29]

Whether Bruno had indeed "borrowed" indiscriminately from Ficino or not, of course his head and brains did not "run round," and, as the seventeenth century would decide, his ideas of "chentrum and chirculus and circumferenchia" were not as contemptible as Abbott found them. Bruno's pushing up his sleeves with the gesture of a magician-juggler may have been only one of his showmanship tricks. He was also said to have stood on one leg at times while lecturing, and a certain N. W. wrote to the poet Samuel Daniel of Bruno as "that man of Infinite titles among other phantastical toyes."[30]

Judging from the tone of Bruno's account of the disputation described in the Cena and his earlier reaction to "pedantry" in Geneva, we can safely say that he must have been disappointed and hurt over his reception at Oxford. We cannot assume, of course, that Sidney was present at this final fiasco at Oxford, but so close-knit was the little intellectual world of Elizabethan society that we might safely surmise that Sidney heard something of it. We can only conjecture, furthermore, as to what Sidney's reactions were to this fiery Italian with his "phantastical toyes." The important point here is that evidently Sidney was not at all put off by the debate he witnessed in the

company of Prince Laski nor by what he may have heard concerning Bruno's later presentations and his departure from Oxford. Bruno recalls later on that Sidney was the first Englishman to befriend him and that he did so immediately upon Bruno's arrival in England.[31] Whether Sidney had already met Bruno before he began his stay at Oxford or not we cannot determine, but evidently their friendship began early in that summer of 1583. With Bruno once again in London and established in Mauvissiere's home, they would have been able to see more of each other.

Although Bruno had written and published a number of other works, most of them on mnemonics, during his travels, his philosophical writing now began. This was to be an extremely productive period in Bruno's life, for during the two and a half years he was in England, he published a number of books, seven of which are extant.[32] Of these seven, three are particularly relevant to this study--La cena de le ceneri, published in 1584; Lo spaccio della bestia trionfante, also published in 1584; and De gli eroici furori, published in 1585. Some familiarity with some of Bruno's fundamental ideas appearing in these works is necessary for our understanding the nature and the extent of any influence he may have had on Sidney's writings.

La cena de le ceneri, or "The Ash Wednesday Supper," is one of the most important books on astronomy and cosmology ever published, in the opinion of Antoinette Paterson.[33] This work, a series of five prose dialogues interspersed with sonnets, contains the first statement of Bruno's mature philosophy. Bruno assumes the role of Theophilo to project his own ideas. It is here that Bruno gives the harshly satirical account of his disputation at Oxford, referred to earlier. Throughout the entire book, moreover, he criticizes Oxford scholars as "a constellation of the most pedantic, obstinate ignorance and presumption, mixed with a kind of rustic incivility, which would try the patience of Job."[34]

In Cena, also, Bruno presents an account of the second event in which he and Sidney may have participated together--the supper party referred to in the title. In G. C. Moore-Smith's opinion, Bruno's description of this gathering gives us the most conclusive evidence of the existence of Sidney's Areopagus, and Harvey's marginalia confirms the fact that a group which included Bruno met in Fulke Greville's chambers to "discuss moral, metaphysical, mathematical, and natural speculations."[35] In the Cena, Bruno tells us of Greville's invitation to dinner. Bruno accepts, but

he begs Greville to select his opponents carefully and not invite "persons who are ignoble and miscreate and of little understanding in such speculations. . . ." Greville assured him he would have only "men of the best learning and behavior." Bruno then describes at great length how he expected to be escorted to Greville's home and how, after waiting until long past the appointed hour, he went to visit other friends. On his return he found a couple of the guests who had been sent to determine the reason for his delay.[36] After much argument, adventures, and delay, interspersed with a running commentary on English society and customs, they arrived at Greville's, where the guests were already seated at dinner. Scholars have identified one of the guests, referred to as a "knight," as Sidney.[37] The conversation ran an erratic course and ended in a complete rout of the scholars by Bruno-Theophilo.

Philosophy and cosmology permeate the dialogues of the Cena. Bruno pays tribute to Copernicus, whose achievement was "the dawn which was to precede the full sunrise of the ancient and true philosophy after its agelong burial in the dark caverns of blind and envious ignorance. . . ." He speaks of himself as "the man who has pierced the air and penetrated the sky, wended

his way amongst the stars and overpassed the margins of the world. . . . By the light of sense and reason, with the key of most diligent enquiry, he has thrown wide those doors of truth which it is within our power to open and stripped the veils and coverings from the face of nature."[38] In the final dialogues Bruno presents his concept of an infinite universe, which Dorothea Singer says was "an obsession or perhaps, we should say, a constant solace and inspiration to Bruno's thought."[39] Bruno affirms

> that the universe is infinite; that it consists of an immense ethereal region; that it is like a vast sky of space in whose bosom are the heavenly bodies . . . that the moon, the sun, and innumerable other bodies are in this ethereal region, and the earth also . . . the infinite material of the infinite divine potency.[40]

He also envisioned an infinite number of worlds, "each with a pattern of mobility . . . conditioned by his own nature."[41]

Though the Cena seems to be a straightforward philosophical treatise, Miss Yates believes it has profound religious implications, but "all is so confused . . . that it is best to regard it as a kind of magical and allusive picture. . . ."[42] Running through the work, however, is a theme that recurs again and again in Bruno's work--the ideal of religious

reform and unity, an ideal that Sidney, too, cherished. Bruno announces it in the first dialogue when he cries out to the pedant doctor that before "the philosophy which suits you so well arose, there existed that of the Chaldeans, of the Egyptians, of the Magi, of the Orphics, of the Pythagoreans and other early thinkers which is more to our liking."[43] Miss Yates summarizes Bruno's message as "a kind of Egyptian Counter Reformation, prophesying a return to Egyptianism. . . . preaching, too, a moral reform with emphasis on social good works and an ethic of social utility."[44]

Bruno dedicated De la causa, principio e uno and De l'infinto universo e mondi, with expressions of genuine love and gratitude to his friend and benefactor Mauvissiere.[45] In these two works Bruno expands and develops the concepts found in the Cena. In Bruno's infinite universe there is ultimately no distinction between origin and result; matter and form, potentiality and action are all one and infinite. His concept, Coincidence of Contrarieties, "reduceth to a single origin and relateth to a single end . . . so that there is one primal foundation of origin and of end."[46]

Bruno sees Inner Necessity as the force responsible for all behavior, change, and growth. Things respond

to the demands of their own inner nature. Yet Bruno acknowledges Freedom as well as Necessity. His infinite universe demands a universal cosmic free will.[47] For Bruno, God is pure principle; the creation is an emanation from or an extension of himself. Cause and Principle are not distinct; they are both God. Man, however, can never completely know God, but with his reason he can approach understanding.[48] In the words of William Boulting: "Bruno believed in the power of human thought to penetrate the secret nature of things, to reach even to the deepest and highest reality. . . ."[49]

In 1584 Bruno published his most imaginative and most daring work,[50] Lo spaccio della bestia trionfante, and dedicated it to Sidney, as he would also dedicate De gli eroici furori to him the following year. Bruno's dedications, according to John Buxton, are "among Sidney's best rewards as a patron of learning,"[51] and John Addington Symonds thinks that, of the many tributes made to Sidney, these are the most interesting.[52] More importantly, however, they have an unmistakable ring of sincerity, although they are phrased in the extravagant language that was the custom. They also reveal, indirectly, something of the relationship between Sidney and Bruno. In the case of the Spaccio the dedication

is particularly helpful, since it explains some of the major concepts and themes to be developed in the work itself.

Bruno addresses his Explanatory Epistle to "the Most Illustrious and Excellent Knight, Sir Philip Sidney." His opening remarks suggest that Bruno wrote his dedication after Mauvissiere had received notice of his recall as ambassador. Bruno may have thought he himself would be leaving England sooner than he actually did. He writes that he does not wish "to leave before the eyes of eternity a note of ingratitude by turning my back upon your beautiful, fortunate, and most courteous fatherland, without, at least, a sign of gratefulness, by paying my respects to you. . . ." He acknowledges Sidney's overtures of friendship to him "at the very moment I arrived on the island of Britain" (pp. 69-70).

In the dedication, Bruno reveals that the second person to befriend him was Fulke Greville who, Bruno says, resembles Sidney "in the many and worthy, external and internal perfections." Bruno admits frankly that his relationship with Greville, however, had not gone as smoothly as it would have "if the envious Erinys of cowardly, malicious, ignoble, and interested parties had not spread her arsenate" (p. 70). The

significant point here is what this episode suggests. First of all, it is a testimonial to Sidney's independence of mind and spirit that he maintained his own friendly relations with Bruno, even though his oldest and perhaps best friend had become alienated from the Italian. It may also suggest that the attraction and friendship between Sidney and Bruno was indeed strong and close. And finally it attests to Bruno's candor, a characteristic valuable in assessing personal testimonials.

Bruno next makes his presentation to Sidney and, like those he made to Mauvissiere, it has the ring of sincerity. It is a thoughtful, deliberate statement. He dedicates to Sidney a work which he knows will be controversial. Some may praise it; most, he realizes, will reject it, "since the number of the fools and the perverse is incomparably larger than that of the wise and the just . . ." (p. 70).

Of the work itself, Bruno seems to speak with a surprising touch of humility. He speaks of himself and Sidney in the third person: "Let him today present to Sidney the numbered and arranged seeds of his moral philosophy, not in order that he know and understand them as something new, but in order that he examine, consider, and judge them, accepting all that which must

be accepted, excusing all that which must be excused, and defending all that which must be defended . . ." (pp. 70, 73). This statement implies that Sidney was already familiar with the ideas set forth in Spaccio, and that it is only the organization and form given them that he is submitting to Sidney's scrutiny, hopeful of his friend's approval and anxious for his backing.

The last half of the dedicatory Epistle is an exposition of the plot of Spaccio, Bruno's purpose, the key to much of the allegory, and some of the basic principles of his philosophy which are presented in the work. A dramatic dialogue, Lo spaccio presents an Olympian crisis. Jove is a less-than-noble god faced with the necessity for reforming himself and his fellow-Olympians through self-knowledge, repentance, and purification. The "beast" responsible for the physical and moral deterioration which the deities have undergone is a symbol for ignorance, superstition, and prejudice. It is Jove, however, who must, by firm example, lead the way. This basic theme of the responsibility of leadership will appear, strongly stated, in Sidney's Arcadia, and, although it was a commonplace of the Renaissance, its appearance in Sidney's and Bruno's works should not be overlooked.

Another basic theme of Lo spaccio which also appears in Sidney's Arcadia--and only in the revision done after his meeting with Bruno--is the ideal of a natural religion based on reason. According to Arthur Imerti, Lo spaccio strongly suggests that "not until man is governed by the religion of reason, based on an understanding of the universal laws of nature, will he be able to completely purge himself of the 'triumphant beast' within him."[53] Miss Yates is more specific. She thinks that Jove's "reformation" symbolizes Bruno's "zealous hope for a return to Egyptian religion and ethics." She believes a basic theme of the work is "the glorification of the magical religion of the Egyptians," a worship of "God in things."[54] We shall see in the New Arcadia a statement of a belief in a natural religion similar to Bruno's and spoken by a character whose ideas are identified with Sidney's.

In 1585 Bruno published another of his ethical works, a whimsical satire called Cabala del cavallo Pegaseo. The work was dedicated to a fictitious abbot of a fictitious monastery, a device in keeping with the fantastic and exaggerated tone of the piece. The work is connected to Spaccio--Miss Yates calls it a companion piece--since it is a full-scale discussion of asininity, a "virtue" that found a place in the

reformed heaven of the earlier work.[55] Bruno praises asininity or humble ignorance as the surest guide to salvation, again an idea that Sidney, too, uses in the revision of the Arcadia.

De gli eroici furori, also published in 1585, was the second work Bruno dedicated to Sidney. This ethical philosophical work is a series of love poems accompanied by commentaries explaining the symbolism of the poems. The philosophical tradition underlying Bruno's Eroici furori goes back to Plato's Symposium, in which Socrates describes the Diotiman ladder of love by which the love of a particular body is generalized into love of all bodily beauty and ascends through various stages of love until the lover perceives the changeless idea of Beauty itself. Ficino's translations disseminated the concept of "Platonic love" throughout the western world, and the tradition was strengthened by adapters like Pietro Bembo, Castiglione, Petrarch, Agrippa, and others.[56]

Bruno employs the Neoplatonic ladder of love in a manner similar to that of earlier writers, but he goes beyond his predecessors; the Eroici furori gives more attention to philosophical problems. As a Platonic love treatise it concerns the ascension of the soul toward God through love.

The dedication of Eroici furori follows the same pattern as that of Lo spaccio--a personal statement, a presentation of the "argument" of the work, and, finally, another personal address to Sidney. Bruno opens his dedication with a lengthy tirade against the Petrarchan tradition of the poet-lover who becomes a melancholy "slave" to a "thing" without "sensibility, intelligence or goodnesss. . . ."[57] But after two pages in this vein, he qualifies what he has said. He, too, is subject to the spell cast by a woman's charms: "I do not think that the snows of Mt. Caucusus [sic] or Ripheus would suffice to cool my passion." Too, he denies that he was referring to "those ladies who have been praised and who are praiseworthy . . . especially who may and do reside in this British land . . ." (pp. 61, 65). The significance of this anti-Petrarchan diatribe, as well as his excepting British womanhood, may become clearer when we examine it in conjunction with Sidney's works.

Bruno then explains his major themes and their development through the series of dialogues, sonnets, and commentaries. Bruno as poet, protagonist, and commentator is a "frenzied lover" or, as some scholars translate the phrase, a "heroic enthusiast." In his struggle upward, the lover's soul suffers many setbacks.

He finally understands that to achieve the supreme good he must bring balance and harmony between body and soul by means of his rational faculties. In Bruno's words, the poet-lover must seek Truth, the soul's "proper object, the primary or absolute truth, which will illuminate divine beauty," which is the object of heroic love (p. 123). It is the emphasis on a more spiritual or "heroic" love as opposed to physical, sensual love that is one of the most striking innovations which Sidney introduced into his revision of his Arcadia. But there are other parallels, which also appear in Lo spaccio--among them the ideal of a natural religion--that will be discussed in more detail later.

In his closing remarks to Sidney, Bruno departs from his opening frenetic tone. Quietly, but sincerely, he tells Sidney that this work could not be "conveniently addressed and recommended to anyone than to you." To offer it to anyone else, Bruno continues, would be to "present a lyre to a deaf man and a mirror to a blind one." Bruno concludes with a somewhat cryptic statement, perhaps understood only by Sidney and himself: "And in that which particularly concerns me, I know that through your good services you have guided me with a magnanimity far greater than any

recognition you may have given to others who may have since come to you" (pp. 77-78).

What is the significance of Bruno's dedicating these two particular works to Sidney? We may reasonably assume that Bruno's dedications were sincere and not lightly or opportunistically planned. Everything about the man--his fierce independence, his complete lack of obsequiousness, and his total unwillingness to compromise his ideals or ideas--obviates any thought that Bruno used his dedication privileges for any reason other than a real desire to show his gratitude and to compliment the two men who meant most to him. In the course of his stay in London as secretary to Mauvissiere, he had been often to Court and met Elizabeth and others of much more prestige and influence than either Mauvissiere or Sidney. And yet he chose to dedicate all seven of the extant works published in England to these two same friends.

The dedications to Mauvissiere seem to have been dictated by personal love for the Frenchman and gratitude for his protection and favors. He acknowledges the many kindnesses Mauvissiere had done for him, and he praises "the perseverance and the solicitude with which, adding service to service and benefit to benefit, you have conquered me, laid me under obligation,

rendered me your prisoner. . . ."[58] Again and again in those dedications he expresses appreciation and thanks.

The dedications to Sidney, on the other hand, seem to have been more discriminating and more selective. The books were particularly suitable, because they were more clearly belles lettres than the others. Bruno also seems to have weighed carefully Sidney's reception of the works as well as his ability to understand and appreciate them. In these works, which McIntyre says are the "distinctively ethical teaching of Bruno,"[59] the theme of Hermetic religious reform is presented in literary form and language. The analyses of Sidney's prose works, presented in the following chapters, reveal that, of all Bruno's works, these two seem to have been of most particular interest to Sidney and seem more closely linked to his own writing. Bruno's awareness of Sidney's responsive interest in these two particular works could certainly have been a factor in his dedicating them to Sidney.

There is, moreover, a perceptible difference between the tone of the first dedication to Sidney and the second. In the Spaccio, published in 1584, Bruno writes in sincere but rather formal tone: "Now I do not know how I should esteem myself, excellent sir, if I did not esteem your intellect, did not respect

your customs, did not proclaim your merits . . ." (p. 69). In contrast, the dedication to Eroici furori has a strongly personal tone. Bruno addresses Sidney: "To you then these discourses are presented without fear, because here the Italian reasons with one who understands him. My verses are submitted to the censure and the protection of a poet. My philosophy stands naked before so pure an intellect as yours" (p. 77).

Just as the difference between the dedications to Mauvissiere and to Sidney suggests a difference in their relationships, so the difference between the two made to Sidney suggests that during the intervening months Bruno's friendship with Sidney had become closer. When we remember Bruno's intolerance and Sidney's idealistic integrity, we can more easily believe that there must have been in their relationship genuine reciprocity. Bruno's words strongly suggest a complete meeting of minds between the two and a confident expectation of total acceptance and warm approval on the part of Sidney. Had they then become close friends and intellectual companions over the months? The evidence, though not conclusive, is compelling.

Thus, personal testimonials, as well as contemporary sources have provided a part of the evidence. From bits and pieces of evidence--a casual report by a

university official, a satiric epigram, a marginal notation, a puzzled account by a countryman, and an offhand allusion--Bruno's presence in England is confirmed. His position and contacts placed him within the orbit of Sidney's acquaintances. But it is from the writings of the men themselves that the outlines of a picture emerge which allow us to speculate with some degree of confidence that a personal relationship of some intimacy did indeed exist between Sidney and Bruno. Bruno's dedications attest to its warmth and constancy, and from the literary writings of both men we will attempt to deduce its nature, range, and tone. One of Sidney's most famous works, The Defence of Poesie, will be examined in Chapter IV for evidence for a friendship and for traces of Bruno's influence.

NOTES

[1]Wilson, p. 127.

[2]Buxton, Sidney, p. 161.

[3]Howell, p. 221.

[4]Ringler, p. li.

[5]Singer, p. 28; Pellegrini, "Bruno and the Elizabethans," p. 104.

[6]Singer, p. 26; Imerti believes Bruno was a "tutor and gentleman companion," "Introduction," The Expulsion, p. 9.

[7]Yates, "Religious Policy," pp. 193-197.

[8]Singer, p. 27; Imerti, op. cit., p. 10.

[9]Wallace, p. 279; Pellegrini, "Bruno and the Elizabethans," p. 11.

[10]Imerti fixes Bruno's stay from April to June, 1583, op. cit., p. 7; Elton also accepts this date, op. cit., passim.

[11]Quoted in Boulting, pp. 81-82.

[12]Ludovico Limentani doubts that the piece was ever sent as a letter at all and thinks it was written later in pique and wounded feelings, cited in Robert McNulty, "Bruno at Oxford," Renaissance News, 13 (1960), 305.

[13]Elton, p. 5.

[14]Quoted in Grant McColley, "William Gilbert and the English Reputation of Giordano Bruno," Annals of Science, 2 (1937), 353.

[15]Quoted in Boulting, p. 25.

[16]Anthony à Wood, Athenae Oxienses, ed. Philip Bliss (1815; facsimile rpt. London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1962), II, 88.

[17]John Dee, The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee, ed. J. O. Halliwell (1842; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1971), p. 20.

[18]Wood, II, 88.

[19]Pellegrini, "Bruno and the Elizabethans," p. 30.

[20]Wood, II, 88; Wood also indicates that there were several disputations presented before Laski, II, 27; Singer places Gabriel Harvey and William Temple "probably in the audience," p. 41.

[21]Quoted in Singer, p. 43.

[22]Quoted in Elton, p. 10. La cena de le ceneri has not been translated into English. For this reason, it will be necessary to quote from a variety of secondary sources.

[23]Harvey's Marginalia, p. 156, n. 273.

[24]Quoted in Elton, p. 9.

[25]Imerti points out that dissenters were fined and often ousted, op. cit., p. 8.

[26]Pellegrini, "Bruno and the Elizabethans," p. 198.

[27]This interesting discovery was revealed for the first time in 1960 by Robert McNulty in his article "Bruno at Oxford," op. cit. The complete title of the tract is The Reasons Which Doctor Hill Hath Brought, for the Upholding of Papistry, Which is Falselie Termed the Catholike Religion: Unmasked, and Shewed to be Very Weake, and Upon Examination Most Insufficient for That Purpose, (STC 37).

[28]Quoted in McNulty, pp. 302-303.

[29]Ibid., p. 303.

[30]The allusion appears in a preface to Samuel Daniel's Impresa (1594) by one signing himself "N. W.," quoted in McColley, op. cit., p. 353.

[31]Bruno, The Expulsion, p. 69. Parenthetical reference will be given in the text when the source is clearly indicated.

[32]Dorothea Singer gives a complete listing of Bruno's works as well as variant printings, op. cit., 204-213. Because of the variety of translations of the titles of Bruno's works, this study will adopt the widely accepted practice of using the Italian titles even when citing English translations.

[33]Antoinette M. Paterson, The Infinite Worlds of Giordano Bruno (Springfield: Charles Thomas, 1970), p. 7.

[34]Quoted by Imerti, op. cit., p. 18.

[35]Harvey's Marginalia, p. 274. Moore-Smith comments on Harvey's notation.

[36]Singer lists, besides Greville, John Florio, resident tutor in the household of Mauvissiere, and the poet Thomas Sackville as among those present, op. cit., p. 37.

[37]Wallace, p. 300; Yates, "Conflict With Oxford," p. 323; Elton, p. 16.

[38]Quoted in Yates, Bruno, pp. 236-237.

[39]Singer, p. 95.

[40]Quoted in Yates, Bruno, pp. 244-245.

[41]Quoted in Singer, p. 59.

[42]Yates, Bruno, p. 254.

[43]Quoted in Yates, Bruno, p. 235.

[44]Yates, Bruno, p. 273; Boulting, too notes that Bruno constantly appeals to Hermes Trismegistus, p. 129.

[45]In his dedication to De la causa, Bruno compliments two of the Oxford scholars for their courtesy to him, as if he realized he had gone too far in La cena.

[46]Quoted in Singer, p. 84.

[47]Ibid., pp. 73, 78-79.

[48]Singer, pp. 87-88.

[49]Boulting, p. 100.

[50]Lo spaccio was the only work used as evidence against Bruno during his heresy trial, Imerti, p. 21.

[51]Buxton, Sidney, p. 162.

[52]Symonds, Sidney, p. 170.

[53]Imerti, p. 25.

[54]Yates, Bruno, pp. 221, 273, 274; Imerti recognizes Bruno's elevation of "natural religion" over "positive religions," as well as his "strong attraction to the mysteries of the Egyptian religion," pp. 32-33.

[55]Yates, Bruno, p. 275 ff.

[56]John Charles Nelson, Renaissance Theory of Love: The Context of Giordano Bruno's Eroici Furori (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 67-70.

[57]Giordano Bruno, The Heroic Frenzies, trans. Paul Memmo, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 59-60. Parenthetical references will be given in the text when the source is clearly indicated.

[58]Bruno, "Dedication," De la causa, quoted in Singer, p. 96.

[59]McIntyre, Bruno, p. 252.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEFENCE OF POESIE AND GIORDANO BRUNO

Tracing Sidney's literary career presents the scholars with many problems. Dates are in some cases difficult to fix with any certainty; sources and influences are often difficult to trace; and the occasion or purpose behind some of Sidney's works is difficult to determine. Sidney was, for the most part, noncommittal about his own writings, and since his friends--like most Renaissance men[1]--remembered him for other contributions, contemporary literary critical statements are few. Yet over the years scholars have uncovered much information and, on the basis of new insights, often reinterpret what was perhaps an arbitrary judgment that persisted simply because it was unexamined and unchallenged. This chapter is an attempt to challenge such judgment: it examines one of Sidney's major works, The Defence of Poesie,[2] for evidence that Bruno was an important influence on Sidney's writing--a possibility heretofore generally rejected.

As they are on the question of the possible friendship of Sidney and Bruno, the scholars are divided on the issue of Bruno's possible influence. Albert S.

Cook, editor of an 1890 edition of the Defense of Poesy, wrote that Sidney's intimacy with Bruno "did mark a distinct stage in Sidney's spiritual development" and that he saw traces of Bruno's influence in Sidney's Defence.[3] Cook, however, did not pursue this line of thought to any length, and later scholars have refused to accept his hypothesis. Although Wallace declares in his biography of Sidney that he could not see the influence Cook noted, he also admits that there are many questions about Sidney's attitudes and beliefs on philosophical, religious, and political matters for which he has no answers.[4]

Marcus Goldman, writing in the 1930's, expressed his disappointment over the reluctance of scholars to probe the relationship of Sidney and Bruno. Goldman considers this neglect a weakness in the work of Italian Renaissance historian John Addington Symonds. Goldman also reproaches Sidney's definitive biographer Malcolm Wallace for similarly glossing over what Goldman recognizes as one of "the most interesting but least understood years of Sidney's life, the year 1583." Though he praises Wallace's scholarly restraint, Goldman regrets that Wallace has disagreed with Cook's hypothesis without offering any of his own.[5]

Frances Yates began researching and writing about Bruno in the 1930's, and she agrees with Cook's hypothesis. "The link between Bruno and Sidney," she says, "is completely authenticated."[6] And although her own published research has not taken her into an investigation of this link in Sidney's prose works, Miss Yates does think that an investigation "might provide an invaluable key to the motive springs" of Sidney's writings, which she includes in "our greatest literature."[7]

In 1942 Angelo Pellegrini attacked Cook's and Miss Yates' judgment. Pellegrini denies Cook's identification of Bruno's influence on Sidney's Defence: "It is idle to look in the Defense of Poesy for traces of Bruno's thought since the subject matter of that treatise is one that the philosopher never seriously considered."[8] This critic sums up his investigation of the relationship between Bruno and Sidney with the claim that "Bruno's mind, insofar as it was original and outside the main channels of Elizabethan scholarship, was as unintelligible to Sidney as to the most bigoted Oxford doctor. . . . In short, he lacked both the talents and the interests necessary to make him understand and appreciate the genius of Giordano Bruno."[9] In view of Bruno's expressed admiration for

Sidney's intellectual abilities, Pellegrini seems to call into doubt either Bruno's sincerity or his perception. Sidney's essay is, of course, much more than a mere défence of poetry. It touches on so many areas of philosophy, art, and religion that one wonders if Pellegrini's familiarity with Sidney's treatise extended beyond its title.

The scholarly research of the past few decades has brought no new or definite opinions. Critics like Buxton and Howell seem to be more receptive to a possible influence by Bruno on Sidney's work, but they remain cautiously uncommitted. Scholars have adopted a hesitant attitude toward Bruno's influence perhaps because of the admitted difficulty in tracking down Sidney's sources. Freda Townsend explains that Sidney "so naturalized his borrowings that sources for particular passages are hard to find."[10] This should not surprise us. Sidney expressed his contempt for imitative borrowing in his claim that he was "no pick-purse of another's wit."[11] This study, however, approaches the enigma as being a problem of Bruno's influence on rather than his being a source for Sidney's writings. A distinction made earlier between influence and source bears repeating: source is seen as the particular origin for a specific idea or verbal borrowing and

usually refers to one work, whereas influence is seen as a broad, directional effect. This is not to say that verbal echoes, parallels, or analogues which suggest a source--if found in sufficient quantity--would not offer evidence for influence. Influence may also be reflected in a writer's work in what Altick calls a "contentual" manner.[12] Nor is influence always reflected in a positive fashion. A writer may react negatively to an influence--or "source." He may feel called upon to debate or to refute an issue or idea, or he may feel called upon to clarify his own position.

This chapter will examine Sidney's Defence of Poesie and Bruno's Eroici furori for traces of contentual or ideological influence and the overall tone of a familiar exchange of ideas. Instances of verbal similiarities--echoes, parallels, and analogues--will also be noted.

In many ways the Defence of Poesie is the most totally revealing of Sidney's works. In it we learn much about his attitudes toward life as well as toward the literary art which he called "poesie." Establishing a serious, earnest attitude on the part of Sidney toward his own literary art is of primary importance to this chapter, because if Sidney did not value his own role as poet and his own literary works, the ideas

he expresses in his Defence of Poesie may be suspect. The author could possibly stand convicted of hypocrisy, or worse.

Much has been written about Sidney's attitude toward his literary career. Greville set the tone for later opinion by recording that Sidney's literary pieces "were scribled rather as pamphlets, for entertainment of time, and friends, than any accompt of himself to the world."[13] Remembering Greville's near adoration of Sidney, we might question whether he may have unconsciously minimized those literary interests, a facet of his friend's life that was not generally appreciated or admired at that time. Even early in this century we find Wallace writing that Sidney "did not regard his literary work in a serious way."[14] In 1925 Joel E. Spingarn placed Sidney in the era just before art became self-conscious and aware of rules and discipline,[15] but since that time other critics have come to accept Sidney's art as self-conscious, though they differ as to his being guided by critical rules. Kenneth Myrick has reexamined Sidney's attitude in the context of the Renaissance social and literary milieu and has made some interesting observations.

Myrick points out that it is very difficult to determine the attitude of any Renaissance writer toward

his own work because of a fashion prevalent during the time that demanded that a writer not take his literary efforts seriously. This attitude of belittling one's artistic work derives from an idea central to the humanist tradition that the ideal Renaissance man be not only a humanist but a courtier as well.[16] Edwin Greenlaw writes, "It was a point of honor among gentlemen writers in that age to affect contempt for their literary works."[17] Castiglione's Courtier established the mode. The ideal courtier excelled at concealing his serious purpose with dash and grace, "to practise in everything a certain nonchalance that shall conceal design and show that what is done and said is done without effort and almost without thought."[18] The Italian word "sprezzatura" is used to designate this nonchalance, this courtly affectation.

Sidney himself subscribed to the attitude of sprezzatura. He speaks of himself as a "paper-blurrer"; he refers to his Defence of Poesie as "this inck-wasting toy"[19] and to his Arcadia as "a trifle, and that triflinglie handled."[20] The artist in the man betrayed itself, however: Sidney confesses that he had a compelling urge to express himself in writing. "Onely over-mastered by some thoughts," he writes, "I yeelded an inckie tribute unto them" (III, 36). Moreover, his

work reveals that he felt a conflict between the high moral goals of literature and the lure of the beauty often revealed in its expression--beauty that was viewed by many at that time with a suspicion amounting to fear.[21] According to Myrick, then, Sidney's remarks are nothing more than sprezzatura. This critic thinks Sidney's deprecatory remarks actually point to the "deliberate and careful art of the work in hand" and should be interpreted as a part of the light irony which permeates his writings.[22]

With a dash of sprezzatura Sidney has explained that he began writing his pastoral romance Arcadia in 1580--during that year of self-exile at Wilton--to please and entertain his sister Mary. Aubrey reports that Sidney "was often wont, as he was hunting on our pleasant plains, to take his table-book out of his pocket and write down his notions as they came into his head when he was writing his Arcadia."[23] He apparently wrote much of it hurriedly and in Mary's company, and, when he was away from Wilton, he would send her completed sheets, one by one.[24] Even without Aubrey's testimony we can believe that Arcadia was spontaneously composed--the overflow of the author's vivid imagination colored by his wide reading. The work does not seem to have been guided by any consistent

artistic principles or ethical philosophy.[25] In Milton's judgment it was "a vain amatorious poem," and some later critics have agreed. Wallace complained that "The God of Arcadia is Love," and he goes on to say that "the preoccupation of the writer's mind with the facts of sex is much in evidence."[26]

Some time later, probably in 1584,[27] Sidney began to revise his Arcadia. The revision, known as The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia, is, in contrast to the earlier work, a work of conscious art as well as being the epitome of a clearly defined artistic theory and ethical philosophy.[28] Myrick indirectly poses--but leaves unanswered--the question of what or who stimulated and inspired Sidney to study the principles of literary criticism and to review ethical philosophy, work that is reflected in his writings done after the completion of the Old Arcadia, probably late in 1582.

In their search for influences and sources for Sidney's works--answering questions such as Myrick has raised--scholars have perhaps overlooked too long a man who had the literary interest and experience as well as the philosophic brilliance to provide the stimulation and inspiration that Sidney seems to have experienced in 1583--Giordano Bruno.

We cannot date either Sidney's Defence or Bruno's Eroici furori closely. Scholars are fairly well agreed that the Defence was written after the completion of the Old Arcadia, and most are willing to accept 1583 as the beginning date.[29] In Wallace's opinion, furthermore, the essay was not necessarily composed at one time, but may reflect a development of ideas over some time.[30] Eroici furori was the last of Bruno's works to be published in England--in 1585. This does not mean, however, that it could not have been in progress earlier. If it was being written during the same period as the Defence, Sidney might very well have seen the manuscript. Or perhaps--and this seems the more plausible of the two ideas--Sidney's essay was inspired by conversations between the two men in which Bruno expressed his literary and philosophical ideas. These ideas he could have later incorporated into his Eroici furori, a feat which would be relatively simple for a man with Bruno's reputed phenomenal memory. Certainly we can agree, as Cook points out, "The impulse given by Bruno would be precisely that which Sidney needed in order to urge him to clarify his ideas, and reduce them to the orderly form in which they are presented in the Defense."[31]

That form was one that was very familiar to Sidney. Not only was he familiar with its classical predecessors, but, in the opinion of Charles Nauert[32] and A. C. Hamilton,[33] the recently translated declamation of Cornelius Agrippa, De Vanitate, offered Sidney a more contemporary model. The Defence is structured in accordance with the rules of the classical rhetoricians and contains--although they are not designated--the seven traditional parts: an exordium, a narratio, a propositio, a partitio, a confirmatio, and a reprehensio. Geoffrey Shepherd, editor of a 1965 edition of the Defence, has described the structure in more modern and descriptive terms: the first part is "a commendation of the dignity of poetry"; the second part is "a defence of poetry against a variety of charges"; and the third part is "a review of the contemporary situation."[34] The tone of the essay as well as its structure echoes models of classical oratory. Myrick thinks the Defence bears a close resemblance to "a judicial oration in behalf of an accused client."[35] Shepherd says we should imagine the author delivering the Defence "in reply to a prosecutor's speech. . . ."[36]

For centuries scholars accepted the idea that Sidney's Defence of Poesie was indeed written in reply to Stephen Gosson's puritan attack on the theater,

School of Abuse, published in 1579 and dedicated to Sidney without the latter's permission. This notion has by now been almost entirely revised. Even Wallace was cautious in suggesting that Sidney may have had Gosson in mind for even one short section of the Defence.[37] Myrick, like most modern critics, rejects the idea that Sidney's essay was a response to Gosson's attack in particular.[38] Some critics, among them Irene Samuel and Cornell Dowlin, think Sidney's essay is a refutation of Plato's indictment of poets,[39] but this explanation does not satisfy everyone, either. Sidney does not really respond to either Gosson or Plato. R. L. Elia says Sidney is actually Plato's advocate,[40] and Jacob Bronowski finds Sidney and Gosson actually agreeing on several points.[41]

And yet the Defence quite definitely has the tone of a response to someone or something in particular, a personal rather than a legalistic tone, however, In reading the essay, we have the impression that we are listening to half a dialogue--a lively, lengthy, many-faceted disputation, the kind Bruno relished. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on philosophy and philosophers in the work itself and an aside addressed to "my masters the philosophers" suggest that the person addressed is himself a philosopher. Cook thinks Bruno was the

"famous philosopher and highly gifted nature," who was instrumental in inspiring Sidney to write the Defence.[42]

Sidney's and Bruno's choice of forms for their literary expression actually supports the thesis that the Defence is, partially at least, a response to Bruno and his ideas. Eroici furori is a full-scale literary work based on Bruno's already matured philosophy, whereas Sidney's essay is a critical commentary touching expositorily on subjects developed at length and poetically by Bruno. Well-structured and meaty as it is, the Defence is still a response, a counterpoint to a major theme. There is also an occasional divergence of opinion which does not argue against influence, but rather reinforces the disputative tone and the idea of a personal exchange. Throughout the Defence, Sidney displays a firm independence of thought,[43] even though a gentle irony lightens the tone of the work as a whole. On a topic which Bruno develops ardently and at length, Sidney appears to mock gently the other's florid verbosity; even on a topic Sidney treats seriously, his comments have a tone of tolerant, courteous banter.

This disputative tone is often apparent in Bruno's work as well as Sidney's, though the dialogue sections are handled so that the interlocutors complement and supplement each other more than they disagree. The

disputative tone is, however, sharply apparent in Bruno's dedication of Eroici furori to Sidney, a piece of writing that has puzzled scholars. They cannot understand either the tone or the context of the passage. Bruno opens his dedication with an abrupt and seemingly unrelated anti-Petrarchan tirade that has all the characteristics and feel of an interrupted argument--the last word, clear only to the participants themselves, Sidney and Bruno. "Most illustrious knight," Bruno addresses Sidney, "it is indeed a base, ugly and contaminating wit that is constantly occupied and curiously obsessed with the beauty of a female body!" (p. 59). We can almost hear the two men arguing in friendly but often heated fashion a favorite Renaissance topic, the Neoplatonic concept of love. Certainly, accepting the Defence and Eroici furori in this disputative context makes the tone of the dedication less puzzling, to say the least. The two works are not "companion pieces," nor is the Defence a critical analysis of Eroici furori. The disputations or conversations behind these two works, however, may well have been at once the source of ideas for Sidney's essay and an influence on his thought.

Although the sources of Sidney's works are usually obscure, in the case of the Defence, this is only

partially true, because the constant references to Aristotle and Plato point clearly to the works of these two as sources for ideas expressed in the Defence. Until fairly recently the Defence was thought of as primarily Aristotelian in thought--an opinion that Cornell Dowlin labels "one of the mysteries of scholarship."[44] Miss Irene Samuel in 1940 pointed out the dominant Platonic overtones,[45] and her work has met with general acceptance. Michael Krouse criticizes Miss Samuel for ignoring possible intermediary sources, pointing out the fact that Renaissance Platonism was rarely pure.[46] John McIntyre agrees with Krouse on this point. McIntyre declares that the Neoplatonism of the Florentine Academy was "the most immediate source for this essay," which this critic describes as "an apogee of Renaissance Neoplatonism."[47]

Aristotle's contribution, however, should not be overlooked. Krouse summarizes the balance of influence in this way: "The Defence relies principally upon Plato for its fundamental conceptions of the nature of poetry and poetry's ethical affects, but principally upon Aristotle for its treatment of the formal aspects of poetry and of the whole question of the relationship between form and function."[48] Cook leans toward Aristotle as the dominant influence on Sidney in the

essay, but he argues for Bruno as a possible intermediary source: "The preparation for the Defense necessitated a comparison of the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle touching poetry, and nothing could well have served as a more urgent stimulus to such philosophical study than familiar intercourse with Bruno, at home in Platonism and Neoplatonism, and a vigorous assailant of the exclusive authority of Aristotle."[49]

As Renaissance literary men, Sidney and Bruno undoubtedly shared many sources which may have exerted an influence and which might account for many similarities and echoes in their works. The elements linking Bruno to the Defence, however, because of their nature and the manner or tone in which they are presented, suggest something more than a common background or mere coincidence. Plato's Theory of Ideas, the Neoplatonic concept of the ascendance of the soul toward the Good, the reputation and function of poetry, the inspiration and role of the poet, visual epistemology--all these appear in both works. Besides the similarities of topics, there are verbal parallels, verbal echoes, and analogues scattered throughout the works. It is the tone, though, that persuades. Perhaps it was this elusive but pervasive tone that compelled Cook to ask:

> Who can fail to recognize the substantial identity of Sidney's reflection on the loveliness of virtue, "who could see virtue would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty" not only with the common source in Plato but also with the following sentiment taken from Bruno's Heroic Rapture. . . ."For I am assured that Nature has endowed me with an inward sense by which I reason from the beauty before my eyes to the light and eminence of more excellent spiritual beauty, which is light, majesty and divinity."[50]

Although Cook drew only this one parallel, it is quite possible to marshall a more convincing array of evidence.

Sidney's concept of the nature of the poet, as well as the examples he cites and the imagery he employs, closely parallels that of Bruno. In the opening section of Eroici furori, Bruno speaks highly of poets, and Homer and Hesiod are among his roll call of great poets. "Who would know," he asks, "about Achilles, Ulysses and so many other Greek and Trojan captains . . . if they had not been raised to the stars and deified by the sacrifice of praise upon an altar kindled in the hearts of poets and other illustrious seers . . ." (p. 189). With parallel feeling, Sidney opens his Defence with praise of poets, and Homer and Hesiod are among the first names he cites, too. Like Bruno, Sidney reminds his readers that the Romans had called their poet vates, or prophet, because they thought of

him as a seer (III, 6). To both Bruno and Sidney the poet is a special being, moved by a special force. Bruno recognized the unique nature of poets, "chief inventors and authors," who by their contact with the Good and the Beautiful "become as Gods." Poets are "endowed with a lucid and intellectual spirit" and can "enkindle a rational flame which raises their vision beyond the ordinary" (p. 108). Sidney, a bit more reserved but with a parallel thought, believes the poet's work reveals "the heavenly maker of that maker . . . when with the force of a divine breath" (III, 8) he creates his art. Bruno's poet is above rules and traditional limitations. "Poetry," he declares, "is not born of the rules, except by the merest chance, but that the rules derive from the poetry" (p. 83). The pedant knows all the rules but lacks any poetic spark. Sidney's poet, "disdeining to be tied to any such subjection" as rules lawyers or grammarians, is also a free soul, "lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect into an other nature: in making things either better then nature bringeth foorth, or quite a new, formes such as never were in nature . . ." (III, 8).

In describing the poetic gift, Sidney and Bruno employ a mythical allusion. They recognize that a

special force is at work in the poet, and both allude to the Daedalus myth. Bruno, however, identifies with the son of Daedalus. Inspired by that "rational flame," the poet soars upward; "Nor does the cruel fate of Daedalus's son burden me, on the contrary I follow his way the more." He encourages his fellow-poets: "Fear not noble destruction, burst boldly through the clouds, and die content, if heaven destines us to so illustrious a death" (p. 118). Sidney's reference to Daedalus is more prosaic than Bruno's. He concedes that "a Poet no industrie can make, if his owne Genius be not carried into it," and he implies the need of some inspiration: "The highest flying wit," Sidney says, must have "a Dedalus to guide him." With a touch of the pedantic, Sidney informs his readers that "Dedalus, they say both in this and in other, hath three wrings to beare it selfe up into the ayre of due commendation: that is Art, Imitation, and Exercise" (III, 37). When Sidney admits, however, that with these disciplines" we much comber our selves withall," he echoes Bruno's disdain for pedantry.

The force or power which fills and inspires the poet is of parallel interest to both Bruno and Sidney, and Bruno uses it as a major theme and title of his work. This is the "heroic frenzy." The word "heroic"

has a special meaning for Bruno, and certainly for Sidney, who uses it in flattering terms frequently in the Defence and who probes its connotations even more deeply in his revision of his Arcadia. The originator of the word was Plato, who explained that "the heroes . . . sprang either from the love of a God for a mortal woman or of a mortal man for a goddess."[51] Later the word was accepted as the name for the malady of love-sickness afflicting heroes. Thus, for Bruno the word "heroic" suggests both the lover's aspiration and nobility. The phrase "eroici furori" means a Platonic species of "intellectual aspiration" of the highest nobility, "erotic in character, heroic in dignity." Similarly, the origin of the concept of poetic inspiration is Platonic. Plato spoke of a divine fury that fills the poet and enables him to create his works of art. He had combined the word mantic, or prophecy, with manic, or frenzy, to describe the madness of prophets and poets. Plato had further identified four species of madness, placing poetic madness third and love madness--"given by the gods for our greatest happiness"--fourth.[52] Plotinus had interpreted the poetic frenzy as a force from God himself, a sort of divine emanation.[53] Ficino modified this idea by changing the order of the four types of madness and

describing the condition as divinely inspired degrees of the soul's ascension. Bruno describes the frenzy which overtakes the poet as "an internal stimulus and spontaneous fervor," and again and again he emphasizes that it is "a rational force following the intellectual perception of the good and the beautiful . . ." (p. 109).

Sidney, too, uses the word "heroic" with reverence. This word is often confused with "epic," but Sidney seems to make a careful distinction, reserving "heroic" for the poetry that "teacheth and mooveth to the most high and excellent truth" and that presents virtue in such a way that we are "ravished with the love of her bewtie" (III, 25). Sidney is not sure at first, however, that the "frenzy" is a divine gift. Even Plato, he says, "attributeth unto Poesie, more then my selfe do; namely, to be a verie inspiring of a divine force, farre above mans wit . . ." (III, 34). He does admit, though, that in poetry "our brain is delivered of much matter which never was begotten by knowledge." Then, toward the end of the essay, perhaps convinced at last, Sidney urges his readers to believe, with Landin "that poets are so beloved of the Gods, that whatsoever they write, proceeds of a divine furie" (III, 45).

Bruno describes what happens when the heroic frenzy seizes the poet. "A divine force . . . sets wings upon him," and, coming "closer to the intellectual sun, rejecting the rust of earthly cares he becomes gold proven and pure . . ." (p. 109). In a verbal analogue, Sidney closely echoes Bruno's passage with the image of the rust and gold, but Sidney surpasses Bruno in one of the most poetic passages in the Defence: "Nature never set foorth the earth in so rich Tapistry as diverse Poets have done, neither with so pleasaunt rivers, fruitfull trees, sweete smelling flowers, nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth more lovely: her world is brasen, the Poets only deliver a golden" (III, 8).

In comparing the poet's creative power with that of God, Sidney says the poet can exercise his rare gift to create a world, "a second nature," far surpassing the real one "with no small arguments to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam, since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected wil keepeth us from reaching unto it" (III, 9). Though the remark about "erected wit" and "infected wil" seems almost an afterthought, this statement, in the opinion of Frank Evans, is central to Sidney's thought.[54] It is on this subject, moreover,

that Sidney may have been most deeply influenced by Bruno's ideas.

Bruno takes an extremely unorthodox position toward the role and relationship of will and intellect. Augustinian theology had declared that man's corruption resulting from Adam's fall was complete and total. Aquinas had somewhat alleviated the harsh Augustinian decree: it was man's will primarily that had been corrupted, not his intelligence. The popular Protestant doctrine had returned to the grim Augustinian position, one that had become a commonplace in England during this time.[55] Bruno's Eroici furori, however, seems to grant an untarnished power and grace to the will that goes much further than even the Thomistic modification. His statements concerning will and intellect form an important thematic motif that runs throughout the work. In some instances he equates the will with the heart: "The heart, that is to say, the will finds joy and finds it in that very will through the power of love . . ." (p. 94). In metaphoric terms, Bruno describes the relationship of will to soul and mind: "The captain is the human will which sits at the stern of the soul and with the little rudder of reason governs the affections of the inferior potencies against the surge of their natural violence" (p. 87).

Bruno also presents the will-intellect relationship through other metaphors. As Sidney does in his revision of the Arcadia, Bruno employs the Diana-Actaeon myth throughout Eroici furori to convey this image--only one of several roles this myth plays. John C. Nelson sees Diana as a symbol of nature, reflecting Apollonian divinity as the moon reflects the light of the sun. She is the Plotinian nous, the finite mode of the Divine.[56] Actaeon, the heroic lover represents the intellect intent upon the capture of divine wisdom and the comprehension of the divine Beauty. This concept is symbolized by Actaeon the hunter who becomes increasingly possessed with the desire to see the nude Diana but who is slain by his own dogs. In the Eroici, Actaeon's thoughts are the dogs which gnaw at him and threaten to consume him entirely, or, in Bruno's words, until "the great hunter becomes the prey that is hunted" (123-125).

In Bruno's philosophy the will has an active role, even though "the operation of the intellect precedes the operation of the will" (p. 124). In the soul's pursuit of the good and the beautiful, the will acts as co-equal to the intellect, which sees always the higher form as it ascends, "a greater and still greater one" and constantly rises, drawing the will ever

higher (p. 128). The will, Bruno declares, "desires to know all of the truth . . . to grasp all that is beautiful and good . . ." (p. 132). Once the soul has glimpsed true goodness, "the will is incapable of any other appetite when it experiences the supreme and sovereign perfection" (p. 213).

There is a danger here, however, and Bruno warns us of it. Man can be seduced by the beauties of the intellect. Reason can "tyrannize over the law of the senses" and destroy the harmonious balance compatible with life (p. 135). Souls may exert a "rebellious will of their own" through "the necessity of an inward law" and may "fall" (p. 120). The soul may become so enamored of the divine splendor that, like Actaeon, it becomes the "prey by the operation of the will whose act converts him into the object . . ." (p. 125). The intellect must guide the soul into harmony, at which point the "heroic frenzy is well integrated" (p. 195). Typically, Bruno pulls will and intellect together finally with his Coincidence of Contrarieties: "There are not two contrary essences but one essence subject to two extremes of contrarieties" (p. 137). He reflects a pre-lapsarian attitude, suggesting that, if there was a fall, man has been restored by the divinity which resides within: "Then it is well said that the

kingdom of God is within us, and that divinity lies within us by virtue of the regenerated intellect and will" (p. 125).

Sidney does not take as extreme a position as Bruno does, but Bruno may very well have brought Sidney to what Evans calls the "startling" and "most unusual" position expressed in the Defence. The remark about the fall is addressed to non-believers, evidently "Platonists and other pagans"--a category Bruno certainly fits into--and was calculated to win converts, Evans says.[57] Sidney's position, like Bruno's, reflects the Thomistic doctrine, but he, too, goes further. He affirms the freedom and majesty of man's intellect and suggests that it can be further exalted by learning, whose final 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" (III, 11). Sidney moves dangerously close to heresy when he implies that poetry, which must be apprehended through the intellect, has the power to influence man's "infected will"--a power seen by the orthodox of the time as belonging only to God. Sidney, then, is actually very close to Bruno on this point, and though we do not find total agreement with Bruno on the part of Sidney, there appears to be an unusual and unaccountable effect for which no cause has yet

been established. Again, supplementing the contentual parallels, there are verbal echoes that strengthen the tone of personal exchange and reaction. Both men held that it is the intellect that draws man's soul upward toward perfection. Both accepted the idea that the poet, the man possessed by a heroic frenzy, stimulates that intellect with heroic poetry and discloses the ravishing beauty of virtue--in Bruno's words, the "naked Diana." Evans admits that he has "not discovered an intermediary source which may have influenced Sidney. . . ."[58] Could not Bruno have been that "intermediary source"?

Sidney's and Bruno's statements on the purpose behind that drawing upward of men's souls through poetry abound in verbal echoes and parallels as well as contentual similarities. Though the statements probably reflect, broadly, common classical and contemporary sources, in the light of the previous evidence, the parallels become even more significant. Sidney defines poesy, quoting Aristotle, as "a speaking Picture, with this end, to teach and delight." It is that "faining notable images of vertues, vices, or what els, with that delightfull teaching" that is the mark of a poet (III, 9, 11). Similarly, Bruno's purpose in Lo spaccio exemplifies just such an end. His "final intention,"

he says in the Dedication addressed to Sidney, is "the order, the initiation, the disposition, the index of the method, the tree, the theater and arena of the virtues and the vices . . ." (p. 74). In the Eroici furori Bruno also recognizes that "true poets" create didactic and pleasing poems. "Either they will be delightful," he says, "or they will be useful, or they will be useful and delightful at the same time" (p. 183). Bruno emphasizes the role of contemplation as the means of achieving self-knowledge and wisdom and thus of acquiring virtue. Poetry can aid man in learning and perfecting contemplation. First, he must "withdraw within himself" until he reaches the state in which he "no longer regards but scorns each struggle, so that the more passion and vice fight him from within and vicious enemies from without the more will he recover his breath and rise again. . . ." By diligent contemplation the mind sees in the "mirror of similitudes" the symbol of divinity. "The soul ascends by virtue of contemplation. . . ," Bruno declares (p. 194).

Sidney also recognizes the fascination and charm of contemplation, which shows us "that unspeakable and everlasting beauty to be seen by the eyes of the mind. . . ." He knows, too, that through contemplation man's reason can free itself from passion, finding "the

inward light each minde hath in it selfe . . ." (III, 19). Sidney insists, however, that virtue consists in action. Right knowing is not enough; right doing should be man's goal.[59] Bruno and Sidney both recognize a common enemy. Sidney identifies it as man's "enemie vice . . . and his combersome servant passion," which hinders his achieving virtuous action (III, 12). Bruno, similarly, knows that "the power of the affections" disturbs contemplation, thus obscuring man's vision of the good and the beautiful (p. 256).

Sidney and Bruno agree, then, that poetry should be useful and delightful; they agree that unruly passion is the obstacle to delightful utility or teaching; they agree also on the ultimate goal of that utility and teaching--virtue. They simply present two ways of approaching that goal. Bruno emphasizes contemplation more than Sidney does, whereas Sidney stresses action. That there was lively discussion and debate on the validity and efficacy of each approach is underlined sharply in Sidney's statement that philosophers, unlike poets, cannot "move" except in "wrangling whether Virtus be the chiefe or the onely good; whether the contemplative or the active life do excell . . ." (III, 20). Of course, Sidney's work itself takes the

sting out of the slightly mocking tone, but again there is a personal and particular ring to his words.

Sidney continues to develop the theme of virtue in the Defence. Some men think, Sidney says, that virtue can be achieved through knowledge, and so they pursue mathematics, music, astronomy, or natural philosophy. These, says Sidney, are "serving sciences" and cannot teach virtue. The moral philosopher, though he knows what virtue is, is not much more effectual. "He teacheth obscurely, so as the learned can onely understand him . . ." (III, 15, 16). The delight that attends poetry, "the food for the tenderest stomachs," is missing. Philosophers, Sidney accuses, "scorne to delight, so must they be content little to moove" (III, 20).

Those studies and skills, then, that serve to bring forth virtuous action have, in Sidney's opinion, "a most just title to be Princes over al the rest" (III, 12). Having examined all areas of learning, Sidney declares that "of all Sciences . . . is our Poet the Monarch" (III, 19), who "with words set in delightfull proportion . . . with a tale, which holdeth children from play, and olde men from the Chimney corner . . . doth intend the winning of the minde from wickednes to vertue . . ." (III, 20). The poet can not only create

a particular hero, a Cyrus, as Nature can, but he provides a model which may be imitated and so, in turn, makes many heroic Cyruses. Even men little accustomed to uplifting thoughts or acts may be moved "ere themselves be aware, as if they tooke a medicine of Cheries" (III, 8, 21).[60]

It was the poet's power to create "speaking pictures," according to Sidney, that moved men to virtuous action. That moving power, he says, "is of a higher degree than teaching . . . ," and, in a statement that echoes Bruno's Coincidence of Contrarieties, Sidney adds: "It is well nigh both the cause and effect of teaching" (III, 19). The belief that visualization, such as Sidney refers to, aids learning was a Renaissance commonplace,[61] and Sidney and Bruno both accept it. Forrest Robinson thinks, in fact, that this concept of visual epistemology was central to the thought of both men.[62]

Sidney and Bruno both assumed that poetry and other artistic creations were not simply sense impressions but "concepts formed and visualized in the mind."[63] In the Defence Sidney admits that "the skill of ech Artificer standeth in that Idea, or fore conceit of the worke, and not in the worke it selfe" (III, 8).

This emphasis on the visual aspects of literature links Sidney's and Bruno's works to a literary tradition popular during the Renaissance--the emblem book. In his Eroici furori, Bruno illustrates the theory that Sidney discusses in the Defence. In his revision of the Arcadia, however, we shall see that Sidney, too, had perfected the literary emblematic technique during this period of his association with Bruno. The various sections of the Eroici describe an emblem or device which invokes a Latin motto, the sonnets employ images that describe the emblems, and the commentaries explain the allegorical links between emblems and poems. Concerning visual aspects of literature, Sidney and Bruno are ideologically very close.

Certainly Bruno's emblematic technique in Eroici furori was literally one of Sidney's "speaking pictures." The sharply drawn images--"a shield divided in four colors; on the crest of the shield is painted a flame underneath a head of bronze. . . ."; "a flying phoenix toward which a little boy is turned who burns in the midst of flames. . . ."; and "a golden apple tree most richly enamelled with a variety of the most precious fruits . . ." (p. 143, 154, 167)--these are some of Bruno's "speaking pictures." The eye sees the emblem, and the image is mysteriously transferred to

the mind, where it is subjected to analysis and contemplation. The poem accompanying the emblem aids the intellect in its struggle for insight and wisdom; the poem also helps the intellect to maintain the state of contemplation.

The speaking picture of poesy paints a portrait of a virtuous action that, like Bruno's emblem, is contemplated by the "eyes of the mind" until it excites within the soul a desire to imitate the action. Bruno would say that the soul, enamored of virtue and perfection, is then satisfied with nothing less. For Bruno, the visual image is the primary step in contemplation; for Sidney it is the delightful example which will stir men to virtuous action. Sidney gives a personal testimonial to the power of poetry with its speaking pictures to move men's hearts. Almost apologetically, he says, "Certainly I must confesse mine owne barbarousnesse, I never heard the old Song of Percy and Duglas, that I founde not my heart mooved more then with a Trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blinde Crowder, with no rougher voyce, then rude stile . . ." (III, 24). This entire discussion of visualization seems to be a part of a larger issue--the life of action as opposed to the contemplative life. Again Sidney and Bruno are ideologically close. The

difference is minor, but Sidney insists on making the distinction: for Bruno the "speaking pictures" aid contemplation, which in turn, leads to virtue; for Sidney, the "speaking picture" inspires virtuous action directly. The discussion of the two ways of life contains throughout strong echoes of an intimate debate, one in which Sidney grants certain points, but firmly holds to others.

The note of personal exchange is one of the most convincing pieces of evidence for a friendship between Sidney and Bruno. This note becomes especially prominent in the last half of the Defence. The entire section on the refutation of objections to poetry might well be a response to an argument that philosophy is superior to poetry. The tone of familiar banter that appears in this section from time to time strengthens the idea of a disputation between the poet Sidney and the philosopher Bruno.

In anticipating and refuting certain popular objections to poetry Sidney pokes fun at carpers with what seems to be a significant remark: "We know a playing wit can praise the discretion of an Asse" (III, 26). Bruno's Cabala Pegaseo, of course, was just such a work--a satire that ironically praised asininity, the blessedness of ignorance. Cornelius Agrippa, whom

Sidney cites a bit further on, also used asininity as a symbol of complete innocence, but Agrippa was serious,[64] whereas Bruno was truly "a playing wit."

The most serious "imputations laid to the poore Poets," says Sidney, are that "a man might better spend his time," that it is "the mother of lyes," that it is "the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires," and finally "that Plato banished them out of his Commonwealth" (III, 28). Sidney dispenses with the first objection by calling up his "proof" that, since poetry is the best teacher of virtuous action, "incke and paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose imployed" (III, 28). The second he dismisses on the grounds that the poet "nothing affirmeth, and therefore never lieth" (III, 29). The poet--and here Sidney may be twitting his Magus friend Bruno and the Italian's interest in Natural Magic--"never maketh any Circles about your imagination, to conjure you to beleeve for true, what he writeth" (III, 29).

The last two objections Sidney has heard against poetry offer him more of a challenge. To the third objection that it turns men's minds to "wanton sinfulnesse, and lustfull love," Sidney admits that "there are wanton shows of better hidden matters," but he asks, reasonably: "Shal the abuse of a thing, make the

right use odious?" (III, 30). Bruno had written in his dedication of Eroici furori to Sidney that vulgar love "may have borrowed wings for itself and become heroic" (p. 63). Sidney might be replying directly to Bruno's accusation when he muses half-defensively and half in agreement that it is rumored that "even to the Heroical, Cupid hath ambitiously climbed." Sidney stoutly challenges the poet haters--"these mysomousi": "But grant love of bewtie, to be a beastly fault . . . graunt that lovely name of love, to deserve all hatefull reproches . . . yet thinke I, when this is graunted, they will . . . not say that Poetrie abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth Poetrie" (III, 30). The passage just quoted contains a parenthetical aside that is rich in irony and, perhaps, in significance. After the phrase "that lovely name of love," Sidney remarks: "(Although even some of my maisters the Philosophers spent a good deale of their Lampoyle in setting foorth the excellencie of it)" (III, 30). What more appropriate riposte could Sidney have delivered to a philosopher friend with whom he had been engaged in lengthy disputations on that same subject, love?

Reluctantly, Sidney turns to the final objection: he admits his "burthen is great." A great name, that of Plato, "is laide uppon mee, whom I must confesse of

all Philosophers, I have ever esteemed most worthie of reverence; and with good reason, since of all Philosophers hee is the most Poetical" (III, 32, 33). Sidney flatly denies that Plato abused poetry. Plato had abused the abuse of poetry only. Sidney cites Plato's Ion which gives "high, and rightly divine commendation unto Poetrie" and decrees that Plato "shall be our Patron, and not our adversarie" (III, 34). This entire section devoted to refuting objections to poetry has a lighter tone than the earlier sections. The presence of what seem to be familiar, friendly jibes creates a less serious but at the same time a more personal atmosphere.

Sidney concludes his Defence on a note of confident reassurance that he has swept his opposition aside and has won his case. He reiterates that Poesie is "full of vertuebreeding delightfulnesse," that the charges against it "are either false or feeble," that its lack of esteem "is the fault of Poet-apes, not Poets." He pleads with his readers "no more to scorne the sacred misteries of Poesie. No more to laugh at the names of Poets . . . but to beleeve with Aristotle, that they were the auncient Treasurers of the Grecians divinitie. . . ." Then, with light irony, alluding perhaps to his own "immortality" through Bruno's

dedications, he promises his readers that, if they do as he has urged, "your name shall flourish in the Printers shops. . . . You shalbe of kin to many a Poeticall Preface. Thus doing, you shal be most faire, most rich, most wise, most all: you shall dwel upon Superlatives" (III, 45).

Sidney might have been addressing himself in the above passage, for it is with superlatives that critics have spoken of his Defence of Poesie over the centuries. He displays here that wit and style that are in the opinion of many scholars the epitome of prose excellence, as well as revealing more of his personality and spirit than in any other single work.[65] The Defence contains, furthermore, signs of a specific and penetrating influence by Bruno on Sidney's thought as expressed in the Defence. In his unorthodox theological position, Sidney reflects an ideological influence that might well be attributed to Bruno--indeed, it could hardly be attributed to any other of Sidney's friends and associates of this particular time. Verbal similarities--echoes, parallels, and analogues--appear in convincing numbers. And above all, there is the pervasive tone of a personal exchange of ideas with a friendly adversary, a philosopher, a Neoplatonist who

held strong opinions on love, virtue, contemplation, and visual epistemology.

The evidence, then, though not conclusive, strongly suggests that Cook's hypothesis was correct--that Bruno did exert an influence on Sidney, and that this influence can be detected in his Defence of Poesie. Other, later literary activities of Sidney's also reflect this new stage in his "spiritual development." The revision of his Arcadia shows, as Myrick has suggested, a new sense of artistic direction and a new grasp of ethical philosophy which the Old Arcadia had not shown. Chapter V will discuss the significance of this literary project as it relates to this study. Sidney's reasons for revising the Arcadia in the first place will be explored, and specific changes which Sidney made in that work that seem to reflect the continuing influence of Bruno will be examined.

NOTES

[1]Myrick, p. 12.

[2]Two quartos were published in 1595, one entitled The Defence of Poesie, the other, An Apology for Poetry. Though both titles are in use today, this study follows Albert Feuillerat's choice of the Ponsonby quarto and the title The Defence of Poesie, The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: University Press, 1917-1926), III, v-vi.

[3]Albert S. Cook, ed. Defense of Poesy, Philip Sidney (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1890), p. xiii.

[4]Wallace, pp. 301-302.

[5]Marcus S. Goldman, Philip Sidney and the Arcadia (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1934), pp. 38, 43.

[6]Yates, "Religious Policy," p. 207.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Angelo Pellegrini, "Bruno, Sidney, and Spenser," Studies in Philology, 40 (1943), 129.

[9]Ibid., p. 136.

[10]Freda L. Townsend, "Sidney and Ariosto," PMLA, 61 (1946), 98.

[11]Philip Sidney, Astrophil and Stella, Poems, ed. Ringler, p. 204.

[12]Altick, p. 73.

[13]Greville, p. 17.

[14]Wallace, p. 222.

[15]Joel E. Spingarn, A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, 5th ed. (1899; rpt. New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), p. 258.

[16]Myrick, pp. 7-15.

[17]Edwin Greenlaw, "Sidney's Arcadia as an Example of Elizabethan Allegory," Anniversary Papers by Colleagues of George Lyman Kittredge (1931; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 329.

[18]Count Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. Leonard E. Opdycke (1901; rpt. New York: Horace Liveright, 1929), p. 35.

[19]Philip Sidney, The Defence of Poesie, Works, III, 45. Future citations in this study will refer to this text. Parenthetical references in the text will be made when the source is clearly indicated.

[20]Letter from Sidney to Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, Works, I, 3-4.

[21]Myrick, pp. 11, 12, et passim.

[22]Ibid., pp. 25, 56, 298.

[23]Aubrey, p. 279.

[24]C. S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama (1954; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 331.

[25]Myrick, p. 299.

[26]Wallace, p. 237.

[27]Ringler, p. xxxvi.

[28]Myrick, p. 229, f.

[29]Bate, p. 82. D. L. Clark also accepts the date 1593, Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance (1922; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 83.

[30]Wallace, 238.

[31]Cook, p. xiii.

[32]Charles G. Nauert, Jr., Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 326.

[33]A. C. Hamilton, "Sidney and Agrippa," Review of English Studies, 7 (1956), 151-157, passim.

[34]Geoffrey Shepherd, ed. An Apology for Poetry or The Defence for Poesy (London: Nelson, 1965), p. 12.

[35]Myrick, p. 53.

[36]Shepherd, p. 12.

[37]Wallace, p. 238.

[38]Myrick, p. 38. Cook also rejected the idea, op cit., p. xiv. A. C. Hamilton says that though the essay was occasioned by Gosson, Plato was Sidney's "natural adversary," "Sidney's Idea of the 'Right Poet,'" Comparative Literature, 9 (1957), 51-59.

[39]Irene Samuel, "The Influence of Plato on Sidney's Defense of Poetry," Modern Language Quarterly, 1 (1940), 383-391; Cornell Dowlin, "Sidney's Two Definitions of Poetry," Modern Language Quarterly, 3 (1942), 580.

[40]R. L. Elia, "Platonic Irony in Sidney's An Apology for Poetrie," Revue Des Langues Vivantes, 36 (1971), 402.

[41]Jacob Bronowski, The Poet's Defence (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), pp. 30-56, passim.

[42]Cook, p. xiii.

[43]J. P. Thorne, "A Ramistical Commentary on Sidney's An Apology for Poetrie," Modern Philology, 54 (1957), 164.

[44]Dowlin, p. 573.

[45]Samuel, passim.

[46]Michael Krouse, "Plato and Sidney's Defence of Poesie," Comparative Literature, 6 (1954), 139.

[47]John McIntyre, "Sidney's Golden World," Comparative Literature, 14 (1962), 356, 363.

[48]Krouse, p. 140. George Hallam denies the Ramistic influence noted by some scholars, "Sidney's Supposed Ramism," Renaissance Papers (1963), pp. 11-20.

[49]Cook, p. xiii.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Quoted in "Introduction," Memmo, p. 18.

[52]Ibid., pp. 17-20.

[53]McIntyre, "Sidney's Golden World," p. 361.

[54]Frank Evans, "The Concept of the Fall in Sidney's Apologie," Renaissance Papers (1969), p. 11.

[55]Ibid., p. 12.

[56]Nelson, pp. 190, 192.

[57]Evans, p. 12.

[58]Ibid., p. 13.

[59]Russell Fraser thinks this is a part of Sidney's humanist background, "Sidney the Humanist," The South Atlantic Quarterly, 66 (1967), 87-91.

[60]Mark Roberts identifies the "pill concept" of poetry as Christian and the "cherries concept" as pagan, "The Pill and the Cherries: Sidney and the Neo-Classical Tradition," Essays in Criticism, 16 (1966), 28.

[61]Forrest Robinson, "The Shape of Things Known, Sidney's Apology in Its Philosophical Tradition and An Approach to His Poetry and Prose," Diss. Harvard University, 1968, p. 114.

[62]Ibid., pp. 129, 199.

[63]Ibid., p. 170.

[64]McIntyre, Bruno, p. 257. Agrippa's attitude is thoroughly discussed by Richard Popkin, The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes (Assen: Van Gorcum & Company, 1960), pp. 23-25.

[65]Dorothy McArdle, ed., "Introduction," Defence of Poesy, Philip Sidney (London: Macmillan, 1963), p. xv.

CHAPTER V

THE ARCADIA AND BRUNO

Sidney's major literary project after Defence of Poesie was his revision of his pastoral romance Arcadia. Scholars acknowledge that a change--a philosophical and ethical deepening[1]--occurred in Sidney between the time he finished the first version of Arcadia around 1581[2] and the time he began the revision some time in 1583 or 1584.[3] The effect noted by scholars is more of a sudden focus and intensity of interest in matters he was already familiar with to some extent, rather than a natural maturing or a developing of new interests. The preceding chapter presented evidence which suggests Bruno's influence on Sidney's Defence of Poesie. The present chapter will show that the change or deepening in Sidney's thought is also apparent in his revision of his Arcadia. An attempt will be made to ascertain whether his revision of Arcadia and the changes made in the work are attributable to Bruno's influence.

Once more it should be pointed out that the intellectual associations Sidney had at this time--with the exception of that with Bruno--were of long standing.

Those men who held common religious, philosophical, and literary ideas with Sidney, men like Daniel Rogers and Plessis du Mornay, were friends of over ten years' standing. And although they may have been something of an influence over the years, such friends could hardly be considered the cause of the dramatic change evidenced in Sidney's revision of Arcadia. Like his Defence, this revision shows signs of an inspiration and stimulation that is difficult to assign to any member of the Sidney circle--that is, until Bruno arrived in London and joined that circle.

It will be necessary to review briefly the peculiar publishing history of the Arcadia to establish the identities of the different versions of the work. The Arcadia did not appear in print until 1590, four years after Sidney's death, although manuscripts did exist and had been passed from hand to hand. In that year there appeared in London The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia, a work of only three divisions, or "Books," and ending abruptly in mid-sentence. A dedication by Sidney to his sister, Mary Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, appeared in that edition. With a blend of sprezzatura and pride, Sidney speaks of his work as his child, "this idle worke of mine. . . ." He tells Mary: "You desired me to doo it, and your desire to

my hart is an absolute commandement. Now, it is done onlie for you, onely to you: if you keep it to yourselfe or to such friendes who will, I hope for the fathers sake, it will be pardoned, perchaunce made much of, though in itself it have deformities."[4]

This dedication long puzzled critics, since Sidney would scarcely have said "it is done" to refer to an incomplete work such as the 1590 edition. Neither would such a comment have applied to the more complete, but still imperfect form that was published in 1593 under the direction of the Countess of Pembroke, a work that consisted of five books, the last of which provided an ending and some vague promise of a sequel. A writer, identified only by the initials "H. S.," explains in a preface that "that noble Lady" had remedied some blemishes from the earlier publication, evidently referring to the 1590 edition. The writer assured his readers that "though they finde not here what might be expected, they shall finde nevertheless as much as was intended, the conclusion, not the perfection of Arcadia: and that no further than the Authour's own writings or knowen determinations could direct."[5]

These two editions--the 1590 and the 1593 publications--were for more than three centuries the only versions of Sidney's Arcadia known to exist. Then, in

1907, a manuscript copy of a different Arcadia fell into the hands of an antiquarian book dealer, Bertram Dobell. This version was identified as the original Arcadia, the one begun by Sidney in 1580; the 1590 and the 1593 editions were then recognized as revisions.[6] When Dobell read the Old Arcadia, he realized that Sidney had revised only the first part of his work, and that death had interrupted the work of revision. The 1590 edition had been the three books Sidney had completed; the 1593 edition, prepared by the Countess of Pembroke, was that three-book revision plus the last two books of the Old Arcadia.[7]

Comparison of the Old Arcadia and the New revealed that Sidney's attitude and thought had changed in the time elapsing between the two literary projects. It is the New Arcadia which will be examined to determine whether Sidney's inspiration or need to revise his work and whether the revisions made were the result of his association with Bruno. Although the major concern will be with the 1590 edition--that portion which Sidney finished revising--Books IV and V as they appeared in the 1593 edition will also be considered.

The concluding two books are of significance to this evaluation. Many changes were necessary in those books to make the story consistent, and it is important

to establish the validity of those changes which were actually carried out by the Countess of Pembroke. A controversy has raged since 1907 as to whether the Countess actually fulfilled Sidney's scheme of Arcadia, or whether she, acting on her own, altered and censored certain portions of her brother's work. Dobell immediately took the position that Mary had made some of the changes that appeared in the 1593 edition out of personal, puritanical prudishness.[8] Reinard Zandvoort, author of a scholarly comparison of the two Arcadias, agreed essentially with Dobell.[9] Later, Kenneth Rowe pointed out that to assume that the Countess of Pembroke had been offended by certain passages is to replace Elizabethan morality with "Victorian" standards.[10] Rowe says: "Only by careless or strained interpretation" can Mary Herbert be held responsible for revising or adding to her brother's work. Even the changes in the last three books, in Rowe's opinion, give every appearance of being Sidney's revisions.[11]

Other recent critics--Kenneth Myrick, for example--have followed Rowe's lead in exonerating Mary Herbert from taking liberties with Sidney's work.[12] They feel that, with the 1593 edition, we have the Arcadia which Sidney would have been pleased to leave behind. The deathbed request that the manuscript of Arcadia be

burned--one of Greville's heroic stories about Sidney, which he presents as illustrating his hero's repentance of youthful follies[13]--was probably made because of the incomplete state of the revisions.[14] As important evidence, of course, we have the word of "H. S.," the author of the preface to the 1593 edition, who reassures us that nothing was done "further than the Authour's writings or knowen determination could direct." The fact that the final chapters were not published in 1590 does not mean that Sidney had not started working on them--or that they were not finished. It might simply mean that that portion of that manuscript was not available to the printer.

The plot of both versions is basically the same. The Arcadian king, Basilius, to avoid the fulfillment of a dreaded prophecy, leaves his duties to an advisor and establishes himself and his wife and two daughters in a wooded retreat. Two princes, Musidorus and Pyrocles, come to Arcadia and discover this strange and dangerous situation. The princes fall in love with Pamela and Philoclea, the daughters of Basilius, and the young couples, fearing they can never win the consent of the king, plan to elope. Many digressions and sub-plots serve as contrast to and as illustrations

of the main plot,[15] but the primary focus is on this situation and these characters.

The plot is complicated when the king becomes infatuated with Pyrocles, who has disguised himself as an Amazon named Zelmane and has taken service in the King's household. More complications arise when the Queen, Gynecia, who sees through the young hero's disguise, also becomes enamored with him. The plot comes to an unlikely climax when Pyrocles grants an assignation in a forest cave to both Gynecia and Basilius. While Pyrocles is enjoying the company of Philoclea elsewhere, the king and queen meet in the darkened cave, where, each thinking the other is the fascinating Pyrocles-Zelmane, they consummate their love. Basilius drinks a love potion brought to the cave by Gynecia for Pyrocles and falls unconscious to the ground. Gynecia is arrested for her husband's murder, and the lovers are arrested for treason, elopement being interpreted as such. King Euarchus, a good and just neighboring king, called in to restore order to the leaderless, strife-ridden country, pronounces the death sentence upon the young princes and Gynecia. Even the revelation by Pyrocles that he is Euarchus' son does not deter the king from his duty. Only the sudden recovery of King Basilius from the deep, death-like trance which the

potion had induced saves the day. The lovers are paired off, Gynecia is forgiven, and Basilius, admitting that his was the greatest fault, reassumes his throne, and all ends happily.[16]

This is the plot of both Arcadias, and Sidney evidently was satisfied with it. He must have felt, when he began his revision, that it would serve his purpose and that it was worthy of the time and effort he planned to invest. But even though the plot remained the same in outline, the revised Arcadia is a completely different work, not only in structure and technique, but also in tone and effect as well. Most immediately noticeable is the drastic alteration of the structure of the work. From a rambling, episodic, pastoral romance Sidney has made the Arcadia into an elaborate heroic prose poem.[17] Borrowing some techniques from epic and heroic poetry, he created a vastly more complex, but more tightly integrated plot. Reflecting the Renaissance critical attitude that such poetry was necessarily allegorical, Sidney sharpened the symbolic elements that suggested allegorical associations.[18] In the process of creating his heroic poem--or, perhaps, in order to create his heroic poem--Sidney introduced a great deal of new material, sharpened and reshaped characterization, moved and

deleted old material, and imbued the entire work with a more sharply defined philosophical ethos. The changes which will be noted in this chapter are, like those instances cited from the Defence as evidence for Bruno's influence, both contentual and verbal.

The Old Arcadia shows that chaos and disaster follow the abandonment of reason to passion, but the New Arcadia develops this theme more graphically and at greater length. The Old Arcadia presents love as a trap and a folly; the New Arcadia projects a many-faceted image of love.[19] The Old Arcadia shows the loss of order and dignity accompanying the betrayal of decorum and duty, with illustrations of unheroic action; the New Arcadia emphasizes a positive ideal of heroic action, even while retaining the "speaking pictures" of vice.

In the almost entirely new Books II and III, Sidney presents a code of honor for those in power, a statement of religious belief, a system of natural philosophy, and a paean to the virtues of love. One further change that is significant to this study is Sidney's profuse and conscious use of visual imagery in the New Arcadia. Even before he verbalized the Horatian precept, ut pictura poesis, in his Defence, Sidney was evidently aware of the effectiveness of

illustrations and descriptions to impress on the reader not only the scene but the characters and the lessons which he was attempting to body forth. He used this technique, especially to create setting, in the Old Arcadia, but in the New Arcadia he reflects a new awareness of the efficacy of the "speaking picture" and makes a deliberate exploitation of emblematic and iconographic imagery,[20] such as Bruno employed in his Eroici furori.

Questions naturally arise. Why did Sidney embark on the long and arduous task of rewriting in order to make a heroic poem out of a romance that evidently still pleased him as a story? Who, or what, had stimulated his interest in natural philosophy and influenced his attitude toward love? Where had he recently been exposed to emblematic art in literature? Some scholars feel that Sidney was simply realizing in his revision of Arcadia the principles he had stated in his Defence,[21] but this argument fails to explain why such principles were advocated in the Defence. The New Arcadia is certainly more in keeping with the Defence than the Old, but this fact could also suggest that whoever or whatever inspired Sidney in his writing of his critical essay continued to make that influence felt to such a degree that Sidney began to reshape the

Arcadia along the new lines of thought expressed in the Defence. Any of the above questions could perhaps be answered in a variety of ways, but Sidney's association with Bruno can be given as the answer to all of them.

It is impossible to disentangle completely the aforementioned areas of change in the Arcadia for a more detailed discussion. The web of action, character, philosophy, tone, and language is tightly interwoven; the delightful and the didactic are one. The sequence of the work itself, perhaps, offers the most logical approach to an examination of the changes to determine their exact nature and their possible association with Bruno.

Book I has been strikingly changed both in structure and in tone. The Old Arcadia begins ab ovo: the pastoral beauty of Arcadia is described, King Basilius and his family are introduced, the oracle is consulted, and the king and his family retire to their rustic retreat. Then the heroes, Pyrocles and Musidorus, are introduced, and the romantic complications begin. The New Arcadia, however, begins with a prologue in which two shepherds on the seashore lament the departure of their beloved Urania. Katherine Duncan-Jones suggests that the departed Urania may be associated with the Venus-Urania, the heavenly or divine aspect of love

that is imbued with divine wisdom and reason.[22] Bruno, too, envisioned Venus in her more spiritual role, and in Lo spaccio he speaks of her as "she who alone governs the nature of things, and by virtue of whom everything prospers under heaven . . ." (p. 98).

The theme of the New Arcadia is implicit in the prologue: with the absence of spiritual love, infused as it is with reason, the earthly, irrational passion with its attendant pain and destruction is ascendant. The shepherd's lament had appeared in the Old Arcadia, buried in eclogues in Book IV, but Sidney evidently recognized it as significant and useful in his revision.

Besides stating the work's thesis, the passage establishes the epic or heroic tone of the new work. The replacement of the familiar narrator of the Old Arcadia by the objective, omniscient narrator of heroic and epic poetry lends dignity and seriousness to the revision.[23] Instead of being influenced by the ironic, sophisticated comments of the narrator, the reader simply responds to the dialogue and the actions of the characters.[24] The in media res structure that Sidney has imposed on the New Arcadia[25] becomes evident when Musidorus appears upon the scene and is told by Kalander, an Arcadian nobleman, that Basilius and his family are already self-exiled and are living nearby in

the forest. Musidorus is cast upon the shore at the shepherd's feet after being shipwrecked with "nothing upon him but his shirt, which being wrought with blew silk and gold; had a kind of resemblance to the sea: on which the sun (then neare his Western home) did shoote some of his beames" (I, 10). Sidney's description of the young hero, his light wavy hair blowing in the breeze, introduces the emblematic descriptive technique used throughout the revision,[26] a technique strongly reminiscent of Bruno's emblems in Eroici furori.

Not only from the two young heroes, but also from the heroes of the many new digressive and illustrative stories which Sidney added, a certain heroic ideal emerges in the New Arcadia. Many of these young men certainly embody the qualities of "beauty and greatness of mind" that Virgil Heltzel thinks Sidney considered to be the pre-eminent qualities of a hero.[27] A certain refinement of mind and manners through education and travel seems to have been another characteristic of the heroic spirit--more important, indeed, than rank by birth. Sidney's hero shows valor and courage and prowess in arms, but his goals are peaceful, and his passions are always under the control of his reason.[28] Myron Turner adds the Aristotelian virtue

of magnanimity, which he thinks is an important facet of the Sidneian ideal hero. The magnanimous hero is stoically self-sufficient, but, paradoxically, he hungers for honor and glory.[29]

Bruno, too, was aware of the "contrarieties" alive in the heroic soul. Speaking of the heroic dynamic in Petrarchan terms, he says in the Eroici: "Heroic love is a torment, because it does not rejoice in the present, as animal love does, but in the future and the absent; and its contrary awakens in it ambition, emulation, suspicion and fear" (p. 99). The harmonious balance, which both Sidney and Bruno considered the summum bonum, would contain some measure of magnanity--an awareness and a confidence in one's abilities and a sense of one's individual worth. Sidney interprets this quality perhaps in his own "rule of virtue, not to abandon ones selfe" (I, 194), but, as Turner points out, this creed is strangely lacking any element of Christian self-sacrifice.[30] This aloof, almost non-Christian element noted by Turner may be the result of Bruno's concept of the contemplative hero.

Bruno also recognized the superior nature of the hero; indeed, the Italian sees him as more than human. His use of the phrase "heroes, gods and men" places the hero outside and somewhere between the human and

divine realms. Bruno implies that the heroic ideal can never be totally realized in man, whom he recognizes as having an inferior nature. In his Eroici furori Bruno says: "The species of a divinity cannot be obtained by an inferior nature, and consequently must not be desired or even become the object of our appetite" (p. 226).

Taking the heroic ideal as their goal, Sidney's two pairs of young lovers illustrate varying degrees and facets of heroic virtue and action. The young princes, bound by strong ties of chivalric friendship, offer both similarity and contrast. Musidorus is the representative of rational man, the celebrant of reason and virtuous action. Pyrocles, on the other hand, is the emotional man, the devotee of Neoplatonic love and contemplation.[31] Though it is natural to try to identify an author with a particular character, especially a hero, Myrick warns the reader not to associate either hero too closely with the author, since they may both express Sidney's ideas and attitudes.[32] The author obviously sees his heroes as godlike figures--in the words of Myron Turner, "capable of awesome deeds of mind and arms."[33] Despite their potential for greatness, however, Sidney shows them both as susceptible to follies and excesses.

Sidney also presents his two heroines as complementary characters.[34] Philoclea, beloved of Pyrocles, is more innocent and spontaneous than her older sister. Pamela, the beloved of Musidorus, is, like the prince, wiser and more rational. Later on in the story, Pamela and Philoclea reach heights of heroic action unknown in the Old Arcadia.[35] Like the men, the heroines have been accorded a new dignity, and all four are viewed as potentially tragic rather than merely foolish and even comic, as they had been in the Old Arcadia.[36] The deliberate changes in their impresa or emblems reflect this heightening of heroic effect and echo those dramatic emblems of the Eroici. Pyrocles' eagle-dove jewel of the Old Arcadia is replaced by a Hercules-Omphale device that emphasizes his heroic potential, while retaining the suggestion of a dangerous propensity to romantic passion. Pamela's earlier chained lamb device is replaced by a diamond set dramatically in black horn with the attached motto: "Yet still myself," an emblem more appropriate to her new, more clearly defined intellectual and moral nature. In the love affairs of the two couples, violent passions, when uncontrolled by reason, are still shown to be destructive and unheroic, but any hint of the dishonorable conduct shown in the Old Arcadia has been

deleted from the New, thus removing any stain from the heroic ideal.

There are other characters to illustrate the extremes of conduct--notably the Kings Basilius and Euarchus. Through these characters Sidney develops one of the primary thrusts of his thesis--that passion destroys reason in the larger social unit as well as in the individual. The character of Basilius represents at once the microcosm and the macrocosm, both of which disintegrate under the invasion of undisciplined passion. As king of Arcadia, he is at the peak of the earthly hierarchy, and on his shoulders rests responsibility for the health and peace of his subjects. When he reacts with irrational fear to the oracle and abandons his throne and duty, he throws open the gates to chaos and war.[37] Then, when he becomes ridiculously infatuated with the disguised Pyrocles, he reduces majesty to folly. His disregard of decorum in elevating the ignorant, foolish peasant Dametas to a position of power also helps illustrate Sidney's point--that man's reason can be dangerously distorted by irrational passion.

Bruno, too, was concerned about the effects of passion on reason and about the responsibilities of power. In his Spaccio, Bruno's primary theme is the

role of the prince. Although the setting is Olympus and the characters are deities, clearly the author is discussing an earthly society as well. Jove faces a crisis; he has undergone a deterioration, both physical and moral, a decline of power and strength and beauty. He has allowed his lustful passions to unseat his divine wisdom. In the absence of a worthy example, which, Bruno implies, is the responsibility of the head of a social hierarchy to provide, the gods and goddesses have also given themselves over to all manner of vices and excesses. Under the threat of a prophecy, Jove has been thinking of his "Day of Judgment" and fears that Fate will ordain the hereditary succession. Bruno's concept of contemplation as a path to wisdom and truth is illustrated by Jove's having meditated for an entire year before gaining insight into the situation and finding the courage and wisdom to announce and carry out his solution. He now recognizes the need for repentance and purification--a cleansing of the heavens by replacing the starry emblems of the gods' former vices with counteracting virtues. Of these, Truth is to be esteemed most highly; next is a companion of Truth, a goddess who bears two names, Providence and Prudence. Truth, however, "is seen only as shadow, similitude, a mirror, both in surface and in manner of

appearance," and is approached most nearly through Sophia, who represents wisdom. Sophia's daughter, Law, follows her, and "through Law princes reign, and kingdoms and republics are maintained" (pp. 143, 144).[38]

To maintain good leadership, Bruno sees the necessity for vigilance on the part of the governed: "Let no one be placed in power," he declares in Lo spaccio, "who himself is not superior in merits through the virtue and the intelligence in which he may prevail . . ." (p. 145). Bruno is perceptive enough, however, to realize that the governed also have responsibility; to these, he says: "Let there be preserved the fear and the cult of invisible powers, and honor, reverence, and respect toward our proximate living rulers" (p. 145). Law, in human terms and meted out by men, Bruno knows, can never be perfect. Though Jove has given Law the power to bind, she has two hands--one is Justice and the other is Possibility--which must moderate each other.

Such blindness and rigidity compose the flaw in Sidney's otherwise ideal prince, Basilius' opposite, King Euarchus.[39] His very perfection is his weakness. His regard for law and his impartiality are commendable, but he tries to enforce a perfect justice on an imperfect world, and he very nearly creates havoc as

tragic as that wrought by Basilius. It is between these two extremes of conduct--represented by Basilius and Euarchus--that the four young heroic protagonists play out their roles. Pyrocles and Musidorus, Philoclea and Pamela move in sometimes divergent, sometimes parallel lines along this continuum of reason-passion. The heroic ideal is perhaps more clearly and fully seen in the New Arcadia by virtue of its not being crystallized in any one character but, as Bruno saw it, an ideal that could never be truly realized in imperfect, mortal man.

Sidney's preoccupation with the concept of the heroic extends into the area of love as well as power, and in this area Bruno may have exerted his greatest ideological influence. Sidney observes not only the chivalric and the heroic traditions of love but the Petrarchan and the Neoplatonic as well. Both the latter traditions stress the role of sight in the malady of heroes, and in the New Arcadia, as Bruno did in his Eroici furori, Sidney illustrates this theory freely. Bruno explains how the process works: "The eyes make their imprint upon the heart, that is upon the intelligence, and excite in the will an infinite torment of gentle love . . ." (p. 237). The beauty of the physical being then is an important concomitant of love. The

beautiful Philoclea, for example, is first introduced as a visual image, in a portrait. In the revised Arcadia, Kalander's garden is the setting. The garden is reflected in "a faire ponde, whose shaking christall was a perfect mirrour to all the other beauties, so that it bare shewe of two gardens: one in deede, the other in shadowes . . ." (I, 17). Inside a pavilion, set like a jewel in the garden, was a picture gallery. Hanging near a picture of Diana and Actaeon was a portrait of a strikingly beautiful girl, echoing the image of the reflected beauty of the real beauty of the garden. Later, Pyrocles sees the same portrait and, in typical Renaissance fashion, is smitten with love for Philoclea. "There were mine eyes infected" (I, 85), he complains to Musidorus. It was his eyes that betrayed Musidorus, too, a bit later. Relating how he had come to love Pamela, Musidorus admits, "When I first saw her, I was presently stricken . . ." (I, 115).

The situation involving Musidorus' love is heavy with irony. When he learns that Pyrocles is so smitten with love that he has adopted the Amazon disguise and the name of Zelmane, he is contemptuous. He declares: "This bastarde Love . . . is engendered betwixt lust and idlenes; as the matter it workes upon is nothing, but a certaine base weakenes . . ." (I, 78). He warns

Pyrocles of the unheroic, unmanly nature of his passion. When Musidorus himself is stricken, however, he admits "that all is but lip-wisdome, which wants experience" (I, 113). When Pyrocles slyly reminds his friend of his earlier statement that "love is a passion; and that a worthie mans reason must ever have the masterhood," Musidorus moans, "I recant, I recant . . ." (I, 113-114). Whereas he had once maintained that man's unique quality is the ability to reason, he now declares it is the ability to see and recognize beauty.

But even though beauty enters the eyes and steals the heart, once the heart, which Sidney, like Bruno, associates with the will, is captured, the lover may ascend to a higher level of love. Then he is no longer dependent on the stimulation of physical beauty. Bruno's dedication to Sidney of his Eroici stresses the transience of physical beauty: "This is a beauty which comes and goes, is born and dies, blooms and decays; and is eternally beautiful for so very short a moment . . ." (p. 60). This idea is examplified, in Book I of the New Arcadia only, by one of the revision's noblest but most tragic subplots, the story of Parthenia and Argalus. These lovers were denied marriage by Parthenia's ambitious mother, who had promised her daughter to another. When the girl refused to comply

with her mother's wishes, the spurned suitor disfigured her face with poison. Far from being repelled by her marred face, Argalus experienced a new dimension of his love for Parthenia.

The theme of the role of sight in love, which also runs throughout Bruno's Eroici, is carried forward throughout the work. In Book II of the New Arcadia Sidney develops the idea that the faculty of sight has a potential for both good and evil. Bruno developed much the same concept in Eroici furori: "The sight is neither beautiful nor good; in fact, it is rather an instrument of comparison or light whereby we see not only the beautiful and good, but also the wicked and the ugly" (p. 123). One of the totally new passages introduced by Sidney in the New Arcadia, a striking verbal and contentual parallel to Bruno's Eroici furori, illustrates various facets of this theme. Although Philoclea's beauty raised Pyrocles' soul to great heights, that same beauty was capable of inspiring purely lustful and dangerous desires. Sidney's use of the Diana-Actaeon myth in the revised Arcadia to develop this idea strongly suggests Bruno's influence. And although the Diana-Actaeon myth was an extremely popular one during the Renaissance,[40] Sidney's use of it to present allegorically the relationship of sight

and beauty and love, closely parallels Bruno's own use of the story.

With careful foreshadowing, Sidney establishes his theme. In Book I of the New Arcadia, he introduces the Diana-Actaeon picture hanging in the gallery near Philoclea's portrait. In Book II he develops the motif more expansively. Pyrocles, still disguised as Zelmane, watches Philoclea bathe in a woodland pool. Sidney lingeringly and with erotic overtones describes her beauty. To the young man the nude Philoclea was like a "Dyamond taken from under a rocke, or rather like the Sun, getting from under a cloud, and shewing his naked beames to the full vew. . . ." Pyrocles was so overcome he "could not choose but runne, to touch, embrace, and kisse her . . ." (I, 217). Even after Philoclea entered the water, Pyrocles remained, transfixed, gazing at her, so moved that he composed and sang a paean to one after another of her physical charms.

Bruno, too, emphasizes the voyeuristic aspect of the story in his Eroici by stressing Actaeon's obsession to see again the nude Diana. Speaking of Actaeon, Bruno says: "Here among the waters . . . he sees the most beautiful countenance and breast . . . which can be seen . . . by a man, or by some deity" (p. 124). Having once gazed on this incomparable beauty, Actaeon is no

longer content. He follows "the dubious and perilous path," constantly searching. He has become "the captive of the one he saw proceed from the forest. . . . Diana . . . has bound him and holds him under her sway . . ." (p. 217). Sidney's casting Pyrocles in the Actaeon role gives the prince heroic, if not mythical, stature. Bruno, too, recognized the special and rare quality of Actaeon: "Very few are Acteons to whom destiny gives the power to contemplate Diana naked . . ." (p. 225).

Although other threads than that of vision-love are carried forward into Book II from Book I, Book II contains much new material consisting of a series of digressions and retrospective narratives. We learn, in epic-heroic fashion, much of the earlier histories of the heroes. Book II also emphasizes heroic virtues and action. Chivalric friendships and conflicts are profusely but carefully used. Emblematic descriptions--especially of portraits and armor--appear even more frequently than in Book I,[41] forming a pattern of Brunonian parallels and echoes.

Two characters emerge from the background of Book II as particularly significant to Sidney's new ethical emphasis. Queen Gynecia appears in much the same role as she did in the Old Arcadia, but Queen Cecropia is a new character and one that plays an increasingly

important role in the story. Gynecia and Cecropia represent two facets--to use Bruno's word, "contrarieties"--of the absence of virtue. Gynecia, a beautiful, intelligent woman, becomes totally irrational and lust-ridden in her mad passion for Pyrocles. She symbolizes the extreme of earthly, Venus-bred passion. Cecropia--a total materialist who epitomizes a self-seeking, amoral philosophy--is the complete antithesis of any kind of love. Though neither woman acts virtuously, there is a vast difference in their knowledge and awareness of virtue. Whereas Gynecia had been virtuous and never forgot what virtue was, Cecropia is devoid of virtue or even any understanding of it. Gynecia is tortured by her knowledge of her loss, but Cecropia glories in her atheism and amorality.

The creation of the character of Cecropia for his New Arcadia was crucial to what Sidney was trying to do in his revision. True to the precept expressed in his Defence, he was teaching moral lessons by showing his readers a "speaking picture" of unrelieved, unredeemed vice as well as of virtue lost. Cecropia is Sidney's "anatomy of the perversion of heroic values."[42] She carries his heroic, self-serving virtue to its extreme when she says, "Though many times Fortune failed me, yet did I never faile my self" (I, 365). To this

Machiavellian heroine, virtue is relative: "What others might consider wickednesse," she says, "yet what is done for your sake (how evill soever to others) to you is vertue" (I, 365).

Cecropia takes an even more prominent role in Book III. An atmosphere of violent, aggressive action pervades this section of the story, threatening the lives of the protagonists. Cecropia kidnaps her nieces, Philoclea and Pamela, in hopes of winning one of the girls for a bride for her son Amphilius. All but a few pages of the uncompleted third book is taken up with the captivity scene--material written especially for the New Arcadia.

Since Philoclea was the favorite of Amphilius, Cecropia undertakes the subversion of her heart and mind first. As she had been in the Old Arcadia, Philoclea is portrayed as innocent and mild. She is treated with more seriousness, however, and at greater length.

Bruno, too, describes a kind of total innocence or holy ignorance, a sort of unblemished purity, similar to that which Sidney ascribes to Philoclea. Though Bruno satirizes the extreme of the concept of holy ignorance in Cabala Pegaseo with his "holy asininity," he recognizes the virtue of the idea itself.

"Faithful is he," Bruno writes in his Cabala,

> who does not allow himself to be tempted beyond what his [sic] is capable. . . . Oh holy ignorance, oh divine madness. . .! That enraptured, profound and contemplative Areopagite, writing to Caius, affirms that ignorance is a most perfect knowledge. . . . The learned Augustine . . . in his Soliloquies, testifies that ignorance more than knowledge leads us to God, and knowledge more than ignorance brings us to perdition. . . .[43]

Some such "holy ignorance" is an important characteristic of Philoclea. Sidney writes: "The sweete mynded Philoclea was in theyre degree of well doynge to whome the not knowying of evell serveth for a grounde of vertue, and holde theyre inwarde powers in better Temper with an unspotted simplicity, then many, who, rather take themselves the followyng of yt" (IV, 103). Though the New Arcadia shows that innocence can be a highly dangerous commodity, in this situation it is a valuable asset. Philoclea is proof against Cecropia's subtle sophistry. Her tender, romantic nature and naive, unsuspecting mind do not grasp the tortuous maneuvering of her aunt's reasoning. The girl's mind wanders to thoughts of her Pyrocles, and, strengthened with thoughts of their love, she adamantly refuses even to listen to Cecropia's wooing. Her innocent heart--her holy ignorance--was her armor in this period of trial.

The careful distinction Sidney has made between Philoclea and Pamela is sharply underlined in the captivity episode. Whereas "silent humblenesse" is his description of the former, "majesty of vertue" distinguishes Pamela. In Pamela, Sidney realizes the Christian ideal, a balance of "love, and terror, beauty and awe."[44] This balance, according to Myron Turner, is not the Aristotelian mean, but a Neoplatonic ideal of inner harmony and poise.[45] Bruno may have contributed to this emphasis on balance and harmony which Sidney presents as the ideal in his New Arcadia. There is also in Pamela's character an element of pride in her strength and independence that was foreshadowed by the impresa motto, "Yet still myself," Sidney had introduced earlier in the revision.

After giving up in her attempts to win Philoclea for Amphilius, Cecropia turns her persuasive powers on Pamela. Cecropia engages the intelligent girl in what she intends to be a seductive argument. Pamela takes over the burden of the dialogue, however, and expounds much more fully than is really warranted by Cecropia's relatively brief though provoking statement. The dialogue, then, seems to be more of an occasion for Sidney to expostulate on certain subjects than an organic development of the plot. As he did on occasion in the

Defence, Sidney himself seems to be engaged in the debate, and once again there is the tone of personal exchange of ideas. And, although we can identify Sidney's position, generally, with Pamela's statements, it would be dangerous to assume that Sidney intended Cecropia to represent Bruno or any one philosopher. Cecropia does mouth ideas that echo Bruno's philosophy, but they are distorted, often to absurdity. Then, too, many of Bruno's ideas are also expressed by Pamela.

The topics discussed in the dialogue are topics which Sidney and Bruno perhaps debated, sometimes agreeing, sometimes not. Certainly, the entire dialogue is permeated with Brunonian terms--Cause, Effect, Necessity, Wisdom, Chance, Contrariety, and Infinity. The verbal echoes and parallels reinforce the ideological similarities throughout the passage to make this scene one of the most telling pieces of evidence for influence by Bruno on Sidney's revision of the Arcadia.

In the opinion of Myron Turner, the melange of philosophical ideas presented in the Pamela-Cecropia debate would have been familiar to most of the intellectual reading audience Sidney was addressing.[46] According to Mark Rose, Cecropia's philosophy was Epicureanism fused with Skepticism; Pamela's was Stoicism blended with a devout belief in a natural

religion.[47] Observing artistic decorum, Sidney does not make his heroine Christian. Mark Rose thinks Elizabethans would have seen Pamela as an enlightened pagan.[48] Cecropia had some notion of the strength of Pamela's religious and moral fiber before the confrontation, because she had once overheard the girl praying, but the expression of humility and unquestioning obedience to a higher power uttered by Pamela was totally foreign to the queen. Addressing the "all-seing Light, and eternal Life of all things," Pamela had asked: "Let calamitie be the exercise, but not the overthrowe of my vertue. . . . But, o Lord, let never their wickednes have such a hand, but that I may carie a pure minde in a pure bodie" (I, 383).

Pamela's patience and humility, however, are displayed toward God; toward Cecropia she shows only anger and disdain.[49] On the occasion of their conversation, Cecropia compliments Pamela on her beauty, but the girl brushes her words aside. Physical beauty, she argues, is "of no real consequence, a thing of chance which not onely beastes have, but even stones and trees . . ." (I, 403).

Pamela begins to show her anger when Cecropia speaks sneeringly of religion, "these bugbeares of opinions brought by great Clearkes into the world . . ."

(I, 406). According to Cecropia, "Feare, and indeede, foolish feare, and fearefull ignorance, was the first inventer of those conceates." She proposes that all things "follow but the course of their own nature, saving only Man, who while by the pregnancie of his imagination he strives to things supernaturall. . . ." Cecropia advises Pamela,

> Be wise, and that wisedom shalbe a God unto thee; be contented, and that is thy heaven: for els to thinks that those powers (if there be any such) above, are moved either by the eloquence of our prayers, or in a chafe by the folly of our actions; caries asmuch reason as if flies should thinke, that men take great care which of them hums sweetest, and which of them flies nimblest" (I, 406-407).

Cercropia's remarks contain echoes of Bruno's concept of Necessity, which governs the behavior and the course of all natural beings, and his emphasis on Wisdom, but certainly not as Bruno presents them.

Pamela's speech of rebuttal also seems to borrow from Bruno. She denies Cecropia's explanation of religion. Not from fear comes religion, says Pamela, but from knowledge; "Because we know that each effect hath a cause, that hath engendred a true & lively devotion" (I, 407). Pamela launches into a full-scale dissertation on Chance and Divine Providence. She argues that to assume that creation occurred by sheer chance is absurd: "If it were chaunceable, then was

it not necessarie; whereby you take away all consequents. But we see in all thinges, in some respect or other, necessitie of consequence: therfore in reason we must needs know that the causes were necessarie" (I, 408). Besides Bruno's concept of Necessity that is echoed in this passage, the relativity of direction and phenomena such as atoms and gravity are alluded to in Pamela's discourse. She has also been pondering the paradox that from "an unitie many contraries should proceede still kept in an unitie" and that from a "number of contrarieties an unitie should arise" (I, 409), a close parallel to Bruno's Contrarieties.

Pamela's righteous indignation reaches a peak when she asks her aunt, "What madd furie can ever so enveagle any conceipte, as to see our mortall and corruptible selves to have a reason, and that this universalitie (whereof we are but the lest pieces) should be utterly devoide thereof?" (I, 409). Pamela's declamation rises toward a climax with a statement of belief in a Divine Wisdom that suggests a Hermetic influence: "This world . . . cannot otherwise consist but by a minde of Wisedome, whiche governes it, which whether you wil allow to be the Creator thereof, as undoubtedly he is, or the soule and governour thereof, most certaine it is that whether he governe all, or make all, his power is above

either his creatures, or his government" (I, 410). The subtle distinction presented here, whether the Divine Wisdom is only the Creator or both Creator and Lord, is just such a point as Sidney and Bruno would debate.

Pamela concludes her declamation with a ringing statement--a surprising parallel to Bruno's central idea. Speaking of the Creator, she declares, "And if his power be above all thinges, then consequently it must needes be infinite. . . : if his power be infinite, then likewise must his knowledge be infinite. . . : if his knowledge and power be infinite, then must needs his goodnesse and justice march in the same rancke. . ." (I, 410). This expression of a belief in infinitude is a startling reflection of Bruno's philosophy--a concept almost exclusively his at that time. In his Eroici, there is a passage that makes it an even more startling parallel: "Where there is infinite wisdom that wisdom can not exist without infinite power. . . . Where there is infinite goodness that goodness must have infinite wisdom. . . . Where there is infinite power that power must also have infinite goodness and wisdom, for the infinite power must have power to know as well as the knowledge of power" (pp. 168-169). It is difficult to assign Pamela's statement

quoted above to any source other than Bruno's work. Sidney's passage echoes not only the concept of infinity but Bruno's phrasing as well. When we remember that Bruno's concept of infinity was his own unique contribution to philosophy and to literature, we find the evidence most persuasive.

Admittedly, there are many philosophical ideas presented in the Pamela-Cecropia dialogue that were a part of the total Renaissance intellectual milieu. Edwin Greenlaw thinks Sidney's primary source for the dialogue was Lucretius,[50] but Ronald Levison believes Cicero was the principal source for this significant philosophical passage.[51] Thomas P. Harrison, however, sees here the influence of Sidney's friend Plessis du Mornay, whose essay On the Trewness of the Christian Religion had been published in 1581.[52] Evidence exists that strongly suggests that Sidney was familiar with the contents of the essay as early as 1579.[53] One wonders, then, why Mornay's Hermetic ideas were not reflected in the Old Arcadia. A more immediate source of this philosophical debate would be Giordano Bruno. As a Renaissance man, Bruno was familiar with and had been influenced by both Lucretius and Cicero, as well as by the Hermetic tradition. But the presence of so many topics which were central to Bruno's cosmology

and philosophy, supplemented by verbal parallels and echoes, makes convincing evidence.

The 1590 edition of Arcadia breaks off at a crucial point in the action soon after the captivity episode. The princesses had been subjected to every mental and physical torture the wicked Cecropia could conceive, but Pamela and Philoclea weathered their ordeal with great heroism. Sidney seems to have felt that a special degree of heroism can best be shown by women under duress. Turner comments that in this portion of the story we find the "hero out-heroed by the traditionally helpless heroine."[54]

The 1593 edition picks up the story from the Old Arcadia with the end of Book III and continues with Books IV and V. The changes made in these last books carry forward important linking motifs established by Sidney in the completed part of his revision. These links reassure us that Mary Herbert carried out the desires of her brother and also affirm the importance of those changes. The Diana-Actaeon motif, introduced in Book I and used more fully in Book II, is, in Book IV, further developed, thereby strengthening the links to Bruno's Eroici furori. The passage, a cave scene, is almost the same in the Old and the New Arcadia, so the significance to this study is not in the passage

itself. The significance lies in the fact that evidently it was not until Sidney had begun his revision--after his meeting with Bruno--that he realized the potential of this passage in his new scheme. This is suggested by the careful foreshadowing that he wrote into the New Arcadia--first with the picture of Diana and Actaeon near Philoclea's portrait and then with the more detailed bathing scene, discussed earlier in this chapter.

Sidney was probably aware, when he was writing the Old Arcadia, of the allegorical interpretation of the myth--that Diana might represent ideal beauty pursued by Actaeon, who, in one version, is consumed by his own desires. Such interpretations of the pagan myths were popular during the Middle Ages and continued to be during the Renaissance. There is no real indication, however, in the Old Arcadia that Sidney intended his cave scene to have any allusion to the Diana myth at all. It is only in his revision, with its foreshadowing and its more clearly defined philosophical ethos--especially the Neoplatonic elements--that the scene emerges as a significant part of something larger. It is as if Sidney, in his task of rewriting, suddenly became, or was made, aware of what

may have been an unconscious use of the material before.

We wonder what sparked this awareness and inspired Sidney's new concept and use of the myth. Bruno, of course, used the Diana-Actaeon myth as a major thematic motif in his Eroici furori, and there are parallels in the way Sidney and Bruno utilize the myth. In the case of both writers, all the elements of the original myth--curiosity, desire, and retribution--are present in their treatment of the story. Both employ the story symbolically or allegorically, but whereas Bruno creates a realistic level to accompany his Neoplatonic ladder-of-love allegory, Sidney does not explicitly associate the myth with the cave scene. According to Walter Davis, however, there can be no doubt that such was his intent and purpose.[55]

The cave scene begins with Pyrocles-Zelmane seeking relief from his troubled thoughts and chaotic emotions in contemplation in the dark solitude of a cave. Drawn by curiosity into the inner recesses of the cave by an echoing whisper, Pyrocles overhears the distraught Gynecia lamenting: "I am Devided in my self. . . . I desire to asswage the sweltering of my hellish longing . . ." (II, 10). The queen, tearing her clothing in her frenzy, confesses her lust and begs

Pyrocles for satisfaction, threatening him with exposure and exile if he refuses her. And, as Sidney says, if Pyrocles's "harte had not bene so fully possest as there was no place left for any new guest, no doubt it would have yelded to that gallant assault" (II, 30). Unwilling to risk exposure, Pyrocles temporizes and promises Gynecia satisfaction later, knowing well as he did that "deceite cannot otherwise be mayntayned but by deceite" (II, 32).

The cave scene is interrupted more than once by a counterpoint technique to follow a comic subplot and the fortunes of Musidorus and Pamela. These lovers are eloping, a rebellious act in itself, but somewhat extenuated by their honorable intent to wed. When they stop to rest in a wooded glade, the New Arcadia account says, Pamela's beauty "did so tyrannize over Musidorus affectes that hee was compelled to put his face as lowe to hers, as hee coulde, sucking the breath with such joye, that he did determine in himself, there had ben no life to a Camaeleons if he might be suffered to enjoye that foode" (II, 27). Musidorus is interrupted in his adoring reverie by a group of rowdies, but there is no suggestion of any evil intent on the hero's part. In the Old Arcadia, however, Pamela's beauty arouses Musidorus to such an extent that he fully intends

to rape her. Only the timely interruption saves her virtue and his honor.

Sight places Pyrocles in a similar, dangerous situation. In the Old Arcadia Pyrocles, having tricked both Basilius and Gynecia into going to the cave to meet him, goes to Philoclea's chamber and watches her for a while as she lies, half-clothed, on her bed, unaware of his presence. Like Musidorus, he becomes so aroused by sheer physical beauty that he sweeps the innocent, naive girl into a consummation of their love. In the New Arcaida, however, any suggestion of sexual impropriety has been removed. The heroes are in the same situations as they were in the earlier work; they are exposed to the beauty of their beloveds, but in the revised version no sensual thought crosses their minds.

These changes are the real center of the controversy over the Countess of Pembroke's editorship of the Arcadia. But even after critics have conceded the point that Mary Herbert was only following her brother's wishes, they still differ as to why Sidney wanted these changes made. Certainly his reasons were not because of prudishness. As Myrick points out, Sidney's treatment of the physical aspects of love is as frank in the New Arcadia as in the Old.[56] If Sidney had really been

appeasing puritan ideals, he would have altered the elopment situation, since that was considered a more serious offense than pre-marital sex in Elizabethan England.[57] According to Rowe, it was because the princes had promised that they would wait until after their marriages to consummate their union. The broken vow would have made a serious stain on the heroic image--moreso than sexual union after a private betrothal, which was recognized by the church as binding.[58] Sidney evidently felt that he had to make these changes in order to make consistent a statement that began with the cave scene.

In his Actaeon role, as Sidney now envisioned his hero, Pyrocles had entered the cave. He was seeking wisdom through contemplation,[59] a process Bruno describes in detail. "One must first of all leave the multitude and withdraw within himself," Bruno declares; "It is necessary to descend more intimately within the self. . . ." And to the question of how the mind mounts upward toward divinity--whether conceived of as love or wisdom or truth, for all are one to Bruno--he answers paradoxically, "By proceeding to the depths of the mind . . ." (pp. 193-194). Like Bruno's Actaeon, however, Pyrocles finds himself in danger of being destroyed by his own lustful desires, now personified by

Gynecia.[60] Walter Davis declares that the hero's penetration of the cave becomes "a growing consciousness of the reality of Gynecia and an exploration of his own mind with its possible depths of passion."[61] The retribution element of the myth, as in Eroici furori, takes the form of self-knowledge with its attendant pain and demands for virtuous action. Pyrocles realizes, in a moment of epiphany, how thin "the membrane dividing continence from lust is. . . ."[62] He is not ready, however, for virtuous action; he clings to his false position and refuses to accept his role of manly hero. He remains secluded in the cave for several days, and only then, finally, emerges with the plan that moves the plot toward its final resolution. The suffering endured through Cecropia's torture and the self-knowledge and wisdom gained through contemplation have prepared the heroic ideal for its final test. In both versions of the Arcadia, both heroes are sorely tempted by the sight of physical beauty. But instead of their being only sensually aroused--as they were in the Old Arcadia and as Pyrocles had been in the bathing scene, earlier in his progress toward the heroic ideal--they are moved to virtuous action. Only the changes made by Mary Herbert, at her brother's bidding, make Sidney's treatment of love complete and consistent.

Between the time Sidney finished his Old Arcadia and the time he began his revision, he apparently came to see love as something more than a snare which robbed even a hero of his reason, dignity, and honor. "Love," says Robert Lawry, "which had been comic rage in the Old Arcadia, is now a harmonious adjunct to heroism."[63] It is seen time after time as being the motivation for virtuous and heroic action as well as the foolish, destructive behavior it had been exclusively a short time before.[64] Sidney's New Arcadian love reflects the view of love expressed by Bruno in the following lines:

> There is no larger kingdom, no worse tyranny, no better domain, no power more necessary, nothing sweeter and more gentle, no food more sharp and bitter, no god more violent, none more amiable, no agent more perfidious and more feigning, no author more regal and faithful than love. And finally, it seems to me that love is everything and does everything, and that everything can be said of it and everything can be attributed to it" (p. 91).

So, once again, we are faced, persuasively, with the sense of Bruno's presence in Sidney's life and thought and writings. The interest in the heroic, the addition of a philosophical statement that includes a belief in infinitude, and a new, more Neoplatonic concept of love[65] make Bruno's influence on Sidney's revision of his Arcadia seem more than conjecture.

Perhaps the answer to why Sidney began the revision in the first place lies in the opening lines of Bruno's dedication to Sidney in the Eroici furori. Bruno rails indignantly at the spectacle of a "rational man" who fritters away his time in writing romances:

> One who spends most of his time and the choice fruits of his life letting fall drop by drop the elixir of his brain by putting into conceits and in writing, and sealing on public monuments those continual tortures, dire torments, those persuasive speeches, those laborious complaints and most bitter labours inevitable beneath the tyranny of an unworthy, witless, stupid and odoriferous foulness!

He is not, he asserts, against the love of women when it is based on something more than mere, transient beauty, "which comes and goes, is born and dies, blooms and decays. . . ." Women are worthy of love and honor, he says, "when they show the natural virtue peculiar to them." He implies that to impute nothing more than physical beauty is to degrade one of God's creations who possess, often, a certain "splendor" and "humility" which would make them worthy of love (pp. 61-62). Could not such a stinging rebuke, even if playfully administered and received, have caused Sidney to consider the moral and ethical possibilities of his Arcadia?

This chapter has examined Sidney's revision of his Arcadia to ascertain whether or not his association with Bruno could have influenced his decision to make the

extensive revisions which he undertook and whether the changes themselves were in any way influenced by Bruno. The evidence--ideological, contentual, and verbal parallels and similarities--is persuasive. The final chapter of this study will examine Sidney's last literary project, the translation of Mornay's essay, for further evidence for influence by Bruno on Sidney's thought and writings.

NOTES

[1]Howell, p. 97. Wilson finds the revised Arcadia "distinctly maturer," op. cit., p. 154.

[2]In a letter to his brother Robert, written 18 October 1580, Sidney says, "My toyfull booke I will send with Gods helpe by February," quoted in Goldman, Sir Philip Sidney and the Arcadia, p. 113. Goldman also cites a notation made by the eighth Earl of Angus that indicates that he saw the Arcadia in 1581, op. cit., pp. 113-114.

[3]Ringler says Sidney did not begin "the complete recasting and rewriting" of the Arcadia until 1584, op. cit., p. xxxvi.

[4]Philip Sidney, The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia, Works, I, 3. Parenthetical references in the text will be used when the source is clearly indicated.

[5]Quoted in Bertram Dobell, "New Light Upon Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia," The Quarterly Review, 211 (July-October, 1909), 78.

[6]This interesting discovery was first made public in Dobell's article, op. cit.

[7]Dobell, pp. 74-79.

[8]Ibid., pp. 99-100.

[9]Reinard Zandvoort, Sidney's Arcadia (Amsterdam: N. V. Swets & Zeitlinger, 1929), pp. 23-41.

[10]Kenneth Rowe, "The Countess of Pembroke's Editorship of the Arcadia," PMLA, 54 (1939), 138.

[11]Ibid., p. 126. William L. Godshalk agrees with Rowe, "Sidney's Revision of the Arcadia, Books III-V," Philological Quarterly, 43 (1964), 182-184.

[12]Myrick, p. 289.

[13]Greville, pp. 16-17.

[14]Myrick, p. 289.

[15]Myrick says these stories and disgressions give the New Arcadia its power of "delightful teaching," op. cit., p. 254.

[16]Americus Wiles offers a concise plot comparison of the two works, "Parallel Analyses of the Two Versions of Sidney's Arcadia," Studies in Philology, 39 (1942), 167-206.

[17]Myrick, p. 263.

[18]Greville viewed the work primarily as a political allegory, pp. 12-18. Edwin Greenlaw also sees it as such, "Sidney's Arcadia," passim.

[19]Mark Rose, Heroic Love (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 37-38.

[20]Patricia Read, "The Disfigured Mind: A Study of Art and Moral Vision in Sir Philip Sidney's Old and New Arcadias," Diss. Rice University 1971, pp. 51, 70.

[21]Myrick, p. 231.

[22]Katherine Duncan-Jones, "Sidney's Urania," Review of English Studies, 17 (1966), passim. See also Rose, p. 44.

[23]Read, p. 93.

[24]Ibid., pp. 90-91.

[25]Wiles, pp. 168-169.

[26]J. J. Jusserand emphasizes the importance of art in Sidney's descriptions, The English Novel in the Time

of Shakespeare (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), p. 234, f.

[27]Virgil Heltzel, "The Arcadian Hero," Philological Quarterly, 41 (1962), 177.

[28]Ibid., pp. 177-179.

[29]Myron Turner, "The Heroic Idea in Sidney's Revised Arcadia," Studies in English Literature, 10 (1969), 68-70.

[30]Ibid., p. 71.

[31]Rose, p. 49.

[32]Myrick, p. 246.

[33]Turner, p. 63.

[34]Zandvoort, p. 78.

[35]Myrick, p. 289.

[36]Read, pp. 90-91.

[37]Alan Isler emphasizes Basilius' abrogation of responsibility as central to the plot and Sidney's purpose, "Moral Philosophy and the Family in Sidney's Arcadia," Huntington Library Quarterly, 31 (1968), 359-371, passim.

[38]Howell thinks Sidney saw society's safeguard in laws more than in the ruler, op. cit., p. 213.

[39]Turner discusses the "paradoxical balance of love and terror" embodied in Euarchus, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

[40]Walter Davis, "Actaeon in Arcadia," Studies in English Literature, 2 (1962), 101.

[41]Read, p. 51.

[42]Turner, p. 71.

[43]Bruno, Cabala Pegaseo, quoted in The Heroic Frenzies, p. 257, f.n. 23. Lois Whitney thinks Sidney may have found the model for Philoclea in Aristotle or in the medieval mystics, "Concerning Nature in the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia," Studies in Philology, 24 (1927), 220, 221.

[44]Turner, p. 75.

[45]Ibid., p. 76.

[46]Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[47]Rose, p. 59.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Turner, pp. 75-76.

[50]Edwin Greenlaw, "The Captivity Episode in Sidney's Arcadia," Manly Anniversary Papers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923), pp. 61-63.

[51]Ronald Levison, "The 'Godlesse Minde' in Arcadia," Modern Philology, 29 (1931), 21-26.

[52]Thomas P. Harrison, Jr., "The Relations of Spenser and Sidney," PMLA, 45 (1930), 720-725.

[53]This evidence will be presented and discussed in Chapter VI of this study.

[54]Turner, p. 81.

[55]Davis thinks the cave scene is "the central episode of the plot. . . ," op. cit., p. 99.

[56]Myrick, p. 283.

[57]Kenneth Rowe, "Elizabethan Morality and the Folio Revisions of Sidney's Arcadia," Modern Philology, 37 (1939), 160-171, passim.

[58]Ibid., p. 163. See also Isler, p. 370.

[59]Rose sees Philoclea as Pyrocles's Urania, p. 46.

[60]Davis calls Gynecia a "travesty of Diana," p. 106.

[61]Davis, p. 109.

[62]Ibid. Hardin Craig points out that Pyrocles' situation is not only one of shame but of danger in "doing violence to nature," op. cit., p. 154.

[63]Robert Lawry, Sidney's Two Arcadias: Pattern and Proceeding (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 166.

[64]Rose, p. 38.

[65]Lawry, p. 187. Turner also sees a more Neo-platonic attitude toward love in the New Arcadia, op. cit., pp. 75-77.

CHAPTER VI

SIDNEY'S MORNAY TRANSLATION AND BRUNO

It is generally agreed that one of the final projects begun by Sidney before his departure from England in 1585 was his translation of his friend Mornay's _On the Trewness of the Christian Religion_, a lengthy essay attempting to "prove" the validity of Christianity. It is also generally agreed that this task, like the _New Arcadia_, was unfinished at the time of Sidney's death. The translation of the Mornay essay is not in the category of Sidney's original writings, but if Bruno influenced Sidney's thought to the extent that he undertook this literary task, it certainly must be considered. And another question that is a part of the total enigma being explored in this study arises: Why did Sidney decide to translate this particular work at this particular time in his career?

As with other questions posed in this study, various answers can be given. But to simply say that Sidney seems to have become more serious and more interested in religion and philosophy after 1583 is unsatisfactory. Such a change in thought is not necessary for such an undertaking. Another possible

answer, that Sidney wished to compliment his friend Mornay, is equally unsatisfactory. Mornay was, indeed, an old and loved friend, but theirs was not an intimate or closely sustained relationship, such as Sidney had had with Languet. When Sidney and Mornay were in each other's country or vicinity, visits were exchanged when convenient. Such an occasion arose in 1577. Mornay was sent to England on a diplomatic mission. Lee reports that, during Mornay's stay in England, Sidney showed him every hospitality possible,[1] and Wallace says Sidney's and Mornay's similar natures drew them together during this time.[2]

In her memoirs, Mornay's wife says that her husband was thinking about his essay and planning it during the eighteen months he spent in England.[3] In light of the intense interest that both Sidney and Mornay had in religious ecumenism, it seems highly likely that they engaged in religious discussions. Nor does it seem unreasonable to conjecture that Mornay discussed his proposed essay with Sidney. And, although the work was not published until 1581, it is very possible that Sidney may have seen the work in manuscript before that date. Why, we wonder, did he not take up this project in the first flush of appreciation and enthusiasm after seeing the completed and published

essay, if he had been at that time thoroughly convinced of its worth? Certainly he was much less occupied during 1581 and 1582 than he was during the years to follow, when he would be involved in family life as well as in rewriting his Arcadia.

Exactly how much of the task of translating Sidney finished is a matter of scholarly controversy. Leading scholars for many years accepted the opinion of Albert Feuillerat that Sidney completed translating only six chapters of the essay and that his friend Arthur Golding completed the work.[4] This opinion has since been sharply challenged. Eva M. Tenison refutes Feuillerat's textually based evidence out of hand.[5] Forrest Robinson agrees that Feuillerat's evidence is "more fanciful than scientific," and he concludes that stylistic analysis is "wholly insufficient for the discrimination between authors."[6] Tenison, moreover, presents statements by Mornay's wife, by George Whetstone, a friend of both Golding's and Sidney's, and by Golding himself that suggest that Sidney had actually completed the translation before he left England,[7] a conclusion that indicates that even more time and energy were spent on this project.

The question of why and when Sidney undertook the translation of Mornay's essay is of more significance

to this study than the quality or quantity of the translation. Certainly the work would have to be one with which Sidney sympathized to some extent. Mornay, it must be emphasized, was, like Bruno, a Hermetist and believed in the authenticity and the validity of the ancient Hermetic writings. Mornay, however, synthesized the Hermetic and Cabalistic lore with Christian theology, and his emphasis was entirely mystical and theological. He rejected the elements of magic that were a part of the Hermetic tradition that Bruno had embraced so eagerly. A brief look at the essay itself will perhaps enable us to understand better why Sidney undertook this task when he did.

In the preface to The Trewness of the Christian Religion, Mornay announces that he believes in certain universal principles of religion which cut across or transcend the narrow restrictions of theologies. These "common insightes," Mornay writes, are "the persuasion of the Godhead, the conscience of evill, the desire of immortalitie, the longing for felicitie, and such other thinges, which in this neather world are incident unto man alone, and in al men. . . ."[8] Mornay goes on to say that "the universalnesse of this consent sheweth that it is nature, and not instruction,

imitation, or bringing up, that speaketh, & the voice of nature is the voice of truth."[9]

The essay is a statement of belief in a universal religion which nevertheless emphasizes Christian principles. Throughout the work Mornay cites one after another of the ancient wisdom writers and their works. This essay offers proof that Sidney was familiar with at least one type of Hermetism when he met Bruno. After announcing and discussing the belief that there is a God and only one God, Mornay offers as proof of this belief the ancient wisdom of the world. "Mercurius Trismegistus, who," Mornay says, "is the founder of them all, teacheth everywhere, That there is but one GOD. . . ."[10] Like Bruno, Mornay believes that man's knowledge of God must of necessity be limited. Though we comprehend God through his creation nature by means of our reason, Mornay believes that faith, too, is necessary. Speaking in mystical terms, Mornay declares that God is unchangeable, everlasting, single and uncompounded, is at once nowhere and everywhere.[11] Mornay admits that God is infinite, but his brief statement does not approach Bruno's development of the concept, nor even Sidney's statement in the New Arcadia.

Mornay's essay contains an explanation and discussion of the Trinity, and he declares that the idea

was understood and even prepared for by the Ancients. Trismegistus "makes a difference betweene the Father and the Understanding. . . ." The Greeks and also the Jews, Mornay argues, uphold the principle.[12]

The chapters on the immortality of the soul, according to Tenison, sound the keynote of the entire essay.[13] A 1646 edition of The Trewness contained a preface by the editor, John Bachelor, who, like Mornay himself, seems to rely as much on the Hermetic tradition as on the New Testament. The belief in immortality, according to Bachelor, writing probably under the direct influence of Mornay's thoughts, is reinforced not only "from the intrinsicall operations of thine owne minde, but also from the wisest men among all Nations: Zoroastres the Chaldean, Tristemegistrio the Aegyptian, Orpheus the Greeke, Phercites, the Syrian, After them Pythagoros, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Porphyrius, Ameluus. . . ."[14] Robert Kimbrough thinks that Sidney selected and translated these portions of the essay on the immortality of the soul as well as the first chapters.[15] Whether Tenison or Kimbrough is correct, or whether Feuillerat, who has labeled all but the first six chapters as apocryphal, is right, Sidney's acceptance of the entire essay has not been questioned.

Sidney had, in all likelihood, long known Mornay's beliefs and had perhaps entertained them as compatible with his own thoughts and principles. But it was only after his meeting and association with Bruno that he decided to put into his own tongue, to disseminate among his countrymen, ideas that Kimbrough thinks are Sidney's "deepest thoughts."[16] Considering the nature of the material in this essay and on the strength of the evidence, we may attribute Sidney's action in translating the work to the influence of Bruno.

Sidney's reason or motivation may be deduced from a review of the situation. He had worked many years to effect some kind of peace and unity in the West, but he must have realized finally that the Christian factions could not be reunited as long as they maintained their jealously guarded separate identities. Sidney had probably never seriously entertained the Hermetic beliefs before, even though he had long been familiar with them. His association with Bruno probably brought to the forefront of Sidney's attention in a forceful way the Hermetic tradition and its potential as a solution to saving Christendom.

Under the stimulus of Bruno's presence and the influence of his ideas, Sidney began to countenance these ideas. Pamela's statement in the <u>New Arcadia</u>

shows us how far Sidney had come in accepting a non-denominational, natural religion. But did Bruno's extreme occult Hermetism stir a negative reaction in Sidney, perhaps evoke a more orthodox statement? If the conjectures made in this study concerning The Defence of Poesie and the New Arcadia are correct, Bruno had this facility of evoking a deliberate, carefully thought-out response from Sidney--neither total acceptance nor rejection, but a sifting and selection of ideas. In the exchange of ideas with Bruno, Sidney may have felt impelled to make a commitment, a clarification of his own beliefs. In Mornay's essay, Sidney may have found a statement of Christian Hermetism--one firmly interwoven with Christian ideals and Judeo-Christian theology--that expressed his own new philosophical position. And though it may have been an inverse reaction Bruno stirred in Sidney on this occasion, it may well have been his influence that inspired this final literary project.

In conclusion, the relationship between Sidney and Bruno and its effects on Sidney's writings, to a certain extent, remain an enigma: no discoveries or new disclosures in the form of documents which attest indisputably to a close friendship or statements that acknowledge Bruno's influence have been forthcoming.

The evidence has been growing gradually over the years, however, and an analysis of Sidney's prose works written during the period of Bruno's stay in England reveals a great deal of persuasive evidence to support the hypothesis that the two were close friends and that Bruno did, in fact, exert a definite influence on Sidney.

Though Sidney and Bruno came from different national, social, and religious backgrounds, they were products of a Western Christian heritage that, of necessity, formed a common intellectual milieu which could account for many similarities in style and ideas. As this study has shown, however, Bruno was a unique figure in Elizabethan society, and many of his ideas were anything but commonplaces in the intellectual milieu of sixteenth century England. Signs and traces of this uniqueness, then, would suggest Bruno's influence as distinct from other possible sources and influences.

A comparison of Sidney's prose works Defence of Poesie and the New Arcadia with Bruno's Lo spaccio and Eroici furori yields many verbal parallels. Even across the barrier of translation, some of these similarities are striking. The tone of a personal exchange of ideas, which is especially strong in the Defence and in a significant disputative dialogue in the New

Arcadia, also makes compelling evidence. And, finally, the topical and ideological parallels existing between both of Sidney's prose works and Bruno's special and almost exclusive interests and ideas make convincing contentual evidence. The final piece of evidence is Sidney's translation of the Hermetic essay On the Trewness of the Christian Religion. While the essay in general is in agreement with Bruno's Hermetic convictions, the distinctions were--to a man like Sidney--so vital that he felt the need for their promulgation. In this final act Sidney seems to have given a final and conclusive testimonial of Bruno's influence.

In the opinion of this writer, based on the evidence presented in this study, Bruno influenced Sidney in the finest literary tradition. He stimulated Sidney to creative, original productivity. Under this fascinating Italian's spell, Sidney became keenly interested in several areas he had been familiar with but had shown no special interest in--the principles of poetry, visual epistemology and the literary emblematic technique, Neoplatonic love, the concept of the heroic, cosmology, and the Hermetic tradition. These interests are reflected in Sidney's Defence of Poesie and the New Arcadia and attest to a influence by Bruno.

NOTES

[1]Lee, p. 89.

[2]Wallace, p. 183.

[3]Eva M. Tenison, "Golding's Completion of Sidney's Unfinished Translation," in Elizabethan England (Royal Leamington Spa: n.p., 1940), VII, 152.

[4]Albert Feuillerat, "Prefatory Note," Works, III, ix-xi.

[5]Tenison presents four brief articles on different facets of the Sidney translation of Mornay's essay, op. cit., pp. 145-160.

[6]Forrest Robinson, "A Note on the Sidney-Golding Translation of Phillipe de Mornay's 'De La Verite De La Religion Chrestienne,'" Harvard Library Bulletin, 17 (1969), 100, 102.

[7]Tenison, "Golding's Completion," pp. 153-154.

[8]Plessis du Mornay, "A Woorke Concerning the Trewness of the Christian Religion," Works, III, 258.

[9]Ibid., p. 259.

[10]Ibid., p. 292.

[11]Ibid., pp. 312-321.

[12]Ibid., p. 341 f.

[13]Tenison, "Golding's Completion," p. 155.

[14]Quoted in Tenison, "A Forgotten Revival of Sidney's Work, 1646," op. cit., pp. 158-159.

[15]Kimbrough, p. 34.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 33.

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