Abstract: Self-Referential Rhetoric: The Evolution of the Elizabethan 'Wit'
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The thesis traces the evolving attitudes towards rhetoric in the highly-rhetorised English-language prose of the late sixteenth century by focusing on a term that was itself subject to significant change: 'wit'. To wit's pre-existing denotations of intellectual acumen, capacity for reason and good judgement was added a novel meaning, related to the capacity for producing lively speech. As a term encompassing widely divergent meanings, many Elizabethan and early Stuart works explored 'wit' as a central theme or treated the term as significant to explorations of the human mind, its capacity for rhetoric, and the social and moral dimensions of this relationship.

The research centres on how 'wit' is seen and how it corresponds to rhetorical wittiness as produced in practice, and questions the implications of this for understanding the social and moral dimensions of the authorial wit. By focusing on the early vernacular manuals of rhetoric by author such as Thomas Wilson and Roger Ascham, on Lyly's and Greene's euphuist prose, and on Thomas Lodge's and Sir Philip Sidney's prose defences of poetry, the first half of the thesis explores the term's conceptual ambiguity. Potentially both reformative and deceptive, this ambiguity becomes a useful tool for the author looking to construct a profitable persona as a Wit, or a brilliant-yet-unruly master of rhetoric. The second half of the research notes how 'wit' tends to outlive its usefulness as a multivalent term in later writings when these seek to move away from the social commodification of an author's rhetoric. Examining Sidney's theological and political aims in *The New Arcadia*, Thomas Nashe's carnivalesque questioning of the idea of profit, and Francis Bacon's systematic interpretation of Nature, the research suggests that rhetoric and 'wit' maintain both their significance and their ambiguity into the seventeenth century. A meta-rhetorical signpost, 'wit' comes to reflect through its use and disuse both the issues at hand and the inherent self-reflexivity of any attempt to deal directly with rhetoric.

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Note on Editions and Formatting

This work is formatted based on Modern Language Association (MLA), 7th edition guidelines, with the addition of full footnote references (first appearance only) for ease of consultation and in addition to a comprehensive Works Cited section. For specific editions of early modern texts, a short-title catalogue (STC) number is provided in footnotes, based on Pollard and Redgrave, *A Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976-91).

Scholarly modern spelling editions of primary texts are used where those are available. In other cases the early modern texts, with expanded contractions, are used directly (with STC numbers given in lieu of a full footnote reference), or later original spelling editions are used in their stead (with full footnote references provided).

Introduction

The Oxford English Dictionary lists definitions for the term 'wit' as falling into three broad categories, of which two are prevalent throughout the sixteenth century. The first is as "Denoting a faculty (or the person possessing it)" (OED, "Wit, N." I), signifying the mind and its faculties in general, its inherent faculty of perception or intellect specifically, or a stand-in for the five senses.[1] This meaning is usually synonymous with the Latin noun *ingenium*, as in Thomas Elyot's definition in the *Bibliotheca Eliotae*.[2] The second category defines wit as "Denoting a quality (or the possessor of it)" (II), reflecting two differing ideas: either intellectual acumen, wisdom and good judgement; or the "capacity of apt expression" which relates to lively speech (II.7). This definition is to turn, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, into the modern sense of "always with reference to the utterance of brilliant or sparkling things in an amusing way".[3] In sixteenth-century dictionaries it is usually a translation of the Latin *arguté*, translated as "wittily" in Elyot's dictionary.[4] The third and least relevant, recorded in the sixteenth century mostly in idiomatic use, is of wit as "Senses… corresponding to those of Latin *scientia* and *sententia*" (III).[5] Only for one of these definitions can the OED provide no examples dating to before the middle of the sixteenth century – that of 'wit' as the capacity to produce apt or lively expressions, or as signifying such expressions. This added meaning had been captured well by C.S. Lewis when he divided, in *Studies in Words*, wit's sixteenth century uses into 'wit (old sense)', long in use as reflecting intellect and reason without a specific reference to rhetoric; 'wit-ingenium', a

[1] Corresponding to definitions W270-3 of 'wit' in contemporary John Baret's *Alvearie* (STC 1410. Published 1574).
[2] STC 7659. Published on or before 1542, and the basis for Thomas Cooper's *Thesaurus linguae Romanæ & Britannicæ* (STC 5686), published in 1565, which makes a similar use of *ingenium*.
[3] OED, "Wit, N." II.8.a.
[4] It also corresponds to Baret's definitions W274-8 of 'wit' (which also translate it into Latin as *salse* and *acuté*).
[5] Reflected in idioms like "to get wit of" (OED, "Wit, N." III.11.c) or "so many heades, so many wittes" (III.13).

natural intellectual aptitude for rational thought which is only indirectly linked with rhetoric via its identification with the gift of the poet; and the emerging 'wit (d.s.)' (or "dangerous sense") which he identifies as "mental agility or gymnastic which uses language as the principal equipment of its gymnasium".[6] Certainly, pre-sixteenth-century writers' propensity to connect 'wit' in its capacity as intellect with the potentially dangerous production of rhetoric should not go unnoticed. But the term's semantic broadening to reflect directly the quality of one's rhetorical mastery and that of rhetoric itself is significant. It reflects the Elizabethan engagement not only with a mind that perceives and works internally, but one that is actively engaged, through speech, with the outside world.

This shift in meaning towards affecting rather than only perceiving the external occurs alongside an increasing engagement with the ideas, and anxieties, regarding one's intellect and reason as reflected in rhetoric.[7] A significant driving force for late sixteenth century authors, this exploration of mind and speech was accompanied by a great increase in the number of vernacular works that touch on rhetoric. Green and Murphy's comprehensive catalogue of Renaissance rhetorical texts lists seven works in 12 editions in the entire first half of the century, mostly translations or works dealing indirectly with rhetoric.[8] Only one – Leonard Cox's *The Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke*, a translation of Melanchthon's *Institutiones Rhetorices* focusing only on Ciceronian invention and disposition – is a theoretical treatise dealing directly with the subject itself.[9] For the second half of the century, on the other hand,

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[6] C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 86-87, 90-93, 97.
[7] "developing acknowledgment that human wit, for all its inventive power, has its limitations" (Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978] 179); See also Feingold, 'The Humanities', *The History of the University of Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 247.
[8] Green and Murphy, *Renaissance Rhetoric Short-title Catalogue 1460-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). These are given internal codes (RR) 176, 498, 791, 1242, 1522, 1927 and 2775. See also Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth-century Rhetoric* (London: Routledge, 1968) for a less comprehensive bibliography that nevertheless paints a similar picture.
[9] Dated to either 1524 or 1531. See Carpenter, 'Leonard Cox and the First English Rhetoric', *Modern Language Notes* 13:5 (1898): 292; and Wagner, 'Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique', Communications Monographs 27:1 (1960): 2. The first extant edition (STC 5947) is dated to 1532.

50 works published in at least 115 editions are listed. By the middle of the seventeenth century, through the conceits of the metaphysical poets and London's coterie poetic circles, wit was to become particularly identified with Lewis' 'wit (d.s.)', even as it maintained its intellectual capital as the binding principle of various clubs and societies.[10] In Elizabethan England, however, wit was not only a dangerous term but an unruly one. It is a term that, despite its shifting meanings and flirtation with moral corruption, became an attractive force for many authors who sought to display their own wit, both natural ingenuity and learned wisdom, and to position themselves as Wits.

Scope

Despite its difficulties, the term is significant to a large corpus of Elizabethan and early Stuart works, which posit 'wit' as a central theme or treat it as central to explorations of the human mind, its capacity for rhetoric, and the social and moral dimensions of this relationship. The full extent of this engagement is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, and so it is to early modern prose that I direct my attention. Necessity aside, there are, I believe, some good arguments to be made for this choice. For 'wit' is first afforded a central thematic role in the depiction of a 'wicked wit' in 1570s and 80s euphuistic prose, produced by several university-educated authors who produced also verse and drama and who are counted among a group known today as the University Wits.[11] Although *ingenium* is often identified with the poet's gift, it is equally central to euphuistic protagonists, whose abuse of the same rests precisely on the balance between excessive rhetoric and intellectual deficiency. This link between prose and the centrality of 'wit' is also maintained by some of the earliest

[10] For a discussion of these emerging wits in the Inns of Court, see O'Callaghan, *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[11] The term itself was never in use in Elizabethan times, and was probably coined by George Saintsbury in the late 19th century. See for example editor Kirk Melnikoff's introduction to *Robert Greene* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

responders to and critics of euphuism. University Wits Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe, for example, considered their post-euphuistic prose, albeit in different ways, as producing material value which in turn was equated with wit as a social commodity. Even for poetry's great defender Philip Sidney it was in prose – in his famous treatise, *The Defence of Poesy* – that he produced a fitting response to Stephen Gosson's euphuistic attack on poetry. Generalising poetry to include both prose and verse, Sidney produced a lengthy examination of an idealised 'erected wit' and a more mundane one in his attempts to explore and shape an English literary tradition. I have chosen to concentrate on prose, although this is nevertheless opting for considerable variety – this thesis alone focuses on rhetorical manuals, novels, polemics, pamphlets, pastoral tales, and scientific writings. Prose is that which "goeth low and soft on foote",[12] but which at the same time is the form of choice for many authors who are highly conscious of themselves as Wits. Choosing to write in prose, a supposedly less artificial form than verse, is particularly telling when dealing with matters of rhetorical conceit and intellectual honesty. And it is in prose that the self-reflexive qualities of the term become most evident.

Argument

My aim is to focus on how 'wit' is regarded and on how it corresponds to rhetorical wittiness as produced in practice, as well as to question the implications of this for understanding the social and moral dimensions of authorial wit. While wit is also explored narrowly, or philologically, my main interest lies in viewing the term through the context of the history of ideas. I explore the way in which 'wit' is employed for rhetorical effect, along with the way in which the relationship between 'wit' as an idea and practical wittiness is realised within the text, for it is a slippery concept in which practice rarely, if ever, follows

[12] Ascham, 'The Scholemaster', *English Works of Roger Ascham*, ed. W.A. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904) 255. First published in 1570 (STC 832).

theory. Nevertheless, as the first part of this research reveals, there is some consistency to the term when it is used in a self-referential and self-advertising display of one's wit as a form of social currency. This part of the thesis begins with the manuals of rhetorical style, examines early euphuistic prose, and ends with Gosson's attack on poets and Sidney's response in *The Defence of Poesy*. This part divides Lewis' terms into 'intellectual wit', which encompasses both 'wit (old sense)' and the more-relevant 'wit-ingenium'; and 'rhetorical wit', which corresponds to Lewis' 'wit (d.s.)'. These categories, however, are revealed to be much more permeable then Lewis suggests. In the works explored in this part, 'wit' comes to denote *ingenium*, speech, and reason, or the capacity to seek truth.[13] But it also becomes bound with the idea that *ingenium* is insufficient on its own to produce moral speech, especially as it is hindered by the imperfections of man's reason and its intrinsic uncertainties. The second half of the research moves from Sidney's two versions of *The Arcadia* through the Harvey-Nashe quarrel to Bacon's quest for the interpretation of nature. It shows how 'wit' tends to outlive its usefulness as a multivalent term in later writings, commercial and otherwise, as these seek to move away from the social commodification of the author's wit.

The thesis seeks to tie in a seemingly disparate catalogue of works from a diverse group of authors, from the early vernacular rhetoricians of John Cheke's Athenian Tribe in Cambridge – Wilson, Hoby, and Ascham[14] – through the emerging class of professional writers like Lyly, Greene, and Nashe, and their uneasy relationship with patronage, to the upper-class Sidney and Bacon, for whom writing was often secondary to civil service. These all share an appreciation for the term's capacity to encapsulate seemingly contradictory ideas – moral judgement, rhetorical fancy, intellectual honesty, and the artifice of language.

[13] Bartholomaeus Anglicus says that "In the *Rationali* is knowledge of the truth" (III.6) in his encyclopaedia, *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (quoted here in Stephen Batman's 1582 translated edition, *Batman vppon Bartholome* [STC 1538]).
[14] Hudson, *The Cambridge Connection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1980).

Whether their wittiness is copious or plain, logical or unreasoned, persuasive or unsuccessful, moral, amoral or simply indifferent – it is the case that when these authors first discuss 'wit', they are also using their own intellectual wits in the process, in the self-reflexive endeavour to establish their own social and moral currency as Wits. But like 'wit' itself, it is an apprehensive, self-contradicting endeavour, bound by the ambiguity of rhetoric, by moral uncertainty and by social insecurity. Appropriately therefore, wit's conceptual ambiguity tends to be downplayed when these authors move away from social self-aggrandisement through rhetoric, even if their efforts remain essentially conflicted by rhetorical ambiguities.

Criticism

A few strands in recent criticism are especially significant to the examination of wit's social and moral dimensions. The most obvious of those focuses on the nascent literary marketplace in Elizabethan England, which paints a picture of an emerging individuality operating within the commercial sphere, alongside an increased economic and social commodification of rhetoric. Richard Halpern's *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation* traces the emergence of this proto-capitalist structure to the expulsion of many from the workforce and the transition into a society in which individual education, talent and desires drive social mobility.[15] Certainly, debate exists as to whether marketing concerns truly reflected an emerging individuality in the author who demands recognition, as articulated by Michael Saenger.[16] But the ubiquity of commercial concerns is maintained by a large number of studies, which examine various forms such as early modern romances (as in Steve Mentz's *Romance for Sale*) and pamphlets (in Alexandra Halasz's *The Marketplace of Print*), and which view the marketplace from the position of both production (see for example Maria

[15] Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).
[16] Saenger, *The Commodification of Textual Engagements in the English Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) 28-29.

Teresa Micaela Prendergast's article in *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*) and consumption (see David Baker in *On Demand*).[17] To formulate and utilise 'wit' is often also to accept the commodification demanded by this emerging model for literary production. Appropriately, most of the authors examined in this thesis relate to the literary marketplace, whether they embrace it, like Greene and Nashe, or resist it, like Sidney and Bacon. Their expressions of wit, as I shall endeavour to show, are inherently intertwined with this reaction.

Another recent strand of criticism focuses on the anti-idealised elements that emerge from this increasingly commodified literary endeavour. This is most evident for the more overtly commercial authors such as Lyly and Greene, said in Katharine Wilson's *Fictions of Authorship* and in Melnikoff and Gieskes' collection *Writing Robert Greene* to be engaged in echoing their own career choices in their protagonists, and to create a flexible, commercial identity rather than an idealised one.[18] But this strand is particularly interesting in recent Sidney studies, which have experienced in the last few decades a re-examination of the earlier readings of Sidney as a perfect humanist with a clear theological and social agenda.[19] It was Robert Stillman's *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* that first emphasised Sidney's Phillipist stance – accommodating rather than partisan, associating "humane and sacred" (xi) – rather than his oft-noted Calvinist sympathies.[20] Others suggested that Sidney's vision was not immune to marketplace considerations – Dolven's *Scenes of*

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[17] Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: the Rise of Prose Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Prendergast, 'Promiscuous Textualities: The Nashe-Harvey Controversy and the Unnatural Productions of Print', *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 173-96; Baker, *On Demand: Writing for the Market in Early Modern England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010). See also Linton, 'The Humanist in the Market: Gendering Exchange and Authorship in Lyly's Euphues Romances', *Framing Elizabethan Fictions: Contemporary Approaches to Early Modern Narrative Prose* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996).

[18] K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives: Euphues in Arcadia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Melnikoff and Gieskes, *Writing Robert Greene: New Essays on England's First Notorious Professional Writer* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2008).

[19] Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England* 77-78.

[20] Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). This approach is named after Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), a noted Protestant reformer whose influence will be explored later in this thesis.

Instruction and Das' *Renaissance Romance* both show Sidney's intellectual debt to the commoditising rhetoric of Lyly – before the recently published *On Not Defending Poetry* by Catherine Bates proclaimed Sidney's *Defence* as overtly anti-idealised precisely by focusing on its engagement with the monetising aspects of literature.[21] As a term that reflects both idealised rationality and practical rhetoric, wit is central to such considerations.

Criticism of the early modern history of rhetoric highlights its classical provenance in legal and political oratory.[22] Since the English jury system was particularly associated with the "rhetorical structures of probability" (75), as Lorna Hutson suggests in *The Invention of Suspicion*, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Inns of Court proved crucial to the shaping of Elizabethan literariness.[23] Yet the convergence of *inventio* and *elocutio* from political and legal thinking to the realm of the literary proved difficult for early modern thinkers. It may have been fundamental to forging suspension of disbelief, hinging on circumstantial understanding that engages the "judgement of probability" (24), as Hutson explores in *Circumstantial Shakespeare*.[24] But it also led to a conflation of truth and probability which is often attributed to humanist rhetoric, such as that explored by Joel Altman in *The Improbability of Othello*.[25] This resulted in a growing wariness of rhetoric and wit that was especially pronounced in the scientifically-minded, as Quentin Skinner shows in *Reason and*

[21] Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Das, *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570-1620* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Bates, *On Not Defending Poetry: Defence and Indefensibility in Sidney's Defence of Poesy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[22] See Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 27; Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 9; and Adamson, Ettenhuber, and Alexander (eds.), *Renaissance Figures of Speech* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 3-4.
[23] Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 75. For more on the literature emerging from the Inns of Court, see Winston, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558-1581* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[24] Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2015).
[25] Altman, *The Improbability of Othello: Rhetorical Anthropology and Shakespearean Selfhood* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010) 121, 123-24.

Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes.[26] Appropriately, then, wit finds a transformation in Bacon's writings into *experientia literata*, a fundamental but flawed sagacity that involves *ingenium* and experimental data but which ultimately offers incomplete knowledge.[27]

Chapter Overview

The conceptual ambiguity of 'wit' is first explored in Chapter 1's discussion of mid-century vernacular manuals of rhetoric, which traces the uneasy relationship between thinking, judgement, and rhetoric to its popularisation in English by members of Cheke and Smith's Athenian Tribe in Cambridge. The chapter focuses on the group's most successful mid-century works – Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique*, Hoby's translation of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* and Ascham's *The Scholemaster* – and asserts that 'wit' comes to encompass both sides of an epistemological and moral divide. It is linked with both the empirical knowledge of the senses and with an idealised divine certitude, and it can lead to moral rectification but can also deceive and corrupt. This is the starting point of this research, as it traces the conflicted meaning of the term as particularly suitable to the self-referential explorations of the social currency of wit.

The most significant commercialised manifestation of these explorations of wit is produced in the early prose of the University Wits, beginning with John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wyt* and the subsequent brief heyday of euphuistic prose. Chapter 2 addresses the emergence of 'wit' as a major theme in Lyly's first work and in those of his closest imitator,

[26] Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 257-58. Note however that even as late as the middle of the seventeenth century would thinkers like Hobbes return to rhetoric and reappraise its facility for providing an ethos or adorning truth (376-77, 381-83).
[27] Recent criticism looking into *experientia literata* begins with Jardine, 'Experientia Literata or Novum Organum? The Dilemma of Bacon's Scientific Method', *Francis Bacon's Legacy of Texts: "The Art of Discovery Grows with Discovery"* (New York, NY: AMS Press, 1990) 47-68. More recent works to examine the concept include Giglioni, 'Learning to Read Nature: Francis Bacon's Notion of Experiential Literacy (Experientia Literata)', *Medical Empiricism and Philosophy of Human Nature in the 17th and 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 81-110; and R. Lewis, 'Francis Bacon and Ingenuity', *Renaissance Quarterly* 67:1 (2014): 113-63.

Robert Greene. Euphuistic literature is constrained between narrative unity – it is that, rather than "assortment and diversity" (45) that is suggested by Andy Kesson in *John Lyly and Early Modern Authorship* to be responsible for Lyly's commercial success – and a rhetoric noted precisely for its diversity – its "superfluity and strangeness" (95), as Catherine Nicholson claims in *Uncommon Tongues* – which is where Lyly finds his rhetorical voice.[28] Chapter 2 contributes to this discourse of commodifying and materialising rhetorical excess by focusing specifically on 'wit', reimagined as a wicked rhetorical display. Wit becomes for Lyly a form of social currency that is both desirable and dangerous, echoed in his highly-commodified rhetoric of analogies, balanced parallelisms, and antitheses. In Lyly's search for patronage, his protagonist's crucial-but-dangerous wit reflects the author's own careful positioning of himself as a Wit, while in Greene's increased focus on commercial success the authorial wit comes to overshadow, and subvert, the euphuistic wit of his characters.

Non-commercial writings were similarly influenced by the view of wit as a social commodity. Chapters 3 and 4 are concerned with tracing the work of Philip Sidney as it moves from commodification of rhetoric in *The Defence of Poesy* and the *Old Arcadia* to the theological vision of the *New Arcadia*, noting the potent use of 'wit' he makes early on and its disappearance as his focus shifts towards concerns 'beyond the rhetorical'. Chapter 3 focuses on the morality of poetic wit, central to the treatises for and against poetry written around 1579 by several prominent scholars. Stephen Gosson's euphuistic attack on deceitful poetry, especially that of the emerging theatre, is responded to by Thomas Lodge and Philip Sidney in works that nevertheless echo Gosson's distaste for the perceived corruptions of contemporary poetry. These works, however, broaden the discussion by repositioning poetic wit in a duality, hinted at by Lodge's discussion of *furor poeticus* but most fully developed in

[28] Kesson, *John Lyly and Early Modern Authorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Nicholson, *Uncommon Tongues: Eloquence and Eccentricity in the English Renaissance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

Sidney's treatise, in which it is the poet's capacity for making – and its relation to God's created Nature – that is at stake, as he produces a diplomatic reading of the poetic wit as a force of moral and social rectification.

Chapter 4 marks the beginning of the second half of the thesis, in which the move away from the previous commodification of authorial wit reorients the term towards a less ambiguous and narrower path. Regina Schneider suggests in *Sidney's (Re)writing of the Arcadia* that Sidney's two versions of the *Arcadia* form a single, continuously evolving literary vision.[29] This evolution, however, is a profound one. As Jeff Dolven claims in *Scenes of Instruction*, if in the *Old Arcadia* Sidney "mocks the ethical ambitions" of men, as Lyly does, in the *New Arcadia* he nevertheless moves towards promising an escape from one's subjective limitations into what "we might now call objectivity".[30] Sidney's *Old* and *New Arcadia* explore and embody the limits of rhetorical force and its correspondence with intellectual wit in vastly different ways. This chapter delves into both works by looking, as a starting point, at the tension produced by the persistent, overlapping sets of antitheses presented in both versions of the *Arcadia*. It is through its power to both transcend and complicate some of these relationships that the *Arcadia*'s shifting manifestation of 'wit' emerges in a journey that complements Sidney's vision in *The Defence of Poesy*, from the brazen world of reality into an exploration of moral universals that can't quite shake off its own rhetoricity. Through this movement, 'wit' loses its central place in the *New Arcadia*'s reshaping of the pastoral tale into an overtly religious one, and in its increased focus on faith and the moral right of political resistance.

Chapter 5 follows the exchange between Gabriel Harvey, an admirer of Sidney, and University Wit Thomas Nashe, in the final decade of the sixteenth century. A series of

[29] R. Schneider, *Sidney's (Re)Writing of the Arcadia* (New York, NY: AMS Press, 2008).
[30] Dolven 131, 175.

polemics in which personal attacks are commonplace, the prose pamphlets serve as a fertile ground for the two authors to develop their differing views on rhetoric's moral and social role, on wit's relation to material and social commodity, and on the legitimacy of their own authorial wit. Despite calling for moderation and objecting to the freedoms of satire which, as Jennifer Richards suggests, were seen as "domineering" and as leading to tyranny, Harvey's more traditional rhetoric is linked with a commitment to the use of wit in the service of self-advancement and social fashioning.[31] Nashe, despite being identified by recent critics as versatile, difficult to pin down, a relentless materialist and one for whom poetic pleasure is always placed before moral advice, embodies the opposite of Harvey's socially mobile position.[32] His rhetoric of self-fashioning embodies rather the suggestion that social mobility is dangerous and bound to fail, all in the service of wide-ranging criticism of the two worlds of 'credit' – of patronage and of commercial success – and their conceited demands for moralising and self-modesty.[33] By focusing on 'wit (d.s.)', Nashe shows the lack of 'reason' and 'intellect' inherent to early modern writing, as he does with the frequent recourse to the grotesque, which inflates issues to the monstrous, but doesn't necessarily offer a solution in its stead.[34] Ultimately Nashe's boldness results rather in a repeated questioning – of the value of wit, of the possibility of objectivity, of patronage, and of social mobility.

Finally, Chapter 6 explores a shift from rhetoric towards the scientific in Francis Bacon's emerging system for the interpretation of Nature, bridging the public and the personal spheres explored earlier as the supplementary work of a civil servant which is nevertheless greatly concerned with public appeal. Examined in relation to some of the

[31] Richards, 'Gabriel Harvey's Choleric Writing', *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature: 1485-1603*, eds. Pincombe and Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 670.
[32] See for example articles by Andersen, Mentz, Landreth and McEleney in Guy-Bray, Linton, and Mentz (eds.), *The Age of Thomas Nashe: Text, Bodies and Trespasses of Authorship in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).
[33] See also Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 72.
[34] See Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980) 6, 44-45.

thinkers discussed in previous chapters, especially Castiglione, Lyly, Harvey, and Sidney, Bacon's use of 'wit' explores similar interests: the means for using language, the possibility of knowledge, and the social function of rhetoric, but these are then turned into a wide-ranging platform on which a grand scientific project is constructed. Initially multivalent, Bacon's 'wit' comes to disappear into the more limited Latin *ingenium* and the related *experientia literata*. Rooted in the fundamental and unstructured laws of nature, *experientia literata* becomes fundamental to the quest for commodifying knowledge as it is acquired through the medium of language.

The authors examined in this thesis are diverse in their social position, intellectual allegiance, approach to rhetorical questions, and mode of writing. And yet they all represent a part of the same movement – one in which the possibilities and dangers of rhetoric are explored against a similar political and economic background. The early rhetoricians of the Athenian Tribe and especially Ascham (in whose work the term *Euphues* is used for the ideal student) greatly influenced the early euphuist prose of Lyly and Greene, whose work in turn influenced other 'University Wits' like Lodge and Nashe.[35] Euphuism also influenced writers with wholly different agendas, such as Stephen Gosson in his euphuistic attack of the theatre, and served as a point of criticism for Sidney in his response to Gosson. Sidney is central to many later authors – Spenser and Harvey admired him, and many later manuals of poetry or rhetoric make extensive use of Sidney's writings as examples.[36] And finally, Francis Bacon, well-versed in the rhetorical and humanist tradition in which his uncle Thomas Hoby played a central part through his translation of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, shows in his works the

[35] See for example Croll, 'Introduction: The Sources of the Euphuistic Rhetoric', *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit; Euphues & his England* (London: Routledge, 1916); Lindheim, 'Lyly's Golden Legacy: Rosalynde and Pandosto' *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 15.1 (1975): 3; and Best, 'Nashe, Lyly, and 'Summer's Last Will and Testament'', *Philological Quarterly* 48.1 (1969): 1.

[36] See Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 106-108; Authors whose works make extensive use of examples from Sidney include Abraham Fraunce, John Harington, and George Puttenham. See discussion in Chapter 3.

influences of the earlier debate surrounding rhetoric and wit.[37] The engagement with 'wit' by these authors is both varied and at the same time part of a single process. Its beginnings arise from the early English forays into the realm of rhetoric, previously reserved to the Latin, and its end lies in Bacon's equivocal, but hugely influential, rejection of what Elizabethan rhetoric had become. It is this process that lies at the centre of this thesis.

[37] See Martin, *Francis Bacon, the State, and the Reform of Natural Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 65.

Chapter 1 – Wit in Theoretical Thinking or, Aspiring to an Ideal

Aristophanes' comedy *The Clouds* provides the earliest known example of unjust speech winning over the just through verbal trickery.[1] Represented by the explicitly named 'Better Argument' and 'Worse Argument', the two debate in familiar Aristophanian bawdiness over the values of the days of old. Just Speech argues for "how the old education used to operate in the days when I flourished by propounding what's right, and when decency was accepted custom" (961-62);[2] while Unjust Speech argues for pleasures of the flesh: "boys, women, dice, fine food and drink, laughs. If you're deprived of all this, what's the point of living?" (1073-74). Just Speech is eventually tricked by his counterpart into hinging the outcome of the argument on the truth of a single ambiguous statement: could one suffer a greater harm than becoming "wide-arsed" (εὐρύπρωκτος):

> WORSE ARGUMENT
> And if he does become wide-arsed, what's the harm in that?
> BETTER ARGUMENT
> You mean, what harm could ever be worse than that?
> WORSE ARGUMENT
> All right, what will you say if I defeat you on this point?
> BETTER ARGUMENT
> I'll shut up; what else could I do? (1084-88)

Despite having admitted to arguing the weaker position (1042), Unjust Speech then proceeds to win over the argument by asking his rival to examine the play's audience. To his surprise, Just Speech finds that "the great majority are wide-arsed!" (1098-99). The reflection is on the audience's bawdiness in enjoying such a play rather than the passive homosexuality implied beforehand, thus showing that being wide-arsed does not necessarily bring harm.[3] Just Speech immediately admits defeat, and verbal ambiguity triumphs over justice. Aristophanes'

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[1] Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) 6-7.
[2] Aristophanes, *Clouds*, trans. J. Henderson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Line numbers correspond to the original Greek given side-by-side with the English.
[3] See also the translator's comment to line 1084 in Aristophanes, *Clouds*, trans. I. Johnston (Arlington, VA: Richer Resources, 2008) 58.

comical lewdness aside, his *Clouds* explores the power of rhetoric and its dubious moral implications as consequences of rhetoric's ambiguous, problematic relationship with justice and reason.[4] This reflection is present throughout much of classical antiquity as rhetoric often explores a negotiated truth, rather than a fixed one,[5] existing in a place for Greeks and Romans that exhibits rather the tensions of their societies.[6]

Rhetoric's most famous critic in ancient times is of course Plato. In the *Gorgias,* his Socrates places rhetoric as one of the four 'sham' parts of what he terms 'flattery', contrasted with the four 'real' parts of art:[7]

> … the rhetoric which I mean is a part of a not very creditable whole… In my opinion then, Gorgias, the whole of which rhetoric is a part is not an art at all, but the habit of *a bold and ready wit*,[8] which knows how to manage mankind: this habit I sum up under the word 'flattery'. (463a; italics mine)

Even more so than Aristophanes before him, Plato's Socrates is highly critical of rhetoric and suggests it is inherently divorced from 'justice', which Socrates claims is to rhetoric as medicine is to cookery (464d).[9] Justice, at which philosophy strives, is a universal attribute linked to temperance and virtue (504e) to which rhetoric, if it is to be "honest", must be subordinated: "… rhetoric and any other art should be used… always, with a view to justice" (527c). Other Greek philosophers considered rhetoric in a different light. Especially the Sophists, for whom rhetoric is not a search for absolute truth with which it has no

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[4] "In *Clouds* this power is seen as sinister" although "[e]lsewhere [in his works] word-mongering is more commonly represented as laughable excess". See Silk, *Aristophanes and the Definition of Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 101.
[5] The ancient rhetorician's "interest in probing both sides of an issue derives from a belief, not that the truth exists independent of discourse and is to be found through inquiry, but that the truth of a case is socially determined by the give and take of opposing, even multiple, perspectives". See Habinek, *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) 72.
[6] See Habinek 17; and Connolly, 'Virile Tongues: Rhetoric and Masculinity', *A companion to Roman Rhetoric,* eds. Dominik and Hall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 85.
[7] Plato, 'Gorgias', *The Dialogues of Plato,* trans. B. Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon, 1875).
[8] "ψυχῆς δὲ στοχαστικῆς καὶ ἀνδρείας". Others translate this idea as "a soul good at guessing and brave" (Murphy, 'Isocrates and the dialogue', *Classical World* 106:3 [2013]: 340) or "a shrewd, gallant spirit" (Lamb in Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967]).
[9] See also Silk 102.

correspondence but an ethical exercise, saw the merits of rhetoric even as they acknowledged it as a possible instrument of deception.[10] Despite the claims of philosophers like Isocrates, that rhetoric and morality are joined through training in the Isocratean *logos*, the Socratic divide "between tongue and brain" remained commonly accepted until Roman times.[11]

The rhetorical corpus of sixteenth-century humanism, however, rested primarily on the works of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, whose views on the ethics of rhetoric are opposed to Plato's and whose forensic rhetoric was particularly appropriate for the English jury system's association with the rhetorical structures of probability.[12] Though grammar school students would study Cicero's earlier works and the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which explicitly discusses deception and amoral speech, the central rhetorical texts for the humanist student would be Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* and, especially, Cicero's *De Oratore*.[13] Cicero's direct response to Plato in *De Oratore* suggests a challenge to the idea that a graceful rhetorical display could ever be at odds with right thinking and true wisdom:[14]

> [Socrates] in his discussions separated the science of wise thinking from that of elegant speaking, though in reality they are closely linked together… This is the source from which has sprung the undoubtedly absurd and unprofitable and reprehensible severance between the tongue and the brain… (III.xvi)

Rather than seeing rhetoric as inferior to and dependent on proper thinking, the two are one and the same for Cicero, for he suggests that true rhetoric can only come about when right thinking, and complete knowledge, are available:

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[10] See Altman, *The Improbability of Othello* 40.
[11] Kennedy 8-9.
[12] See also Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion* 75, 78-79.
[13] Baldwin, *William Shakspere's small Latine & lesse Greeke* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1944) II.62-63. Aristotle also differed from Plato in his rhetorical thinking, noting the ethical value of probabilities (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a-b) and defending rhetoric even as he acknowledged its deceptive powers (*Rhetoric 1355a*). See also Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* 31; and Skinner, *Reason and rhetoric* 15, 28.
[14] Citations for volumes I and II of *De Oratore* are to Cicero, *De Oratore I-II*, trans. E. W. Sutton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948). For volume III, citations are to Cicero, *De Oratore III*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942).

> … no man has ever succeeded in achieving splendour and excellence in oratory, I will not say merely without training in speaking, but without taking all knowledge for his province as well… For, while nearly all the other arts can look after themselves, the art of speaking well, that is to say, of speaking with knowledge, skill and elegance… has no delimited territory, within whose borders it is enclosed and confined. All things whatsoever, that can fall under the discussion of human beings, must be aptly dealt with by him who professes to have this power, or he must abandon the name of eloquent. (*De Oratore* II.i-ii.5)

This knowledge does not amount to epistemological truth because certitude, Cicero suggests in his philosophical works, is impossible: "our school maintains that nothing can be known for certain" (*De Officiis* II.ii.7).[15] Instead he posits the sceptic approach of calculating probabilities as a practical and moral rule of conduct.[16] Thus freed from Platonic epistemology, the orator becomes the master of "moral perfection, righteousness, self-control, discretion, greatness of soul, generosity, loyalty, friendship, good faith, sense of duty and the rest of the virtues and their corresponding vices" (*De Oratore* II.xvi.67).

This ideal notion of the orator finds a similar expression in Quintilian's works. Following Cicero's lead, Quintilian ends his *Institutio Oratoria* by questioning whether someone can achieve the stature of an ideal orator.[17] The impracticality of obtaining absolute knowledge is not lost on him (XII.xi.21-24), but though ideal oratory has never been reached it is potentially possible and is something worth striving for: "… even if a man despairs of the ideal (and why should he despair, if he has talent, health, means, and teachers?), nevertheless, as Cicero says, it is good to be placed in the second or the third rank" (XII.xi.26).[18] Ciceronian

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[15] Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. W. Miller (London: William Heinemann, 1928). Gabriel Harvey terms this kind of knowledge as that of of εγκυκλοπαιδεια (encyclopaedia) in his *Ciceronianus*, first published in 1577 (STC 12899). Forbes translates this into the English as knowledge of "general culture" (79). See Harvey, *Ciceronianus* (trans. C.A. Forbes. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Printing Department, 1945).
[16] *De Officiis*, II.ii.8. See also Meador, "Rhetoric and Humanism in Cicero", *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 3:1 (1970): 4.
[17] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, trans. D. A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
[18] Cicero's and Quintilian's reactions to the Socratic divide and their attempts to reconcile the *logos* of reason with the *logos* of speech are explored in a great number of critical texts. See for example Fantham, 'The Concept of Nature and Human Nature in Quintilian', *Rhetorica* 13:2 (1995): 125; and May, 'Cicero as Rhetorician' 251 and López, 'Quintilian as Rhetorician and Teacher' 309, both in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric*, eds. Dominik and Hall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

rhetorical theory, along with the tensions between practice and ideal that it produces, is central to the emerging vernacular treatments of rhetoric that characterise sixteenth century England, and as such no understanding of the Elizabethan 'wit' and its complexities is complete without it. The next section will look at 'wit' at the dawn of English rhetoric, before moving on to the more robust treatments of several prominent mid-century Protestants.

The Emergence of a Vernacular Wit

The first original English-language work to produce an account of Ciceronian rhetoric is Stephen Hawes' allegorical poem, *Pastime of Pleasure*, first published in 1509.[19] Like Cicero's orator and his ideal grasp of an encyclopaedic "general culture", Hawes' poem is an attempt to produce an allegory of courtly love that also acts as an encyclopaedic poem, in which rhetoric is placed before all other sciences.[20] Wit in the poem primarily means the five outward wits, or senses, which are complemented by five "inward wyttes" (2783). These comprise a hierarchy of increasingly integrative intellectual abilities, from a "comyn wytte" that judges the senses to imagination and fantasy that judge inwardly, estimation that evaluates aptness, and finally memory that records judgements. Nevertheless, when applied to the creation of art wit is that which "chooses and joins poetic perceptions",[21] which Hawes clearly links with the production of alluring rhetoric in his depiction of the monster Imagination: "My crafty wytte is withouten fayle / Loue for to brynge in perturbacyon / Where la belle pucell wolde haue affeccyon / To graunde amoure I shall a tale deuyse / To make her hate hym and hym to despise" (4335-39). Wit for Hawes does not signify rhetorical

[19] STC 12948. The only rhetorical works listed by Green and Murphy as earlier than Hawes' poem are translations by Caxton and Lydgate.
[20] See Wakelin, 'Stephen Hawes and Courtly Education', *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature* 60; and Copeland, 'Lydgate, Hawes, and the Science of Rhetoric in the Late Middle Ages', *Modern Language Quarterly* 53:1 (1992): 75.
[21] W. S. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956) 82-83.

ability as such, but rather an intellectual ability, relying on judgement, which also allows for speech. Yet this intellectual ability is suspect, allowing for both noble invention (701-703) and wicked deception. It is the propensity of wit to encompass two sides of a moral equation that is hinted at by Hawes, as it will speech and mind a few decades later. But even before Hawes' time, these ideas appear most prominently in theoretical discussions of human psychology.

These are explored in the sources for Hawes' wit, the earliest English prose encyclopaedias, translations of medieval works in which wit is often a psychological concept denoting the instruments of external perception, or the five senses, as well as the intellectual faculties that process these senses.[22] Discussions of the term in this context centre on the idea of the organic soul, to which the faculties of perception belong and which men share to some degree with beasts and even plants; and an intellective soul, composed of intellect and will, which is immortal and requires no body.[23] The earliest vernacular encyclopaedia is probably John of Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, dated to c.1245, circulating in manuscripts since the late fourteenth century and printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1495.[24] This occurs fourteen years after another English translation of a medieval encyclopaedia, William Caxton's *Myrrour of the worlde*, becomes the first English encyclopaedia to be printed.[25] The most prized of medieval encyclopaedias, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*'s authority prevailed throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,[26]

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[22] See also Wakelin 61.
[23] Park, 'Psychology: The Organic Soul', *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, eds. Schmitt, Skinner, Kessler and Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 464.
[24] STC 1536. A second edition was published in 1535 (STC 1537). For the work's manuscript history, see for example British Library Harley MS 614 and 4789. Also Svendsen, 'Milton and the Encyclopedias of Science', *Studies in Philology* 39:2 (1942): 306. For more on the life and work of the thirteenth century Franciscan, see Seymour, *Barthomolaeus Anglicus and his encyclopedia* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992) 1-16; 27-35. For the structure of his encyclopaedia, see Keen, 'A Peopled Landscape', *Parergon* 24:2 (2007). For more on Trevisa's life and his other works, see D. C. Fowler, *The Life and Times of John Trevisa, Medieval Scholar* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1995).
[25] STC 24762. The work is a translation of Gossuin of Metz's *L'image du monde*, also dated c.1245.
[26] Twomey, 'Towards a Reception History of Western Medieval Encyclopaedias', *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*, ed. P. Binkley (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 357, 360; Collison, *Encyclopaedias: their history throughout the ages*

and Trevisa's translation proved significant enough to be assimilated into Protestant minister Stephen Batman's revised edition as late as 1582.[27] It categorises the powers of the soul (which he generally terms 'wits', along with the external senses) into a part that is inseparable from the body, made of feeling, perception, imagination or bodily wit, which is "the virtue of the soule, whereby shee knoweth things sensible and corporall" (III.6); and a part divorced from the body and thus "departed as an Angell" (III.6) that is made of reason, which seeks the truth and desires the good, and 'inwit' or intellect which alone allows for perception of intangible things and the divine.[28] 'Wit' thus encompasses the divine part of man's soul which is "euerlasting, incorruptible, and may not die, Wherefore his principall act and déede, that is *Intelligere,* to vnderstand, is not dependaunt of the bodie" (III.13); and its suspect part, necessarily confined to a corrupt body that threatens to befuddle the rational soul: "the more it drowneth it selfe into the bodie, the more slowly and the lesse perfectly it vnderstandeth" (III.13). The use of 'wit' therefore confuses the moral dichotomy and the epistemological one, which partake of the divine as well as the corrupt, of ideal certitude as well as empirical knowledge.

These ideas were to prove especially resonant with the post-Reformation rhetoric of England's Protestants, whose epistemological position is apparent in Philip Melanchthon's similar relegation of empirical knowledge to a corrupt, postlapsarian body, while only "innate ideas" alongside "universal knowledge" and logic can generate certitude via divine will.[29] Batman's choice of editing and republishing Trevisa's translation is suggestive of its

(New York, NY: Hafner Publishing, 1966) 57-58; and Draper, 'Jaques' "Seven Ages" and Bartholomaeus Anglicus', *Modern Language Notes* 54:4 (1939).

[27] It is Batman's edition, titled *Batman vppon Bartholome* (STC 1538), that is quoted here. It features a revised spelling alongside a few added references and comments. The quoted passages are identical, barring minor spelling changes, to those of Trevisa. See also Parish, 'Batman's Additions from Elyot and Boorde', *Studies in Language, Literature, and Culture*, ed. E.B. Atwood (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1969).

[28] A similar use of wit is made in Caxton's *Mirror*, as "the right hye wytte and vnderstandyng of heuen" (8).

[29] Kessler, 'Psychology: The intellective soul', *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, eds. Schmitt, Skinner, Kessler and Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 516-17.

amenableness to late sixteenth century Protestants. Although Tudor England produced no new original encyclopaedias, Pierre de La Primaudaye's French-Protestant *L'Academie Française* became the post-Reformation encyclopaedia of choice from its first translation by Thomas Bowes in 1582.[30] It expands the moral and epistemological dilemmas discussed before through its conceptualisation of reason. La Primaudaye defines reason as "the principall part and vertue of the soule, [that] beareth rule among all the other sences". This 'reason' is itself often synonymous with 'wit', and forms for La Primaudaye the spiritual and intelligible part of the soul alongside a sensual will that is "brutish" (10) and disorganised.[31] La Primaudaye divides reason into two kinds: a divine reason that is perfect, bestowed to an elect few by providence and connected with the unwavering knowledge of Christ, and an earthly reason that "can neuer haue any certaine resolution" (6) and is linked to the philosophers of old, which is the kind naturally given to man. Regarding the aims of reason, however, La Primaudaye offers a different division. Here, reason is either a theoretical power, whose aim is to seek the truth as a goal in itself, or a practical reason that seeks the good for the purpose of directing man's will to follow it.[32] Notwithstanding La Primaudaye's protestations that eloquence necessitates reason for one to "conceiue well in his spirit" (379), the search for truth which echoes the Platonic dialectic rather than Cicero's scepticism, threatens completely to exclude rhetoric and its engagement with probabilities.[33] This, in any

[30] STC 15233. This was to be followed by eight further editions, incorporating the translations of Richard Dolman and William Philip, by 1618. For more on La Primaudaye's background and the history of his encyclopaedia, see Prescott, 'Pierre de La Primaudaye's French Academy: Growing Encyclopaedic', *Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (Florence, KY: Routledge, 2000); and Kenny, *The Palace of Secrets: Béroalde de Verville and Renaissance Conceptions of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 20. On Tudor England's lack of new original encyclopaedias, see Heninger, 'Tudor Literature of the Physical Sciences', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 32:2 (1969): 102.

[31] For an example of 'reason' and 'wit' as synonymous, see the title of Ralph Lever's treatise on logic, *The Art of Reason, rightly termed, Witcraft* (STC 15541, published 1573).

[32] La Primaudaye 418-23. This idea echoes Aristotle's poetical imperative that the poet should speak on what ought to be (*Poetics* 1460b).

[33] See also Altman, *The Improbability of Othello* 48. Both Lever's and Thomas Wilson's treatises on logic name it as 'reason' in their titles. Note also that in his poem Hawes describes the halls of Lady Rhetoric as decorated with "myrrours / of speculacyon" (660).

case, is endangered by man's epistemological condition. Similarly, the search for the ethical, in which rhetoric's lack of correspondence with 'reality' poses no problem, often ends in deceptive rhetoric, as embodied in Hawes' monster Imagination, and in will's obstinate refusal to follow.[34] These issues, in which wit is deeply implicated, are most evident in the rhetorical works of post-Reformation England, the subject of the next few sections.

The Beginnings of Elizabethan Wit

The ideal orator as described by Cicero and Quintilian influenced many theoretical Latin works throughout medieval and early modern Europe.[35] In the 1530s and 40s, however, John Cheke and Thomas Smith began educating in Cambridge a generation of Protestants[36] – including theoreticians Thomas Wilson and Roger Ascham and translator Thomas Hoby[37] – for whom vernacular rhetoric, especially of the Ciceronian kind, was a deliberate weapon of reformation, and whose writings were to shape and popularise English rhetoric in Elizabethan England.[38] In pre-Marian times their output included Ascham's archery manual *Toxophilus*, first published in 1545, which also touches on eloquence;[39] and Hoby's 1549 translation of

[34] See for example his suggestion that in external reality, even better than using reason is foregoing any attempt to tell good from bad and acknowledging man's corruption (15). For more on the development of an awareness of man's deceptive will, especially in Petrarch, see Altman, *The Improbability of Othello* 166-67.
[35] See for example Nederman, 'The Union of Wisdom and Eloquence Before the Renaissance: The Ciceronian Orator in Medieval Thought', *Journal of Medieval History* 18:1 (1992): 75-77.
[36] For further discussion of the group known as "the Athenian Tribe", its theology and eventual political power under Elizabeth, see Hudson 3-4, 52-57.
[37] For Ascham and Wilson's Protestant theology, see Cummings, *Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 245. Similarly, Hoby is described as a "convinced Protestant" (Kelly, 'Hoby, Sir Thomas (1530–1566)', *ODNB* [Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004]) and, although Hoby's source Castiglione was not one, his writings and Italian culture in general were notably amenable to English Protestants (Partridge, 'Thomas Hoby's English Translation of Castiglione's "Book of the Courtier"', *The Historical Journal* 50:4 [2007]: 771).
[38] This idea is to be explored at greater length in the upcoming pages. Note, however, how a prominent Protestant like Melanchthon would also act as an authority on Ciceronian rhetoric, such that John Kingston's 1573 version of Cicero's *De Oratore* and *Orator* (STC 5290) includes Melanchthon's "explanation of some of the difficult terrain in the perfect orator Cicero" (214). See also Shrank, 'Rhetorical Constructions of National Community', *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) 180.
[39] STC 837.

Martin Bucer's theological writings on the Church of England.[40] Most significant however is Thomas Wilson,[41] who followed his 1551 publication of *The Rule of Reason,* the first English work on logic,[42] with *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), the first theoretical work in the vernacular to cover all five parts of Ciceronian rhetoric.[43] Immediately following its publication, however, the Catholic Queen Mary ascended the throne and the group dispersed, with Cheke and Wilson joining Hoby in continental exile while Ascham, who had been tutor to the young Elizabeth between 1548 and 1550, retired into seclusion.[44] Their influence did not truly make itself manifest until Mary's death in 1558 and the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, soon after which Wilson's *Rhetorique* was republished. It was then joined by Hoby's most famous work, the first English translation of Baldassare Castiglione's courtly manual *Il Cortegiano* or *The Book of the Courtier* in 1561,[45] and by Ascham's educational treatise, *The Scholemaster*, posthumously published in 1570.

The period from 1560 to the end of the 1580s marked a brief but significant heyday for the three authors. In those decades, Wilson's *Rhetorique* was printed in seven editions,[46]

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[40] Printed as *The gratulation of the mooste famous clerke M. Martin Bucer* (STC 3963). For more on Bucer's relationship with the Athenian Tribe see Hudson 57-60.

[41] For biographical and background information on Wilson see Schmidt, 'Thomas Wilson, Tudor Scholar-Statesman', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 20:3 (1957); Wagner, 'Wilson and His Sources', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 15:4 (1929); Wildermuth, 'The Rhetoric of Wilson's "Arte"', *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 22:1 (1989): 44; and J. R. Henderson, 'Thomas Wilson', *Sixteenth-Century British Nondramatic Writers. First series,* ed. D. Richardson (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1993): 341.

[42] STC 25809. See Wagner, 'Wilson and His Sources' 525.

[43] Following Leonard Cox's *The Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke* (c.1530) and Richard Sherry's *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550) which both deal with only some of Cicero's parts of rhetoric, and, unlike Wilson, make no special effort to anglicise terms. See also Müller, 'Directions for English', *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature* 310-11; Medine, 'Introduction', *The Art of Rhetoric* (University Park, PE: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994) 8-9; and Mohrmann, 'Oratorical Delivery and Other Problems', *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. J. Murphy (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983) 57.

[44] On Ascham's fortunes during the reign of Queen Mary, see Samuel Johnson's *A Memoir of Roger Ascham* (New York, NY: Chautauqua, 1890) 25-28.

[45] For more on Hoby's background, and especially his travels in Italy, see Woolfson, 'Thomas Hoby, William Thomas, and Mid-Tudor Travel to Italy', *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature*; and Bartlett, 'Thomas Hoby', *Sixteenth-century British nondramatic writers. First series*, ed. David Richardson (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1993).

[46] First reprint following Mary's death in 1560 (STC 25800). The last in 1585 (STC 25806). Citations are to T. Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique*, ed. G.H. Mair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).

Ascham's *Scholemaster* in five,[47] and Hoby's translation of Castiglione in three.[48] All were to experience a fall in popularity in the last decade of the century, during which no further editions of any of the three were printed, although Hoby's would see one further edition printed in 1603. Nevertheless, their influence on a generation of writers born in the 50s and 60s and educated during the first half of Elizabeth's reign is profound. Wilson's handbook paved the way for many other theoretical works on rhetoric and is noted as central to maintaining Ciceronianism's prominence against the "noise made by the Ramists" in the decades to follow.[49] Similarly Hoby's translation of Castiglione, for whose ideal courtier rhetoric is a central attribute, brought the courtly world of Urbino to a wider audience, and set the standard for social conduct amongst England's educated society.[50] It exerted influence on authors as diverse as Philip Sidney,[51] Thomas Nashe,[52] Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare.[53] Lastly Ascham's educational work, which places at its centre the ideal pupil and his teacher for whom rhetoric forms the foremost field of studies, is counted alongside Thomas Elyot's *The Boke Named the Governour*[54] as the most significant English treatise on

[47] Between 1570 (STC 832) and 1589 (STC 836).
[48] In 1561 (STC 4778) and 1577 (STC 4779) in English alone and in 1588 (STC 4781) in a trilingual version with Italian and French. Citations are to STC 4778.
[49] Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 42; See also Müller 307-308. Note for example George Puttenham's direct reference to Wilson in *The Arte of English Poesie* (STC 20519, printed 1589) 191; and Henry Peacham's borrowing of imagery from Wilson in *The Garden of Eloquence* (STC 19497, printed 1577) in Hazard, 'The Anatomy of "Liveliness" as a Concept in Renaissance Aesthetics', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 33:4 (1975): 408.
[50] See Kelly, 'Hoby, Sir Thomas (1530–1566)'. Note that Hoby's English translation was published a few months before Hieronymous Turler's first Latin translation of *Il Cortegiano*, and a full ten years before the first Latin translation published in England, by Bartholomew Clerke (STC 4782, published 1571). See also Cartwright, *Baldassare Castiglione, the Perfect Courtier* (London: John Murray, 1908) I.vi, II.440; Molinaro, 'Castiglione and His English Translators', *Italica* 36:4 (1959): 262; and Eckstein in Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier* (London: Duckworth, 1902) 419-22.
[51] Who "was reputed never to travel without a copy. See Matz, 'Sidney's Defence of Poesie: The Politics of Pleasure', *English Literary Renaissance* 25:2 (1995): 134.
[52] Nashe referred to, and imitated, *The Courtier* in his quarrels with Gabriel Harvey, a notable reader and commentator of Castiglione. See Stamatakis, '"With diligent studie, but sportingly": How Gabriel Harvey read his Castiglione', *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* 5 (2013): 52.
[53] See W. B. D. Henderson, 'A Note on Castiglione and English Literature', *The book of the courtier* (London: Dent, 1948) xiii-xvi.
[54] First published in 1531 (STC 7635) and, like Ascham's work, falling out of print in the last years of the century (eighth edition published in 1580 [STC 7642]).

education published in the sixteenth century.[55] It proved central to shaping educational theories for many decades, was especially instrumental in the development of the euphuist style, and even featured prominently in the writing of later authors such as Bacon.[56]

The three works have a lot in common. They are the foundational works of educated Protestants, members of the same scholarly circle, who are writing at the onset of the Reformation in England. Ciceronian rhetoric constitutes for them a central field of investigation.[57] But their vernacular vision of rhetoric rejects, in the spirit of Erasmus' satirical *Ciceronianus*, the idea that "No one will be Ciceronian if even the tiniest word is found in his works which can't be pointed to in Cicero's *opus*".[58] Nevertheless, each author approaches the subject from a different perspective, complementing rather than reiterating their conceptions of wit. Wilson's theory, the most diffuse of the three in its use of wit, is complemented by the *Courtier*'s reimagining of it as a social force within courtly society. It is similarly enhanced by Ascham's wit as imbued in the conditions and processes that make rhetoric possible in the first place. Over the next few sections, each author's work will be discussed in an attempt to form a detailed picture of the significance of wit in the emerging vernacular rhetoric of early Elizabethan England.

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[55] For more on Ascham's life and preoccupation with rhetoric, see Ryan, *Roger Ascham* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1963); and B. L. Nelson, 'Roger Ascham', *British Rhetoricians and Logicians, 1500-1660, first series,* ed. Edward Malone (Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2001). On Ascham's religion and attitudes towards the vernacular, see Stark, 'Protestant Theology and Apocalyptic Rhetoric in Roger Ascham's "The Schoolmaster"', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69:4 (2008).

[56] Ryan 6-7; and Whipple, 'Isocrates and Euphuism', *The Modern Language Review* 11:1 (1916): 16-17.

[57] For example, see Agnew, 'Rhetorical Style and the Formation of Character: Ciceronian Ethos in Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique', *Rhetoric Review* 17:1 (1998); T. M. Greene, 'Roger Ascham: The Perfect End of Shooting', *ELH* 36:4 (1969); Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978) 18-49.

[58] Erasmus, 'Ciceronianus', *Collected Works of Erasmus,* trans. B. Knott (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1974) 349. Note that Erasmus is far from suggesting a complete rejection of Cicero: "Any young candidate for eloquence must always have Cicero in his pocket – and in his heart" (439), suggesting that one should imitate his virtues rather than his words. See also I. Scott, *Controversies Over the Imitation of Cicero* (New York, NY: Columbia, 1910) 24-41; and Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 39.

Thomas Wilson's Wit

Acting in the belief that Ciceronian rhetoric was the most suitable one to advance the Protestant cause, Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique* also marks a return to Cicero's three functions of the orator – to prove what is true, to win the audience's sympathy, and to stir emotions to the desired action.[59] To that end, Wilson produces a treatise in which 'wit' finds an extremely wide-ranging use, reflecting all of the major significations of the term in use at the time. Wit is first and foremost man's natural intellectual capacity, considered as necessary for the creation of the orator in the following lines:

> First needfull it is that hee, which desireth to excell in this gift of Oratorie, and longeth to proue an eloquent man, must naturally haue a wit, and an aptnesse thereunto: then must he to his Booke, and learne to bee well stored with knowledge… The which when he hath got plentifully, he must vse much exercise, both in writing, and also in speaking. For though hee haue a wit and learning together, yet shall they both little auaile without much practise… (I.4)

Wilson is in effect equating 'wit' with *ingenium* as used by Cicero and Quintilian, which for the latter consistently signifies a natural intellectual aptitude for speaking, as for example when he discusses improvisation: "the facility it shows enhances the speaker's reputation for talent, and the appearance of simple everyday language makes it all the more convincing" (Institutio, IV.i.54). Wilson echoes the common definition of wit as intellect in general, as when he writes: "For his witte was so great, his tongue so eloquent, and his experience such, that no one man was able to withstande his reason" (Preface, 29). His use, however, most significantly reflects his increased interest in rhetoric insofar as wit, rather than simply standing for one's intellectual faculty in general, suggests the specific capacity to acquire a mastery of oratory. This capacity, it is suggested, is insufficient in itself. It necessitates both

[59] Kennedy 142. Wilson sums these up as: "To teach. To delight. And to Perswade" (I.2). See also Wagner, 'Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique' 12-14; and Wildermuth 43-44.

learning and experience in order to be fully developed in the ideal orator who, much as he does for Cicero, combines both speech and reason:

> … he that is among the reasonable of al most reasonable, and among the wittie, of all most wittie, and among the eloquent, of all most eloquent: him thinke I among all men… rather to be coumpted for halfe a God. For, in seeking the excellencie hereof, the soner he draweth to perfection, the nyer he commeth to God, who is the cheefe wisedome… (Preface, 29-30)

For Wilson, that which turns mere potential into a moral, practical capacity for eloquence in the ideal orator is often also signified by wit: "THE memorie, calleth to accompt those things, that were done heretofore, and by a former remembraunce getteth an after wit, and learneth to auoyde deceipt" (I.26). One's potential wit, though morally indifferent, is necessary but not sufficient for the attainment of moral speech. Only the coupling of the two traditional wits, natural *ingenium* as well as an acquired good judgement or reason, produces a moral version of the novel third wit, that which denotes the orator's practical use of wit in speech or his 'wittiness'. Wit therefore has the potential of achieving the three goals of the orator: it teaches, like "A Philosophers wittie saying to a yong man that sought to speake dark language" (I.3); it delights its audience so as to "make them take pleasure, with hearing of thinges wittely deuised, and pleasauntly set foorth" (I.3); and it persuades: "[who] would not rather looke to rule like a Lord, then to liue like an vnderling: if by reason he were not perswaded… who would for his Kings pleasure aduenture and hassarde his life, if witte had not so won men…" (Preface, 29).

Wilson's flexible use of 'wit', by which he often implies intellect, reason and speech, provides a fitting counterpart to his theory in which speech and mind are connected. Like Cicero before him, however, Wilson admits an awareness of rhetoric's propensity to discover

"probabilities rather than taught truth".[60] Thus invention, the first of the five Ciceronian parts of rhetoric, becomes "a searching out of things true, or things likely" (I.5). Cicero may have found "the golden mean of the probable" acceptable, but for Wilson wit is in danger of becoming an amoral idea in practice, especially when overburdened with copiousness:[61]

> In perswading or disswading the rehearsal of commodities, and heaping of examples together increase much the matter. It were a great labour to tell all the commodities, and all the properties which belong vnto the conclusion. For such art may bee vsed in this behalfe, that though the cause bee very euill, yet a wittie man may get the ouerhand, if he be cunning in his facultie. (II.13-14)

The dangers of rhetoric are made manifest by the ambiguous "cunning" of man's mind, otherwise considered necessary for sharpening one's memory: "the best meane both to amende an euill memorie, and to preserue a good, is first to keepe a diet… and last of all to exercise the witte with cunning, of many thinges without booke" (III.40). The ideal rhetorician may aspire to the status of a demigod, but in echoing Melanchthon's Protestant linking of the moral with the epistemological, rhetoric's engagement with probabilities reflects rather a moral precariousness. Wilson' reason, which promises a contemplative search for the true and a practical search for the good, thus runs the risk of failing on both counts. Its truth, Wilson is forced to admit, may be a feigned one that is transformed into mere probability by engaging in rhetoric, and its virtue hidden beneath a cunning cloak that nevertheless delights and persuades.[62] This 'moment of weakness' in Wilson's theory is immediately pushed aside in favour of renewed praise for Cicero, a belief that the "wittiest wil take most paines in this behalf" (II.14) and thus avoid corruption, and a metaphorized justification of rhetoric that equates it to weaponry: "Weapons may be abused for murther,

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[60] Note Wilson's reliance on Cicero's *Lucullus*: "We hold many doctrines as probable which we can easily act upon but can scarcely advance as certain…" (II.iii.7-8). See Kinney, 'Rhetoric and Fiction in Elizabethan England', *Renaissance Eloquence* 386.

[61] Miller (Introduction, x) in Cicero, *De Officiis*.

[62] Altman notes (*The Improbability of Othello* 120-21) that Wilson conflates absolute truth with probabilities even in his discussion of logic in *The Rule of Reason*.

and yet weapons are onely ordeined for safeguard" (II.14). The most complete account in English of Ciceronian rhetoric nevertheless necessarily also translates and investigates its uncertainties. These elements of the popular study of rhetoric, in which Wilson's work held a central position, are to form a key element in the transformation of wit into a wicked rhetorical playfulness in the euphuist prose of the 1570s and 80s and, as we shall see, are to prove just as significant for other Ciceronian thinkers.[63]

The Wit of the Courtier

Baldassarre Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* is one of the most influential theoretical works of the early sixteenth century and in many ways, reflects similar concerns to those of Hoby's scholarly circle.[64] It is a work devoted to the emerging vernacular which relies heavily on the rhetorical theory of Cicero and especially on *De Oratore*, and as a handbook of courtly etiquette and life in the Italian Renaissance, it devotes a significant place to rhetoric and wit.[65] But while the structure and vocabulary of Castiglione's work owe a lot to Cicero, his ideas of speech placed within the world of courtly intrigues offer a somewhat different position for the speaker and his wit. Nevertheless, Hoby's most consistent use of

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[63] See Mair (Introduction, 17) in Wilson.

[64] For a detailed discussion of Castiglione's popularity throughout Europe, see Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: the European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995). Biographies of Castiglione and discussions of his work's structure abound, see for example Cartwright, *Baldassare Castiglione, the Perfect Courtier*; Pugliese, *Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier (Il libro del cortegiano): A Classic in the Making* (Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2008); Woodhouse, *Baldesar Castiglione: A Reassessment of The Courtier* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1978); and Albury, *Castiglione's Allegory: Veiled Policy in The Book of the Courtier* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). For Castiglione's intended audience, see Bernard, '"Formiamo un cortegian": Castiglione and the Aims of Writing', *MLN* 115:1 (2000). For discussions of Castiglione's idea of humour, see Shulten, 'Castiglione and Cicero: Wit and Laughter in The Book of the Courtier', *At Whom are we Laughing?: Humor in Romance Language Literatures*, eds. Da Silva and Pell (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

[65] See for example Castiglione, *Il cortegiano, con una scelta delle opere minori*, ed. B. Maier (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1955). In Maier's annotations, Cicero is cited 128 times, of which 85 are specifically to *De Oratore*. For the *Questione della Lingua*, the debate between Bembo's espousing of Petrarch's Tuscan and the eclectic all-Italian favoured by Castiglione, see discussion in Chapter 6; Rebhorn, 'The Enduring Word: Language, Time, and History in Il Libro Del Cortegiano', *Castiglione: the Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1983) 69-70; Sherberg, 'The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language: The Politics of Theory in Ducal Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly* 56:1 (2003): 28-29; Kidwell, *Pietro Bembo: Lover, Linguist, Cardinal* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004) 223, 235; and Woodhouse 80-82.

'wit' by far is as translation for the Italian *ingegno*, reflecting a similar idea to that of the Ciceronian *ingenium*:[66]

> The good use of speache [*La buona consuetudine… del parlare*] therefore I beleve ariseth of men that have wytte [*che hanno ingegno*], and with learninge and practise have gotten a good judgement [*buon giudicio*], and with it consent and agree to receave the woordes that they think good, which are knowen by a certaine naturall judgement [*giudicio naturale*]… (G1v)

Wilson, as we have seen, presents a similar notion of *ingenium* to the one depicted in this passage, with wit taking the form of a natural intellectual aptitude that is necessary, but not sufficient, for the development of one's moral rhetorical skill.[67] The natural judgement demanded of the courtier is, despite appearances, "the fruit of education, experience, and reason" and not an innate intellectual capacity which, much like Wilson, Castiglione considers to be morally indifferent and even potentially dangerous:[68]

> And therfore where nature now bringeth forth muche better wyttes [*molto migliori ingegni*] then she didde tho, even as they that bee geven to goodnesse doe muche better then didde those of theyr tyme, so also they that be geven to yll doe muche woorse. Therefore it is not to bee saide, that suche as absteyned frome doinge ill because they knewe not howe to doe it, deserved in that case any praise: for although they dyd but a lyttle yll, yet dydde they the woorste they knewe. (L2r-L2v)

Despite connecting intellectual potential to the *grazia* inherent in aristocratic birth, which suggests not only rhetorical capacity but a nobility of thought and action, Castiglione reflects in essence a familiar idea regarding wit as *ingenium*.[69] When connected with rhetoric, however, Castiglione's Ciceronianism evaporates in favour of his own innovative *sprezzatura*

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[66] In Book I, for example, 'wit' and its derivatives 'witty', 'wits' and 'wittiness' appear a total of 25 times, of which 21 are as translation for *ingegno* and its derivatives. Similar numbers are obtained for books II and III.
[67] Even though there is no evidence that Wilson ever read Castiglione in the original, and Hoby's translation was published eight years after Wilson's *Art of Rhetorique*. See also Rebhorn, 'Baldesar Castiglione, Thomas Wilson, and the Courtly Body of Renaissance Rhetoric', *Rhetorica* 11:3 (1993): 261
[68] Saccone, 'Grazia, Sprezzatura, and Affettazione', *Glyph: Textual Studies* 5 (1979): 49.
[69] See Mac Carthy, 'Grace', *Renaissance Keywords* (Leeds: Legenda, 2013) 72; and Salamon, 'The Courtier and the Scholemaster', *Comparative Literature* 25:1 (1973): 26. See also Saccone 36.

or 'recklessness' in Hoby's translation, from which true *grazia* springs.[70] *Sprezzatura* is defined as a careful nonchalance that, like natural judgement's concealment of learning, is meant to hide one's learnedness and art, and thus the inherent deceit of speech, behind a façade of acting naturally and casually:

> To use in every thyng a certain *reckelesness*, to cover art withall, & seeme whatsoeuer he doth & sayeth to do it wythout pain, & (as it were) not myndyng it. And of thys do I beleve grace [*grazia*] is muche derived… Therefore it may be said to be a very art that appeereth not to be art… (E2r)

Though aware of the dangers of unlearned wit, for Castiglione *sprezzatura* highlights "the unteachability of rhetorical versatility" and argues that the ideal speech is precisely that which appears natural and unlearned.[71] *Sprezzatura* may be a calculated move designed to entrap the masses while being immediately obvious to, and appreciated by, the superior minds of Castiglione's court.[72] But it also suggests that Cicero's moral rhetorician has fallen victim to Castiglione's political circumstances, in which speech is no longer didactic, as it is in *De Oratore*, but a tool for establishing the speaker's reputation.[73] Ideal speech itself thus becomes witty or *ingegnoso*: "… more witty & better knitt [*per esser ingegnoso & culto piu*] then a man would haue beleued the shortnes of time required" (B3v). Castiglione reflects the Ciceronian connection of right mind and right speech in the original Italian, but at the same time casts a shadow on his own conclusion by suggesting that ideal speech benefits from its likeness to morally indifferent *ingenium*, leaving teaching behind in its quest for persuading patrons while delighting the masses. The danger of using *sprezzatura* is the danger of

[70] Mac Carthy 71.
[71] Habinek 90.
[72] A role it shares to a large degree with Aristotelian irony. See also Saccone 47.
[73] See Javitch, 46-47; Rebhorn, *Courtly Performances: Masking and Festivity in Castiglione's "Book of the Courtier"* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State, 1978) 155; and Richards, 'Assumed Simplicity and the Critique of Nobility: Or, How Castiglione Read Cicero', *Renaissance Quarterly* 54:2 (2001): 460.

revealing one's learned wit and, consequently, the moral speech that relies on this learned wit is, much as it had been for Wilson, placed by Castiglione in a precarious position.

Hoby picks up on this difficulty and expands upon it, so that his broadening of the term 'wit' beyond the confines of *ingegno* connects it with the morally ambiguous parts of practical speech. Wit therefore also features in surprising one's audience, in which it replaces the Italian *salsissimo*, meaning 'most salty':

> The kinde therfore of wittie sayinges[74] that is most used to make men laughe, is whan we give eare to heare one thinge, and he that maketh answere, speaketh an other and is alleaged contrarye to expectacion, and in case a doubt be annexed therwithall, then is it verie wittie and pleasant [*il motto diuenta salsissimo*] (T3r-v)

Wit functions, like *grazia*, to spice up speech in jesting and unexpectedly delighting.[75] It similarly substitutes for the Italian *argutissimi Sali* or 'most sharp' or 'argumentative' salts which become "wyttye iestes" (A4r), reflecting on the social value of wit: "… the verye sober moode and greatnesse that dyd knyt together all the actes, woordes and gestures of the Dutchesse in jesting and laughynge, made them also that had never scene her in their lief before, to count her a verye greate Ladye" (A4v). Hoby's choice of implicating wit even further in delighting and in achieving social recognition is appropriate for the subject matter of the work.[76] More significantly, however, it reinforces the sense that the courtly copiousness of speech, like *ingenium*, is insufficient in itself for the production of ideal rhetoric. It forms an expression of the mutable speech of jesting and courtly boastfulness[77] rather than an ideal speech guided by the modest judgement (*giudicio*) that Castiglione extols: "Let us… make oure Courtyer of so good a judgement, that he will not be geven to

[74] The original Italian has here simply *di motti* ('maxims' or 'remarks').
[75] Mac Carthy (71) suggests that in Renaissance Italy, *grazia* is the 'condimento' of language.
[76] It is suggested that the courtly style is most concerned with delighting, as opposed to the broader humanist style that aspires, as Wilson does, to also teach and persuade. See Plett, 'The Place and Function of Style in Renaissance Poetics', *Renaissance Eloquence* 373.
[77] See M1v-r; T3r.

understand blacke for white, nor presume more of him selfe then what he knoweth very manifestlye to be true…" (H4v); and, in a Ciceronian twist, Castiglione suggests that even this judgement itself is variable and subjective: "In everye thynge it is so harde a matter to knowe the true perfeccion, that it is almoste unpossible, and that by reason of the varietie of judgementes" (C2r).[78] Castiglione's humanism is a practical one, a search for equilibrium in the true Aristotelian (and Ciceronian) sense.[79] But for that it reflects all the more, in Hoby's words, the failure of producing an ideal wit when subverted by the wittiness of courtly rhetoric.

The Wit of Ascham's Pupil

Ascham's *The Scholemaster* frequently attests to the influences of Cicero and, to a lesser extent, Quintilian,[80] as well as to that of Castiglione and Hoby (218).[81] His notions of mind and speech are therefore unsurprisingly familiar, although as a pedagogue greatly influenced by the writings of Erasmus and Ascham's friend Johannes Sturm, his focus and therefore use of 'wit' are somewhat different from Wilson's and Castiglione's.[82] Appropriately omitting the word's novel signification of representing the capacity for speech in practice, Ascham instead focuses on the education of the ideal humanist pupil that is ultimately to allow for that capacity, the most significant product of a proper education.[83] Presented as separate from practical rhetorical ability, such as in the depiction of "… *Homer*

[78] Castiglione is directly echoing Cicero in these lines: "For we both address ourselves to the ignorant, and speak of matters unknown to ourselves, with the result, that while our hearers form different conceptions and judgements at different times, concerning the selfsame subjects" (*De Oratore*, II.vii.30).
[79] Tetel, 'The Humanistic Situation: Montaigne and Castiglione', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 10:3 (1979): 69.
[80] That Ascham holds Cicero in better regard than Quintilian is occasionally made evident, such as when he rebukes the latter for disagreeing with the former (243).
[81] See also Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier* 84.
[82] See for example Vaughan, 'An Unnoted Translation of Erasmus in Ascham's "Schoolmaster"', *Modern Philology* 75:2 (1977); and Spitz and Tinsley, 'Introduction', *Johann Sturm on Education: The Reformation and Humanist Learning* (St Louis, MO: Concordia, 1995) 12.
[83] As it is for Sturm, who claims that "the knowledge of the physical world without elegant speech is usually base and barbarous" ('The Correct Opening of Elementary Schools of Letters', *Johann Sturm on Education* 74). See also Sturm, *A Ritch Storehouse or Treasurie for Nobilitye and Gentlemen* (STC 23408. London, 1570) 4.

and *Plato* together, two wonders of nature and arte for witte and eloquence…" (255), Ascham's wit is most frequently identified with his student's inherent intellectual potential, and specifically with *ingenium* in relation to the aptitude for rhetoric:

> … where so euer knowledge doth accompanie the witte, there best vtterance doth alwaies awaite vpon the tonge: For, good vnderstanding must first be bred in the childe, which, being nurished with skill… is the onelie waie to bring him to iudgement… (189)

Ascham echoes Wilson's and Castiglione's ideas of a necessary judgement to produce moral rhetoric, and suggests a familiar psychological model that relies on reason:

> … [some] would haue them speake at all aduentures… This is, to seeme, and not to bee: except it be, to be bolde without shame, rashe without skill, full of wordes without witte. I wish to haue them speake so, as it may well appeare, that the braine doth gouerne the tonge, and that reason leadeth forth the taulke. (185-86)

Expectedly, this reason is acquired rather than innate. Similarly, its acquisition is dependent on both learning and worldly experience, as Ascham's educational preferences favour learning but entertain the possibility "of witte gathered, and good fortune gotten, by some, onely by experience, without learning" (178).[84] Ascham also shares his predecessors' apprehension regarding the power of speech when linked with faulty judgement: "Som man either by lustines of nature, or brought by ill teaching, to a wrong iudgement, is ouer full of words… and yet all his words be proper, apt and well chosen…" (260), though he attempts to resolve this issue by proclaiming that such a speech will only deceive the foolish, who value *nimium* or over-excess: "Yet when his talke shalbe heard… of soch one, as is, either of my two dearest frendes… that N*imium* in him, which fooles and vnlearned will most commend, shall eyther of thies two, bite his lippe, or shake his heade at it" (260-61). The real novelty of *The Scholemaster* is found when Ascham uses 'wit' not in his Ciceronian treatment of the

[84] Sturm exhibits a similar preference ('The Correct Opening of Elementary Schools of Letters' 72-73).

psychological and rhetorical dilemmas in which Wilson and Castiglione similarly engage, but in his efforts to categorise the different types of *ingenia*, morally indifferent though they may be.

Ascham's ideal student is depicted as *Euphues*, the first of his seven requirements of a good wit:

> Is he, that is apte by goodnes of witte, and appliable by readines of will, to learning, hauing all other qualities of the minde and partes of the bodie, that must an other day serue learning, not trobled, mangled, and halfed, but founde, whole, full… (194)

The kinds of *ingenia* that form this good wit are the subject of a more protracted discussion, in which Ascham differentiates between three different kinds. One is the dull wit, which Ascham dismisses outright as "heauie, knottie and lumpishe" (190) and as unsuitable for learning. The others are quick and hard wits, corresponding to the different kinds of students at which learning should be directed. Although he conceives of quickness of wit to be good, especially when it is devoid of lightness (192), Ascham nevertheless considers quick wits to be less than ideal:

> Quicke wittes commonlie, be apte to take, vnapte to keepe: soone hote and desirous of this and that: as colde and sone wery of the same againe: more quicke to enter spedelie, than hable to pearse farre… Soch wittes delite them selves in easie and pleasant studies, and never passe farre forward in hie and hard sciences… (189)

As with the natural wit that is overly sharp, Ascham also warns against a misuse of wit through "ouer moch studie and vse of some sciences, namelie, Musicke, Arithmetick, and Geometrie. Thies sciences, as they sharpen mens wittes ouer moch, so they change mens maners ouer sore…" (190). Instead of a wit that is too sharp, whether naturally or through engagement with improper sciences, Ascham posits a hard wit as the ideal form for his student:

> Hard wittes be hard to receiue, but sure to keepe: painefull without werinesse, hedefull without wauering, constant without newfanglenes: bearing heauie thinges, thoughe not lightlie, yet willinglie… They be graue, stedfast, silent of tong, secret of hart. Not hastie in making, but constant in keping any promise. Not rashe in vttering, but ware in considering euery matter… (191)

Ascham evokes material images of imprinting art on "woode and stone" (191) as laborious but worthy exercises that leave a fixed result.[85] This, in turn, serves to produce rhetoric with a proper judgement, like the piece of wax from which, in Quintilian's metaphor taken up by Erasmus, "several different figures are commonly formed".[86] The preference for fixedness over variability suggests an aspiration for immutable truth over sharp rhetoric's tendency for subversion, which Ascham later links with will's influence on the mind: "Where will inclineth to goodnes, the mynde is bent to troth" (230). The tool of this deceptive mutability, suggested by Ascham's preference for hard wits coupled with his previously discussed warnings against being excessive, is the overuse of *copia* in speech.[87] Ascham's discussion may differ from Castiglione and Wilson in the central place it accords to amplification in this process, but he echoes their rhetorical concerns over copiousness' amoral, persuasive power.[88] This anxiety is suggestive of Quintilian, who warns against "noise and clamour" (*Institutio* IV.ii.37) as dangerous to clarity of speech but proceeds to praise copiousness in the following book (*Institutio* V.xiv.31). The perfect orator, he claims, should learn copiousness and exercise it until it becomes natural and spontaneous (*Institutio* VIII.Pr.28).[89] Ascham, in his treatment of imitation, thus pursues the goal of producing a "plaine natural English" (239), similar to Wilson's claim that "Plaine words are proper vnto an Orator" (I.3) and

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[85] On Ascham's use of imagery, especially that of everyday life, see Salamon, 'The Imagery of Roger Ascham', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 15:1 (1973): 5-23.
[86] Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas (De Copia)*, eds. King and Rix (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press: 1963) I.ix.
[87] Warnings that echo Erasmus' *De Copia*: "the aspiration to Copia is dangerous" for it may lead to an "amorphous loquacity" (I.I) that threatens to obscure the subject. See also Cave, *The Cornucopian Text* 20.
[88] See for example Wilson II.14; and Castiglione I3v.
[89] Thus avoiding "[a]ll that anxiety of looking for words" (VIII.Pr.29) which overabundance suggests.

suggestive of Erasmus' idea of good practice in *De Copia* as getting to the essence with as few words as possible and using copiousness without redundancy (I.vi).

Ascham's treatise, then, echoes the Ciceronian issues surrounding the morality of rhetoric. It both reflects the necessity for delightful speech and is apprehensive of its power. Though in that respect it is similar to the other theoreticians' notions of rhetoric, *The Scholemaster* does offer a novel model for understanding the various kinds of natural wit – dull and heavy, quick and light, hard and steadfast – that form the inherent potential for rhetoric, and couples it with observations on speech in practice as directly stemming from this potential. Ascham's categorisation of *ingenia* was to prove central to a variety of works, chief amongst them Lyly's *Euphues* and his many imitators and critics. These also echo the role of 'wit' along the threefold characterisation offered by Wilson and entertained by Hoby: morally indifferent intellectual aptitude, represented in both the organic and the immortal parts of man's soul; moral wisdom or 'reason', ideally noble but apt to become deceptive or excluded from rhetoric; and especially, morally conflicted practical wittiness, ethical in the Ciceronian tradition but made dangerous by the power of its own deceptive ornaments.

The Ramist Wit

Influential though it may be, however, the Ciceronian model of rhetoric and mind is not the only significant one in Elizabethan thought, for the rhetorical ideas of Petrus Ramus and his associate Omer Talon, in which the writings of Cicero and Quintilian are placed under scrutiny, became especially pronounced in England from the 1570s onwards. Although Ramus had been known to scholars such as Ascham from as early as 1550, no significant receptiveness to his ideas in England is noted until a decade later.[90] By the late 1560s however, Ramus' works became especially prevalent in certain Cambridge colleges such as

[90] See Harold S. Wilson's introduction to Harvey's *Ciceronianus* (19-20).

Christ's, where undergraduates read and commented on Ramus.[91] Following the first Ramist teachings on logic by Laurence Chaderton in the early 1570s, Ramism was made a part of the curriculum alongside traditional Aristotelian philosophy and Ciceronian rhetoric.[92] Although it remained contentious amongst the faculty and students throughout the last decades of the century, Ramist rhetoric was popularised by Gabriel Harvey, who lectured on the subject in Cambridge in the mid-1570s and published his lectures in 1577 as the *Ciceronianus*.[93] This was followed by the first adaptation of Talon's *Rhetorica* into English by Harvey's student Dudley Fenner in *The Artes of Logike and Rethorike*.[94] The late 1580s mark a high point for Ramist publications in England and its legacy extends to the rest of Elizabethan times and far beyond, and as such it is a force not to be ignored in any discussion of Elizabethan rhetoric.[95] But Ramism is especially significant for the poignant place it affords to the term 'wit' since, at least on the surface, it appears to represent precisely that which is most reprehensible to the philosophy.

In setting out his theory, Ramus was keen to argue for a "one-to-one correspondence between terms and things" and opposed "allowing words to mean more than one 'thing'".[96] The result is an adaptation of the traditional humanist syllabus into one without overlapping subjects, necessitating the establishment of clear boundaries between rhetoric and dialectic.

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[91] Gabriel Harvey, for example, is known to have read Ramus' *Ciceronianus* in 1568-69, while an undergraduate student at Christ's College. See Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia, and Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 21.

[92] Pepper, 'Introduction', *Four Tudor Books on Education* (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1966) xx; Feingold, 'English Ramism: A Reinterpretation', *The Influence of Petrus Ramus* (Basel: Schwabe, 2001) 134; Morgan, *A History of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 514; and W. S. Howell 178. In Oxford, although not as popular, Ramism was known and taught as well. See W. S. Howell 189-93; and McConica, *The History of the University of Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 713.

[93] Triche, 'Gabriel Harvey's 16th Century Theory of Curriculum', *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 29:1 (2013): 92. To further emphasise the divide between Ramism and the old Ciceronian order, note Harvey's attacks on Ascham in the *Ciceronianus* 91-93.

[94] STC 10765.5 (1584). Followed four years later by the work of another of Harvey's students, Abraham Fraunce's *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (STC 11338).

[95] See Pepper xxiii. English Ramism even saw its own take on Ascham's *Scholemaster*, in the form of William Kempe of Plymouth's *The Education of Children in Learning*, first published in 1588.

[96] Ong, *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958) 203.

Thus Cicero's first two parts of rhetoric, invention and disposition, were broken away from it and presented as belonging solely to the dialectic, "the theory of reason" (16) as Ramus termed it in his attack on Cicero in *Brutinae quaestiones,* first published in 1547. With memory similarly absorbed by judgement and thus the dialectic, rhetoric was left with only style and delivery.[97] The result was that it was divorced from any notion not only of reason but of virtue as well.[98] Quintilian's assertion that the orator is a good man speaking well was consequently directly attacked in Ramus' *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian* (84), for the Ramist orator may speak well without reason and aims not to persuade but only to achieve perfection of style and delivery.[99] Ramism thus argued for a divide between reason and rhetoric, for reason works solely on the parts of dialectic which Ramus claimed can lead to "absolute certainty" and to which he devoted the majority of his attention.[100] Ramus, however, sometimes considered even dialectic itself as a purely methodical disputation and not as a discourse governed by reason, thus echoing the anxiety over reason's failures, even within logic, by more traditional thinkers like Wilson.[101] Similarly, his simplification of rhetoric and dialectic should not be taken to suggest that art belongs solely to rhetoric, for rhetoric and dialectic clearly appear together in the Ramist curriculum and are likewise taken to partake together in art.[102] In fact, a common Ramist warning concerns the putting of *verba*, or words, which belong to rhetoric, before *res* or matter that belongs to the mind and thus to

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[97] See Ramus, *Brutinae Quaestiones* 15-17. Also W. S. Howell 147-49; Ong 270, 280; Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence and English Renaissance Literature* (New York, NY: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992) 59; and Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Ark, 1984) 232.

[98] "Rhetoric is not an art which explains all the virtuous qualities of character". See Ramus, *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian: Translation and Text of Peter Ramus's Rhetoricae Distinctiones in Quintilianum (1549),* trans. C. Newlands (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010) 84.

[99] Ramus, *Brutinae Quaestiones* 23-25.

[100] Ong 176. Note that Ong, often highly critical of Ramus, suggests that the latter doesn't actually demonstrate this.

[101] See Feingold, 'English Ramism: A Reinterpretation' 144-45.

[102] See P. Mack, 'Ramus and Ramism: Rhetoric and Dialectic', *Ramus, Pedagogy and the Liberal Arts*, eds. Reid and Wilson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011) 8. Ramus accords in this regard with Melanchthon's assertion that the "dialectic cannot be understood without rhetoric" (Baldwin II.9). Ramus often classifies poetry as rhetoric (Ong 282), for example, but also suggests it as more dialectical than rhetorical (Ramus, *Against Quintilian* 123-4). This is echoed in English Ramists like Gabriel Harvey, who explicitly connects dialectic and rhetoric and thus also philosophy and eloquence (P. Mack, 'Ramus and Ramism: Rhetoric and Dialectic' 21).

dialectic,[103] leading to what Harvey denounces in the *Ciceronianus* as an excess of copia over knowledge and judgement (69).[104] Ramism, then, voices some similar concerns to those of the Ciceronian theoreticians. A term like 'wit' however, as it is understood in the works of our humanist theoreticians, suggests multiple significations of differing moral natures that are abhorrent to Ramist thought. Similarly, it has a tendency to encompass distinct ideas, especially those relating to reason and rhetoric, in a way that is incongruent with Ramus' educational aims. It seems like the perfect shibboleth to identify, by its absence, Ramism in art. In practice, however, authors with Ramist sympathies like Sir Philip Sidney make frequent use of the term 'wit' and its full range of signification.

Sidney is said to be instrumental in directing Ramism to England, and yet he makes extensive use of 'wit' throughout his writings, sometimes even purposefully confusing its meanings for poetical effects.[105] A good example of this tendency appears in sonnet 34 of Sidney's sequence *Astrophil and Stella*, in which an internal dialogue on the necessity of writing between Astrophil and his 'wit' or reason is broken off with the following exhortation in which all three significations of wit appear: "Peace, foolish wit; with wit my wit is marred. / Thus write I while I doubt to write, and wreak / My harms on ink's poor loss…" (11-13). Astrophil's reason, or the ironically foolish 'wit' that counsels him to stop writing, is doomed to fail because Astrophil's wit as intellect is inseparable from his wit as practically manifested rhetorical ability. As Sidney's poetry suggests, the relationship between Ramist theory and art is often hard to identify, not least because the art of Sidney and his Ramist contemporaries inevitably also embodies Ciceronian influences, deeply ingrained in Elizabethans by humanistic education. The difficulty in discerning Ramist theory in art is true

[103] Ramus, *Brutinae Quaestiones* 44.
[104] Harvey is mockingly attacking what he sees as the blind following of the Ultra-Ciceronians, who argued that only material found in Cicero is worthy of imitation (*Ciceronianus* 67-71).
[105] On Sidney's Ramism, see Ong 301-302.

especially in relation to rhetoric and, as we have seen, Ramus himself is often inconsistent in his classification of art and dismissive of reason in general.[106] In the beginning of the seventeenth century, Ramist and anti-Ciceronian art will come to have a distinctive character and focus on individuality and "personal varieties of experience" that value "sincerity, clearness and simplicity".[107] Ramist influences are inchoate however in Elizabethan England, though these are nevertheless explored in some of the following chapters.[108] It is only after the 1603 publication of *The Advancement of Learning* by Francis Bacon, past critical opinion had suggested, that "the English Ramists had almost no rivals among their own countrymen in the dissemination of rhetorical ideas".[109] The story however will be shown to be more complicated than that, as Bacon's own work, discussed in Chapter 6, bears an uneasy relationship to Ramist ideas.

It is not the purpose of this work to claim 'wit' as the central term on which authors' entire world-views depend, and it is apparent from the discussion of Sidney that a complex usage of the term exists in a variety of authors that are diverse in their thinking on rhetoric. But 'wit' represents mind, judgement and rhetorical capacity, therefore making plain the semantic and intellectual closeness of the three but also the problematic contradictions which they are often forced to represent. These aspire to elevate rhetoric to the ethical certitude of the divine but are plagued by epistemological uncertainty, moral doubt and fear of rhetorical deception to the point where, like the Aristotelian epideictic rhetoric to which literature is often awkwardly equated by Elizabethan rhetoricians, the only judgement their rhetoric allows is that of "the skill of the speaker" itself. [110] Wit should therefore be taken as an

[106] See also Barish, 'The Prose Style of John Lyly', *ELH* 23:1 (1956): 31; Ong 291.
[107] Grund, 'From Formulary to Fiction', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 17:2 (1975): 379-80. See also Ong 286-87.
[108] Ong 303; and Feingold, 'English Ramism: A Reinterpretation' 175-77.
[109] W.S. Howell 364.
[110] Alexander, *Sidney's The defence of Poesy and selected Renaissance literary criticism* (London: Penguin, 2004) xxxvi.

instrument with which to identify and gauge the shifting perceptions of Elizabethan literary society and its rhetorical anxieties. The following chapters endeavour to do just that. They explore the writing of a society that experienced changing attitudes towards Ciceronian rhetoric and the humanist style with which it was identified, and chart the fitful emergence of Ramism and new modes of writing.

Chapter 2 - Wit in Euphuistic Prose or, the Destruction of the Ideal

The previous chapter explored how 'wit' was represented in theoretical writings in the second half of the sixteenth century, reflecting a Ciceronian *ingenium* and at the same time also perception, wisdom, and especially eloquence. Nowhere, however, was 'wit' given a more central expression than in the prose tradition that was to follow in the footsteps of the theoreticians and produce what is now termed euphuism. This began with John Lyly and his first major work, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, first published in 1578.[1] Widely popular and reissued at least a further twelve times by end of the century, Lyly's work placed at the centre of its thematic explorations a multivalent wit and did so while employing an excessively copious style. Not without its detractors, *Euphues* and its equally popular sequel nevertheless inspired the writings of a loose group of Lyly's fellow university-educated authors, known today as the 'University Wits'.[2] Their works often imitated Lyly's style, dealt with similar thematic concerns and even alluded to Lyly's protagonist in titles such as *Rosalynde, Euphues golden legacie* by Thomas Lodge or *Arisbas, Euphues amidst his slumbers* by John Dickenson.[3] This chapter deals with the emerging performed and discussed wit of Lyly's early work, in which it is reimagined as a potent social commodity within the precarious tradition of Ciceronian rhetoric, and its subsequent evolution through the adaptation of the

[1] STC 17052. Citations for both parts of *Euphues* are to Lyly, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit; and, Euphues and His England*, ed. L. Scragg (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
[2] Especially notable are Philip Sidney's attack of euphuism and its similitudes in *The Defence of Poesy* as "a most tedious prattling" (1433); and Gabriel Harvey, who coined the term "euphuism" in his *Four Letters* of 1592 (STC 12900) and dismissed it as "pretty stale" (See Bruster, 'The Structural Transformation of Print in Late Elizabethan England', *Print, Manuscript, & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* [Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000] 60). For more on Lyly's contemporaries' responses to euphuism, see Nicholson, *Uncommon Tongues: Eloquence and Eccentricity in the English Renaissance*; and Kesson, *John Lyly and Early Modern Authorship*. For more on Lyly's own life and education in Oxford see Hunter, *Lyly and Peele* (Harlow: Longman, 1968) 9-13; García-Lorenzo, *Complementation in Early Modern English: A Study of John Lyly's Euphues* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2004) 6-8; Bond, 'Life of John Lyly', *The Complete Works of John Lyly. Vol. I, Life, Euphues, The anatomy of Wyt, Entertainments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1902 [2012]); Lunney, 'Introduction', *John Lyly* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011) xi-xiii.
[3] Lodge's work was first published in 1590 (STC 16664). Dickenson's was published in 1594 (STC 6817).

Lylian narrative and euphuistic style in the early works of his most immediate imitator, Robert Greene.[4]

Introducing the Euphuistic Wit

Lyly may not have been the first to employ in English what is now termed the euphuistic style: parataxical parallelisms and antitheses; an extensive use of alliteration; and an abundance of analogies utilising examples from both classical and proverbial sources.[5] The practice goes back to medieval sermons, themselves echoing structures present in classical texts.[6] It also appears in literary prose form in George Pettie's *A petite pallace of Pettie his pleasure*, published two years before Lyly's maiden work.[7] Nor is his narrative particularly novel, and its theme of a prodigal rebelling against accepted wisdom is common to early modern prose, from Gascoigne's 'The Adventures of Master F.J.' onwards.[8] His work is nevertheless credited as the first masterful execution of the form and, more significantly, as a greatly innovative work in being "the first book to advertise itself in relation to its narrative unity".[9] This unity, as Kesson suggests, presents itself in the work's extended title: 'Very pleasant for all gentlemen to reade, and most necessary to remember. wherein are contained the delights that Wit followeth in his youth by the pleasantnesse of loue, and the happinesse he reapeth in age, by the perfectnesse of Wisdome'. Wit in its relation to wisdom is a crucial locus for Lyly's narrative, concerned with "the moral debate

[4] Whose first euphuistic work, *Mamillia. A mirrour or looking-glasse for the ladies of Englande*, was registered less than two years after the publication of Lyly's *Euphues*.
[5] For more on the euphuistic style, see Ringler, 'The Immediate Source of Euphuism', *PMLA* 53:3 (1938): 678; Guenther, '"To Parley Euphuism": Fashioning English as a Linguistic Fad', *Renaissance Studies* 16:1 (2002): 24; Nicholson 75.
[6] See Plaks, 'Where the Lines Meet: Parallelism in Chinese and Western Literatures', *CLEAR* 10:1/2 (1988): 43-44; Hunter, *Lyly and Peele* 17-18.
[7] SRT 19819. See also Swart, 'Lyly and Pettie', *English Studies* 23:1-6 (1941): 10.
[8] First printed in *A hundreth sundry flowres bounde vp in one small poesie* in 1573 (201-293. STC 11635). See also Pigman's edition of Gascoigne, *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). See Helgerson's *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976) for a full-scale discussion of prodigal narratives.
[9] Kesson 48

that arises when 'wit' ('Euphues' means a man of natural endowment, 'he that is apt by goodness of wit') spurns good advice (Eu-bulus) and becomes involved with self-love (Phil-autus)".[10] Lyly, however, does much more with the term than simply placing it as thematically central to his work.

The grandson of William Lily, a noted humanist grammarian whose textbooks set the standard for instruction in the classics, Lyly's work bears most strikingly the marks of Roger Ascham, one of his grandfather's ardent disciples.[11] Considering Ascham's wit, as the previous chapter suggests, along the lines of the classical *ingenium*, *Euphues* (the first of Ascham's seven requirements of a good wit) is described as the ideal humanist student:

> Is he, that is apte by goodnes of witte, and appliable by readines of will, to learning, hauing all other qualities of the minde and partes of the bodie, that must an other day serue learning, not tro[u]bled, mangled, and halfed, but founde, whole, full… ('The Scholemaster' 194)

The most distinguishing feature of Lyly's protagonist embodies the potential inherent in Ascham's *Euphues*. His wit "like wax apt to receive any impression" (33) is naturally suited to learning, and the wise Eubulus appeals to his birth that shows "the express and lively image of gentle blood" (35). It is his natural wit, in fact, that is Euphues' chief resource – "such a sharp capacity of mind" (32) – a resource much sought-after by his Neapolitan companions, which "courted him continually with sundry kinds of devices whereby they might either soak his purse to reap commodity or soothe his person to win credit" (34). This idea of wit as a social commodity is imbued, as others have noted before, in the very

[10] Hunter, *Lyly and Peele* 15.
[11] See Croll's dated but pertinent discussion of Euphues as "a survival of the 'rhetoric of the schools'" ('Introduction' lxiv) and as particularly indebted to Ascham's work. Also relevant are William Lily's revised compilations of his earlier collaborations with Erasmus and John Colet, first published posthumously in 1548 as *A short introduction of grammar generally to be vsed in the Kynges Maiesties dominions* (STC 15610.10). The only grammar textbook authorised for schools, 'Lyly's grammar' as it came to be known was republished at least a further 31 times by 1600. See also Allen, 'The Sources of "Lily's Latin Grammar": A Review of the Facts and Some Further Suggestions', *The Library* s5-IX: 2 (1954): 85.

language that makes up euphuism, a language that "enacts exchange through strategies of calculation – compare, contrast, weigh, balance" through its extensive similitudes and parallelisms.[12]

We have seen, however, in the previous chapter how *ingenium* without wisdom proved a dangerous concept for authors such as Wilson and Castiglione, and it is immediately apparent that Lyly's protagonist, whose wisdom and virtue are lacking from the first, is far from the ideal humanist student.[13] His wit, rather than producing the moral wittiness suggested by Thomas Wilson, is placed in opposition to wisdom and partakes of a degenerate will rather than a ready one:[14]

> This young gallant, of more wit than wealth, and yet of more wealth then wisdom… gave himself almost to nothing but practicing of those things commonly which are incident to these sharp wit – fine phrases, smooth quips, merry taunts – jesting without mean and abusing mirth without measure. As therefore the sweetest rose hath his prickle, the finest velvet his brack, the fairest flour his bran, so the sharpest wit hath his wanton will… (32)

Euphues recalls to us not Wilson's demigod but rather Ascham's warning against being given too much to vain desires: "… will, and witte… allured from innocencie, delited in vaine sightes, filed with foull talke…" (200).[15] The importance lies in the discord inherent in *Euphues*' idea of wit, a discord that hinges on Lyly's use of the term as a certain novel "liveliness of fancy" that is Euphues' defining trait.[16]

Euphues' wit, like the wax it is likened to, is malleable and changeable, and his interests lie in "fancy before friends and his present humour before honour to come" (33).

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[12] Linton 77.
[13] See previous chapter for a more thorough discussion of this ideal. Also Steinberg, 'The Anatomy of Euphues', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 17:1 (1977): 28.
[14] Defines as a "wilful wit" in McCabe 'Wit, Eloquence, and Wisdom in "Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit"', *Studies in Philology* 81:3 (1984): 310.
[15] For Wilson's idea of the demigod, see *The Arte of Rhetorique*, Preface 30.
[16] Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (London: Routledge, 1962) 10.

Rather than relying on Ascham's idea of *Euphues*, Lyly's initial concept of his protagonist therefore is more akin to Ascham's idea of a 'quick' wit:[17]

> Quicke wittes commonlie, be apte to take, vnapte to keepe: soone hote and desirous of this and that: as colde and sone wery of the same againe: more quicke to enter spedelie, than able to pearse farre… Soch wittes delite them selves in easie and pleasant studies, and never passe farre forward in hie and hard sciences… ('The Scholemaster' 189)

Euphues quickly falls in love with Lucilla and betrays his friend Philautus. He falls out of it just as quickly when she, expectedly, betrays him in turn. His rhetoric often basks in its own delightfulness, mimicking the Ciceronian rhetoric – exordium, partition, refutation and peroration[18] – of the wise Eubulus but turning it, in its quest of securing Euphues' desires with no regard to social constraints, to a mocking attack: "The similitude you rehearse of the wax argueth your waxing and melting brain, and your example of the hot and hard iron showeth in you but cold and weak disposition" (39). Euphues' sharp mind holds the promise of attaining a reason and an 'inwit' or intellect in the Bartholomean sense but, lacking wisdom, it is suggestive at the start of only the corrupt parts of wit such as imagination.[19] Appropriately, the consciously witty form of his language and its appeals to marketplace negotiations are suggestive not only of language's power as a commodity but of the dangers of this commodity's reliance on a negotiated value rather than a universal one, and thus connected to the earthly reason of the philosophers of old which Euphues so often copies, that "can neuer haue any certaine resolution".[20]

Like Lucilla, his partner in vice, who claims to have "neither wit to deciper the wiles of men, nor wisdom to dissemble our affection…" (67), so is Euphues' *ingenium* both

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[17] See also Pincombe, *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the Later Sixteenth Century* (Harlow: Longman, 2001) 120; Maslen, *Elizabethan Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 250.
[18] See King, 'John Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric', *Studies in Philology* 52:2 (1955): 156.
[19] See the previous chapter's discussion of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum*.
[20] La Primaudaye 6. This is unlike the Erasmian notion of using the classics as models while producing an individual character. See Halpern 36. See also Linton 79.

morally and epistemologically suspect. Lyly links wit as *ingenium*, jesting and lively imagination, and an opposite of wisdom, and thus captures within his use of the term what to the rhetoricians that precede him signified both the importance of eloquence and its dangers. Wit thus becomes a virtue that is nevertheless apt to be misused, like Wilson's cunning man that can persuade even to an evil cause (ii.14), but it also promises the possibility of leading its possessor to learning and away from entertainment, into what Quintilian describes as real eloquence:

> But the man who, by some divine instinct, has formed a real concept of eloquence, who sets before his eyes that "speech, queen of the world," of which the famous tragic poet speaks, and who seeks that enduring reward which does not depend on fortune, not in the fees of advocacy but in his own heart and contemplation and knowledge—he will easily persuade himself to spend the time which is wasted in the theatre or the Campus, in gaming or idle talk—not to say sleep and long-drawn-out dinners—in listening to the geometrician and the teacher of music. (*Institutio Oratoria* I.xii.18)[21]

Lyly promises a similar reformation to his Euphues, as his wit is to turn into a wise wit that is "the better if it be the dearer bought" (33). This reformation, as we shall see, takes up the entire second half of the story.

Within this framework wit signifies both Euphues' natural capabilities and at the same time a quality, apt to be shaped, that is a product of his rhetoric. In the first part of *Euphues* it is quick wits, lacking in wisdom, that Lyly investigates, and along the way his term emerges as a complex one. On the one hand, the natural wit of the young student (or his *ingenium*) is morally indifferent, as it had been for Wilson and Castiglione, and possesses both great potential and the possibility of danger. On the other, the rhetorical exercise of his wit is related to moral judgement, whether that of wickedness at the first or as the wit that the narrator claims will eventually lead to Euphues' reformation and real eloquence. Thus, wit

[21] In Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*.

becomes morally ambiguous, rather than merely indifferent: "the word 'wittie,'… stands as a virtue in spite of which Euphues was wicked. Earlier on the same page… wit, Euphues' preeminent attribute, is placed lowest on a scale of values".[22]

What is more significant for the current discussion is the result of Lyly's characterisation of wit as inseparable from eloquence in conjunction with his own utilisation of eloquence. This connection has been the subject of few studies thus far, all relatively recent. These few studies nevertheless share a common perception of a certain deterioration of eloquence that accompanies Euphues' (and other characters') moral wickedness, an observation that appears to be at odds with the common critical view of the past that relegates euphuism to Lyly's "rhetorical manner as distinct from the experience and moral stance of his protagonist".[23] The common implication of these studies is that, though his wit (in the sense of *ingenium*) is morally indifferent, Lyly does produce a Ciceronian coupling of morality and rhetorical wit. But as the next few pages will suggest, Lyly's rhetorical wit is a practical one produced through witty eloquence, and his Ciceronianism becomes not unambiguously formalised but a personal, anxious one in which rhetorical wit is placed in both moral and epistemological peril.

Euphues' Wit in Practice

Euphues' rhetoric is regarded as problematic especially for its incessant use of commonplaces, an engagement warned against by Ascham: "But to dwell in *Epitomes* and books of common places, and not to binde himselfe dailie by orderlie studie… maketh so many seeming, and sonburnt ministers as we haue…" ('The Scholemaster' 259).[24] Euphues,

[22] Steinberg 29.
[23] Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* 59. See also Kinney, *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric, and Fiction in Sixteenth-century England* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986) 146-9; McCabe, 'Wit, Eloquence, and Wisdom' 305-306, 324; Steinberg 38; and Nicholson 91-92.
[24] See also Nicholson 88.

rather than being a faithful student, uses his rhetoric in precisely the way in which Ascham's sunburnt reveller is expected to:

> … so I have most evident and infallible arguments to serve for my purpose. It is natural for the vine to spread; the more you seek by art to alter it, the more in the end you shall augment it. It is proper for the palm-tree to mount; the heavier you load it, the higher it sprouteth. Though iron be made soft with fire it returneth to his hardness; (39)

Similarly, Euphues' use of contradictory arguments and "false parallels" is taken by critics to suggest an anxiety surrounding the negotiable value of rhetorical truth:[25]

> The rattling thunderbolt hath but his clap, the lightning but his flash; and as they both come in a moment, so do they both end in a minute.
>
> Aye but, Euphues, hath she not heard also that the dry touchwood is kindled with lime; that the greatest mushroom groweth in one night; that the fire quickly burneth the flax; (55)

Much critical weight has been given to Lyly's studies in Oxford, in which he was known to be a less-than-perfect student, as the trigger for presenting a wicked humanist student, but the results of these considerations in *Euphues* nevertheless retain the conclusion that Lyly is walking still within the footsteps of Ciceronian rhetoric.[26] The wicked Euphues, it is suggested, flirts with the abuse of copiousness that is often a source of anxiety for humanist authors or, more significantly, even with Ramist danger in pursuing style regardless of substance.[27] Ramus indeed would have seen no problem with wicked characters using perfect

[25] Stephanson, 'John Lyly's Prose Fiction: Irony, Humor and Anti-Humanism', *English Literary Renaissance* 11:1 (1981): 12. See also Linton 81-82.

[26] Helgerson suggests in *The Elizabethan Prodigals* the prodigal-repentant plot is a utilitarian, almost cynical effort to market the author as a true humanist, both witty and at the same time wise and reformed of his youthful prodigality.

[27] See also Kinney, *Humanist Poetics* 137. Lyly, like Ascham before him, is echoing Erasmus' opening chapter of *De Copia*, in which he warns that "the aspiration to Copia is dangerous" for it may lead to an "amorphous loquacity" (I.I) that threatens to obscure the subject.

rhetoric.[28] It could be argued that Lyly reflects on the vices of Ramism via euphuism, as a mode of writing often differentiated based on its sound, and faithful to Ramus' desire for ornamentation based on "the sound of speech alone".[29] Using his protagonist's wit for the detailed production of problematic eloquence, Lyly can be seen as instructing against the dangers of moral corruption and Ramism while he keeps his gaze ever fixed at the ideal of Ascham's *Schoolmaster* and Erasmus' *De Ratione Studii*. If we are then to consider Lyly's presentation as a straightforward exercise in exemplifying (and thus warning against) wickedness in mind and tongue, the conclusion would be that by showing its opposite, Lyly merely reaffirms the Ciceronian relationship between a 'right rhetoric' and a 'right mind'.

It would, however, be quite naïve to take Lyly's moral lessons at face value. Though it has been suggested that "Lyly provides plenty of hints that reading [*Euphues*] should be regarded as an aesthetic rather than a moral experience", the moral dimension of *Euphues* is omnipresent, though not as it superficially appears.[30] Rather, the engagement with the follies of wit in the first part of *Euphues* reflects not simply an aspiration to the ideal but a practical approach to humanist ideas. The insistence of Ascham on the primacy of learning over experience and practice, for example, is turned on its head. For the wicked Euphues of the first part of the narrative, though his education is greatly criticized as overly reliant on commonplacing, appears to lack neither native wit nor learning and indeed finds it quite easy to respond to Eubulus with carefully crafted sentences to match Eubulus' own.[31] Thus Eubulus' exclamation that "One drop of poison infecteth the whole tun of wine, one leaf of coloquintida marreth and spoileth the whole pot of porridge…" (37) is answered by Euphues

[28] See for example Ramus, *Against Quintilian* 87: "Nor is rhetoric a moral virtue as Quintilian thinks, so that whoever possesses it is incapable of being a wicked man". On how this affected later Ramist literature, see Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence and English Renaissance Literature* 60; and Grund 379-80.
[29] Ong 274. See also Croll, 'Introduction' xv.
[30] K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives* 55.
[31] In the spirit of a university disputant. See also P. Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 58-59.

with "The Sun shineth upon the dunghill and is not corrupted, the diamond lieth in the fire and is not consumed…" (41) – a manipulation of exempla that is suggestive of Euphues' abilities and bookishness. He even possesses a quality that hints at the humanist 'judgement' (which Hoby's translation of Castiglione's *Courtier* suggests arises out of employing one's wit in learning and practice) in his ability to "easily discern Apollo's music from Pan his pipe" (34) and see through his guests' intentions.

Euphues' rhetoric, in fact, is quintessentially humanist. His (and Lucilla's) argumentation of opposing points of view, most evident in the wicked discourse of lust, is suggestive of "the endless iterability of the commonplace" in the spirit of Erasmus' *De Copia,* in which it is argued that material can and should be twisted to serve opposing purposes.[32] Similarly his tools – analogies and aphorisms that make extensive use of historical, mythological and proverbial sources – are those of the ideal student of Erasmus' *De Ratione Studii*.[33] Rather than serving as Euphues' unique trait, these tools of the humanist student become a convention of euphuism itself, used by everyone from the wicked Euphues and the treacherous Lucilla to the seemingly-omniscient narrator and the wise Eubulus, even as the latter refrain from the explicitly contradictory arguments of the two lovers. Thus Lyly's narrator, reflecting on Euphues' wickedness despite his qualities, remarks that "Venus had her mole in her cheek which made her more amiable; Helen her scar in her chin… Aristippus his wart, Lycurgus his wen…" (32), freely mixing examples of the well-known with the made-up, the very images of unchasteness (Helen of Troy and Venus) with Lycurgus of Sparta, whom Ascham lists as one of the greatest in "eloquens and ciuill lawe" ('The Scholemaster' 212).[34] Even arguments for Euphues' Ramism lose their sway when we

[32] See Nicholson 89.
[33] In *Collected Works of Erasmus, Vol 24,* trans. B. McGregor (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1974) 676-78. These are also manifested in the 11th method of embellishment in Book II of *De Copia*.
[34] See also Sell, 'The Origin of John Lyly's "Cos Amoris"', *Notes and Queries* 61:2 (2014): 212.

consider Ramus' own rejection of putting *verba* before *res*, as the previous chapter suggests, or the correspondence between characters' moral positions and subject matter that is a consistent feature of Lyly's narrative – Eubulus' speech, though ineffective, advocates a moral position, while that of the wicked Euphues celebrates folly.

Lyly, rather than merely critiquing youthful folly or Ramist degeneration, suggests a playful but sober view of rhetorical wit in practice. Thus epistemological anxiety permeates even the speeches of the wise, as Eubulus extols an educational ideal of universal truth, but his own euphuism suggests a negotiated one.[35] The rhetoric of the wicked may be burdened by questionable aphorisms, overdone copia and contradictory analogies, but it is ultimately in line with the teachings of the humanist curriculum.[36] Euphues may have been educated poorly, but what he really lacks and Eubulus has in his "hoary hairs" (35) is *experience*, precisely that which produces wisdom. This practical view of wit as maturing through an active participation in the world, rather than an idealised version dependant solely on learning, is echoed by Lyly's use of the noun as an active agent: "…well he knew that so rare a wit would in time either breed an intolerable trouble or bring an incomparable treasure to the commonweal" (35).[37] The result is that rhetoric in the first half of the narrative is invariably bound to fall short of the ideal. Euphuism thus becomes a tool for expressing not a perfect example of Ciceronian rhetoric (or a critique of Ramist rhetoric) but rather the shortcomings inherent to the humanist rhetorical tradition, the same ones often entertained by theoreticians like Wilson and Ascham but quickly pushed aside in favour of renewed interest in the theorised ideal. For Euphues and Lucilla these shortcomings are perhaps obvious,

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[35] See Linton 81-82.

[36] "For by a similitude you maye as soone proue a wrong matter, as a righte" (N2v) as Ralph Lever suggests in *The Arte of Reason, rightly termed, Witcraft*. See also K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives* 55; Stephanson 19. Euphues "uses the apparatus of logic and rhetoric without the wisdom that should govern it". See J. R. Henderson, 'Euphues and His Erasmus', *English Literary Renaissance* 12:2 (1982): 158.

[37] "Too much studie doth intoxicate their braines", claims Lyly's narrator when he discusses quick young wits (8r).

because their intentions and moral character are flawed, and the outcome of their association is betrayal and abandonment. But even the rhetoric of the wise and moral Eubulus fails in that it does not achieve Cicero's goals of rhetoric: it fails to persuade Euphues, and it fails to teach him. Lyly's narrator therefore captures the idea of an imperfect practical wit, but retains the promise of defending it as well:

> I go not about, gentlemen, to inveigh against wit, for then I were witless, but frankly to confess my own little wit. I have ever thought so superstitiously of wit that I fear I have committed idolatry against wisdom; and if Nature had dealt so beneficially with me to have given me any wit, I should have been readier in the defence of it…" (43)

The implication is that a different, better kind of wit exists that the narrator, through what little wit he false-modestly claims to have, is attempting in earnest to bring to the surface. This different kind of wit is always at the background of the first part, from the title page's promise of a wit gaining wisdom and reaping happiness to the narrator's promise of a better wit bought with experience that "in the sequel of this history shall most manifestly appear" (33).

Following the practical presentation of imperfect wits, it is perhaps then not surprising that the first part of the narrative ends with Euphues' rejection of Lucilla and the practical world in a self-declared reformation that seeks to re-establish the proper use of wit:

> If wit be employed in the modest study of learning, what thing so precious as wit; if in the idle trade of love what thing more pestilent than wit?
>
> The proof of late hath been verified in me, whom Nature hath endued with a little wit which I have abused with an obstinate will. Most true it is that the thing the better it is the greater is the abuse… (84)

Euphues asserts that learning is a necessary activity in shaping a young wit, and ultimately conceives of learning as also the proper *end* of one's use of wit. Though still bound by the antitheses of euphuism, the protagonist thematically positions himself as a disciple of

Ascham's, who argues that learning is superior and more necessary than experience: "Surelie long experience doth proffet moch, but moste, and almost onelie to him… that is diligentlie before instructed with preceptes of well doinge." ('The Scholemaster' 214).[38]

This idea is thematically taken to its conclusion in the letters that form the second half of Lyly's work, pointing to a retirement into academic pursuits and eventually to theology as the noblest use of one's wit. The first part's subversion of the 'right mind', however, is echoed by the difficulty in assessing the merits of right eloquence in the book's 'reformed' second part. If the first part explored, and implicated Lyly in, the notion of the 'quick' wit, it is worth considering the second part in the light of its opposite, hinted at as we have seen before by Lyly, that is Ascham's notion of a 'hard' wit:

> Hard wittes be hard to receiue, but sure to keepe: painefull without werinesse, hedefull without wauering, constant without newfanglenes: bearing heauie thinges, thoughe not lightlie, yet willinglie… They be graue, stedfast, silent of tong, secret of hart. Not hastie in making, but constant in ke[e]ping any promise. Not rashe in vttering, but war[y]e in considering euery matter… ('The Scholemaster' 191)

Lyly's narrator, who in a previously quoted passage attacked those young wits that berate 'hard' learners, now professes to deliver somewhat of this more steadfast wit. His narrative becomes a series of epistles and treatises, one of which he even frames with the following declaration: "Which discourse following, although it bring less pleasure… yet will it bring more profit" (99). The results, however, are rather ambiguous, as similarities between *Euphues*' two parts suggest that thematic choices are often not seen to be Lyly's main concern.[39]

[38] Cicero and Quintilian claim similar things. See also Holcomb, '"The Crown of All Our Study": Improvisation in Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31.3 (2001): 53-72.
[39] See Lawlis in Kinney, *Humanist Poetics* 136: "What appears to interest [Lyly] is not ideas so much as the process of reasoning, not the ideas themselves but the manipulation of them".

Euphues begins his 'reformation' with an epistle aimed at rebuking the follies of love, especially aimed at Philautus, and the uncertainties of euphuistic rhetoric rear their heads quite clearly in the text. Euphues attacks women using very similar rhetoric to that which he had used before, using natural and classical examples: "Think this with thyself, that the sweet tongs of Calypso were subtle snares to entice Ulysses… that hyena when she speaketh like a man deviseth most mischief, that women when they be most pleasant pretend most treachery" (91). In the following letter, however, Euphues excuses his own attack on the basis that not all women are the same: "There is great difference between the standing puddle and the running stream, yet both water… great contrariety between Lais and Lucretia, yet both women" (98).[40] This is precisely what Euphues had used in his condescending, wicked response to the wise Eubulus: "Though all men be made of one mettal, yet they be not cast all in one mould" (38), suggesting that, at least rhetorically, Euphues' has remained unchanged.

But if euphuism served in the first part to highlight the practical, imperfect nature of rhetoric when used in active life, should the reformed Euphues be taken as an idealised response? Certainly, his previous placing of *verba* before *res* is now rectified.[41] His subject matter turns to education, albeit in a treatise lifted directly from Plutarch and Erasmus, and then to theology, as he debates and converts an atheist by invoking the prodigal son (133), hinting at himself as a repentant Christian.[42] But Euphues' strict moralising against women in the first letters is accompanied by equal severity in his final ones, such as when he dismisses Lucilla's death as just and focuses instead on lecturing Philautus (140-42), or when he attempts to console an exile by suggesting that virtue shall aid him, like "meats which are

[40] Scragg notes this as an exercise in "trans-historical dialogue" (12), another attempt to encompass multiple points of view ('Introduction', *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit; and, Euphues and his England* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003]). See also K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives* 63.
[41] And could be excused as a necessary step for, according to Erasmus' opening lines in *De Ratione Studii*, one must first have knowledge of words to be able to attain the more important knowledge of things. (666)
[42] On Lyly's borrowing from Plutarch and Erasmus, see J. R. Henderson, 'Euphues and His Erasmus' 135.

sour in the mouth and sharp in the maw, but if thou mingle them with sweet sauces they yield both a pleasant taste and wholesome nourishment" (142). The reformed Euphues doesn't seem to exhibit the marks of Ascham's hard wit: constancy in thought and wariness in speaking. Rather, he lacks the "temperaunce" upheld by Wilson (i.29) as necessary for the Orator, and his abruptly gained wisdom, hardly the product of a long life of experience, is therefore doubtful as well.[43]

Many critics have noted the failure of Euphues' reformation, but perhaps it should be seen as a move towards thematic ambiguity that matches the ambiguous nature of wit and rhetoric, both morally and epistemologically, that is inherent to euphuism.[44] Lyly relies on the notion that letters are an intimate medium and thus revealing of a more personal, more 'real' truth and his letters are presented on the surface as a means of displaying his and Euphues' learning for the purpose of engaging with and shaping reality.[45] This common humanist practice has its origins in Erasmus, whose letters worked "to create the image, and subsequently the reality, of a pan-European network of like-minded humanist scholarly men".[46] But letters are also an anxious medium, in which the present authority of oral discourse is absent and thus the authorial voice weakened, and in which misunderstandings are apt to arise.[47] Delighting in rhetorical prowess, the epistolary Euphues is far from the grave 'hard' wit that is never too hasty in speaking. Shooting his arrows of moralising

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[43] Euphues is even explicitly noted as still being "young" (190) in *Euphues and His England*.
[44] On Euphues' failed reformation, see for example Dolven 93-95; Maslen, *Elizabethan Fictions* 250; and Pincombe 117.
[45] See Clough, 'The Cult of Antiquity: Letters and Letter Collections', *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976) 33; McCue Gill, 'Fraught Relations in the Letters of Laura Cereta: Marriage, Friendship, and Humanist Epistolarity', *Renaissance Quarterly* 62:4 (2009): 1099. On ideas of epistolary truth, see A. Fowler, 'The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After', *New Literary History* 34:2 (2003): 197; Guillén, 'Notes toward the Study of the Renaissance Letter', *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986) 100.
[46] Stewart, 'Letters', *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500-1640*, ed. A. Hadfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 418. On Erasmus' ideas of intimacy, derived from the Ciceronian idea of writing *familiariter*, see Eden, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012) 74.
[47] See G. Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005) 29-34.

rhetoric in all directions, he is still the product of quick wit, one that has maintained its moral ambiguity while, and through, moving from excess wantonness to extreme severity.[48] "[T]he moral Euphues is unlikely to make many converts among his readers" and Lyly, whose narrator partakes in the first part of the wantonness, now partakes of the ambiguity through becoming practically indistinguishable from his protagonist and disappearing into the epistles.[49]

The return to letters appears to signal a return to Ascham, who declares that "Much wryting breedeth ready speakyng" (*The Scholemaster* 186), but Lyly seems unable to provide an account of perfect wit. Much as the reception to Lyly's work was mixed, with a significant audience accepting Euphues' reformation at face value before more discerning critics made their voices heard, so seems to be his message of ambiguity.[50] When he was writing *Euphues* in the late 1570s, Lyly was actively seeking patronage, having given up hopes of an Oxford fellowship.[51] Disappointment with the humanist order in which he had failed to find a place may have moved Lyly to reproduce the anxieties of his rhetorical tradition, or the need for appealing to a patron may have demanded a "self-negating tendency" in which rhetorical perfection could not even be pretended, let alone seriously attempted.[52] Perhaps this is why even in the sequel to *Euphues*, written when Lyly's star was rapidly rising, the protagonist maintains his ambiguous new-found convictions and Lyly maintains his ambiguous relation to wit.[53] Thus, Euphues boasts a new-found belief in experience, a belief that is at odds with

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[48] See also Pincombe 117

[49] K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives* 64. Helgerson suggests in *The Elizabethan Prodigals* that the narrator 'merges' with Euphues.

[50] See Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* 66; and Stephanson 15.

[51] See Bond 16; Linton 93-95; Hunter, *Lyly and Peele* 10. Lyly would find patronage, around the time of the publication of *England*, in the Earl of Oxford. See also Bond 24-28; Lyly's connection to *Euphues*' dedicatee, Lord Delaware, is not known with any degree of certainty (Hunter, *John Lyly* 67-68, 79). For more on the Earl of Oxford's eclectic literary patronage, see A. H. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003) 380-84.

[52] Das 112. For more on the desire as well as the danger of patronage for authors such as Erasmus, see Gundersheimer, 'Patronage in the Renaissance: An Exploratory Approach', *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[53] *Euphues and his England*, published in 1580 (STC 17068) and reprinted a total of ten times before 1600.

his own inexperience which suggests that "what is gotten with wit will be kept with wariness and increased with wisdom" (169), or on his insistence that the subject elevates the speaker (188-90). Nevertheless, he is encountered by characters that challenge these beliefs, such as the hermit Callimachus whose speech praises education over experience, and the kind Fidus who mistakes wittiness for wisdom (208-209) and is rebuked for this mistake by his wife Iffida (210).[54] Detached from the investigation of courtship that is at the heart of the sequel, Euphues ends up still the severe scholar, a label Lyly had by now left behind for good, as even the narrator now aligns himself with Philautus' notion of a noble consummated love rather than with Euphues' notion of friendship and admiration from afar (296).

Euphues's wit embodies the moral anxiety of unrestrained youthful *ingenium* and the epistemological anxiety when wit fails to nudge *ingenium* aside and become the practical knowledge of experience.[55] In that sense it is reflexive of Lyly's own anxieties regarding the place of his wit between the demands of patronage – a certain modesty coupled with the production of overtly moralising rhetoric – and those of the market, whose notions of value escape universality.[56] And yet, wit is the most distinguishing feature of both Euphues and, by extension, his creator. Lyly was certainly also creating a fashion when he was writing the two *Euphues* works, and the choice of employing his wit in gaining patronage is not incidental because for Lyly, as for his protagonist, wit carried with it great social power.[57] Euphues' wit, his preeminent attribute, serves as the driving force for the plot, just as Lyly's wit paved the way for patronage, a decade of successful playwriting and a legacy of imitators and responders.[58] As the next sections shall demonstrate, this idea also formed the heart of

[54] Note also how Fidus' attempts at persuading himself out of the folly of love only lead to his falling in it the more (201). This dangerous capacity of wit is to be explored much more fully in Greene's treatment of the subject in *Mamillia*.
[55] See also the previous chapter's discussion of Cicero's similar notion in *De Officiis*.
[56] On the social climate that produced moralising literature in the 1560s and 70s, see Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 62-64.
[57] See also Guenther 29; Saenger 67-68.
[58] Despite Lyly's frustrations and retiring from the London scene later in his life. See Lunney xii-xiii.

euphuism for Robert Greene, for whom professional literary success, rather than patronage within the established system, was the most central concern.

Robert Greene's Euphuism at Large

Robert Greene's preface to the gentlemen readers in his first published work, *Mamillia. A mirrour or looking-glasse for the ladies of Englande*, entered at the Stationers' Register on 3 October 1580, makes a point of apologising for the author's lack of wit and calls upon the readers to accept it rather for his good will.[59] Greene is following in the footsteps of convention when he does so, as he does not fail to note himself:

> … I chanced to reade diuers Epistles of sundrie men written to the readers, wherin I found the best learned of them also far drenched in doubt of their disabilitie, & almost fortified for feare that want of skill shoulde be a blemish to their woorke, as (thinking a flat confession should haue a plaine pardon) they cal their bookes vanities, shadowes imperfect paterns, more meete for the Pedler then the Printer, toyes, trifles… and yet the worst of them all so perfectly polished with the pumice stone of eloquence, as in them nature and art doe striue for supremacie. (A3r)

It is not difficult to guess to whom Greene is referring when he mentions pedlars and printers.[60] John Lyly's preface to his own gentlemen readers in *Euphues* begins with the following line: "I was driven into a quandary, gentlemen, whether I might send this my pamphlet to the printer or to the pedlar. I thought it too bad for the press and too good for the pack" (30).[61] Indeed, Lyly's influence on Greene's body of work is quite apparent, and his *Mamillia* is in many ways a reflection of Lyly's notable style and narrative. Greene is one of the earliest, and the most prolific, of Lyly's imitators, and this section aims to examine his

[59] The work was published only in 1583. STC 12269.
[60] See also K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives* 76.
[61] For more on the "genetic information" contained in dedications, and how these also define genres, see Genette's seminal study *Seuils*, translated into English as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. J.E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 210-12, 224-29.

adaptation of the Lylian wit in his euphuistic maiden work and its sequel.[62] It then moves on to the rather different *Euphues his censure to Philautus*, published in 1587, whose title nevertheless directly refers to Lyly's protagonist.[63]

Humility was greatly valued in Elizabethan rhetoric, and therefore we should not take Greene's claims to lacking skill all too seriously.[64] Indeed, claiming an important subject matter alongside modestly ingratiating oneself on one's audience were sound ways of establishing one's ethos.[65] But Greene's earlier writings, more concerned with unashamed pandering to popular opinion than with seeking out universal truths, don't live up to their claims of subject matter either.[66] Greene begins by promising to depict "*firme faith, brought a sleepe by fading* fancie: vntil wit ioyned with wisedome, doth awake it by the helpe of reason" in the title of the first book of *Mamillia*. This is a promise he fails to keep, as Lyly had failed to live up to his own promise of presenting a wise wit, and his book abruptly ends with two betrayed women, unaware of the betrayal and no closer to wisdom. Greene then claims in the extended title his second book, *Mamillia. The second part of the triumph of Pallas*, to celebrate "WITH PERPETVAL fame the constancie of Gentlewomen" which, it shall be shown, he engages in rather facetiously. Greene is often mentioned as a more commercially-minded author than Lyly, and it is not hard to see why.[67] While Lyly sought

[62] Mentz ('Forming Greene: Theorizing the Early Modern Author in the Groatsworth of Wit', *Writing Robert Greene*) categorises no less than seven of Greene's works under "Lylian romance" (124-25), although even that number excludes obviously relatable texts such as *Menaphon; Camilla's Alarum to Slumbering Euphues* (1589, STC 12272).
[63] These works, alongside *A Mirrour of Modestie* (1584), have been long ago noted to bear most strikingly Lyly's influence. See McNeal, 'The Literary Origins of Robert Greene', *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin* 14:3 (1939): 176-77. See also Crupi, *Robert Greene* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1986) 36; Kinney, *Humanist Poetics* 184.
[64] For more on humility and the modesty *topos*, see Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric* 79-80.
[65] See Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric* 129-30. Lyly does so himself in his own preface to *Euphues*.
[66] On Greene's famous 1590s 'repentance', see Crupi 6-7, 14; Newcomb, 'A Looking Glass for Readers: Cheap Print and the Senses of Repentance', *Writing Robert Greene* 133-56. See also Maslen, 'Robert Greene and the Uses of Time', ibid. 160.
[67] On Greene's life and commercial interests See Das 111-12; Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England* 103, 108; Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002) 23-9; Crupi 1-35.

patronage with the Earl of Oxford and remained close to him for over a decade, Greene addressed his works to a large number of temporary patrons, the Earl of Oxford included, suggesting that "he depended for his livelihood directly upon the reading public rather than upon a sustaining patron".[68] Greene's ingratiating prefaces, while similar in tone to Lyly's, nevertheless maintain that his works are commodities, and present the first part of *Mamillia* as "the first payment" (A2v) of a social debt.[69] Greene commodifies not only the wit of his characters but his own.[70] It is worth keeping in mind that, even more so than for Lyly, wit serves for Greene as a sort of "linguistic capital" in which the common aims of rhetoric are turned from the audience to the speaker.[71] To teach, to delight and to persuade, as Thomas Wilson describes in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (i.2-3), are also to be believed, to be appreciated and to be obeyed. The product of such a wit, *Mamillia* is not really a work boasting of originality.[72] It rides the wave of Lyly's popularity by echoing quite closely his inventive euphuism and its narrative of courtship and betrayal is strikingly similar, if reversed in gender, to that of Euphues, Philautus and Lucilla.[73] Nevertheless, while Lyly's *Euphues* walks a fine line between exemplary rhetoric and Aschamian quick-wittedness that echoes its own moral ambiguities and anxieties, Greene's notion of rhetorical prowess as a commodity promises a somewhat different way of approaching the morality of wit.

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[68] Rosenberg, *Leicester, Patron of Letters* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1955) 301. See also A. H. Nelson 247, 265, 381.
[69] See also Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England* 112.
[70] Greene uses the term proverbially to suggest wisdom, as in "one fore-wit is worth two after" (*Mamillia I,* 9), but his main usage is of wit in the Lylian sense, as *ingenium* when lent specifically to the production of rhetoric, such as when he first describes Pharicles as "a youth of wonderful wit and no less wealth, whom both nature and experience had taught the old proverb as perfect as his paternoster, He that cannot dissemble cannot live…" (*Mamillia I,* 7).
[71] See Bourdieu in Munro ('Knightly Complements: The Malcontent and the Matter of Wit', *English Literary Renaissance* 40:2 [2010]: 216) in which wit is defined as "linguistic capital" such that "utterances are not only… signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also signs of wealth, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed".
[72] Maslen ('Robert Greene and the Uses of Time' 160) suggests that Greene is "impudently hijacking other men's work for purposes of self-promotion".
[73] See also Heilman, 'Greene's Euphuism and Some Cogeneric Styles', *The Workings of Fiction: Essays* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1991) 188.

Greene's diegetic imitation of Lyly extends into the dialogues, as Mamillia and her fellow characters in the two books all engage in ceaseless euphuism, such that "For Greene euphuism acts as a test, a way of checking that the person you are talking to speaks the same language".[74] Thus the first exchange between Mamillia and Pharicles allows mutual appreciation of each other's *ingenium*, but also examines the speaker's desire to be believed:

> And where you say the offence proceedeth of good will and affection, I am not so madde to thinke, that the hearb *Sisimbrium* wil sprout and sprigg to a great branch in a momente: that the colde yron will burne at the sight of the fire: but hee that will iuggle must playe his feates vnder the boorde, or els his halting will be spied. (4r)

Mamillia uses two common euphuistic images (the growing plant and the forged iron) alongside characteristic euphuistic alliteration and ends with an example that suggests Pharicles as an underhanded trickster. He in turn acknowledges her mockery and answers in kind using antithetical comparisons:

> … though the hearbe *Sisimbrium* growes not to a great braunch in a moment, yet the tallest blade of *Spattania* hath his full height in one moment: and if the Iron burneth not at the sight of the fire, yet the harde stone *Calcir,* which can be bruised with no mettall, melteth with the heate of the Sunne, and is resolued into licour. As for my iuggling, if it may be spyed, it argueth the more good will, and lesse deceite: so that if I halte, I am a starke lame Lazar, and not a counterfeit Criple. (4r)

Pharicles chooses a tactic similar to that of Greene's preface by suggesting that his lack of wit, by which his 'juggling' is revealed, is proof of his good will and should therefore convince Mamillia of his fidelity. This playful reshaping of wit's effect highlights Pharicles' own, and his speech moves Mamillia to great perplexity before eventually securing her favour:

> his beauty is not it that moueth me, nor his wit the captayne which shall catch the castle, sith the one is momentary, and the other may be impayred by

[74] K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives* 77.

> sicknesse. Thy faith and honestie, *Pharicles*, whereof all *Padua* speaketh, hath won my heart, and so shall weare it: thy ciuility without dissimulation, thy fayth without fayning haue made theyr breach by loue, and shall haue their entrance by law. (5r)

Following the narrator's description of Pharicles as "not faythful enough" (3r) and Mamillia's own arguments both for and against believing Pharicles, this new-found belief is certainly ill-founded. It is precisely Pharicles' wit and beauty that cause Mamillia to appreciate Pharicles and move her to accepting his assertions of good faith. Upon their next encounter Pharicles praises Mamillia but she resolves, per the narrator, to give "him this cold confect for his hotte stomacke" (16r).[75] Mamillia attempts to withstand the last of rhetoric's three assaults, the one calculated to obtain her obedience to his desires. Her reply indeed begins with resistance: "For although I was so foolish to lend you mine eare, I am warie enough in letting of my heart: for as you found me prodigall in the one, you shall finde me as niggardly in the other" (16r), but suddenly turns to requital: "thou hast wonne the castle that many haue besieged, and hast obtained that which others haue sought to gaine" (17v). This peculiar change in Mamillia appears in the middle of a lengthy speech, as if her own use of wit in speaking has reinforced Pharicles' into the achievement of its goals – his proclamations of honesty are believed, he is admired for his euphuistic eloquence and he is obeyed in his demand of Mamillia's consent.

Pharicles' powerful wit exemplifies its place as a potent social commodity and a driving force throughout *Mamillia*. Unlike Lyly's carefully anatomised but ultimately ambiguous wit, Greene pays no respect to Ascham's warning against over-quickness and makes no effort to draw a distinction between the rhetoric and subject matter of wicked and

[75] Although the narrator jestingly suggests that "…these wordes of *Pharicles*, Gentlemen, did not greatlye displease *Mamillia*" (16r), so that once more mutual appreciation is achieved through engagement in witty exchanges.

proper wits.[76] Thus while his narrator has no qualms about proclaiming his characters virtuous (Mamillia, Florion and Publia) or wicked (Pharicles), these characters all use their wits in a very similar manner and often for similar purposes. The virtuous characters echo Pharicles' "filed phrases" that suggest "deceite" (4v) and Mamillia, for example, is not averse to mocking her nurse and her wit, much as Lyly's Euphues had mocked Eubulus:[77]

> Old women wil quickly conceiue, & soone beleeue: for age is as credulous, as suspitious; the dried oake wil sooner fire, than the greene Ashe; & olde ragges wil sooner burne, than new linnen… Whereas you draw your perswasions for my credite, of your talk from your gray haires, it sheweth surely but a greene wit, not so ful of grauity, as either your age or yeeres requires. (11r)

The similarity among Greene's characters is especially apparent in the emotional, perplexed monologues given by Mamillia and Publia following their encounters with Pharicles, and by Pharicles after encountering each lady. These monologues are characterised by anxiety over one's developing desires and the arguing of opposing points of view with oneself. Mamillia, whose constancy is supposedly her most notable attribute, nevertheless produces the following lines of reasoning for and against believing Pharicles' sincerity, which reflect on his beauty: "Take heede *Mamillia*, the finest scabberd hath not euer the brauest blade; nor the goodliest chest hath not the most gorgious treasure… Why? but yet the Gem is chosen by his hue, and the cloth by his colour" (4v-5r).[78] Similarly, Pharicles argues against and for pursuing beauty:

> Ah *Pharicles* is the foundation of thy faith fixed vpon her feature? consider with thy selfe, beauty is but a blossome, whose flower is nipped with euery frost… What *Pharicles*, wilt thou become a precise *Pythagoras* in renouncing of loue, or a teastie *Tianeus* in dispraysing of beauty? What more cleere then the Cristall? and what more precious? (6v-7r)

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[76] Unlike Lyly's appeal to patronage, Newcomb notes that "just as Greene wrote what would sell, he performed the sins that would sell" (*Reading Popular Romance* 28).
[77] This exchange (5v) is discussed earlier in this chapter.
[78] Note that constancy is an attribute lacking in Lyly's protagonists. See also Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England* 113.

Greene's characters are all persuaded by their own rhetoric to make the wrong choice even as they exhibit awareness of its dangers. The force of wit is therefore inherently dangerous. Like Lyly, Greene relies on examples and inductions rather than on syllogisms or perfect logical proofs. Certainly, humanists from Valla onward considered the syllogism to be only one form out of many for presenting arguments, with examples and comparisons in particular seen as especially convincing, and so such usage had come to be common practice.[79] Nevertheless, such reliance also leaves rhetoric as potentially deceptive, as Greene is keenly aware: "Yet he would not altogether, (although hee had cause with *Euripides* to proclaime himselfe open enemie to womankinde) seeme so absurd a Sophister, to inferre a general conclusion of a particular proposition" (2r). Greene's wit permeates every discussion, argues any point no matter how contradictory, and is often connected with great anxiety when expressed privately.

For Lyly such self-contradictory monologues belong to characters inflamed with desire, such as Lucilla's musing on her own constancy after falling for Euphues: "Ah fond wench, dost thou think Euphues will deem thee constant to him, when thou hast been unconstant to his friend?… But can Euphues convince me of fleeting, seeing for his sake I break my fidelity?" (52). Euphues similarly argues his passion to Lucilla: "for by how much the more my affection commeth on the sudden, by so much the less will she think it certain" (55). Both Euphues and Lucilla, Lyly's narrator makes sure to note, are wicked: "none more witty then Euphues, yet at the first none more wicked" (33); "this gallant girl, more faire than fortunate, and yet more fortunate than faithful" (46). Greene, however, allows for similar uses of rhetoric for lust to carry with them not the moral tone of wickedness that it finds in Lyly

[79] For more on Valla's objections to the Aristotelian elevation of the syllogism, see P. Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 85. Regarding comparisons, Agricola suggested that they possess "a ready strength for convincing the minds of ordinary people" (in P. Mack, *Renaissance Argument* 162). Thomas Wilson lists all of the above in his list of arguments in *The Rule of Reason* (F.vii.r-H.vi.v). See also P. Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric* 68-69; Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric* 36.

but rather a suggestion that one is misguided, so that each character's morality is retained. Consequently, Mamillia's monologue after falling for Pharicles' is merely "foolish" (5v) while Pharicles' is explicitly described as ill intentioned: "not that it did proceede from any sincere affection, enforced by her vertue: but that his mind was set vpon lust" (7v). Similarly, after Publia falls for Pharicles her own musings are described merely as "vexed" (24v) while Pharicles' confusion is "a perfect patterne of Louers in these our dayes, that beare two faces vnder one hoode; and haue as many Ladyes as they haue wittes" (26r). In Greene's utilitarianism wit is divorced not only from wisdom as it had been in Lyly's work but from its possessor's moral character entirely.[80] The virtuous ladies may lack wisdom, but they are not reduced to Euphues' or Lucilla's arrogant wickedness.

This is not to say that Greene completely ignores the moral dimension of wit or of lust. Wit in the service of vice is certainly undesirable, even if it does not mirror a character's moral nature. Greene, however, places moral responsibility entirely on Pharicles and his two-faced wit, while Publia's wit for example is more akin to a deceived intellect: "you thinke my simple witte hath no such capacitie to conceiue your vaine iesting, yet all women are not of one mettall" (28r). This wit, of course, is soon to fail as guardian against deception, as Publia's requital of Pharicles paves the way for the first book's romantic entanglement. Pharicles' and Publia's wits fail in different ways, but the copious euphuistic speeches of Greene's characters reflect a similar trait – not necessarily characters' morality but rather their inability to couple wit with wisdom or to identify and resist inconstancy. Lightness of speech suggests a certain lightness of mind that infects the virtuous as well as the wicked.

[80] See P. Mack (*Elizabethan Rhetoric* 12) for further discussion of the link between religion, moral virtue, wisdom and eloquence in Erasmus and Ascham.

In the title to the second book of *Mamillia* Greene promises to praise womanly constancy and devotes a significant portion of the text to doing just that.[81] Having painted women as light and foolish in his first book, Greene now suggests a restoration of their reputation. Following Mamillia's opening monologue the narrator proclaims that "wee are by conscience constrained to condemne those vnseemly *Satyres* and vaine inuectiues, wherein with taunting tearmes and cutting quippes diuerse iniurious persons most vniustlie accuse Gentlewomen of inconstancy" (B3v). Greene is certainly being facetiously witty in depicting womanly constancy. For the monologue that precedes his proclamation is another in the long line of euphuistic, self-contradictory and anxious engagements with perplexed emotions, in which Mamillia debates her promise to the unfaithful Pharicles:

> No no, cast away care, let the remembraunce of his treacherie mittigate the fire of thy fancie, lyke not where thou art not loued, nor loue not where thou findes such inconstancie… Why *Mamillia* art thou mad, or is fancie turned into frenzie? Shal the cowardize of the Kistrel make the Faulcon fearefull? Shall the dread of the Lambe make the Lion a dastard? Shall the leaudnesse of *Pharicles* procure thy lightnesse, or his inconstancie make thee wauering? (B3r)

Mamillia decides to remain constant to Pharicles even if he proves inconstant himself, ending up either married to him or dying a virgin. This decision echoes Publia's, who eventually "entred her selfe into a religious Monasterie where shee led her life as a chast and famous virgin" (D1r). These decisions by the women, though praised again and again by Greene's narrator, are not without a note of discord.[82] Not only is Mamillia's speech reflective of her inconsistent thoughts, but Publia upon being questioned regarding her relation to Pharicles proceeds to lie to her uncle even as she professes it blasphemy to do so:

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[81] The second part was published alongside the first part in 1583. STC 12269.5.

[82] Publia's retirement to the monastery is concluded by the narrator in the following manner: "Where gentlemen (thinke of me what you please) I am constrained by conscience (considering the constancie of *Publia*) to blame those blasphemous blabs which are neuer in their vaine except they be breathing out some iniurious speeches against the constancie of women…" (D1r).

> … as I haue alwaies found you to haue had a fatherly care to prouide for my welfare, so I haue alwayes counted it religion to requite that fatherly affection with the dutie and obedience of a childe… In deede sir I confesse, that *Pharicles* hath shewed mée some curtesie, and I haue not altogither requited him with curiositie, he hath made some shew of loue, and I haue not wholie seemed to mislike, least in louing lightly I might seeme lasciuious, and in contemning churlishly I might be iudged very curious… (C3r-v)

Publia hides in this restrained reply her true feelings, described in the first book as "loue, that the glowing coles turned to flashing flames: her fleeting fancy, to firme affection: her lingring liking, to loyal loue" (35v). Her retirement to the monastery to spend a life doting on a deceptive lover may therefore suggest, rather than a celebration of her constancy, a just result for the folly of falling for and choosing to remain constant to a deceptive lover.

Mamillia, upon hearing that Pharicles and Publia had not consummated their relationship, is refilled with hope described by a list of euphuistic antitheses:

> For now she hoped that although *Pharicles* had sowen wilde Oates hee should reape good graine, that he had not runne so farre but he might easily return, that bought wit was best, and the being throughly beaten with his owne rod, he would in time learne to be wise, and that whereas before hee was trothlesse now he woulde be trustie, as he was false so hee would be faithful. (C4r)

Aware that he had been inconstant, Mamillia still hopes that Pharicles will gain experience and prove faithful in the end. But the rhetorical power of the antithetical pairs provides no epistemological certainty, no guarantee that Pharicles will indeed reform and that his trothless and false nature will become trusty and faithful.[83] The reference to bought wit may be a jab at Lyly's reformed Euphues who supposedly learns that "wit is the better if it be the dearer bought" (33), for the antithetical images rather embody the uncertainty over Pharicles' constancy. Greene concludes with reiterating this anxiety when, at the end of the story, he

[83] See also K. Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives* (79): "Mamillia is always trying to work out whether alliterative connections are liable to predict behavioural patterns: does Pharicles have to act like Paris because their names sound the same?"

announces: "Marrie whether *Pharicles* proued as inconstant a husband as a faithlesse wooer, I knowe not: but if it be my hap to heare, looke for newes as spéedilie as may be" (K3r). If the women were too light in the first part of the story, now they appear to be too severe in their adherence to constancy directed at an unworthy and uncertain cause.

Greene makes sport of playing with his readers' expectations. While his narrator constantly praises the virtues of women, no doubt a significant part of Greene's intended audience, the end result is nevertheless a withholding of the wise wit that he had promised us in favour of the playful language of inconstancy.[84] In each book Greene makes a point of abruptly ending his narrative without a moral conclusion, leaving us only with his own wittiness in promising further news "by a speedy Post" (I, 37v) and with Mamillia's warning letters to Modesta against the foolish pursuing of love.[85] By creating a move from excessive lightness to excessive severity Greene is suggestively mocking Euphues' reformation, but his own good will becomes suspect in the absence of redeeming morality. Like Pharicles' proclamations of a good will which prove false, exemplifying "such yong youthes whose wits are wils, and their wils are lawes, coueting so much sensual libertie, as they bring themselues into perpetuall bondage" (II, D3v), so should Greene's claim to a good will be seen as calculated to exhibit its counterpart, his omnipresent wit.[86]

Euphuism Censured

Euphues and his characteristic rhetorical style became immensely popular in the wake of Lyly and Greene's earliest works. Barnabe Rich, for example, introduced Euphues to his

[84] That Greene aimed often at women readers is noted by many Greene scholars. See for example Mentz in Melnikoff (ed.), *Robert Greene* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011) 112; L. B. Wright, 'The Reading of Renaissance English Women', *Studies in Philology* 28:4 (1931): 679.
[85] Which, upon learning that Modesta is already committed to choosing a husband, push her towards choosing the wittiest suitor, as Mamillia herself had done.
[86] This wit is commonly the subject of praise in early critical reception to *Mamillia*, such as Roger Portington's claim that "No finer wittes in Grecia raigned then Britayne breedes, No brauer works in Smirna wrought then English deeds" (In Melnikoff [ed.] 61)

own work, *Don Simonides*, as a wise advisor (101) who attempts to dissuade the eponymous Simonides from the folly of wicked love, a conclusion that Rich's protagonist will eventually reach, like Euphues had himself reached before, when his lady betrays him (149-50).[87] Others like Thomas Lodge used the form to reiterate the danger of young wits as "vnwholsome" (8) and celebrated the humanist ideal of attaining wisdom and what he terms true philosophy (88).[88] Sometimes works turned to pastoral themes, like Lodge's *Rosalynde*, but maintained the ideal of a rhetoric that triumphs when it is of a right mind and aimed at securing a noble love (89);[89] while for others, like Dickenson in *Arisbas*, Euphues' popularity may have been enough to secure a reference in a work that, despite being highly rhetorical, engaged more fully with other literary texts.[90]

Long before the last of these works was published, however, Lyly had abandoned euphuistic prose in favour of drama, while Greene had moved out of his Lylian phase and was producing "Novella collections" and later his more famous repentance pamphlets.[91] Nevertheless, one of these later works, *Euphues his censure to Philautus*, directly interacts with and comments on Lyly and Greene's earlier euphuism.[92] Greene's earlier works suggest wit as a pervasive commodity, and thus appropriately fail to deliver an image of the perfect or 'wise' orator. This orator becomes central to *Euphues his Censure to Philautus*, presented as a piece written by Euphues that Greene had stumbled upon. The stated aim of the book, as claimed in the preface to Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, is to produce an account of the perfect soldier, driven no doubt to complement Essex's military prowess in the Netherlands to which Greene refers: "hauing heard of your noble & vertous resolutions, not onely in

[87] In *The second tome of the trauailes and aduentures of Don Simonides* (Published 1584. STC 21002a).
[88] In *Euphues shadow, the battaile of the sences* (Published 1592. STC 16656). Pages are cited for the original-text edition in *The Complete Works of Thomas Lodge, vol. 2*, ed. E. Gosse (Glasgow: Hunterian Club, 1883).
[89] In *Rosalynde; or, Euphues' golden legacy* (Boston, MA: Ginn and Company, 1910).
[90] Especially with Sidney's *Arcadia*. Dickenson also refers to Sidney explicitly throughout the text, usually as "Astrophell". See also Kesson 75.
[91] Mentz, 'Forming Greene: Theorizing the Early Modern Author in the Groatsworth of Wit' 124.
[92] Registered on 18 September 1587 and published later the same year. STC 12239.

laudable and honorable qualities, generally inserted in your Lordships mynde, but especially in the fauour of warlike indeuours, following the steppes of your honorable father" (A2v).[93] The resulting book, however, remains invariably concerned with rhetoric and wit. Abandoning the Lylian narrative in favour of "imitating Tullies orator, Platoes common wealth, and Baldessars courtier" (A2v), Greene sets his story during a truce in the middle of the Trojan War. His characters, Trojans and Greeks alike, participate in dialectics regarding the virtues of the two warring nations, followed by a succession of 'tragedies' told by the characters concerning whether wisdom, fortitude or liberality are most crucial in a soldier.

The politics of actual war however are far from Greene's mind, as his characters rather seem to be engaged in a battle of wits: "*Troilus* willing to shewe that the weapons of Troy were as sharp ground as the swords of the Gretians, and that feare had as litle priuiledge to crepe within their walles as to lurke within the others tents, made *Achilles* this answere" (C1r). Though the euphuism of *Mamillia* is toned down for what seems a more serious discussion, the characters still make ample use of alliteration, balanced clauses and classical images and maxims. Achilles, for example, depicts his countrymen using all the above:

> The Gretians worthy Lordes whose fore pointed resolutions are euer limited within the proportion of Iustice, holde their woordes as lawes, and sacrifice their thoughts with their deedes, at the Aultars of equity, measuring enemyes at the point of the Launce and frindes by perfourmance of league, vsing their hands and heartes as the instruments of *Delphos,* which might not be touched by any appeached of periury. (B2r-v)

The Trojan War in the background becomes inconsequential as the real war within the narrative is that in which *ornatus* or the embellishments of rhetoric are the weapons one arms oneself with.[94] Greene cares little for picking sides, as his Cassandra encapsulates well: "wee

[93] Essex fought alongside his stepfather in the Netherlands in 1585-6. See Younger, 'The Practice and Politics of Troop-Raising: Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, and the Elizabethan Regime', *The English Historical Review* 526 (2012): 566.

[94] See Skinner's (48-9) discussion of *ornatus* in *Reason and Rhetoric* as referring to both rhetorical embellishments and weaponry in Classical Latin and especially in Cicero and Quintilian.

through ignoraunce haue fetcht a Harlot from Greece, and you that are learned make a challeng to recall vyce with the sword: whose folly is the greatest, let the verdict of one of your owne Philosophers witnesse" (C2r-v). The importance of the dialectic lies in the rhetorical prowess of its participants: "This philosophicall answere of *Cassandra* so satisfied the Gretians, as they admyred hir speech, and held hir reason for an Oracle" (C2v). Greene's concern, it appears, is to establish sufficient authority in his speakers and to avoid the fate of Mamillia and Pharicles, who fail to heed Cicero's warning in *De Oratore*: "The sole distinction will surely be that the good speakers bring, as their peculiar possession, a style that is harmonious, graceful, and marked by a certain artistry and polish. Yet this style, if the underlying subject-matter be not comprehended and mastered by the speaker, must inevitably be of no account or even become the sport of universal derision" (i.XII.50). Thus Ulysses' excessively euphuistic tale of the unfaithful Moedyna and Vortymis, though obviously reflective of Helena and Paris, leaves no mark on the discussion of Greek and Trojan morality and is appropriately met with "a plawsible silence" (E3r) and a quick change of subject. Its narrative, which echoes both *Euphues* and *Mamillia* and makes similar uses of impassioned monologues to examine contrarieties, is calculated rather to reinforce the characters' understanding of the dangers of the Aschamian "quickest wit" which is "the more easily won" (18).[95]

The reason an authority in speaking is sought by Greene is that, if warfare is undertaken through the ornaments of rhetoric, the perfect soldier that Greene anatomises becomes also the perfect orator.[96] Alongside Eulysses' recapitulated euphuistic wit, the soldier's three qualities of wisdom, liberality and fortitude are all described in Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* as belonging to the orator (i.25, 28-29), and the three stories therefore each

[95] These monologues invariably cannot stop one from making the wrong choice. See for example Moedyna's monologue and subsequent infidelity (C4v-D1v).
[96] Greene states outright that both philosophy and eloquence are essential to the wise soldier (F2r).

examine an imperfect example of the soldier-orator. In the first story Rascianus employs fortitude and liberality and fails in capturing Lydia (and the virtuous Cimbriana for whom he lusts) before turning to wisdom to achieve his military goals. With the help of the eloquent Cleophanes he delivers a speech to deceive and betray the Lydians (G3v-4r), leading to his eventual downfall through Cimbriana's self-sacrifice (H1v-2r). In this story, poignant rhetoric brings ruin to both sides, suggesting the wisdom behind it to be wickedness rather than the virtuous wisdom anatomised only a few pages earlier as "that perfect index, that sheweth how farre one man excelleth an other in the pretious constitution of his mynde" (F1r). Similarly, in the second story Frontinus (whose distinguishing quality is fortitude) delivers a speech to his army, rallying them on to defeating the armies of his brothers Martignamus (wisdom) and Ortellius (liberality). But "forgetfull that they were his natiue countrymen" (K3r), Frontinus rushes on after his opponents surrender and slaughters his own brothers, proving his fortitude to be lacking in temperance.[97] In the last story Roxander, whose renown is in his liberality, produces a moving letter that drives his countrymen to victory (M2r-v) where wise and valiant captains had previously failed. And yet his countrymen prove not liberal but revengeful when they massacre the enemy's senators after victory is secured, leaving him "with teares disalowing their disobedience, and with threats showing him selfe discontent" (M3r).

These three stories are almost interchangeable. In all three stories, one's wit – as precious a commodity for the soldier as it had been for the courtier before – paves the way to military success through a moving speech or letter. And yet in all three stories the quality discussed is turned into a vice, marred by the lack of the other two, with disastrous consequences. The conclusion of the narrative follows directly from this observation in

[97] Elyot's *The Boke Named The Governour* (1531. STC 7635), for example, reflects on the furious temper of Achilles, and presents his reformation as rooted in reason and temperance: "he was there with asswaged of his furie, and reduced in to his firste astate of reason" (i.VII).

marking the ideal soldier: “then of these premisses wee may conclude, that none can come to the perfection of a souldier, vnlesse he be both wise, valiant, and liberall” (M3r). The ideal orator is reflected in these qualities as well, but so are his limitations. Thus Quintilian’s “quos ingenii igniculos” or “flashes of intellect” (VI.Pr.7) become wit as “a sparke that soonest inflameth desire” (C4r). The orator’s wit is always at the risk of becoming too quick, his wisdom abused in wickedness, his fortitude lacking temperance and his liberality turned to undue severity. Along with the discounting of euphuistic discourse in the text, this suggests that the ‘censure’ offered in the title can be taken to be Greene’s warning against euphuism (or the rhetorical precariousness it represents), both Lyly’s and Greene’s own, for the euphuistic protagonists invariably lack either wisdom at first or liberality later on, and their moral advisors lack the fortitude to persuade them from folly.[98] Euphuism in this equation is seen as *Philautus,* or self-love, and our considerations of the flawed characters as well as both Lyly’s and Greene’s self-promotion through the euphuistic wit suggest this as a fitting label. The place of *Euphues,* the witty or graceful, is suggested unsurprisingly to be taken by the author himself. That he himself is implicated in this criticism of rhetoric matters little to Greene for, freed from Lyly’s need for patronage, he flirts openly with the idea of rhetoric as morally indifferent. His concerns, it seems, remain the same as they were in his earlier years: not to repay a social debt but to peddle to his readers his own commoditised wit. As the next chapter shows, however, such concerns were not confined solely to the euphuistic orator.

[98] Especially its subpart ‘continuance’, defined by Thomas Wilson as “a stedfast and constaunt abiding, in a purposed and well aduised matter, not yeelding to any man in quarell of the right” (i.29)

Chapter 3 – The Gosson Quarrel or, Poetic Wit under Attack

Lyly and Greene explored the commodification of their own wit through their prose, producing along the way a mode of writing whose immense popularity appropriately reflected the commercial and social power wielded by rhetoric via the euphuistic wit. But euphuistic prose was only part of a greater Elizabethan debate surrounding the commodification of art and the artistic medium. This debate found an especially poignant expression in the anti-theatrical debates that raged in England in the late 1570s and early 1580s. These began as attacks focused on the theatre and its social aspects but came to encompass a more general discussion of art, poetry, and artistic creation, and produced several literary treatises representing both sides of the argument. This chapter explores the idea of a poetic wit as it emerges from this debate, beginning with Stephen Gosson's anti-theatrical tract *The schoole of abuse*.[1] Gosson's euphuistic tract is noted both for attacking not only the theatre but poetic art in general and for eliciting a particularly aggressive response from the defenders of poetry and the theatre. The chapter then turns to an examination of this response by looking at the two extant replies to Gosson's tract.[2] The first is a response by Thomas Lodge, circulated within a year of Gosson's tract and usually known today as *A defence of poetry, music and plays*.[3] The second is *The Defence of Poesy* by Philip Sidney.[4] By far the most well-known of the Elizabethan treatises relating to the debate, the

[1] First published in 1579 (STC 12097).
[2] See J. D. Wilson, 'The Missing Title of Thomas Lodge's Reply to Gosson's "School of Abuse"', *The Modern Language Review* 3:2 (1908): 166.
[3] Lodge's response was denied a publication license and circulated without a title page. A copy (Mal. 896, STC 16663) in the Bodleian library is dated to 1579 or 1580 by David Laing, who edited the first reprint of the work in 1853. The tract was probably written between 22 July and 7 November 1579. See Allison, *Thomas Lodge, 1558-1625: A Bibliographical Catalogue of the Early Editions* (Folkestone: Dawsons, 1973) Entry 33. Citations in this chapter are to Lodge, *A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage-Plays* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1853).
[4] First published posthumously in 1595 (STC 22535), although it was probably begun in 1580 and completed around 1582-83 at the latest, circulated in manuscript form and known to Sidney's acquaintances (such as Edmund Spenser) during his lifetime. The treatise was also published under another name, *An apologie for poetrie*, in the same year. See also D. B. Hamilton, 'Religion', *A Concise Companion to English Renaissance Literature* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006); Duncan-Jones, 'Introduction', *Sir Philip Sidney, A Critical Edition of the Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) xviii.

response by Gosson's dedicatee couples with its discussion of the theatre also an investigation of poetic creation in which wit finds a novel expression.[5]

The Schoole of Abuse and Mimetic Wit

The history of theatre in England marks a seminal moment in the year 1576 when London's first permanent playhouses, the *Theatre* and the *Curtain*, opened their doors to the public.[6] Increasingly more common, accessible and commercialised, Elizabethan theatre's growing popularity and secular focus troubled many who considered it a potentially dangerous force capable of corrupting man's soul.[7] Especially singled out for dispraise was the commercial aspect of the new theatre which was often portrayed as idolatrous, dangerously celebrating material gains over Christian virtue.[8] Variously depicted as pagan or papist, the newly-established theatre became the target for an increasing number of denunciatory pamphlets.[9] Foremost amongst the anti-theatricals was Stephen Gosson, a former student of John Reynolds at Oxford and a disappointed playwright whose shift in allegiance towards objecting to the theatre, if brought about by necessity, nevertheless realigned him with the teachings of his earlier years.[10] Reynold's own arguments against drama, which were to form the basis for his later quarrel with William Gager over the merits of university plays, are present in Gosson's treatise: theatre confuses genders and threatens to

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[5] Regarding the popularity of Sidney's work, compare the no-less than 1300 citations listed by Google Scholar (scholar.google.co.uk; accessed September 2015) for various editions of Sidney's *Defence* with those for Gosson's (around 300) and Lodge's (only around 80) tracts.
[6] Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 42-43.
[7] See also Ringler, *Stephen Gosson: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1942) 55-56.
[8] Hawkes, 'Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in the Antitheatrical Controversy', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 39:2 (1999): 256-60.
[9] For a history of anti-theatrical attacks before Gosson, see Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 57-63.
[10] For more on Reynolds' influence on the development of euphuistic rhetoric in both Lyly and Gosson, and on Gosson's university years in general, see Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 8-28. For more on the history of Gosson's writing, see Kinney, *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1974) 12-19; and Sénéchal, 'The Antitheatrical Criticism of Stephen Gosson', *Literature Compass* 1:1 (2004). For a discussion of satirical elements in Gosson's *The Schoole of Abuse*, see Cavanagh, 'Modes of Satire', *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

"effeminate the minde" (11r), is often in opposition even to civil laws (6r, 24v) and, as plays were often performed on the Sabbath, is highly sacrilegious: "For they that lack Customers al the weeke… To celebrate the Sabboth, flock to Theaters, and there keepe a generall Market of Bawdrie" (18r).[11] But while Gosson's publication of *The Schoole of Abuse* in 1579 was not the first in the drawn-out anti-theatrical debate and many of its arguments against the theatre were present in the works of others, it nevertheless made an extraordinary impact on those in opposition to the theatre.[12] More significantly, it differed from other anti-theatrical pamphlets in dealing not only with the theatre as a social phenomenon but also with the abuses of poetry, poets and music (1v-14v), with other undesirables such as dancers and fencers (27v-32r) and finally with real soldiers, not poet-warriors, as necessary for the wellbeing of the commonwealth (32r-v).[13] Gosson's responders leave no doubt as to which of these topics was to them most contentious and Sidney's *Defence,* on the limited occasions in which it discusses live theatre, presents a picture that is similar to Gosson's.[14] Lodge and Sidney aim their responses primarily at Gosson's treatment of poetry, redefining in the process both the poetic arts and the wit that allows for their *poiesis*. A discussion of Gosson's dealing with poetry and the mimetic arts in general, however, requires a brief return to the classical notions of *mimesis* in which Elizabethan parameters for thinking about poetry were often defined.

Plato's unfavourable view of rhetoric in the *Gorgias* had been discussed in Chapter 1. The *Gorgias* briefly refers to the "poets in the theatres" (502d) as rhetoricians, but it is in

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[11] For more on Reynold's arguments and the quarrel with Gager in the early 1590s, see Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914) 232-42. For Gosson's more extensive treatment of theatrical crossdressing in his later works, see L. Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 19-21.

[12] See Kinney, *Markets of Bawdrie* 15-16.

[13] In this Gosson refers to the long-standing rhetorical tradition of the poet as warrior, from Quintilian's assertion in the *Institutio Oratoria*: "Who could sing of wars better than he who wages them so well?" (10.1.92) to Ascham's *Toxophilius* (1545. STC 837) in which the discussion of archery and poetry is often one and the same (for example in 12v-13r).

[14] Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981) 117.

Book X of the *Republic* that the full extent of his thinking on the mimetic arts, inseparable from epic poetry and the theatre, is made manifest.[15] Famously banishing the poets from his ideal republic, Plato's Socrates denounces their mimetic endeavour entirely:

> [The poet imitates] without knowing in what respects the object is good or bad but, it seems, the way it appears good to the ignorant masses is how he'll imitate it… the imitator knows nothing worth mentioning about the object he's portraying, but that imitation is a kind of game… (602b)[16]

The poet imitates only some small aspect of the thing itself because his imitative powers, like those of the painter in Socrates' lengthy comparison of the two, belong to the part of the soul "which is far from the intellect and has no healthy or even true purpose" (603b). What poetry does produce, and that which makes it so dangerous, is pleasure rather than profit, such as the "the satisfaction of a good cry" (606a-b) that inflames men's emotions and makes them worse people, not better ones (606c-d).

Plato's conception of imitation as epistemologically suspect and dangerously appealing to the emotions may have proved problematic for later thinkers, due in part to Plato's comparison of the poet with the painter and to his own mimetic playfulness.[17] Certainly, Aristotle's response to his teacher in the *Poetics* suggests that man "through imitation learns his earliest lessons" (1448b) and that poetry, through teaching not only "what has happened, but what may happen" (1451a), is able to discuss general truths and even offer a chance at "true knowledge".[18] But despite the humanist consensus on the favourable Ciceronian view of rhetoric, when the debate turned to the poetics of the theatre it was the

[15] See Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* 5.
[16] Plato, *Republic, Volume II: Books 6-10*, trans. C. Emlyn-Jones and W. Preddy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
[17] See Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* 6-7, 11.
[18] Ibid. 28. *Poetics* references are to Aristotle, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. S.H. Butcher (London: Macmillan, 1922).

thinking of Plato, coupled with the Christian objections of men like Reynolds, which often set the tone for anti-theatrical thinkers.[19]

Gosson demonstrates his allegiance to the Platonic cause by referring to the *Gorgias*' comparison of rhetoric with cookery, suggesting that, as does Plato, he considers poetry and rhetoric to be inseparable and potentially dangerous:

> I may well liken Homer to Mithecus, and Poets to Cookes: the pleasures of the one winnes the body fro labor, and conquereth the sense: the allurement of the other drawes the mind from vertue, and confoundeth wit. (4r-4v)

This wit that poets confound, Gosson makes sure to clarify later in the work, is not merely the Bartholomean bodily wit which "knoweth things sensible and corporall" (13v) but man's inwit, his intellect, which for Bartholomaeus "comprehendeth thinges not material but intelligible" (13v-14r).[20] Gosson thus supplements the Platonic comparison:

> I iudge Cookes and Painters the better hearing, for the one extendeth his arte no farther then to the tongue, palate, and nose, the other to the eye; and both are ended in outwarde sense, which is common too vs with bruite beasts. But these by the priuie entries of the eare, slip downe into the hart, & with gunshotte of affection gaule the minde, where reason and vertue should rule the roste. (14v-15r)

Heaping on Plato's epistemological anxiety also a moral one, in which poetry potentially compromises virtue, *The Schoole of Abuse* echoes the Elizabethan concerns regarding rhetoric and its abuses. Gosson had often been described as a puritan by past scholars, but his

[19] Although Platonic thought was often only indirectly studied by Elizabethans, and only a single edition of an authentic Plato dialogue was printed in England in the entire long sixteenth century (Jayne, *Plato in Renaissance England* [Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1995]). Copies of Plato's works were nevertheless available in some college libraries at least from 1555. See Ker, 'Oxford College Libraries in the Sixteenth Century [The Sandars Lectures in Bibliography, Cambridge, 1955]', *Bodleian Library Report* 6:3 (1959): 487. Partee (in 'Sir Philip Sidney and the Renaissance Knowledge of Plato', *English Studies* 51:5 [1970]) suggests that Sidney is unique amongst the major Elizabethans for his extensive direct knowledge of Plato, as opposed to more widespread Neoplatonic adaptations such as the Florentine variety advanced by Ficino or the medieval Christian one inherited from Augustine. See also Jayne, 'Ficino and the Platonism of the English Renaissance', *Comparative Literature* 4:3 (1952): 215.

[20] See Chapter 1 for a discussion of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' work.

modern biographers reject this label in favour of an almost "classic case study of the growth of an English humanist".[21] And yet even if mimesis was often seen as dangerous by humanists, whether content with the Church of England or desirous of further reforms, in Gosson's use of classical sources "to deny the efficacy of art" he is inverting the normal humanist practice.[22] Rather than glossing over the problems of rhetoric in a quest to rehabilitate it, Gosson's pamphlet seeks condemnation for poets, or what he terms the "caterpillers of a comonwelth" in his title.

More significant than Gosson's condemnation is his interplay of intellectual and rhetorical wit as part of a quest for stability in which the shifting identities of the theatre, though perhaps not sufficient to destabilise one's own identity "at the drop of a hat (or the start of a play)", are nevertheless vehemently denounced.[23] This quest makes use of Gosson's definition, by now familiar from authors like Wilson, of wit as both an intellectual capability incorporating *ingenium* and as a practical capacity to produce rhetoric. Wit's role as intellect had been demonstrated earlier in the comparison to cooks and painters – and it is also used for knowing "the secretes of nature, searched by witte" (21r) – but wit is also a potentially deceitful rhetorical one:

> *Salust* in describing the nurture of *Sempronia,* commendeth her witte in that shee coulde frame her selfe to all companies, too talke discretely with wyse men, and vaynely with wantons, taking a quip ere it came too grounde, and returning it back without a faulte. (4v-5r)

[21] Kinney, *Markets of Bawdrie* 2. See especially Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* (8) for a discussion of Gosson's ill-fitting label.
[22] Kinney, *Markets of Bawdrie* 28. On oppositional Protestantism, often pejoratively called 'puritanism', see Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983) 245-72. On humanists and mimesis, see Hilliard, 'Stephen Gosson and the Elizabethan Distrust of the Effects of Drama', *English Literary Renaissance* 9:2 (1979): 232.
[23] Lehnhof, 'Ships That Do Not Sail: Antinauticalism, Antitheatricalism, and Irrationality in Stephen Gosson', *Renaissance Drama* 42:1 (2014): 93. See also Mitsi, 'Myth and Metamorphosis in Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse', *English* 60:229 (2011): 113.

Poets, Gosson writes, are the masters of deceitful rhetorical wit, and therein lies their power: "I must confesse that Poets are the whetstones of wit, notwithstanding that wit is dearly bought: where hony and gall are mixed, it will be hard to seuer the one from the other" (2r). Instead of this corruption, reminiscent of Lyly's protagonist who learns "that witte is the better if it bee the dearer bought" (33) and who ends up denouncing one's meddling in love for having "for euerye pynte of honnye a gallon of gall" (38v-39r), Gosson posits an alternative, positive side to poetry:

> The right use of auncient Poetrie was too have the notable exploytes of woorthy Captaines, the holesome councels of good fathers and vertuous lives of predecessors set downe in numbers… that the sound of the one might draw the hearers from kissing the cupp too often, the sense of the other put them in minde of things past, and chaulk out the way to do the like… To this end are instruments used in battaile, not to tickle the eare, but to teach every souldier when to strike and when to stay, when to flye, and when to followe. (7v)

Gosson's conception of the deceitful rhetorical wit of the poet as befuddling the intellectual wit of his audience amounts to an attack on imagination altogether: "It was an old law & long kept that no man should according to his owne humor, adde or diminish, in matters concerning that Art, but walk in the pathes of their predecessors" (9v). Poetry finds its proper place only when it disallows rhetorical wittiness in favour of imitating the universal morals of the past, producing a stable intellect rather than deceiving its audience through an overly-sharpened wit.

This view suggests, in line with Gosson's aims, that ideal wit is incompatible with the changes shaping London's emerging theatre scene and with the assumed identities of the theatrical medium itself. But along the way Gosson attacks "the corruptible nature of man" and produces a testament to rhetoric's engagement with fallible reality rather than with a

fixed moral ideal.[24] Gosson's work is a more serious discussion of human nature and the mimetic arts than it has sometimes been given credit for, notably by C.S. Lewis's assertion that "His pamphlet is hardly explicable except on the assumption that his main, almost his sole, purpose was rhetorical display. We take Gosson far too seriously if we try to give him a place in the history of English criticism".[25] But it is equally evident that Gosson's own rhetorical display stands as a barrier to accepting his invectives against rhetoric at face value. Even more so, *The Schoole of Abuse* is a work aimed at restoring a certain fixed ideal and objecting to the commoditised, fluid nature of contemporary poetry and theatre, and yet Gosson's work is written in a euphuistic style that is highly commoditised and marketable.[26]

The euphuism of *The Schoole of Abuse* is perhaps most jarring immediately after Gosson dispraises poets' self-sharpened wits as mixing their poison with rhetorical sweetness:

> The deceitfull Phisition giueth sweete Syrropes to make his poyson goe downe the smoother: The Juggler casteth a myst to worke the closer: The Syrens song is the Saylers wrack: The Fowlers whistle, the birdes death: The wholesome bayte, the fishes bane… (2r)

The calculated language of balanced parallelisms, suggestive of marketplace exchanges in Lyly and Greene's prose, reflects a similar idea in *The Schoole of Abuse*. For Gosson, even the notions of his own persona as it emerges from the text echo changeability for, as Kinney had noted, Gosson is at times a man of wisdom and at others a man of the people, sometimes a sinner and other times a moral guide.[27] Gosson may have been writing in the style imparted to him at Oxford by the teachings of Reynolds, who preached moderation but was notable for

[24] Kinney, 'O Vita! Misero Longa, Foelici Brevis: Thomas Lodge's Struggle for Felicity', *Thomas Lodge*, ed. C. Whitney (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011) 86.
[25] C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954) 396.
[26] See the previous chapter's discussion of Lyly, Greene, and the marketability inherent in euphuism.
[27] See Kinney, *Markets of Bawdrie* 41-42.

the copiousness of his Latin.[28] But his euphuism ultimately produces a similar effect to that produced in Lyly's *Euphues*, so that the stated ideals of Gosson's rhetoric – upholding content over form (34v) and experience over learning (11r-v), and especially aspiring to a fixed ideal rather than the negotiable, corrupt reality of the theatre – are all destabilised by their own medium.

Gosson's life while writing *The Schoole of Abuse* was similar in many respects to that of John Lyly as he was writing *Euphues*. Both men had failed to secure a fellowship at Oxford, both had yet to find popular acceptance, and both appealed to notable patrons in their works.[29] It is conceivable that, as it had functioned for Lyly, so did Gosson's euphuistic style serve to exhibit his own literary worth in the quest for securing patronage and financial success. This, of course, casts an even larger shadow on Gosson's warnings against the commercialised theatre, a shadow that had not gone unnoticed by some of Gosson's contemporary critics. Chief among those was Sir Philip Sidney, *The Schoole of Abuse*'s own dedicatee, an intriguing choice given that Sidney's acquaintances Spenser and Harvey had up to this point been the only English authors to dedicate works to him.[30] Gosson's choice of appealing to Sidney is often noted as misguided due to Sidney's disapproving response in *The Defence of Poesie*, but Sidney and Gosson came from a similar theological background.[31] In fact, it has been claimed that their ideological meeting points were so significant that it is to Gosson's crude presentation, rather than his content, that Sidney objected.[32] It is clear that Gosson himself soon became aware of the attacks on his work and style and made efforts to

[28] See Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 11-12.
[29] See Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 17.
[30] See F. B. Williams, *Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses in English Books Before 1641* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1962) 170. It should be noted however that both Harvey and Spenser, in their appeals to Sidney's fame, may have been depicting their relationship with Sidney as more intimate than it really was. See also Hadfield 106-8.
[31] See Matz 136; Lehnhof, 'Profeminism in Philip Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 48:1 (2008): 23; Hawkes 256.
[32] See Kinney, 'Parody and Its Implications in Sydney's Defense of Poesie', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 12:1 (1972): 6.

address them. His later response to his attackers was published in 1582 as *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions*.[33] It is consistent with *The Schoole of Abuse* in message and usage of wit – a term once again both rhetorical, as in "Many thinges might bee spoken against Playes, for the vaine ostentation of a flourishinge wit" (A6r); and intellectual, as in "we tremble & shiver at the remembrance of folly past, & gather vp our wittes vnto amending" (E8r). The treatise's aim, as Gosson states from the start, is to reiterate his message and respond to accusations regarding Gosson's own plays (A7r-v). It also serves, however, to deflect stylistic criticism by presenting a work written not in the euphuism derived from the rhetorical exercises of his university years, but in a plainer arrangement derived from his logical training.[34] Similarly his short pamphlet entitled *An Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse*,[35] published along with *The Ephemerides of Phialo* a few months after *The Schoole of Abuse* in 1579, anticipates the criticism directed at him by Lodge and clarifies that he does not mean to attack art in general, but rather its corrupt users, using the same image of the physician that had before served to showcase his euphuism: "When we accuse the Phisition for killing his patient, we finde no faulte with the Arte it selfe, but with him that hath abused the same" (82v).[36] As the next sections suggest, however, some profound differences remained between Gosson and his responders, and between their notions of rhetorical wit and the value of art, despite his attempts at bridging those differences.

[33] STC 12095. The full title of the work addresses Lodge's defence of plays directly: *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions, Prouing that they are not to be suffred in a Christian common weale, by the waye both the Cauils of Thomas Lodge, and the Play of Playes, written in their defence, and other obiections of Players frendes, are truely set downe and directlye aunsweared.*
[34] See Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 86.
[35] In Gosson, *The Ephemerides of Phialo Deuided into Three Bookes. The First, a Method Which He Ought to Follow That Desireth to Rebuke His Freend, When He Seeth Him Swarue* (STC 12093).
[36] And so, erasing some of the ideological differences between Lodge and himself. See also Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 68-69.

The Denial of Wit in Lodge's Response

In his *Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse,* Gosson writes that some in the pro-theatre camp "haue got one in London to write certaine *Honest excuses,* for so they tearme it, to their dishonest abuses which I reuealed" (90v). Some critics take this man to be Thomas Lodge and *Honest excuses* to be his untitled defence, written shortly after the publication of Gosson's tract.[37] A fellow Oxonian, Lodge's work was suppressed – the precise reason is not definitively known – but circulated privately and was certainly made known to Gosson before he wrote his 1582 reply in *Playes Confuted*.[38] Regardless of whether it is the work referred to by Gosson or not, Lodge's maiden work closely engages with Gosson and refers to him by name a total of 12 times. As the earliest surviving Elizabethan defence of poetry and the theatre, this work provides a counterpart to Gosson's work from a man whose ideas and stylistic choices nevertheless share much with the target of his attack.[39]

From the start, Lodge posits his own tract as a sensible response to what he perceives as Gosson's ridiculousness of content and form: "fuller of words then judgement, the matter certainely as ridiculus as serius: assuredly his mother witte wrought this wonder, the child to dispraise his father" (3). Referring to Gosson as "my ouer wittie frend" (4), Lodge shares his objection to the rhetoric of overly-sharpened, changeable wits, but claims that Gosson fails to live up to his own ideal. Lodge's own stylistic choices seem to support this view, as the tract makes use of balanced parallelisms and frequent classical allusions that echo Gosson's

[37] See J. D. Wilson, 'The Missing Title of Thomas Lodge's Reply to Gosson's "School of Abuse"' 166; Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 66-67.
[38] Lodge's later reference to the case in *An Alarum against Vsurers* (1584. STC 16653) suggests that it is the subject matter that displeased the authorities: "by reason of the slendernes of the subiect (because it was in defence of plaies & play makers) the godly & reuerent that had to deale in the cause, misliking it, forbad the publishing" (A3v). See also J. D. Wilson, 'The Missing Title of Thomas Lodge's Reply to Gosson's "School of Abuse"' 166.
[39] For more on Lodge's life, education and other works, see Sisson, 'Thomas Lodge the Man', *Thomas Lodge,* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011) 3-17; Laing, 'Some Account of Thomas Lodge and his Writing', in Lodge's *A defence of poetry, music, and stage-plays* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1853) xii-lxv; and Walker, 'The Life of Thomas Lodge', *Review of English Studies* 9:36 (1933): 410-32.

euphuism: "What made the Chians and Colophonians fal to such controuersy? Why seke the Smirnians, to recouer from the Salaminians the prais of Homer?" (9), but in a greatly toned-down fashion, more sparing in its repetition of such clauses and making less frequent use of alliteration and natural commonplaces.[40] Lodge's engagement with euphuism to argue against Gosson is a nod to the central role played by disputations in euphuistic works, in which they are often the protagonists' favourite pastime. Topics common to university disputations, such as the merits of education, the role of women and the nature of knowledge, feature frequently in such works.[41] Lyly's own Euphues, for example, argues with Eubulus over the follies of uneducated youth (35-42) and with Lucilla over the nature of women (47-51); while Rich's Don Simonides debates the limits of human knowledge with a philosopher as part of a discussion of Nature and Art (117-25). For university disputations, it was rhetorical skill, not the issue itself, which was most significant. Lodge's objections, however, strike at the core of the disputations themselves, because it is precisely the overreliance on one's rhetorical wit that he inveighs against, his own euphuism suitably toned-down to the message he aims to deliver.

The poets that Gosson attacked, Lodge suggests, are strawmen that don't exist in practice: "he raysed up a new sect of serius Stoikes, that can abide naught but their owen shadow, and alow nothing worthye, but what they conceaue" (4). Instead of a man drawing solely on his own rhetorical wit to produce delightful Platonic corruptions of nature, Lodge suggests humanist examples that fulfil an ideal of instruction:

> I wyll have you therefore to taste first of that cold riuer Phricus, in Thratia, which, as Aristotle reporteth, changeth blacke into white… that is of an enuious man a wel minded person, reprehending of zeale that wherein he hath sinned by folly, and so being prepared, thy purgation wyll worke more easy,

[40] See also Rae, *Thomas Lodge* (New York, NY: Twayne, 1967) 23.
[41] For more on topics of university disputation, see Thompson, *Universities in Tudor England* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1959) 22. See also Fletcher, 'The Faculty of the Arts', *The History of the University of Oxford, Vol. 1. The Early Oxford Schools*, ed. J. I. Catto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 386-93.

> thy understanding wyll be more persit, thou shalt blush at thy abuse, and reclaime thy selfe by force of argument. (11-12)

Poetry communicates via images that act as allegorical lessons: "vnder the persons of beastes many abuses were dissiphered" (4).[42] The source of these images, however, rests not simply in man's bodily wit or "*Substantiam intellectu predictam*", as Lodge terms Plato's definition for the soul (6). Rather, it is precisely the corruptibleness of man that Gosson's Plato represents: "your Plato in midst of his presisnes wrought that absurdite that neuer may be red in Poets, to make a yearthly creature to beare the person of the Creator, and a corruptible substance, an incomprehensible God!" (6).

In place of a rhetorical wit bound within the confines of sensible knowledge, Lodge provides a vision of the poet that unites man's inspiration with his rhetoric: "when ther matter is most heauenly, their stile is most loftye, a strange token of the wonderfull efficacy of the same" (11). Rather than an expression of man's corruption, which Lodge does not deny, his rhetoric is elevated through "heauenly inspiration from aboue" (11), like Ronsard's Pléiadic poet which is "directed by celestial influence".[43] This is suggestive of the same force that for Bartholomeus elevates man's *inwit*, "departed as an Angell" (14r) from the corruption of the body. Moral objections to poetry are sidestepped, for it is the divine that guides man's wit and his persuasive style is an expression of worthy content. Epistemological concerns are equally discarded, for through heavenly influence the poet aims not at sensible reality but at an educational ideal: "a poet's wit can correct, yet not offend" (26). The Pléiades' idea of poetry as divinely inspired is suggestive of the Platonic *furor poeticus*, or a kind of ecstasy

[42] See also Kinney, 'Thomas Lodge's Struggle for Felicity' 85.
[43] Cave, 'Ronsard as Apollo: Myth, Poetry and Experience in a Renaissance Sonnet-Cycle', *Yale French Studies* 47 (1972): 76. Ronsard's own literary and dramatic criticism often notes that the "gift of poetry is like a divine fire" (Wiley, 'Ronsard's Ideas on the Theatre'. *Studies in Philology* 50.2 [1953]: 151). For more on Lodge's knowledge of the French and Italian lyric poets, see Walker, 'The Reading of an Elizabethan: Some Sources of the Prose Pamphlets of Thomas Lodge'. *The Review of English Studies* 8.31 (1932): 278; and Prescott, *French Poets and the English Renaissance: Studies in Fame and Transformation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978) 112-14; 142.

which is inspired by the Muses and which alone allows for the creation of proper, educative poetry:[44]

> … the Muse inspires men herself, and then by means of these inspired persons the inspiration spreads to others, and holds them in a connected chain. For all the good epic poets utter all those fine poems not from art, but as inspired and possessed, and the good lyric poets likewise… For a poet is a light and winged and sacred thing, and is unable ever to indite until he has been inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer in him: every man, whilst he retains possession of that, is powerless to indite a verse or chant an oracle. (*Ion* 533e-534b)[45]

The implication of this passage is that both *ingenium* and rhetorical wit or art (τέχνη) are excluded from poetry. This is reflected in Lodge's mockery of Gosson's over-sharpened wittiness and equally deficient intellectual wit:

> the vniversity is litle beholding to you, al their practices in teaching are friuolus. Witt hath wrought that in you, that yeares and studie neuer setled in the heads of our sagest doctors. No mervel you disprayse Poetrye, when you know not what it meanes (6)

Lodge, like Gosson, fails to live up to this ideal that excludes his own wit, and he would go on to become a prolific writer of euphuistic romances, such as *Rosalynde*, as well as of prose pamphlets, dramas and poetry – although the latter offered him the least success[46] – before converting to Catholicism around 1596 and largely retiring from active literary life.[47] If it is indeed *Strange News*, Lodge's tract, like Gosson's, is probably a contracted work aimed at advancing its young author's fortunes, even though its suppression means that it lacks the

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[44] See also Murray, 'Inspiration and Mimēsis in Plato', *Apeion* 25:4 (1992): 36-37. For more on *furor poeticus* in Ronsard and the Pléiades, see Castor, *Pléiade Poetics: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Thought and Terminology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) 29.

[45] Plato, 'Ion', *Statesman. Philebus. Ion*, trans. Fowler and Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925) 401-48. A similar possession by the Muses is described in the *Phaedrus*, which "takes hold upon a gentle and pure soul, arouses it and inspires it to songs and other poetry, and thus by adorning countless deeds of the ancients educates later generations" (245a). See Plato, 'Phaedrus', *Euthyphro. Apology. Crito. Phaedo. Phaedrus*, trans. H. N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914) 407-580.

[46] For more on Lodge's other writings and his success as a poet see Walker, 'The Reading of an Elizabethan' 264-65; and Laing lviii-lxv.

[47] Allison 7-8.

usual dedication to a patron.[48] It consequently fails to disengage from euphuism's propensity to produce university-style disputations in which the issue at hand takes a back seat to the disputant's wit. For the two men's works – works of university-educated men who have yet to make a name for themselves and whose Christian humanism suggests similar moral and epistemological positions – function in a very similar way.[49] Their differences seem not ideological but practical, as both reject artful wittiness in favour of divine inspiration. Perhaps due to their commercial concerns, the major difference between Gosson and Lodge is one of attitude – Gosson notes examples of good poetry but his focus is on poetic degeneration, while Lodge notes that poetry can be immoral and yet focuses on its proper uses. The final work discussed in this chapter, Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy*, is the work of a very different man, an author so well thought-of that both Gosson's *Schoole* and Lodge's next work, *An Alarum against Vsurers* (1584), were dedicated to him. The subject of the next section, Sidney's *Defence* has been celebrated for centuries as one of the Renaissance's most significant works, but it is also an affirmation of the poetic wit by a writer that is primarily a poet himself.[50]

Sidney's Erected Wit and *The Defence of Poesy*

Critics often note the similarities between Sidney and his two fellow debaters, especially those that relate to the Elizabethan theatre itself and to the three's theological ideals.[51] Indeed, it has been argued that Sidney's treatise fails to adequately address Gosson

[48] It also shows the marks of generous borrowing from older works, especially Badius' *Praenotamenta*, first printed in 1502 in France. See also Ringler, 'The Source of Lodge's Reply to Gosson', *Review of English Studies* 58 (1939): 165.
[49] On the similarities between Gosson's and Lodge's positions, see Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* 15-6; and Kinney, 'Thomas Lodge's Struggle for Felicity' 85.
[50] One of Sidney's editors had gone as far as naming it "the most important English work of literary theory published in the Renaissance" on the back cover of their edition. See Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry (Or the Defence of Poesy)*, ed. R.W. Maslen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).
[51] See for example Lehnhof, 'Profeminism in Philip Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie' 24; Kinney, 'Parody and Its Implications in Sydney's Defense of Poesie' 6.

precisely because of these similarities. Sidney's own objections to the theatre and his engagement with an acknowledged fallen reality certainly cast a shadow on the celebration of poetry that is *The Defence of Poesy*. And yet the treatise's enduring significance as a piece of Renaissance literary theory is aided by much critical work that highlights Sidney's originality, rather than his similarities to other thinkers. Whether it is through Sidney's ideas of masculinity and femininity, his engaging literary persona or his innovative use of classical philosophy, the *Defence* is nothing if not insightful.[52] The *Defence*'s vision of the poet's wit and the practical manifestation of its creation, to which Sidney devotes some of the treatise's most striking moments, is exceedingly so.[53]

The circumstances surrounding the writing of *The Defence of Poesy* are markedly different from those of the earlier tracts because Sidney, the grandson of the Duke of Northumberland and the son of the Queen's at-times Lord Deputy of Ireland and Lord President of Wales, came from a very different background.[54] Not aiming at the same targets as many of his contemporaries, Sidney's work was not intended for publication and the *Defence* only circulated in manuscript form until almost a decade after Sidney's death. Rather than as a means to seek an advancement in court or to make money, Sidney's works seem to have served an opposite purpose, a chance to escape court business and establish himself as a

[52] For discussions of Sidney's ideas on gender, see Lehnhof, 'Profeminism in Philip Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie'; J. A. Williams, 'Erected Wit and Effeminate Repose: Philip Sidney's Postures of Reader-Response', *The Modern Language Review* 104:3 (2009); and Doherty, *The Mistress-Knowledge: Sir Philip Sidney's Defence of Poesie and Literary Architectonics in the English Renaissance* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1991). For more on Sidney's knowledge and use of classical philosophy, see Partee, 'Sir Philip Sidney and the renaissance knowledge of Plato'; and Krouse, 'Plato and Sidney's Defence of Poesie', *Comparative Literature* 6:2 (1954). For more on Sidney's persona in the *Defence*, see Barnes, 'The Hidden Persuader: The Complex Speaking Voice of Sidney's Defence of Poetry', *PMLA* 86:3 (1971).

[53] Citations for the *Defence* (using line numbers) are to Sidney, 'The Defence of Poesy', *Sir Philip Sidney, A Critical Edition of the Major Works* 212-50.

[54] See Alexander, *Sidney's The Defence of Poesy and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* lii-liii. For more on Sidney's life, see Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915); Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991); Stewart, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000); and, especially regarding his European travels and influence, Buxton, *Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1964).

poet rather than as a courtier.[55] This idea of breaking free from a strictly-conceived system is especially significant for understanding Sidney's tract for it forms the most distinguished characteristic of his ideal poet, described as free from the confines of nature to range under the guidance of his own poetic wit.

To understand Sidney's idea of poetry it is necessary to reflect on his engagement with Aristotle, for the *Defence* makes constant references to the *Poetics* when it defines the role of the poet.[56] Sidney's poet, like the Aristotelian one, is an all-encompassing maker of more than merely verses: "we Englishmen have met with the Greeks in calling him a maker" (153-54).[57] The best kind of poets, Sidney suggests, are "they which most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be" (252-55). The passage is a clear nod to Aristotle, whose poets similarly range beyond the confines of history: "it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen, what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity" (*Poetics* 1451a). Sidney's poet, however, is a very different one from Aristotle's, for his goal is to produce a moral imperative of what *should* be, rather than a merely probabilistic one of what *may*.[58] Like Lodge's divinely-inspired poet, so is Sidney's the product of "the heavenly Maker of that maker" (204) and the product of his *poiesis* can even compete with Nature herself, for "Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden" (185).

[55] It is even suggested that he may have been financially worse off for engaging in writing rather than attending to his duties in court. See Duncan-Jones, 'Introduction'. For Sidney's relations in court and their effect on his work, see Ferguson, 'Sidney's A Defence of Poetry: A Retrial', *boundary 2* 7:2 (1979).
[56] For an extended discussion showing that Sidney read the *Poetics* in the original Greek, as well as in other languages, see Lazarus, 'Aristotle's Poetics in Renaissance England' (University of Oxford Diss., 2014) 71-107.
[57] See also Alexander, *Sidney's The Defence of Poesy and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* lviii.
[58] See also Reisner, 'The Paradox of Mimesis in Sidney's Defence of Poesie and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 39:4 (2010): 334-35.

Gosson argued for a fixed intellectual wit over a shifting rhetorical one, but Sidney suggests that the one elevates the other:

> Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms as never were in nature… so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. (175-78; 179-82)

The poet's rhetoric, active and varying like the rhetorical wit that Gosson objects to in his rejection of imagination, is freed from the boundaries of nature's gifts and given free rein to wander under the guidance of a zodiac, which has come to figuratively represent an inclusive and ordering principle.[59] Like Palingenius' encyclopaedic *Zodiacus vitae,* which attempted to represent and order the entirety of human knowledge, Sidney's zodiac is epistemological and represented by man's divinely-inspired intellect, or his "erected wit" which "maketh us know what perfection is" (209).[60] Rather than embracing Plato's *furor poeticus,* as Lodge does, Sidney invokes Horace's response in which *ingenium* and rhetoric become themselves divinely inspired: "To the Greeks the Muse gave native wit [ingenium], to the Greeks she gave speech in well-rounded phrase [ore rotundo… loqui]" (*Ars Poetica* 323-24).[61] It is precisely the movement of wit that rhetoric generates, rather than the imitation of invariable past examples, that produces Sidney's Horatian ideal of "a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight" (221-22).[62] Sidney's restatement of wit as an inevitable condition of man capable of transcending nature and producing a microcosm of perfect knowledge is coupled with a rebuke of the practical manifestation of wit as capable of most harm. In a

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[59] See also M. Mack, *Sidney's Poetics: Imitating Creation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 72-77.
[60] Marcellus Palingenius' work, dated to c1530, is noted by the Oxford English Dictionary to be the first to use the zodiac in a figurative sense ('Zodiac, N.' 3.b).
[61] Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. R. Fairclough (London: William Heinemann, 1942).
[62] An ideal quite unlike Plato's denunciation of pleasure in the *Republic*. See also Lamb, 'Apologizing for Pleasure in Sidney's "Apology for Poetry": The Nurse of Abuse Meets the Tudor Grammar School', *Criticism* 36:3 (1994): 499.

reversal of Castiglione's warning against indifferent *ingenio*, however, it is good use by which wit is ought to be defined:[63]

> For I will not deny but that man's wit may make poesy, which should be *eikastiké* (which some learned have defined: figuring forth good things), to be *phantastiké* (which doth, contrariwise, infect the fancy with unworthy objects)… But what, shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious?… whatsoever, being abused, doth most harm, being rightly used (and upon the right use each thing conceiveth his title), doth most good." (988-90; 996-97; 1001-1003)

Man's wit, as it aspires to perfection, can reproduce Plato's accurate eikastic art (εἰκαστικὴ τέχνη) of imitation rather than his subjective, corrupt phantastic (φανταστικὴ τέχνη) one.[64] In defending the poetic arts, Sidney makes use of similar arguments to Lodge and produces a similarly-inspired maker working to achieve an ideal, but his treatise goes a step further. Unlike Lodge's poetry which "procedeth from aboue" (9), Sidney's *Defence* celebrates the poet's own 'freely ranging' inspiration, the "work of the free and godly poet".[65] This does not amount to a denial of heavenly authority, of course, because man's poetry indirectly honours God "who having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature" (204-205). It raises an issue, however, of which Sidney is acutely aware: the 'second nature' that is poetry, despite man's erected wit, is produced in and aimed at corrupt reality in which perfection is impossible, for wit's corrupt counterpart prohibits it: "and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it" (209-10).

Sidney seems to respond to this problem when he turns to examine the actual poetics of his time, because his manner and attitude change entirely, along with his terminology.[66]

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[63] Castiglione L2r-L2v. See discussion in Chapter 1.
[64] Although for Plato both are of relatively low value (Sheppard, 'Plato and the Neoplatonists', *Platonism and the English Imagination* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994] 15). For more on Plato's division of imitation in the *Sophist*, see also Biester, 'Fancy's Images: Wit, the Sublime, and the Rise of Aestheticism', *Wonders, Marvels, and Monsters in Early Modern Culture* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1999) 298-99.
[65] Guagliardo, 'The Poet, the Skeptic, his Witches, and their Queen: Political Theology and Poetic Charms in Sidney's Defence', *ELH* 81:3 (2014): 750.
[66] See primarily the section in lines 1165-1451.

From a celebration of the poet's supremacy over the philosopher and the astronomer, the treatise moves to a scathing look at the perceived corruption of Sidney's contemporary poets and dramatists:

> … before I give my pen a full stop, it shall be but a little more lost time to inquire why England, the mother of excellent minds, should be grown so hard a stepmother to poets, who certainly in wit ought to pass all other, since all only proceedeth from their wit, being indeed makers of themselves, not takers of others. (1165-70)

The need to shape an English literary tradition out of a perceived lack is common, as Richard Helgerson had noted, in authors of Sidney's generation, "after nearly two centuries of only sporadic accomplishment" in the English language.[67] Concerned with 'makers' instead of 'takers', Sidney echoes the sentiments of Ascham's *The Scholemaster*, for whom a self-fashioning of one's hard wit in learning, not a "passive acceptance of 'time and custom'" which he sees as the legacy of the English poetry of the past, is essential to producing a true understanding of Englishness.[68] And yet for Ascham this self-fashioning of English wit is not without a model for imitation: "to follow rather the *Gothes* in Ryming, than the Greekes in trew versifying, were euen to eate ackornes with swyne" ('The Scholemaster' 289). In his engagement with English tradition in practice, Sidney's language of poetic wit, which was characterised before as being free from nature's ownership and as possessing the power to grow an alternative nature, now takes an abrupt turn and becomes closer to Ascham's imitative one. For Sidney suddenly acknowledges that style is an intrinsic part of discourse – even as he protests the equation of poetry with verse alone – and that it must be ordered:[69]

> Our matter is *quodlibet* [whatever] indeed, though wrongly performing Ovid's verse,
> *Quicquid conabor dicere, versus erit* [whatever I tried to say, it was verse];

[67] Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 1-2.
[68] Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood* 28-29, 36.
[69] See also Hager, *Dazzling Images: The Masks of Sir Philip Sidney* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1991) 33-34.

> never marshalling it into any assured rank, that almost readers cannot tell where to find themselves (1235-39)

Instead of *mimesis* as unconstrained imaginative creation, Sidney moves closer to Gosson and Ascham and suggests learning from the examples of the past: "as the fertilest ground must be manured, so must the highest flying wit have a Daedaus to guide him" (1225-26).[70] This euphuistic comparison suggests a shift in Sidney's language that matches his content, the end of Icarus' journey notwithstanding, but the treatise proceeds to object to both euphuism and the commercialisation it represents. The *Defence* shies away from commercial publication, because "base men with servile wits undertake it, who think it enough if they can be rewarded of the printer" (1197-98).[71] It similarly objects to its literary counterpart:

> So is that honey-flowing matron Eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation: one time, with so far-fet words that may seem monsters but must seem strangers to any poor Englishman; another time, with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a dictionary; another time, with figures and flowers, extremely winter starved… Now for similitudes, in certain printed discourses, I think all herbarists, all stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits; which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible. (1397-1402, 1428-31)

Obviously counting euphuism's similitudes among the affectations which he denounces, Sidney is seemingly reaffirming the freedom of the poet that he celebrated in previous sections of his treatise:

> I have found in divers smally learned courtiers a more sound style than in some professors of learning… the courtier, following that which by practice he findeth fittest to nature, therein (though he know it not) doth according to art, though not by art: where the other, using art to show art, and not to hide art (as in these cases he should do), flieth from nature, and indeed abuseth art. (1445-51)

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[70] Hardison, 'The Two Voices of Sidney's Apology for Poetry', *English Literary Renaissance* 2:1 (1972): 94.
[71] For more on Sidney's unwillingness to have the *Defence* widely circulated, and on the history of Sidney's manuscripts in general, see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 234-35.

The idea of the overly-learned as failed rhetoricians is also found elsewhere in Sidney, such as in Rombus, the incompetent schoolmaster of Sidney's masque *The Lady of May* whose elaborate speeches are met with derision.[72] Instead, Sidney's idea of proper commodity is suggested to exist in the workings of a plain speech as it achieves its Ciceronian goals: "Antonius and Crassus, the great forefather of Cicero in eloquence, the one (as Cicero testifieth of them) pretended not to know art, the other not to set by it, because with a plain sensibleness they might win credit of popular ears" (1436-40). These passages, however, reflect not a free and unconstrained poet but rather an admission that one is practising *sprezzatura*, or Castiglione's concept of carefully-concealed artfulness.[73] As it had done for Castiglione, *sprezzatura* promises to celebrate natural *ingenium* over wittiness – speaking aptly over affection or *affettazzione* – but ultimately suggests the opposite, a show of constructed and concealed artifice. Even more so, it is suggestive of a speaker working not merely towards Cicero's didactic goals but also to establish his own reputation.

The wit of Sidney's ideal poet had come before to suggest an intellectual capacity to gain "a natural insight into the nature of truth itself".[74] When *sprezzatura* is invoked, however, it becomes reduced in scope to the bounded and fallible attribute that the purposeful concealment of art cannot help but reveal:

> [poetry is] a divine gift, and no human skill: since all other knowledges lie ready to any that hath strength of wit. A poet no industry can make, if his own genius be not carried into it; and therefore it is an old proverb, *orator fit, poeta nascitur* [an orator is made, a poet is born]. (1221-24)

[72] *The Lady of May* was probably written in 1578 and performed in front of and involving the Queen. It first appeared in print in a collection of Sidney's writings from 1598 (STC 22541; 570-76). See also Duncan-Jones, 'Chronology', *Sir Philip Sidney, A Critical Edition of the Major Works* xxii-xxiii.
[73] See discussion in Chapter 1.
[74] An idea Sidney shares with Ramus. Robinson, *The Shape of Things Known: Sidney's Apology in its Philosophical Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972) 116.

This is an idea that flirts with Lodge's similar assertion that "Poetrye commeth from aboue, from a heauenly seate of a glorious God, unto an excellent creature man: an Orator is but made by exercise" (10), although it maintains the pre-eminence of the poet's genius rather than the direct frenzy of *furor poeticus* as the originator of poetry. But this amounts to a diminution of wit, in line with Sidney's remark on Plato's *Ion* as attributing "unto poesy more than myself do, namely, to be a very inspiring of a divine force, far above man's wit" (1135-36). Wit is severed in the passage from *ingenium* to become merely a capacity for learning and insufficient to produce true poetry. With *ingenium* itself being morally indifferent in the tradition that produced *sprezzatura* in the first place, Sidney's practical poet becomes in many ways the opposite of his ideal one, for whom a "purifying of wit… which we commonly call learning" (293-94) is nevertheless significant for allowing "as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of" (296-8). Even his idea of nature shifts, as Sidney's practical poet comes to embrace it as the fount of inspiration despite the previous rejection by his ideal poet, freed from the boundaries of commoditised exchange, of nature's gifts. This is suggestive of two different conceptions of the term at which Sidney is pointing. His ideal poet rejects and outdoes our everyday, post-lapsarian nature (*natura naturata*), while his practical poet fails to appropriate the Nature of God (*natura naturans*).[75] The slippage in the word's meaning from the practical to the ideal is inversely mirrored in the shifting of wit and that of the passage itself.

Sidney ends his examination of contemporary English poets with a look at the medium of the practical poet, the English vernacular itself. Earlier in the *Defence* he had taken a position in line with Ascham's rejection of 'Gothic' rhyme: "it is not rhyming and versing that maketh poesy" (870-71). This is a position common in Sidney's humanist circles

[75] See Stillman 112. For more on Sidney's poet as looking towards the Nature of God while outdoing God's created nature, see M. Mack 33.

and one of which Sidney himself was considered to be a leading proponent, as evidenced by Spenser's identification of Sidney, in his correspondence with Gabriel Harvey, as advocating "a generall surceasing and silence of balde Rymers" and instead prescribing "certaine Lawes and rules of Quantities of English sillables for English Verse" (2).[76] The *Defence*'s practical voice, however, plays with expectations once again, and shifts to accommodate both quantitative verse and rhyming verse as worthy, and English as uniquely suitable for both:

> Now of versifying there are two sorts, the one ancient, the other modern: the ancient marked the quantity of each syllable, and according to that framed his verse; the modern… the chief life of it standeth in that like sounding of the words, which we call rhyme. Whether of these be the more excellent, would bear many speeches… there being in either sweetness, and wanting in neither majesty. Truly the English, before any vulgar language I know, is fit for both sorts. (1473-85)

The stated promise is, as it had been for the discussion of *sprezzatura*, to celebrate the lack of constraint in the English wit whose language is not bound by any single kind of verse. But the argument is once again undermined, for it is within the discussion of that most constrained arrangement of speech – namely verse – that English is given this freedom. Sidney makes sure this is understood when he proceeds to discuss the various rules dictated by both forms of verse, rules which other vernacular languages, he suggests, are ill-suited to uphold. Like his insufficient wit, so is the practical poet's English insufficient to break free of the constraints of language.

The Highest-Flying Wit?

The two distinct modes of Sidney's treatise – the ideal and the practical – have been the source of much scholarly debate. The incongruence of the two voices has led critics,

[76] This letter is dated to late 1579. 'Edmund Spenser to Gabriel Harvey [I]', *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904). For more on the debate surrounding quantitative verse and rhyme, see Quinn, 'Samuel Daniel's Defense of Medievalism', *Prose Studies* 23:2 (2000): 31-32; and Evans, 'Spenser's Role in the Controversy over Quantitative Verse', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 57:3 (1956).

notably O.B. Hardison, to suggest that the two parts had been written in different periods of Sidney's life, the first dominated by a Catholic-like inclusivism and the second by a later, more exclusive neo-classicism which some critics identify with a Calvinist view.[77] Possibly more influenced by Melanchthon and the Philippists than by Calvin, as Sidney's engagement with Languet and Mornay suggests, the religion that emerges from the *Defence* nevertheless appears conflicted.[78] Critics tend to agree that at the very least Sidney subscribed to a reformed, even oppositional theology and that his treatise reflected the belief that poetry is "an instrument of social and political change" or a quest for enacting an ideal aristocratic Utopia.[79] This has led critics like Stillman and Ferguson to reject the idea that the *Defence* had been written in different periods of Sidney's life in favour of a diplomatic, nonpartisan reading in which Sidney was soberly examining poetry with a practical eye aimed at both celebrating its power and defending against its destructive potential.[80]

There is much to favour the diplomatic readings of Sidney, when we consider that his terminology – shifting in meaning according to the incidental needs of the author – and his vision of English – both Greek and Gothic – are themselves practical. The very choice of allowing such shifts in meaning, and such constrained 'inclusiveness' of language, is appropriate for a poet whose defining characteristic is freedom from conventional boundaries, but whose authority is at the same time questioned by the uncertainty that language affords.

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[77] Hardison 94-95, 98. Note that Duncan-Jones' biography of Sidney (in *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*) similarly observes that Sidney experienced periods of Catholic influence in his life, particularly that of Edmund Campion (124-27), before turning to the writings of Du Plessis Mornay and to more severe Protestantism (270). On Sidney's Calvinism, see Reisner 332; and Heninger, *Sidney and Spenser: The Poet as Maker* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989) 297-7.

[78] See also Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* 166. For more on the Philippists, their own contradictory religion and their influence on Sidney, see Stillman 9-14, 20. Certainly Sidney's focus on innate ideas and Aristotelian universals is in line with Melanchthon's psychology. See discussion in Chapter 1.

[79] Heninger, *Sidney and Spenser* 235. See also Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 85-6.

[80] See Stillman 5; and Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defences of Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983) 150-51.

For the very first paragraph of the *Defence* warns us both against falling for the rhetoric of others and against unduly esteeming our own:

> Then would he add certain praises, by telling what a peerless beast the horse was… that if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse. But thus much at least with his no few words he drave into me, that self-love is better than any gilding to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves be parties. (16-22)[81]

Sidney is obviously thinking of Erasmus' equivocal description of self-flattery in *The Praise of Folly*: "For what is so foolish as to be satisfied with yourself? Or to admire yourself? Yet on the other hand, if you are displeased with yourself, what can you do that is pleasing or graceful or seemly?" (10); and of his similar treatment of the oratory of others: "If therefore, the less skilled man is more pleasing both in his own eyes and in the wondering gaze of the many, what reason is there that he should prefer sound discipline and true skill?" (21).[82] Sidney's own persona of a sonneteer, but one which claims to speak on "behalf of all poets" (540), becomes similarly suspect in its appropriation of universality, despite the claim that the poet "nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth" (935-36). Erasmus' *Folly* suggests that this is an inevitable condition of man: "And now I seem to hear the philosophers disagreeing with me. But the true unhappiness, they say, is to be engrossed in folly, to err, to be deceived, not to know. Nay, this is to live as a man. Why they call it 'unhappy' I cannot see" (16). Whether lamentable or not, it is a fitting expression of Sidney's persona, whose admittance of man's corruption is not enough to dampen his enthusiasm for the human cause, and whose concerns consistently imbue religion with a practical imperative – the need to establish himself as a poet, to create an English wit, and to enact social and political change through rhetoric.[83]

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[81] See also Perry, 'Imitatio and Identity: Thomas Rogers, Philip Sidney, and the Protestant Self', *English Literary Renaissance* 25:3 (2005): 393-94; and Hager 114.
[82] Citations are to section numbers in Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, trans. H. H. Hudson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941).
[83] See also Connell, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 3; Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* 96; and Perry 397-98.

While Sidney appears to share with Gosson and Lodge the preference for wit as engaging in universals, he differs from them by producing a positive account of imagination, which Gosson rejects as deceptive and which Lodge abandons by positing *furor poeticus*.[84] For Sidney wit is not merely that which imitates the past, for that is only the baser wit of Sidney's practical voice, and it is not only a divine one either, because his erected wit is questioned in practice. The brazen world of post-lapsarian nature and the golden one of man's erected wit become intertwined in Sidney's exercise of poetic imagination, in which wit, Nature, and freedom, and indeed language itself, become changeable concepts. Certainly, man's fallen condition due to "that first accursed fall of Adam" (208) casts it in a precarious position, and Sidney's claim that "these arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted" (210-11) and subsequent change of focus to deal with philosophy, astronomy and finally poetry in practice are suggestive of his anxiety. But wit has now become an epistemological condition of man that is always to do with rhetorical making, like the Ramist notion of poetry in which logic and rhetoric both partake, and in which "finding what to say includes, overlaps, is the same as, finding how to say it".[85] The poet's moral imperative is by necessity also a practical one in which "*idea* is manifest" (194) and made material, even if it is in some respect but an acknowledgement of rhetorical pretence.[86] For Sidney explains "that no learning is so good as that which teacheth and moveth to virtue; and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as poetry: then is the conclusion manifest that ink and paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose employed" (920-23).[87] Bound by language to the material world of paper and ink, the poet is yet in the position to make the most of this world, to become the image of Gosson's celebrated soldier not in war but in the service of his public

[84] On Sidney's engagement with universals, see Stillman 111.
[85] Tuve, 'Imagery and Logic: Ramus and Metaphysical Poetics', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 3:4 (1942): 380.
[86] See Levao, 'Sidney's Feigned Apology', *Sir Philip Sidney: An Anthology of Modern Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 139.
[87] See also Connor, '"Delivering Forth": Philip Sidney's Idea and the Labor of Writing', *Sidney Journal* 31:2 (2013): 55-59.

nonetheless.[88] His imperative is to direct man to virtue by reflecting on himself as working within the corrupt world, delineating "the lines of connection or consequence that the mind attempts to draw in making sense out of the world" via man's inevitable poetic wit.[89]

Sidney's vision promises to depict the ideal poet as a moral beacon shining, by God's grace, in a sensible, epistemologically debased world of which his created 'second nature' is nevertheless a part.[90] His own *Defence* is described as "an ink-wasting toy of mine" (1511) with the implication that, had it been poetry and not a prose treatise, it would have been a much better use of material, but of course the *Defence* serves a very significant purpose because it is a practical reflection on poetry and therefore on Sidney himself. It may not have been aimed at commercial publication, but the *Defence* certainly engages with the value produced by poetry, not only to teach but to move as well, for the poet "doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it" (601-603). Sidney's parting words leave no doubt as to what this value amounts to, as they call on the readers to "believe themselves, when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses" (1525-26), a promise we should be wary of for it echoes the irony of Erasmus' *Folly*.[91]

This realignment of the *Defence* with an un-idealised view of poetry in which it is seen in terms of a net loss, rather than as "accumulative and instrumentalist", is central to Catherine Bates' recent study of Sidney's treatise.[92] For Sidney, literary engagements in general were perhaps not financially worthwhile, as suggested before, but Bates goes beyond

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[88] On Sidney's militarised arguments in the *Defence* as reflecting his idea of the poet as soldier, as well as his own aspirations for military public service, see Berry, 'The Poet as Warrior in Sidney's Defence of Poetry', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 29:1 (1989).
[89] Levao 134.
[90] On how Sidney's conceptions of art and the artist borrow from Neoplatonism and Calvinism, but conform to neither and produce instead a hybrid of Plato and Aristotle, see Craig, 'A Hybrid Growth: Sidney's Theory of Poetry in An Apology for Poetry', *English Literary Renaissance* 10:2 (1980): 188-201.
[91] Specifically, section 25. See also Connell 7.
[92] Bates 231.

this and suggests that poetry's complicity with monetary forms amounts to a "refusal, practicably speaking, to be tied to any profitable purpose".[93] That it is a work of propositional prose rather than fictional poetry, Bates argues, reflects the idea that for Sidney "The plea for a non-idealist, non-profitable, non-bankable model of poetry is still unsayable".[94] This plea, in the form of an albeit still conflicted, desirous poetic will, only fully comes out in Sidney's poetic works. The final metaphor in Bates' research, the *raison d'etre* for the *Defence*, paints poetry as a horse – free and unruly – always leading the bumbling horseman, the poet who is necessarily "bad, faulty, or indecorous", where it pleases.[95]

Thomas Nashe, discussed in Chapter 5, brings the questioning of literary value more forcefully to the centre, although his conclusions differ significantly from Sidney's and do not envision the author as so woefully incompetent. And in fact, it is perhaps somewhat insufficient to stop where Bates does, with the image of the poet stumbling along behind poetry's galloping horse, for Sidney's poet embodies a significant human impetus that is not quite without value. This is especially important for the next chapter's discussion of Sidney's *Arcadias*, but even the *Defence* ultimately argues on the side of the poet. To those who oppose poetry, Sidney wishes, "in the behalf of all poets, that while you live, you live in love, and never get favour for lacking skill of a sonnet; and, when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph" (1542-43). The *Defence*, to be sure, consciously offers a circular argument when it pegs the practical as necessary but at the same time admits its failings, all while pretending that it is not in itself a part of the practical commoditisation of poetry. Sidney may claim that the value of man's wit on earth should not be commoditised monetarily, but it is nevertheless one whose engagement is "profitable" (923) and whose product is "golden" (185). Unable to shake off Gosson's monetary terms, Sidney's vision is

[93] Ibid. 77.
[94] Ibid. 141.
[95] Ibid. 270.

equally material – contained in the promise of influence and of an enduring epitaph – because in the fallen reality in which the poet is bound to act, and in which his highly-rhetorical product is created, that is all one can hope for.

Despite being written in the early 1580s and shortly made known to his close circle of associates, the influence of Sidney's *Defence* became evident primarily in the last decade of the century, when several theoretical writings on poetry began to refer to it. These include Sir John Harington's *A Briefe Apologie of Poetrie*, the preface to his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*[96] in which he frequently refers to Sidney and "travels over much the same ground";[97] and William Scott's recently-rediscovered work, *The Model of Poesy*, whose attention to Aristotle is attributed to the influence of Sidney's work.[98] The *Defence* may have even inspired Samuel Daniel's *A Defence of Ryme*, a response to the humanist attempts to elevate English by extracting it from its 'barbarous' customs (such as rhyming verse), which instead celebrated "the cultural accomplishments of the Barbarians themselves".[99] Earlier treatises such as George Puttenham's *The arte of English poesie*[100] or even Sidney's protégé Abraham Fraunce's *The Arkadian rhetorike*[101] fail to mention the *Defence*, although both refer to other works by Sidney.[102] And yet only a few years after Sidney's death in 1586, *The*

[96] Published in 1591. STC 746.
[97] Ward and Waller, *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature: An Encyclopedia in Eighteen Volumes, Volume III: Renascence and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908) XIV.9.
[98] W. Scott, *The Model of Poesy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) xxxviii. Editor Gavin Alexander concludes that it was probably written in 1599.
[99] Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood* 36; also see 39. Daniel's treatise was published in 1603 as a companion to *A panegyrike congratulatorie deliuered to the Kings most excellent Maiestie at Burleigh Harrington in Rutlandshire* (STC 6260), and is a response to Campion's *Obseruations in the Art of English Poesie*, published the year before (STC 4543). It is dedicated to Sidney's nephew, William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke. For more on Daniel's life, including his acquaintance with Sidney's sister and with Fulke Greville, see McKisack, 'Samuel Daniel as Historian', *Review of English Studies* 23:91 (1947): 228-29.
[100] Published in 1589. STC 20519.
[101] Published in 1588. STC 11338.
[102] For more on Puttenham's lack of acquaintance with either Gosson's *Schoole* or Sidney's *Defence*, see Whigham & Rebhorn in Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007) 42; and Alexander in W. Scott xxxviii. Fraunce does refer to the *Defence* extensively in a later work, *The third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch: Entituled, Amintas dale*, published in 1592. See also Bearden, *The Emblematics of the Self: Ekphrasis and Identity in Renaissance Imitations of Greek Romance* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2012) 82-83.

Defence of Poesy had far outstripped the works of Gosson and Lodge for enduring fame and influence. The treatise does not necessarily constitute a complete account of Sidney's theory of poetry and wit. In his sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella,* and especially in his epic *Arcadia* (both old and new) which will be dealt with in the next chapter, Sidney often engages with the concepts at greater length. But though it is not a work of 'immortal verse', the *Defence* has established its place as a fitting epitaph for Sidney and a powerful reflection on the ability of language to bridge mind and body even as it offers us a choice "not between error and truth but between error and recognition of the inevitability of error in the self".[103] In this role it persists to this day.

[103] Ferguson, *Trials of Desire* 155.

Chapter 4 – The Wit of Sidney's Arcadias or, Reassessing the Author as a Wit

Previous chapters examined the way in which 'wit' is used, both commercially and in writings not meant for publication, to express the social value of rhetorical proficiency and its moral and epistemological ambiguity. The interrelationship of *ingenium*, reason and rhetorical aptitude emerged as problematic in vernacular manuals of rhetoric first published around the middle of the century. It was in the prose of the euphuists in the 1570s and 80s, however, that the moral ambiguity of having an unrestrained rhetorical wit was first given a central thematic place, even as this same wit was celebrated for its potential to produce social commodity. The 'wit' of the poet was similarly examined as both dangerous and socially profitable, with Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* producing an account that moves between man's idealised 'erected wit' and its practical manifestations in a balanced reading that both celebrated poetry's ability to produce social change and attempted to defend against its destructive potential. In some of his other works, however, Sidney was rethinking the idea of 'wit' as social commodity as he focused, away from the public eye, on political and religious considerations. This chapter looks at the transformation in Sidney's reworking of his pastoral prose, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*.

Early on in the version known today as the *Old Arcadia*, Philip Sidney has his narrator apologise for not expanding upon the earlier adventures of his two protagonist princes, Pyrocles and Musidorus: "what befell unto them,what valiant acts they did, passing in one year's space through the lesser Asia, Syria, and Egypt, how many ladies they defended from wrongs, and disinherited persons restored to their rights, it is a workfor a higher style than mine…" (11).[1] Sidney is conventionally using the ancient *topoi* of *paralepsis* (or

[1] Citations for the *Old Arcadia* are to *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. J. Robertson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973). Citations for the *New Arcadia* are to *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)*, ed. V. Skretkowicz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

occupatio), describing something by seeming to pass it over, and of *recusatio*, claiming inability to write in a specific poetic style.[2] This episodic recounting of heroic acts, however, which readers of the *Old Arcadia* are for the most part denied, was to form the heart of Sidney's transformative additions to his pastoral prose which resulted in the incomplete text of the *New Arcadia*. Sidney makes here a plain reference to a grand style, which according to Aristotle is particularly suited to epic poetry: "It is a great matter to observe propriety in these several modes of expression, as also in compound words, strange (or rare) words, and so forth. But the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor… In heroic poetry, indeed, all these varieties are serviceable" (*Poetics* 1459a).[3] There has been much debate surrounding the presence of both romance and epic in Sidney's two Arcadias, and the perceived generic shift from the former to the latter at which Sidney's narrator hints in the quoted passage.[4] But it should not be understood that the *New Arcadia* alone deals with rhetoric's power to move, monopolising the grand style which, as defined by Cicero, "has power to sway men's minds and move them in every possible way" (*Orator* 97).[5] Nor is it the case that it lacks the didactic clarity or pleasing charm of the plain and middle styles with which the *Old Arcadia*'s narrator identifies.[6] Both the *Old* and the *New Arcadia*, in different ways, explore and embody the limits of rhetorical force and its correspondence with man's intellect. This chapter delves into both works by looking, as a starting point, at the tension produced by the persistent, overlapping sets of antitheses presented in both versions of the

[2] *Paralepsis* dates at least to the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (I, 9), while *recusatio* is usually attributed to the Augustan poets, although even Homer uses something akin to it when he claims inability to name the entire Greek army. See also Ford, *Homer: The Poetry of the Past* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994) 73.
[3] For more on Sidney's knowledge of the *Poetics*, both in the original Greek and in other languages, see discussion in Chapter 3 and Lazarus 71-107.
[4] See for example R. E. Levine, *A Comparison of Sidney's Old and New Arcadia* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1974) 1; and Greenlaw, 'Sidney's Arcadia as an Example of Elizabethan Allegory', *Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge* (Boston, MA: Athenaeum, 1913) 330.
[5] Cicero, 'Orator', *Brutus. Orator*, trans. G. L. Hendrickson and H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939).
[6] "For the plain orator is esteemed wise because he speaks clearly and adroitly; the one who employs the middle style is charming" (Cicero, *Orator* 99).

Arcadia. It is through its power to both transcend and complicate some of these relationships that the *Arcadia*'s manifestation of wit emerges, culminating in the stripping away of wit's rhetorical multivalence, in the *New Arcadia*, in favour of an increased focus on faith and the moral right of political resistance

The textual history of the *Arcadia*'s numerous revisions and editors is complex, but it is nevertheless possible to identify a distinct older version of the work, the *Old Arcadia*, completed in five acts and circulating among Sidney's friends, which was probably written between 1577 and 1581.[7] This version, rediscovered in the early 20th century after being unknown for centuries, now stands alongside the much-revised but incomplete *New Arcadia*, which was first published in 1590.[8] The *Old Arcadia* presents, in a Senecan five-act structure which includes interludes in the form of shepherds' eclogues, a story of courtship and dissimulation in a reclusive ruler's residence, which has been appropriately seen to explore the dangers of love, "the leaderless state and the disastrous consequences of human folly".[9] Beyond these social concerns, however, the Arcadia explores much more personal matters: "the paradoxical nature of human passion, its relationship to the human will and the active life, to the patterns of human intercourse, public and private".[10] The *Old Arcadia* is saturated with antithetical topoi which are both "themes and to a lesser extent… guides for the action" of the narrative.[11] Three such sets of antitheses, central to the *Old Arcadia*, are especially salient for discussing the role played by 'wit' in the work – the antitheses of the real and the

[7] See Alexander, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia', *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 220-21.
[8] STC 22539. A third version of the *Arcadia*, published in 1593 (STC 22540), is heavily edited by Sidney's sister using the *New Arcadia* and parts of the *Old* to create a complete story. For more on the *Arcadia*'s textual history, see J. B. Davis, *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia and the Invention of English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 23-78.
[9] Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* 179.
[10] R. E. Levine 5. See also Schurink, 'Lives and Letters: Three Early Seventeenth-Century Manuscripts with Extracts from Sidney's Arcadia', *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700* 16 (2011): 172.
[11] Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia* (University of Toronto Press, 1982) 17.

ideal, of passion and reason, and of inward experience and outward expression – and these are the subject of the following section.

Introducing Antitheses to the *Old Arcadia*

Antithesis is a common rhetorical scheme in early modern prose. Henry Peacham's *Garden of eloquence* defines it as "a proper coupling togeather of contraries, and it is eyther in wordes that be contrary, or in contrary sentences" (R.i.r), and argues that it is "very eloquent, and to be compared with the best, & none more vsed of Orators, in varying & garnishing an oration then it" (R.i.v).[12] The use of rhetorical antitheses is especially prevalent in the parallelisms of euphuistic prose, whose preoccupation with the ornaments of rhetoric had been discussed in Chapter 2 and which echo rather Peacham's caution, in the revised 1593 edition of the *Garden of Eloquence,* that one is to "moderate the number of comparisons, lest they growe to too great a multitude" (161).[13] It is characteristic of the broad movement in Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* from the ideal poet to the practical one. But it also forms a part of the *Arcadia*'s rhetorical makeup: "What an inward discountenance it was to master Dametas to find his hope of wealth turned to poor verses" (265).[14] At the heart of Sidney's work, several sets of antithetical ideas explore rhetoric and its 'pore verses' not merely in the balanced clauses of sentences, but more broadly as purposeful forces within the narrative.

Perhaps the clearest sign that Sidney is pitting reality against an idealised vision is his choice of setting in the form of Arcadia, Virgil's pastoral land of eclogues which had been reclaimed in many Renaissance works as a place of idealised escapism, "an entirely

[12] STC 19497, printed 1577.
[13] STC 19498. Besides this caution and a warning against using antithesis for items that aren't contraries but merely differ, Peacham's description of the scheme is virtually identical in both editions.
[14] For a discussion of this as a "composition of contraries" or *synoeciosis,* common to both the *Old* and the *New Arcadia*, see Carey, 'Structure and Rhetoric in Sidney's Arcadia', *Sir Philip Sidney: An Anthology of Modern Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 246.

conscious disavowal of modernity in favour of simplicity".[15] This escapist version of the Arcadia in Sidney's work, seen as inspired by the likes of Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, is most obviously manifested in Basilius' lodge, the countryside abode into which he retreats following an alarming vision by the Oracle of Delphi, but it is also alluded to more generally in the very first lines of the work:[16]

> ARCADIA among all the provinces of Greece was ever had in singular reputation, partly for the sweetness of the air and other natural benefits, but principally for the moderate and well tempered minds of the people… Even the muses seemed to approve their good determination by choosing that country as their chiefest repairing place, and by bestowing their perfections so largely there… (4)

This simplicity and singularity of Arcadia, however, finds a contrast, an expression that is "realistic, complex, and definitely not a pastoral idyll" which one critic has suggested to be based on Polybius' vision of the Arcadia in the *Histories*.[17] This expression is similarly made plain very early in the text, where the self-deception of the duke is matched by the language, which uses parallelisms, material comparisons and a reference to sophistry to suggest, as had the narrator's previously cited rejection of the grand style, a denial of the ideal:

> 'To give place to blows', said the duke, 'is thought no small wisdom.'
> 'That is true,' said Philanax, 'but to give place before they come takes away the occasion, when they come, to give place.'
> 'Yet the reeds stand with yielding', said the duke.
> 'And so are they but reeds, most worthy prince,' said Philanax, 'but the rocks stand still and are rocks.'
> But the duke, having used thus much dukely sophistry to deceive himself, and making his will wisdom, told him resolutely he stood upon his own determination; (9)[18]

[15] Everton, 'Critical Thumbprints in Arcadia: Renaissance Pastoral and the Process of Critique', *Style* 35 (2001): 3.
[16] On Sidney's debt to Sannazaro, see Kalstone, 'The Transformation of Arcadia: Sannazaro and Sir Philip Sidney', *Comparative Literature* 15:3 (1963): 234-49.
[17] Forsyth, 'The Two Arcadias of Sidney's Two Arcadias', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 49:1 (2009): 2.
[18] In *Orator*, Cicero identifies the sophists as the originators of the middle, rather than the grand style (96).

As opposed to the well-tempered minds of the ideal Arcadia's shepherds, it is the workings of a deceived mind that lead to the scene of escapism, and it is the building blocks of euphuism which construct the Arcadia's natural scenery. In the *Defence of Poesy,* Sidney's dislike of the "most tedious prattling" (1433) that is euphuism had been noted before. Similarly, his Arcadia is imbued from the outset with a discord that is to drive much of the events of the narrative[19] – events whose main focal point is a deception perpetrated by the two protagonists, the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus, as they take on women's identities in an effort to get closer to Basilius' daughters.

This tension has often been seen in relation to the politics of Sidney's *Arcadia* as concerned with the dangers of neglecting political duties.[20] In a more personal context, the tension between real and ideal informs two other significant antithetical relationships which are central to how Sidney's characters perceive themselves. The first is the contrast between passion and reason, pitted against each other in a manner suggestive of the Socratic (and Erasmian) call upon desirable reason to constrain execrable passion:[21]

> Remember (for I know you know it) that, if we will be men, the reasonable part of our soul is to have absolute command-ment, against which if any sensual weakness arise, we are to yield all our sound forces to the overthrowing of so unnatural a rebellion; (19)

The tension between the real and the ideal is especially significant for understanding different possible conceptions of reason, for in Protestant thought it is often seen as "immersed in error and delusion"[22] and is only allowed an expression within the confines of the "Earthly

[19] See also Lindheim, *The Structures of Sidney's Arcadia* 41.
[20] See for example Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* 83; and Worden, *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996) 16.
[21] Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph over Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 16-33; and W. R. Davis, 'A Map of Arcadia: Sidney's Romance in its Tradition', *Sidney's Arcadia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965) 65.
[22] Tilmouth (33) suggests that this is true for both Luther and Calvin.

Kingdom", where it does not encroach on faith.[23] As was suggested in Chapter 3's discussion of the *Defence of Poesy,* Sidney is looking to make the most of fallen reality, and thus his interest in the real is echoed by a conception of reason that, while it may subordinate it to faith, nevertheless acknowledges its power to "qualify the Reformation's attack on this-worldly values with his hopes for human intellect".[24]

Despite its interest in rehabilitating human reason, the *Old Arcadia* is greatly concerned with the opposite movement, the power of passion to corrupt. Echoing rather Calvin's statement that the whole man "from the intellect to the will" (*Institutes* 2.1.8) is nothing but lust, Sidney's main characters stumble into ill-advised love with one another, and even the supposedly noble love of the two princes for Basilius' daughters Philoclea and Pamela is judged to be reprehensible in the final trial scene.[25] In the characters' failure to allow reason to free itself from the prison of the body's passions, the *Old Arcadia* establishes a third antithesis, between inward experience, suggested as the realm of love which is constrained and ruled by passions: "They only know it which inwardly feel it. It is called love" (12); and outward expression, supposedly free and unconstrained: "what if I be not so much the poet, the freedom of whose pen can exercise itself in anything, as even that very miserable subject of his cunning…" (17). Yet even this dichotomy presents ambiguity, for outside and inside rather influence each other, and outward expression becomes dangerous and deceptive.[26] Thus Pyrocles/Cleophila sings of his falling in love with Philoclea's picture:

> Transformed in show, but more transformed in mind,
> I cease to strive, with double conquest foiled;

[23] Bergvall, 'Reason in Luther, Calvin, and Sidney', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23:1 (1992): 117.
[24] Mentz, 'Reason, Faith, and Shipwreck in Sidney's New Arcadia', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 44:1 (2004): 1.
[25] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. H. Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845). On love's opposition to reason in both Arcadias, see Hopkins, 'Passion and Reason in Arcadia', *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities in England, 1570-1640* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 69; on the idea that all of Sidney's characters are far from "exemplars of heroism or virtue", see Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1978) 100.
[26] See Alexander, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia' 225; and R. Schneider 160.

> For (woe is me) my powers all I find
> With outward force and inward treason spoiled.
> For from without came to mine eyes the blow,
> Whereto mine inward thoughts did faintly yield;
> Both these conspired poor reason's overthrow;
> False in myself, thus have I lost the field. (28-29)

None of the *Arcadia*'s seemingly-dichotomic relationships offers a clear boundary, for the ideal Arcadia is infused with 'realness', the reason of its characters is corrupted by passions, and its inner mind is shaped by the deceptiveness of external forces and in turn presents a dissimulating outward show.

This ambiguity is further compounded by the uncertain relationship of the three antitheses to each other. Reason, for example, is presented as external, in some way, to the passions of the body: "she was forced by reason to give an outward blow to her passions, and for the lending of a small time to seek the usury of all her desires" (200), but it is also struck down by the same forces that penetrate the mind and inflame passions. Similarly, the ideal is aspired to both outwardly, in the form of the idyll Arcadia, and inwardly in aspiring to a state of being governed by reason, which "must ever have the masterhood" (42). But both aspirations fail, as Arcadia becomes a leaderless state in which a rioting rabble is moved by their "unbridled use of words" (127) and as characters repeatedly fail to heed the voice of reason: "… And there he whistled, and stamped, and knocked, crying 'Ho! my liege!' with such faces as might well show what a deformity a passion can bring a man unto when it is not governed with reason" (33). A Melanchthonian distinction is made here between a post-lapsarian knowledge contained in the corrupt body and a universal knowledge inspired by divine will. This is turned by Sidney into an examination of only one part of the antithetical relationship between the real and the ideal. As with his practical focus in the *Defence of*

Poesy, Sidney's *Old Arcadia* concerns tangible human existence and its incomplete knowledge, made evident through the ambiguity of the antitheses at its heart.[27]

'Wit' has a central role in this complex interplay. Both the *Old* and the *New* Arcadia make a point of playing on the double meaning of 'wit' as both rhetorical ability and as an intellectual capacity for knowledge. In the *Old Arcadia* this is evident when the narrator praises Pyrocles' speaking ability: "And here Pyrocles suddenly stopped, like a man unsatisfied in himself, though his wit might well have served to have satisfied another". A few lines later, the same Pyrocles explains his dissatisfaction as resulting from being unable to express the perfection of Arcadia: "see you not the rest of all these beautiful flowers, each of which would require a man's wit to know, and his life to express?" (15).[28] Pyrocles makes a clear distinction between practical, rhetorical wit which may be enough for some people but is essentially insufficient to paint Arcadia's perfection, and the intellectual, epistemological wit which is potentially capable of perceiving this perfection, akin to the *Defence of Poesy*'s erected wit whose powers rival "the efficacy of nature" (217). Thus Sidney places 'wit' in yet another antithetical relationship in which once again the *Arcadia*, as a rhetorical work, moves to expose the problems with the ideal rather than to enact it.

The dual meaning of 'wit' is nevertheless significant for its resonance with the other antitheses presented before. Like the written language in which the narrative plays out, it seems that the opposition between rhetorical and intellectual wit serves as a medium in which the other relationships are realised. Thus the *Arcadia*'s rhetorical wit forms the medium in

[27] See chapter 1 for more on this epistemological distinction in the writings of Melanchthon. On Sidney's possession of Melanchthon's works, see Bowen, Warkentin, and Black, *The Library of the Sidneys of Penshurst Place circa 1665* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2013) 17. For more on Sidney's uncertain knowledge, see Turner, 'Distance and Astonishment in the Old Arcadia: A Study of Sidney's Psychology', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 20:3 (1978): 309. For more on the *Old Arcadia* as concerned with ambiguity and "human fallibility", see McCoy, *Rebellion in Arcadia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1979) 135.

[28] See pp. 19, 28 of the *New Arcadia* for a similar double-use of wit.

which practical human concerns are explored, reflecting in itself the impossibility of aspiring to the unrepresentable ideal of divine intellect:

> then is there left nothing but the intellectual part or intelligence which, void of all moral virtues… doth only live in the contemplative virtue and power of the omnipotent God (the soul of souls and universal life of this great work); and therefore is utterly void from the possibility of drawing to itself these sensible considerations. (372)

But of course the *Arcadia*'s presentation of intellectual wit is as problematic as that of its idyllic setting. Musidorus, for example, fails to dissuade Pyrocles from his lustful follies even when he claims to "have left nothing unsaid which my wit could make me know" (24), and one's intellect serves only to know the woes of corporeal existence:

> *The child feels that; the man that feeling knows,*
> *With cries first born, the presage of his life,*
> *Where wit but serves to have true taste of woes.*
> *A shop of shame, a book where blots be rife*
> *This body is; this body so composed*
> *As in itself to nourish mortal strife.* (140)

The passions which subvert one's intellect are often used to signify unbridled lust, and so also relate to the human will.[29] Passion's counterpart reason consequently relates to will's counterpart, the erected wit of Sidney's *Defence*. Both reason and intellectual wit have been idealised by Sidney before, but here they represent the practical uncertainty regarding the power of reasoned argument to triumph, thus undermining this ideal.[30] And so does the contrast between inward and outward expressions, so that Philoclea's supposedly erected, steadfast thoughts find a counterpart in a "constant marble stone" (110) on which she writes her testimony, but both internal thoughts (which turn to love) and external words end up erased and changeable:

> My words, in hope to blaze my steadfast mind,

[29] See Worden 212.
[30] On Sidney's concept of practical wit in the *Defence of Poesy*, see Chapter 3.

> This marble chose, as of like temper known:
> But lo, my words defaced, my fancies blind,
> Blots to the stone, shame to myself I find;
> And witness am, how ill agree in one,
> A woman's hand with constant marble stone. (110)

As vehicles for the *Old Arcadia*'s sober examination of the interplay between passion and reason on the one hand, and inward mind and outward show on the other, the different meanings of wit are always central to the narrative. It is intellectual wit with which Pyrocles perceives his dire situation, after his sexual dealings with Philoclea are revealed, even as this wit remains powerless to change either the situation or the passions which have led to it: "his excellent wit, strengthened with virtue but guided by love, had soon described to himself a perfect vision of their present condition" (290). Similarly ambiguous, rhetorical skill is often placed on the border between success and failure, as when Pyrocles responds to Musidorus' previously cited dissuasion from love by falsely granting him the victory in the debate: "'Alas,' said he, 'Prince Musidorus, how cruelly you deal with me! If you seek the victory, take it; and if you list, triumph…" (24). Even when speech achieves a perceived effect it is often one of ambiguity, such that when Cleophila appeases the rioting mob she inspires only uncertainty:

> The action Cleophila used, with a sweet magnanimity and stately mildness, did so pierce into their hearts… that, instead of roaring cries, there was now heard nothing but a confused muttering whether her saying was to be followed, betwixt doubt to pursue and fear to leave. (131)

The narrator's wit is equally ambiguous. On the one hand, he uses rhetorical confusion to echo characters' internal mental turmoil – such as the princes' confused debate which was to turn to Pyrocles' initial statement of love – and thus highlight his own rhetorical ability.[31] But the narrator also suggests that a higher style than his exists, and his subjectivity "means that

[31] See P. Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric* 162-64; and Robinson 161-62.

the romance lacks a completely reliable control".[32] The seeming freedom of wit, which the *Arcadia* reflects upon when it considers the poet's ability to break free of the lover's prison of passions, "whose liberal pens can as easily travel over mountains as molehills" (17), is never without qualification, without an admission that it is ultimately deceptive:[33]

> Poor painters oft with silly poets join
> To fill the world with strange but vain conceits:
> One brings the stuff, the other stamps the coin,
> Which breeds naught else but glosses of deceits.
> Thus painters Cupid paint, thus poets do,
> A naked god, blind, young, with arrows two. (65)

The sense in Sidney's verse is similar to that found in his friend Fulke Greville's poetry, although the latter's overt Calvinism takes a more extreme approach to its own medium:

> False antidotes for vitious ignorance,
> Whose causes are within, and so their cure;
> Errour corrupting Nature not mischance:
> For how can that be wise which is not pure?
> So that man being but mere hypocrisie,
> What can his arts but beames of follie be? (Sonnet LXVI, 25-30)[34]

Greville, moved by his great esteem for his friend, suggests in his account of Sidney's life that the latter could have been secure, upon his deathbed in 1586, of his Protestant justification by faith alone and not by works (82).[35] Indeed Sidney's poetry, although Greville holds it in high regard, is seen by him as civil rather than ecclesiastical in scope, the "enabling of free-born spirits to the greatest affairs of states" (3). Reformers such as

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[32] Lanham, 'The Old Arcadia', *Sidney's Arcadia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965) 326.
[33] See also Alexander, 'Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia' 224; Richards, 'The Art of Being Persuaded: Rhetoric and Effeminacy in Philip Sidney's Old Arcadia', *Sidney Newsletter and Journal* 13:2 (1995) 4. For the idea that this deceptiveness is aimed primarily at women, see DeZur, 'Defending the Castle: The Political Problem of Rhetorical Seduction and Good Huswifery in Sidney's "Old Arcadia"', *Studies in Philology* 98:1 (2001): 93.
[34] Greville, 'Caelica', *The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of the Right Honourable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke* (Blackburn: P. Tiplady and Son, 1870).
[35] Greville, 'A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney', *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). For more on the concept of justification in Lutheran and Reformed thought, derived from the writings of St Augustine, see Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* vol.2 (Cambridge: Cambirdge University Press, 1978) 6-7. For more on Greville's view of human society and poetry as deceptive and potentially idolatrous, see Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* 140-41; 147-51.

Melanchthon suggested that man's innate knowledge of natural law, and limited free will, are confined to the realm of "civil good or bad" due to man's fallen nature, and exclude any possibility of knowing God.[36] Though less bleak in his enthusiasm for the poet as a maker than Greville, Sidney would certainly be inclined to accept the suggestion that his subject is human, with all of its limitations. Despite its pervasiveness, his notion of wit is subordinated to the *Old Arcadia*'s focus on human fallibility as manifested in its central antitheses. It is wisdom and goodness which "can bring man's wit to a higher point" (7), but the *Old Arcadia* depicts the misapprehension of wit's wisdom, and of the moral maxims which its characters often utter but then ignore, "like troublesome stones in [the narrative's] rushing stream".[37]

The *Old Arcadia*'s rhetorical choices echo the problematic place it thematically affords to 'wit'. Sidney's prosopopoeial tactics, in which both characters and Sidney himself as the narrator assume various ethical masks, reflect "how rhetorically complex the literary representation of self and voice is".[38] Similarly, it is noted, his extensive use of ekphrastic imagery essentially "confesses its own failure", that of the infected will in attempting to reach the perfection of erected wit, embodied in the indirectness of its speech.[39] The *Old Arcadia*, at times, uses a "gentle persuasion" of courtly civility and self-restraint as a kind of rhetoric that can accommodate man's imperfections.[40] Its point of view on the force of rhetoric, however, is that of the soldier, its words imagined as a double-edged sword, always capable of piercing "into the minds already inclined" (324), even as they represent those same minds.

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[36] Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 95. For more on these "two kingdoms" in Protestant thinking, see MacCulloch, *The Reformation: Europe's House Divided* (London: Penguin, 2004) 157. See also O'Kelly, 'Luther and Melanchthon on justification: continuity or discontinuity?', *Since we are Justified by Faith: Justification in the Theologies of the Protestant Reformation* (Carlisle: Authentic Media, 2012) 40.
[37] Dolven 125. See also P. Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric* 149. For the idea that the *Old Arcadia* explores the prodigal response to "rational and antiromantic good counsel", see Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* 130.
[38] Alexander, 'Prosopopoeia: The Speaking Figure', *Renaissance Figures of Speech* 105.
[39] Preston, 'Ekhprasis: painting in words', *Renaissance Figures of Speech* 119.
[40] Olmsted, 'The Gentle Doctor: Renaissance/Reformation Friendship, Rhetoric, and Emotion in Sidney's Old Arcadia', *Modern Philology* 103:2 (2005): 157.

Shifting Wit from *Old* to *New*

The *New Arcadia* differs from the old one in many ways. It abandons the straightforward narrative in favour of a convoluted and non-linear one which jumps back and forth between various heroic episodes, and in which stories are nested, occasionally using multiple levels, within other stories. It also eschews the *Old Arcadia*'s subjective, implicated narrator in favour of a less-personal and more-omniscient one, relegating the bulk of the work's rhetorical weight to the enlarged cast of characters and their various rhetorical styles.[41] It has been suggested that the characters of the *New Arcadia* become individualised, no longer mere vehicles for Sidney's rhetoric, and attempt to solve their problems in debates rather than spewing out commonplaces.[42] And yet the *New Arcadia* initially reuses much of the *Old*'s key ideas where 'wit' is concerned, both its moral maxims like "yet no destiny nor influence whatsoever can bring man's wit to a higher point than wisdom and goodness…" (21), and its key rhetorical scenes like that of Philoclea's verse on the marble stone (148), copied word for word from the older version. If the speeches of the *Old Arcadia* capture either lack of success or a fallible susceptibility to rhetoric, how does the *New Arcadia*, whose rhetoric critics have observed to be just as problematic, re-evaluate the discussion of the antithetical relationships which lie at the heart of its predecessor?[43]

Although early readings of the *Arcadia* tended to see its recreational side as inseparable from its pragmatic one,[44] it is its increased interest in political and religious pedagogy that for some critics chiefly distinguishes the *New Arcadia* from the *Old*.[45] Certainly Sidney's early reference to "a mind of most excellent composition" echoes

[41] See R. E. Levine 30.
[42] R. Schneider 116.
[43] See for example ibid. 102-103.
[44] See Schurink, 'Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 73:3 (2010): 456.
[45] See Greenlaw 335.

Ascham's didactic descriptions of the ideal student's hard wit, by positing it as "a piercing wit quite void of ostentation, high-erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy, an eloquence as sweet in the uttering as slow to come to the uttering…" (14). This pretence of pursuing didactic objectivity is bound to fail when we consider that the *Arcadia* is itself bound by the confines of language, whose uncertain knowledge is transmitted "only in the disguises of imagination".[46] The very essence of moving to virtue demands a move from the poet's mind out to language, then back into the reader's mind where the image of virtue is to be created, and thus makes it impossible to separate the process from dependability on man's ambiguous wit in its dual capacity.[47] Sidney is deeply aware of this when, in formulating the movement into virtue in the *Defence of Poesy,* he makes sure to qualify his argument as pertaining only to human concerns: "Now therein of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit) is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it" (600-603). And yet the *New Arcadia*'s treatment of the central antitheses regarding the real and the ideal, passion and reason, and inward and outward expression, can perhaps best be described as working towards actively solving the problematic ambiguities that they hold, turning ambiguous antithetical relations into clearly resolved, exclusionary dichotomies. This is attempted by doing precisely what has just been suggested as impossible, by shifting the exploration of antithetical ideas from the ambiguous, subjective medium of one's wit, out towards a manifestation that seems to imply objective assessment of the *Arcadia*'s antithetical relations.

In the *Old Arcadia*, Sidney's involved narrator often implicates his own wit in the conflict between passion and reason by siding with his protagonists. When Pyrocles,

[46] Turner 309.
[47] On the idea that "imitation and imagination" make this bi-directional movement, see R. Schneider 160.

overcome with passion for Philoclea, takes on the guise of an amazon princess, the narrator seeks to excuse his protagonist's passions and along the way reveals his own moral ambiguity:

> … thus did Pyrocles become Cleophila—which name for a time hereafter I will use, for I myself feel such compassion of his passion that I find even part of his fear lest his name should be uttered before fit time were for it; which you, fair ladies that vouchsafe to read this, I doubt not will account excusable. (27)

As late as the trial scene in Book 5, the narrator seems sympathetic to the two princes and not to their accusers: "Thus, when Philanax had uttered the uttermost of his malice… and did with such bitter reproaches defame the princely Pyrocles…" (391). It is only because of the "extraordinary excellencies" (414) of the princes' judge, Pyrocles' father Euarchus, that the narrator accepts their harsh verdict as just. And yet, the narrator is often critical of the princes' behaviour in the earlier books, such as when the mob's interruption of Mosidorus' advances on the sleeping Pamela is described as "the just punishment of his broken promise" (202).

The moral ambiguity reflected in this characterisation of the narrator finds no counterpart in the *New Arcadia*'s narrator, who has no such personal investment in his characters' follies. Even more so, the characters themselves seem to move towards an elimination of moral ambiguity, as by Book 3 (which has no narrative counterpart in the *Old Arcadia*) the focus for some of the major characters becomes increasingly religious. This is quite different to the brief theological discussion between Pyrocles and Musidorus as they await trial in the *Old Arcadia*, which encompasses the idea of a providential God and a transcendent intelligence that persists beyond the death of "sensible or passionate knowledge" (372). Sidney is echoing the moral and natural philosophy of Luther and Melanchthon, who both argued that spirit and flesh are not "two different substances in man"

but rather "the subject of grace".[48] But the discussion is concerned with human folly, not only with Protestant ideals, and ultimately captures the princes' lack of repentance: "We have lived, and have lived to be good to ourselves and others. Our souls (which are put into the stirring earth of our bodies) have achieved the causes of their hithercoming" (371). In the *New Arcadia*, in contrast, characters tend to exhibit the qualities of either religious martyrs or blasphemers.[49] The former is typified in Pamela, as she prays in her cell:

> O Lord, I yield unto thy will, and joyfully embrace what sorrow thou wilt have me suffer. Only thus much let me crave of thee (let my craving, O Lord, be accepted of thee, sice even that proceeds from thee): let me crave, even by the noblest title which in my greatest affliction I may give myself – that I am thy creature – and by thy goodness which is thyself, that thou wilt suffer some beam of thy majesty so to shine into my mind that it may still depend confidently upon thee. (336)

On the other end of the moral spectrum, the evil Cecropia attempts to convince her captive of the necessity of forsaking the divine:

> … it is manifest enough that all things follow but the course of their own nature – saving only man, who, while by the pregnancy of his imagination he strives to things supernatural, meanwhile he loses his own natural felicity.
>
> 'Be wise, and that wisdom shall be a god unto thee; be contented, and that is thy heaven; for else, to think 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 carries as much reason as if flies should think that men take great care which of them hums sweetest, and which of them flies nimblest.' (359)

In these portrayals, the *New Arcadia* introduces faith to where only reason and passion interacted before. The implication seems to be that the moral compass, ambiguous before because of the complexities of human reason, now becomes fixed through the machinations of faith, to which reason is subordinated in mainstream Protestant thought.[50] It is worth noting that these passages are particularly suited to Sidney's use of wit – they speak of

[48] Kusukawa, *Transformation* 89. See also Stillman 117.
[49] Duncan-Jones (*Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*) calls Book 3's virtuous characters "all but Christian" (263).
[50] See also Mentz, 'Reason, Faith, and Shipwreck in Sidney's New Arcadia' 2.

"mind", "imagination" and "eloquence" – and yet the word is found in neither passage. As an ambiguous term bound in the human realm of reason and passion, the *New Arcadia*'s reimagined discussion of divine faith has little room for the erected wit of Sidney's earlier writings. And so, when it appears in book 3, 'wit' is always either practicing deception, beguiling its possessors, or failing to persuade evil characters from desisting in their actions.[51]

A similar attempt to resolve antithetical relationships is made in the re-imagination of Arcadia. The *Old Arcadia* introduced the land's imperfections implicitly through the follies of its ruler and other occupants, quickly resolved civil unrest, and restored order with the *deus ex machina* revival of Basilius in the end (415), so that it was more in confused speeches than in the unfolding of events that its inherent instability was explored. The *New Arcadia*'s land, on the other hand, is expressly brazen, rather than golden: "Then spared he not to remember how much Arcadia was changed since his youth… according to the nature of the old growing world, still worse and worse" (53-54). Even more clearly, the *New Arcadia* plunges its land into an all-out conflict in the third book. This war is foreshadowed early in the narrative, when the shipwrecked Musidorus asks the two Arcadian shepherds Strephon and Claius why they choose to live in Laconia, torn apart by civil war. The response by Strephon is telling: the shepherds are "Guarded with poverty… and guided with love" (11). Strephon is referring to the shepherds' material poverty and to the love they bear to Urania, but similar ideas are later to drive Amphialus to kidnap the princesses and initiate Arcadia's own civil conflict as, denied a requital for the love he bears towards Philoclea, he is likened to "the poor woman… all her flock being spent, and she fallen into extreme poverty…"

[51] Of the 23 uses of 'wit' in Book 3 (excluding four narrow references to the senses), 17 refer to the deceptive wit of Cecropia, Amphialus, Artesia and Clinias, and the "witty persuasion" (374) they employ; five instances refer to wit, inevitably Zelmane's, as overcome or "beguiled" (436); and once it is Philoclea's "wittie wordes" which fail to reform Cecropia's evilness (381).

(323).[52] The *New Arcadia*, then, appears to be much clearer on the relationship of the real and the ideal, and its Arcadia is much more explicitly imperfect. This is achieved not only in speech but also in action, even as the work explores within its corrupt world the workings of faithful minds aspiring towards the divine and its certitude.[53]

The setting for this religious aspiration within a fallen world takes place primarily in the third book, where the last of the antithetical relationships is externalised from the level of the individual to that of narrative events. This comes to pass, as Schneider notes, because the walls of Amphialus' castle also represent the boundary between inward reflection and outward show.[54] This reading notes that characters inside the castle tend to engage in lengthy expressions of their own minds, while the outside becomes the space of physical action and chivalric battles. But the real significance of the boundary lies in the possibility of its crossing. While characters like the virtuous princesses or the wicked Cecropia do not freely cross into and out of the castle, and the latter even finds her death by falling off the castle's walls (440), the morally ambiguous Amphialus (and to a lesser degree his proud friend Anaxius) is marked by freely passing between both worlds. This is a striking presentation of the ambiguity of engaging one's mind, supposedly the passive recipient of righteousness through Christ, with the imperfection of the world.[55] The implication, as had been the case with the treatment of the other antitheses in the *New Arcadia*, is that of demolishing the *Old Arcadia*'s ambiguity – moral clarity is potentially available if only the boundary between inside and outside, or between one's divine intellect and the corrupt world, is maintained.

[52] For more on the opening of the *New Arcadia* as more sombre and foreshadowing than that of the *Old Arcadia*, see R. E. Levine 23-24.
[53] On the pastoral's exhibition of "good and evil in pure and radical forms", see W. R. Davis 51.
[54] R. Schneider 127.
[55] For more on this concept of alien righteousness in Luther, see O'Kelly 33. For the same concept in Calvin's thought, see Fesko, 'Calvin on Justification and Recent Misinterpretations of his View', *MJT* 16 (2005): 93-96.

But of course, as Schneider notes, the readers are also able to pass with Amphialus from inside outwards and back again, suggesting that they share rather the ambiguous position of the princesses' love-struck cousin and not the clearer ones of the princesses themselves. This is an appropriate articulation of the readers' place, for one's intellectual wit cannot be expressed without an external medium, and the *Arcadia*'s is that of language, of rhetorical wit. Its linguistic medium is necessarily external, as part of the corrupt world, and so it is bound by the possible deceptiveness of rhetoric. By weakening the relation of his major antitheses to the ambiguity of wit, Sidney is suggested to present the idea that "a painting is a painting, just as words are words",[56] an idea explored in the omitting of the scene in which Pyrocles falls in love with Philoclea's painting.[57] Action can supersede wit, Sidney suggests, just as might overpowers art:

> But that blow astonished quite a poor painter who stood by with a pike in his hands. This painter was to counterfeit the skirmishing between the Centaurs and Lapiths and had been very desirous to see some notable wounds, to be able the more lively to express them… but this last happening near him so amazed him that he stood stock still, while Dorus with a turn of his sword strake off both his hands; and so, the painted returned well-skilled in wounds, but with never a hand to perform his skill. (282)

The *New Arcadia* concerns itself with a denial of complete rhetorical freedom, even as it purports to offer a much less ambiguous reading of the other major ideas inherited from its predecessor.[58] This is possibly Sidney's way of coming to terms with the fallout from the Anjou episode in which those protesting the Queen's intended marriage to the French duke, Sidney among them, were censured, and John Stubbs had his hand amputated as punishment

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[56] R. E. Levine 40.
[57] Replaced in the *New Arcadia* with a scene in which it is Musidorus which encounters the painting (18).
[58] Alexander (47-48, 53-54) suggests that while in the *Old Arcadia* words often burst forth, in the *New Arcadia* they are suppressed and interrupted. In *Writing after Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney, 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

for publishing a pamphlet on the matter.[59] Yet it also serves his broader aims, of moving to virtue while avoiding the pitfalls of rhetoric.

So what, besides fears of angering the Queen, are the greater issues at play in the shift from the *Old* to the *New Arcadia*? While it is imprudent to claim knowledge of direct causal influences on Sidney in the early 1580s, the two works do reveal a shifting focus in his literary, didactic, political and religious sensibilities. The first, literary shift between the two Arcadias is perhaps the most straightforward one. Both *Old* and *New Arcadia* make thematic use of scenes directly borrowed from two pastoral romances, Sannazaro's *Arcadia* and Montemayor's *Diana*, as well as from an Ancient Greek source, Heliodorus of Emasa's *Æthiopian Historie*. And yet structurally, the two Arcadias engage these works in different ways, reflecting the critical opinion that Sidney's work is "radically imitative" and at the same time "radically unlike its sources".[60] While some of its scenes, and especially Book 5's trial scene, are inspired by Heliodorus' work, the *Old Arcadia*'s structure owes much rather to the escapist Arcadian landscape of Sanazzaro's own Arcadia – "a country of the mind" from which Sannazaro himself was unable to escape in his later works[61] – and to Montemayor's engagement with a multivalent wit, both a rhetorical "*claridad de ingenio*", loosely translated by Bartholomew Yong as "ripe wit and fluent toong" (136), and at the same time a universal "*ingenio humano*" or simply "wit" (97) in Yong's translation, which is contrasted with both art (*arte*) and being (*ser*).[62] The *New Arcadia* in contrast, in its shift towards the epic and towards increased political interest, presents a structure that engages

[59] See also Worden 222.
[60] A. C. Hamilton, 'Sidney's Arcadia as Prose Fiction: Its Relation to Its Sources', *English Literary Renaissance* 2:1 (1972): 31.
[61] See translator Ralph Nash's preface to Sannazaro, *Arcadia & Piscatorial Eclogues* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1966) 23.
[62] Although Yong does use the more complete "humane wit" in other places, such as in his translation of Alonso Pérez's Second Part of Diana. This translation of the *Diana* and its two sequels by Pérez and Gaspar Gil Polo, first published in 1598 (STC 18044), is noted by Yong to be complete as of 1st May, 1583. The Spanish version used here is that of the *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, based on Montemayor, *Los Siete Libros de La Diana* (Barcelona: Jayme Cortey, 1561).

more closely with that of the *Æthiopian Historie*, itself a work greatly influenced by ancient epics.[63] This is achieved, as noted by Skretkowicz, through the *New Arcadia*'s *in medias res* beginning, temporal shifts and secondary plots.[64] But it is also reflected in the *New Arcadia*'s growing de-emphasis of wit's conceptual ambiguity. This is a choice similar to that undertaken by Heliodorus' first English translator Thomas Underdowne in 1569.[65] Despite their differences in allegiance – Underdowne dedicated his translation to the Earl of Oxford, Lyly's patron and rival to Sidney's faction in court[66] – their similar choices regarding 'wit' reinforce Sidney's didactic aims of going beyond human reason and rhetoric.

These aims align the *New Arcadia* with the educational project of Petrus Ramus. Modern critics, led by Walter Ong, consider Sidney to have been greatly influenced by Ramus,[67] and his position on Ramism may be gleaned from the choice of Banosius, Ramus' pupil and secretary, to dedicate his own Ramist biography to Sidney as possessing "the tenderest love" for Ramus.[68] Although Sidney's antithetical writing is believed to evince Ramist influences even in the *Old Arcadia*,[69] his move towards turning ambiguous antitheses into clearly defined dichotomies in the *New Arcadia* brings the work much closer to Ramus' project of clearing up the "foolish, useless confusion" of his classical antecedents.[70] The *New Arcadia*'s sense of moral clarity and move away from an ambiguous Arcadia echo the Ramist method, whose purpose is "to map knowledge into clear categories" in order to allow for the

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[63] Garson, 'Notes on some Homeric Echoes in Heliodorus' "Aethiopica"', *Acta Classica* 18 (1975): 137-40.
[64] Skretkowicz, 'Sidney and Amyot: Heliodorus in the Structure and Ethos of the New Arcadia', *The Review of English Studies* 27:106 (1976): 171-72.
[65] Note that all but two of the 13 appearances of 'witt' or its derivatives in Heliodorus's translation (STC 13041) are to such expressions as "at theire wittes ende" (17v).
[66] See Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England* 64.
[67] See for example Ong 301-302; Smith, 'An Examination of Some Claims for Ramism', *The Review of English Studies* 7:28 (1956): 349-50; and Robinson 152-62.
[68] R. Howell Jr, 'The Sidney Circle and the Protestant Cause in Elizabethan Foreign Policy', *Culture, Theory and Critique* 19:1 (1975): 38.
[69] See Astell, 'Sidney's Didactic Method in the Old Arcadia', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 24:1 (1984): 42-43.
[70] Ramus, *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian* 127. See also discussion in Chapter 1; Ong 199-202; and Hallett, 'Ramus, Printed Loci, and the Re-invention of Knowledge', *Ramus, Pedagogy and the Liberal Arts* 99-104.

externalisation of cognitive processes.[71] Ramus' own mistrust of human reason – which he links with discourse[72] – is similarly entertained by Sidney's notion of introducing a greater emphasis on faith. Like Sidney, Ramus reflects on man's imperfections as these imitate nature,[73] but the result for Ramus is a rejection of the poetic arts altogether as not sufficiently didactic.[74] Sidney on the other hand, and despite his frequent allusions to the deceptiveness of rhetoric, is very much a poet as well as a defender of poetry. His own works embody didacticism rather in the spirit of the Philippist aspiration to both "the promotion of classical learning and the elucidation of Reformation principles".[75]

These Reformation principles are already evident in the *Old Arcadia*'s denial of the ideal, although Sidney's earlier work attempts to chronicle the humanist attempt to rehabilitate reason in the spirit of Erasmus' suggestion that it is not completely and irrevocably corrupt.[76] In the *New Arcadia*'s Ramist clarity, however, the corruption of the external world is made both central and inescapable, as human reason is rejected in favour of faith. When Pamela, then, asks of God "that thou wilt suffer some beam of thy majesty so to shine into my mind" (336), the passivity in her plea hints at Calvin's protestation that "To the great truths, What God is in himself, and what he is in relation to us, human reason makes not the least approach" (*Institutes* 2.2.18). There is nevertheless hope in Pamela's speech as she is espousing the doctrine of justification, briefly discussed earlier in this chapter, according to which only passive acceptance through faith enables one's regeneration, as Melanchthon's Article IV of the *Augsburg Confession* declares: "Also they teache that men can not be made

[71] Triche and McKnight, 'The Quest for Method: The Legacy of Peter Ramus', *History of Education* 33:1 (2004): 47.
[72] See Ong 176; Feingold, 'English Ramism: A Reinterpretation' 138.
[73] See Ramus, *Peter Ramus's Attack on Cicero: text and translation of Ramus's Brutinae quaestiones*, trans. C. Newlands (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1992).
[74] Ong 253; and Feingold, 'English Ramism: A Reinterpretation' 156-57.
[75] Kusukawa, 'Melanchthon', *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 58.
[76] See MacCulloch 151.

ryghtuous in the lyght of God by theyr owne proper powers merites or workes / but that they be freely iustifyed for Christes sake throughe fayth".[77] But even faith itself is merely a vessel without inherent worth,[78] because what Pamela is searching for is grace, "the undeserved and unmerited divine favour towards humanity".[79] Coupled with the disappearance of 'wit' from religious speeches and with its distancing from the *Arcadia*'s overarching antitheses, the *New Arcadia* suggests a move from the civil to the theological which empties man's work entirely of merit.

The religious shift reflected in the *New Arcadia* raises a difficulty for the work as a whole. By producing a rhetorical account of faith, its undertaking becomes doubly suspicious, for both rhetoric and faith have questionable moral currency – the former for its tendency to deceive and the latter for man's complete inability to actively secure divine favour. The question of one's relation to God, however, was central to the early Protestant cause not only theologically but politically as well. Political concerns are central to Sidney's thought, probably influenced by the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 in which Ramus himself was among the slain. The targets of the massacre were the French Huguenots, with which Sidney's close friends Hubert Languet and Philip Du Plessis-Mornay were affiliated.[80] In response to the massacre, Huguenots like Mornay went on to develop an influential doctrine of active resistance which posits a covenant between the ruler, the magistrates, and God, and argues that a ruler's breaking of this covenant justifies active

[77] First translated into English by Richard Taverner as *The confessyon of the fayth of the Germaynes* (Published in 1536. STC 908). Calvin's restatement of this principle in the *Institutes* is even more forceful: "Not contented with simply giving God the praise of our salvation, he distinctly excludes us from all share in it, just as if he had said that not one particle remains to man as a ground of boasting. The whole is of God" (2.3.6).
[78] A position held by both Calvin and the mature Melanchthon. See O'Kelly, 37, 41-42. For more on the various accounts of regeneration, concurrent with but not necessarily resulting from justification by faith, see McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) 121-25.
[79] See ibid. 102-103.
[80] See also Ribner, 'Sir Philip Sidney on Civil Insurrection', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13:2 (1952): 259.

resistance.[81] When Sidney, who was present in Paris during the massacre,[82] is invoking faith and placing it at the heart of his work, he does not simply engage with the unknowability of God, but also with similar practical concerns regarding the permissibility of resistance. In the *Old Arcadia* this received an expression in the form of criticism of the leaderless state, which persists into the *New Arcadia*.[83] But the latter work then goes on to explore a full-scale civil war in which the idea of resistance becomes much more significant. The clearest manifestation of resistance is produced when the rebel leader Amphialus, amidst preparations for war with the forces of Basilius and his Steward Philanax, produces a political justification – the "justification of this his action" (325) in which he presents his reasons for rebelling:

> … for beginning how much the duty which is owed to the country goes beyond all other duties… since the end whereto anything is directed is ever to be of more noble reckoning than the thing thereto directed, that, therefore, the weal-public was more to be regarded than any person or magistrate that thereunto was ordained; the feeling consideration whereof had moved him, though as near of kin to Basilius as could be, yet to set principally before his eyes the good estate of so many thousands… the care whereof did kindly appertain to those who (being subaltern magistrates and officers of the crown) were to be employed, as from the prince… and if the prince should command them otherwise, yet to know that therein he was no more to be obeyed than if he should call for poison to hurt himself withal, since all that was done was done for his service, howsoever he might, seduced by Philanax, interpret of it – he protesting that whatsoever he should do for his own defence should be against Philanax, and no way against Basilius. (325-26).

Amphialus' model of resistance is seemingly reluctant, and careful to suggest that resistance is aimed not at the true monarch but at his corrupt steward. It also makes a point of emphasising that it is 'subaltern' magistrates, and not the wider populace, who bear the responsibility for resistance. Amphialus' model, then, echoes what Quentin Skinner terms as the constitutional theory of forceful resistance, "allowing for opposition by 'inferior

[81] Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (vol. 2) 325.
[82] See J. M. Osborn, 'Sidney and Pietro Bizari', *Renaissance Quarterly* 24:3 (1977): 350.
[83] See for example Sinfield, 'Power and Ideology: An Outline Theory and Sidney's Arcadia', *ELH* 52:2 (1985): 266.

magistrates'".[84] This kind of resistance is most often connected with the Magdeburg rebels' *Confessio et apologia pastorum* of 1550, and it subsequently came to be adapted by the Huguenots. It suggests that "a ruler who goes beyond the bounds of his office" ceases "to count as a genuine magistrate",[85] and so becomes a legitimate target for forceful resistance.[86] Amphialus' rebellion, justified by his own civil office and aimed at the steward who tries to rise above his station, presents therefore a neat version of Protestant resistance, arising out of civic duty and aimed at promoting the wellbeing of the people.

Its civic concerns, however, are also where the model's main problem lies.[87] When Amphialus suggests that duty to one's country is paramount, he sets himself apart from the Protestant magistrate of Magdeburg, who rebels by virtue of God's mandate alone (*propter mandatum Dei*). Protestant resistance is ultimately concerned with the oppression of true religion (*oppressionem verae religionis nostrae*) and not with standing up to civil tyranny.[88] Sidney, his own political situation with Elizabeth clearly on his mind, is very careful to maintain this, just as he had maintained Elizabeth's status as "the only protector of [God's] church" in his ill-fated letter of 1580 regarding her intended marriage.[89] Thus his narrator expressly rejects Amphialus' actions even before their justification is presented, "which with some glosses of probability might hide indeed the foulness of his treason" (325). Sidney was likely thinking of Anjou's opposition to his brother, King Henry III of France, when he was

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[84] Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (vol. 2) 207.
[85] Ibid. 219.
[86] For more on ideas of resistance in Sidney's group of correspondents in the 1570s, see Roland Greene, 'Resistance in process: On the semantics of early modern prose fiction', *Prose Studies* 32:2 (2010): 103.
[87] For the suggestion that Sidney was familiar with the inferior magistrate theory but not sympathetic to it, see Raitiere, *Faire Bitts: Sir Philip Sidney and Renaissance Political Theory* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1984) 20.
[88] References are to the opening syllogism of the original 1550 Latin edition of *Confessio et apologia pastorum & reliquorum ministrorum Ecclesiæ*, of uncertain authorship but often attributed to Nicolas von Amsdorf. See also Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (vol. 2) 207-208; and Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition* (St Louis, MO: Concordia, 2001) 67-91.
[89] 'A Letter Written by Sir Philip Sidney to Queen Elizabeth, Touching Her Marriage with Monsieur', *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, eds. van Dorsten and Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) 56.

creating Amphialus.[90] Appropriately, the justification for Sidney's rebel is guided by dangerous rhetorical excess and not by faith: "To this effect, amplified with arguments and examples, and painted with rhetorical colours, did he sow abroad many discourses" (326). As mandated by the *New Arcadia*'s Ramist lack of ambiguity, Amphialus' rhetorical justification of political actions is just as abhorrent as Cecropia's rhetorical wit and its atheistic dissimulations, noted by Pamela to be the source of her wickedness: "O foolish woman – and most miserably foolish, since wit makes you foolish" (359).

Sidney's focus on faith suggests another model of resistance, embodied by the virtuous Pamela and Philoclea as they resist Cecropia's rhetorical assault on their chastity:

> … she herself omitting no day and catching hold of every occasion to move forward her son's desire and remove their own resolutions, using the same arguments to the one sister as to the other… yet the handling was diverse (according as she saw their humours) to prepare a more or less aptness of apprehension, this day having used long speech to Philoclea amplifying not a little the great dutifulness her son had showed in delivering Philanax – of whom she could get no answer but a silence, sealed up in virtue and so sweetly graced as that in one instant it carried with it both resistance and humbleness. (354)

Instead of forceful political resistance, the princesses embody a more personal kind of passive resistance which entirely undermines Cecropia's rhetorical weaponry: "But in vain was all her vain oratory employed. Pamela's determination was built upon so brave a rock that no shot of hers could reach unto it; and Philoclea, though humbly seated, was so environed with sweet rivers of clear virtue as could neither be battered nor undermined" (419). This kind of passive disobedience is more characteristic of the less radical and more equivocal resistance admitted by Calvin himself, rather than by his followers, especially in his earlier writing. Generally opposed to advocating resistance, Calvin nevertheless qualifies this in the very last section of the *Institutes*: "But in that obedience which we hold to be due to the

[90] Raitiere 26-31.

commands of rulers, we must always make the exception, nay, must be particularly careful that it is not incompatible with obedience to Him to whose will the wishes of all kings should be subject… If they command anything against Him let us not pay the least regard to it, nor be moved by all the dignity which they possess as magistrates" (4.20.32).[91] The passive resistance of Sidney's heroines is much along these lines, and its message is unequivocal: obedience is never bound to the deceitful words of man, but always to the word of God – even when it is aimed at his magistrates, for, as Calvin suggests, "though the Lord declares that a ruler to maintain our safety is the highest gift of his beneficence, and prescribes to rulers themselves their proper sphere, he at the same time declares, that of whatever description they may be, they derive their power from none but him" (4.20.25). The *New Arcadia*'s idea of resistance then goes full circle and ends up where it had begun – with the problematic admission of the limits of its own rhetorical medium.

At his Wits' End

There is no major paradigm shift, only a changing focus, in Sidney's transition from *Old* to *New Arcadia*, just as there had been none in the *Defence of Poesy*'s move from erected wit to its practical manifestation. In his treatise Sidney exhibited a diplomatic, pragmatic view of Protestantism and of wit in an effort to enact social change, and his two *Arcadias* seem equally willing to entertain both the inescapable corruptness of man and at the same time the humanist inevitability of his rhetoric. But while the *Defence of Poesy* and the *Old Arcadia* put the brazen world of humans at the centre, the *New Arcadia*, though its land is the most explicitly imperfect, sets out on a different kind of journey. It is a journey in which one is expected to "penetrate beneath the verbal particulars"[92] into moral universals as entertained in its dichotomies, but also one which eventually ventures into the unknowable realm of the

[91] See also Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (vol. 2) 192.
[92] Robinson 139.

divine. Its rhetoric is appropriately ambivalent: despite its lofty pedagogical aims and its apprehensions regarding rhetoric, the *New Arcadia* is nevertheless suggestive of deliberate rhetorical copiousness, especially in its first two books. Its highly-artificial structure permeates the narrative, even as it questions the limits of rhetoric, "a foolish wittiness to speak more than one thinks" (93). It follows a discussion of the limits of knowledge: "the vanity which possesseth many, who… are desirous to know the certainty of things to come, wherein there is nothing so certain as our continual uncertainty" (22), with an account of language as positive for transmitting that same knowledge: "nature loves to exercise that part most which is least decayed – and that is our tongue; or that knowledge being the only thing whereof we poor old men can brag, we cannot make it known but by utterance" (23). Even the *New Arcadia*'s supposedly epic style is problematic, for though it has a great power to move, it lacks the stability of the expressly didactic plain style, with which Cicero's *Orator* is "far from standing on slippery ground" (98).[93] This view fundamentally echoes the ideas of Du Plessis-Mornay, as Sidney's own translation of his friend's *A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian religion* reveals:[94]

> But if thou couldest haue entered into the mynde of that man at the making of his worke, thou shouldest haue seene it farre more beautifull there: and all that euer he could do or thou say, is alwaies farre lesse than his Conceyt; and yet the same Conceyt of his is but as a sparke of the Mynd, whereof the same worke is a part. Now then, if thou being a man, canst not conceiue the mynde of a man by his doings, though thou beare the like mynd about thée thy selfe; and if his doings (of what sorte so euer they be) come farre short of that which he himselfe is: darest thou be so bold as to describe God by his works what he is, and to dispute of his substaunce? (47)

Sidney's revised *Arcadia* is deeply concerned with the sentiment expressed in this passage. Man's intellectual wit, it suggests, is as unknowable by his rhetorical wit as the nature of God

[93] For more on Sidney's Ciceronianism in the *Arcadia*, see Lanham, 'The Old Arcadia' 339-41.
[94] The translation of Mornay's work, begun by Sidney, was completed by Arthur Golding and published in 1587 (STC 18149). For more on Sidney's friendship with Mornay and similar Protestant ideals, see Sinfield, 'Sidney, Du Plessis-Mornay and the Pagans', *Philological Quarterly* 58:1 (1979): 26-30.

is unknowable by man altogether, and by anything else which partakes of God's creation. Man's 'tragic' view or his inability to conform human poetics to Protestant demands is perhaps also why, as critics often suggest, Sidney could not have completed his *New Arcadia* as its focus grew increasingly theological.[95]

It seems warranted to suggest that by reshaping his main ideas from expressions of wit into narrative events, Sidney is distancing himself from his imperfect characters, and so also from their passionate blindness, political corruption and impious rhetoric. Sidney seems to be moving from the personal realm of the courtier and his social standing in the *Old Arcadia*, for whom rhetoric is both important and at the same time ambiguous, to a didactic role in the *New Arcadia* where the practicalities of politics and religion are key, and faith necessarily rules over both. But of course distancing himself from wit is impossible, for it is in Sidney's own rhetoric that these characters come to life. Rhetorical wit is always on Sidney's mind, because it constitutes the medium for engaging with the practical world. Just as rhetoric had proved a soldier's piercing sword for the *Old Arcadia*'s courtly concerns, so it is the courtier's biting pen which shapes the *New Arcadia*'s political and religious struggles.

[95] See for example McCoy 171; and Mentz, 'Reason, Faith, and Shipwreck in Sidney's New Arcadia' 14. For more on the idea that Sidney is expressing a pessimistic view, see Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts* 355; and Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* 260.

Chapter 5 – Harvey and Nashe or, a Battle of Wits

In the preface to his friend Robert Greene's *Menaphon, Camillas Alarum to Slumbering Euphues*, first published in 1589,[1] Thomas Nashe contrasts two kinds of eloquence which he perceives as competing for supremacy in contemporary literary life. On the one hand is an overly-learned rhetoric that chains English to the inflections of Latin and whose result is periphrastic strangeness: "I am not ignorant how eloquent our gowned age is growen of late; so that euerie moechanicall mate abhorres the english he was borne too, and plucks with a solemne periphrasis, his *vt vales* from the inkhorne" (**1r).[2] On the other is a more desirable eloquence, reminiscent of the middle style praised by Cicero, which he claims to detect in Greene's work: "I come (sweet friend) to thy *Arcadian Menaphon*; whose attire though not so statelie, yet comelie, dooth entitle thee aboue all other, to that *temperatum dicendi genus*, which *Tullie* in his *Orator* tearmeth true eloquence" (**1v).[3] Notwithstanding Nashe's humorous appropriation of vernacular Ciceronianism, his criticism aims at a rather serious target: those who oppose, often on religious grounds, the secular exercise of one's wit.[4] In a reversal of the objections to secular matter as unworthy, he defends "a secular wit" as more worthy than "our quadrant crepundios", i.e. two-penny triflers, "that spit *ergo* in the mouth of euerie one they meete" (**2v), and proclaims erroneous those bishops "who account wit vanitie, and poetrie impietie" (A1v).

[1] Entered in the Stationers' Register on 23 August. STC 12272.
[2] Like the grand style when studied and used in isolation, as Cicero suggests in *Orator*: "the copious speaker, if he has nothing else, seems to be scarcely sane" (99).
[3] See Cicero's description of "the mean and tempered style [*modica ac temperate*]" (*Orator* 95). On the rhetoric of intimacy that transpires when the orator presents himself "in a way that stimulates attachment and affection rather than alienation", see Eden 25.
[4] On Ciceronianism's relationship with the vernacular in the sixteenth century, see Tunberg, 'Colloquia Familiaria: An Aspect of Ciceronianism Reconsidered', *Cicero Refused to Die: Ciceronian Influence through the Centuries* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013) 137.

This short piece of criticism, from an author with only a single work, *The anatomie of absurditie*,[5] to his name, brought Nashe to the attention of astrologer and theologian Richard Harvey. In an epistle entitled "To the fauourable or indifferent *Reader*" and added to some copies of his 1590 work, *A theologicall discourse of the Lamb of God and his enemies*,[6] Harvey attacked Nashe for "censuring his betters" and compared him to Martin Marprelate, suggesting that Nashe "taketh vppon him in ciuill learning, as *Martin* doth in religion" (a2v). The reference to the pseudonymous Presbyterian pamphleteer, whom both Nashe and Greene had probably attacked anonymously, could not have been well-received by either.[7] Greene issued a scathing (and hastily withdrawn) remark against the Harvey brothers in *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*[8] and subsequently died in 1592, prompting Richard's brother Gabriel Harvey to publish a letter in which he mocked the circumstances of Greene's passing, purportedly of "a surfett of pickle herringe and rennish wine", and called him a "madde libeller" (5).[9] Claiming to "reape commodity of him" (8) that irked him, Harvey also indirectly referred to Nashe (11), who in turn attacked the Harvey brothers directly in his own work, *Pierce Penilesse his supplication to the diuell*.[10] This was the inception of what is now known as the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, conducted between Nashe and Gabriel Harvey in a series of pamphlets published between 1592 and 1596.

The quarrel itself can be seen in terms of the personal feud between Harvey and Nashe, a result of the vast differences between them. Harvey was a former Cambridge scholar whose penchant for Ramism had made into a controversial figure, and whose hopes for

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[5] Entered at the Stationers' Register on 19 September 1588 and published the following year. STC 18364.
[6] STC 12915.
[7] Sources often link both Nashe and Greene to the anti-Martinists, even though certain attribution of specific texts to them is impossible. See for example McKerrow, *The Works of Thomas Nashe, vol. V* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958) 49-65; and Black, 'Introduction', *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernized and Annotated Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) lxiii.
[8] STC 12300.
[9] This letter was reproduced later in the same year as the second of *Foure Letters, and certaine Sonnets* (STC 12900), from which it is quoted here.
[10] STC 18372.

advancement at university were subsequently frustrated.[11] Nashe, on the other hand, was a young Cambridge-educated writer seeking, like his friend Greene, a modicum of commercial success.[12] It was certainly, at least at first, a deeply urgent quarrel for both, leading to the writing of all but one of its major texts within a short space of time, between Greene's death in September 1592 and Harvey's completion of *Pierces Supererogation or A New Prayse of the Old Asse* in July 1593.[13] Harvey and Nashe were close to their publishers – John Wolfe for Harvey, John Danter for Nashe – and were both employed by them as correctors at various times, and their pamphlets are "bursting with satirical allusions to the medium in which they were conveyed".[14] Like their engagement with the printing press, their own writings take on a personal, familiar, and even intimate quality. Besides frequent *ad hominem* attacks, the two also use the polemic stage to express their ideas on rhetoric's moral and social role, on wit's relation to material and social commodity, and on the legitimacy of their own authorial wit. These have all found some expression in the preceding Marprelate controversy, albeit with a less central place for wit, but Harvey and Nashe bring their own names and authorities into what had before been an exchange between pseudonymous authors.[15] This chapter, through an examination of the developing quarrel, attempts to

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[11] On Harvey's Ramism and his academic frustrations at Cambridge, see Feingold, 'English Ramism: A Reinterpretation' 152-53. For broader biographical details, see Stern 3-136; Popper, 'The English Polydaedali: How Gabriel Harvey Read Late Tudor London', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 66:3 (2005): 358-9; Richards, 'Gabriel Harvey's Choleric Writing' 656-57; and Schrickx, *Shakespeare's Early Contemporaries: The Background of the Harvey-Nashe Polemic and Love's Labour's Lost* (Antwerpen: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1956) 95-101.

[12] On Nashe's search for commercial success see Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 72. On the complex ideas that such professional authorship implies, however, see Brown, 'Generating waste: Thomas Nashe and the production of professional authorship', *Redefining Elizabethan Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 55, 60-65. For more on Nashe's life, see McKerrow, vol. V 2-34; Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 1; and Schrickx 136-37.

[13] STC 12903. The date is provided by Gabriel Harvey's preface to the work, dated to 16 July 1593.

[14] Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 54. On the two's employment by their respective publishers, see Jowett, 'Henry Chettle: "Your Old Compositor"', *Text* 15 (2003): 142-43.

[15] For just one example of many, see Martin Marprelate's attacks in *The Epitome* against John Bridges' A *Defence of the Government*. Martin's notes, errata and running head, all make light of the format of printed debate, but at the same time argue that those who "handle honest and godly causes, labor to bring good proofs and a clear style" (Marprelate, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernized and Annotated Edition*, ed. J. L. Black [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008] 57).

identify these two authors' distinct notions of the interplay of rhetoric, morality and authority, and the role of one's wit in this interplay. What transpires from this debate is a divide on how the role of wit is imagined. Harvey blends humanist ideas with a social progressivism that nevertheless shares much with the self-advocating authors discussed in previous chapters, and his use of wit is strikingly familiar.[16] Nashe, on the other hand, moves towards a rejection of the social value of patronage (and the commercial value of the marketplace) into something that is seemingly reactionary – in its denial of social mobility – but which is also groundbreaking. His use of wit, appropriately, reflects a move away from the multivalent wit – weighty *ingenium* as well as rhetorical playfulness – discussed previously.

The Abuse of Wit in *Pierce Penilesse* and Harvey's First Response

A convenient starting point for the framing of the quarrel is Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse*.[17] The work concerns itself with criticising, through Nashe's eponymous mouthpiece, a huge array of different targets, from the corruption of London's lawyers (165) to the faults of other nations (175-78). As part of this general assault, Richard Harvey is given his fair share of scorn: "Gentlemen, I am sure you haue hearde of a ridiculous Asse that many yeares since sold lyers by the great";[18] and one of his brothers, the late John Harvey, is suggested as disingenuously lending his name to works published by his discredited brother: "Thou hast a Brother hast thou not, student in Almanackes, go too Ile stand to it, fatherd one of thy bastards (a booke I meane) which being of thy begetting was set forth vnder his name." (196).[19] This attack on his two brothers would lead Gabriel Harvey to produce the third of his

[16] For more on Harvey as constructing "an improved model for educational and social exchange" with Edmund Spenser, see Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 114.
[17] Citations for *Pierce Penilesse* refer to the 1592 text identified as edition B in McKerrow's *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (vol. I 138). It is identical, except for the added epistle, to edition A.
[18] This line refers to Richard Harvey's *Astrological discourse* (Published in 1583. STC 12909.7), which made predictions that did not come to pass. See also Aston, 'The Fiery Trigon Conjunction: An Elizabethan Astrological Prediction', *Isis* 61:2 (1970):166-71
[19] At least two of John Harvey's almanacs survive: those of 1585 (STC 455.3) and 1589 (STC 455.7).

Foure Letters as the first direct attack by either of the authors on the other. But already in *Pierce Penilesse* it is evident that there is more at stake than merely personal reputation, as Nashe grapples with the same issues of commodity and wit that will come to dominate both his and Harvey's later pamphlets.

Pierce Penilesse, as his name suggests, is defined from the start by two contrasting attributes: an abundance of rhetorical wit, and a lack of substance. His immediate concern is financial: "my selfe (in prime of my best wit) laid open to pouertie", and as his wit has so far failed to solve this problem, it is lamented: "Ah worthlesse Wit, to traine me to this woe, / Deceitfull Artes that nourish Discontent" (157).[20] A self-confessed knave who "cannot be maintained with nothing" (165), like the traditional carnival trickster on whom he is based, Pierce is nevertheless maintained by the text in a long supplication to the Devil in which he assaults everyone in an appeal for his own material gain in their stead.[21] Pierce's dubious character and moral ambiguity, of course, suggest that both the material profit he seeks and the wit he claims to possess are not the positive forces that they seem to be. His imagery, as many have noted before, echoes the Rabelaisian, carnivalesque engagement with the scatological language of the marketplace as described by Mikhail Bakhtin – of gaining through eating and of losing through death or excrement.[22] Referring to Richard Harvey as producing excrement, he exclaims: "If the Printer haue any great dealings with thee, hee were best to get a priuiledge betimes, *Ad imprimendum solum,* forbidding all other to sell waste paper but himselfe, or else he will bee in a wofull taking" (198). In a similar vein, he depicts the ambitions of a wannabe politician in gluttonous terms, suggesting that "his dainty fare is

[20] See also Landreth, 'Wit without Money in Nashe', *The Age of Thomas Nashe* 135.
[21] On Pierce's 'trickster' persona, see Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 72.
[22] See Bakhtin, 'Rabelais and His World', *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov,* trans. H. Iswolsky (London: E. Arnold, 1994) 212-23. For more on Nashe's grotesque and carnivalesque imagery of the body, see Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* 42-43; and Chen, 'Pamphlets and Body-Related Metaphors in Thomas Nashe's Pierce Penilesse and Strange Newes', *Literature Compass* 3:2 (2006): 108.

turned to a hungry feast of Dogs & Cats, or Haberdine and poore Iohn at the most, and which is lamentablest of all, that without Mustard" (171). Even Pierce's own writing is depicted using the carnivalesque image of birth, suggestive of simultaneous loss and gain: "I determined to clawe Auarice by the elbowe, till his full belly gaue mee a full hande, and lette him bloud with my penne (if it might be) in the veyne of liberalitie: and so (in short time) was this Paper-monster *Pierce Penilesse* begotten" (161). The carnivalesque spirit accords with the ambiguous notion of 'commodity', at once positive – something desired or needed, an object of value or a personal profit[23] – and reprehensible, that which is "sold on credit by a usurer to a needy person, who immediately raised some cash by re-selling [it] at a lower price, generally to the usurer himself".[24] It is tempting to read Nashe's protagonist as representative of that which he mocks, his rhetorical wit debased and his search for marketplace commodity a foul one, undone by the energetic subversion of hierarchy that is the cornerstone of the carnival.[25] As one critic puts it, "Nashe seems to be invested – and, as much to the point, seems to expect his reader to be invested – in a scathing critique of indulgence in early modern England".[26] The text and its protagonist, it seems, become an anatomy of consumptive abuses which links Nashe's work with the likes of Gosson, the playfulness of its language echoing the euphuism of *The Schoole of Abuse* and its message equally severe.

Nashe's attitude towards these abuses, however, is much more contradictory than Gosson's wholehearted denunciation.[27] This becomes most apparent in his strategy of self-

[23] 'Commodity, N.' 1.a, 2.c and 6.a.
[24] OED, 'Commodity, N.' 7.b. See also Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 113.
[25] On hierarchy and the carnival, see Bakhtin 200; and Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 114.
[26] Baker, 'Thomas Nashe, "Pierce Penilesse," and the Demon of Consumption', *On Demand: Writing for the Market in Early Modern England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010) 38.
[27] See for example Baker's lines immediately following his comments on Nashe's critique of indulgence: "It's odd, then, that the contrary case can be made as well. Nashe is clearly not blind to facts of rising consumption, and just as clearly he is willing to do his part to encourage this trend" (38). Similar sentiments are expressed by Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* (26).

presentation, evident for example in one of the lines that follow his initial mention of Richard Harvey: "Why, could not you haue sate quiet at home, and write Catechismes, but you must be comparing me to *Martin?*" (197). Textually, these words are Pierce's in his letter to the Devil. But it is Nashe and not Pierce Penilesse whom Harvey had compared to Martin, suggesting that Nashe purposefully blurs the lines between his authorial wit and that of his invented persona.[28] The result is that Nashe reflects on the ambiguity of his literary endeavour in general, in which *res* or matter – Pierce's supplication which overlaps with Nashe's attack on his enemies – is undermined by its vehicle, the unambiguous *verba* of the knavish Pierce. The eponymous protagonist, perhaps, "overcomes his despair through the exercise of his own wit".[29] But what is left along the way is a lack of profitable matter suggested by the undermining of *res*, not only for Pierce but for the text as a whole, promoting the sense that both consist of words alone and are thus inherently amoral.[30] In a way, Nashe seems to be claiming a material achievement, the text itself, where his amoral protagonist fails to gain substance, suggesting himself as removed from the Devil's "dauncing schoole" (165) which is "made around what isn't there".[31] But at the same time he cannot help but acknowledge that his work will receive the same treatment he himself had given to those he dislikes. Pierce's narrative now over, Nashe thus addresses his readers:

> I dare say, thou hast cald me a hundred times dolt for this senseles discourse: it is no matter, thou dost but as I haue doone by a number in my dayes. For who can abide a scuruie pedling Poet to plucke a man by the sleeue at euerie third step in *Paules* Churchyard, & when he comes in to seruey his wares, theres nothing but purgations and vomits wrapt vppe in wast paper. (239)

[28] This blurring of identities recurs again and again throughout Pierce's narrative. See also Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986) 69.
[29] Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* 70.
[30] In *The Boke Named The Governour*, Thomas Elyot identified *res* and profit as inextricable: "the worde Res hath diuers significations, and dothe nat only betoken that, that is called a thynge, whiche is distincte from a persone, but also signifieth astate, condition, substance, and profite" (1.I). See also Muldrew 46.
[31] Landreth 148.

The poet's "purgations and vomits" hint at medicine – laxative and emetic – but in the context of the carnivalesque, scurvy poet it is the signification of disease that is most potent. Despite Nashe's subsequent efforts to defend the work, *Pierce Penilesse* ultimately suggests an amoral tautology, in which the preclusion of *res* by *verba* and Pierce's subsistence on words leaves us with the notion that the text exists merely because of, and for, its own material wastefulness.

The third of Gabriel Harvey's *Foure Letters* is a sustained exposition of what he perceives as Nashe's amorality and of his own ideas regarding the relationship between commodity and wit. Nashe may have produced Pierce in an effort to prevent the attaching of real value to his text, but Harvey appears to see Pierce Penilesse quite seriously, and to suggest Nashe and Greene as the real-life counterparts to Nashe's protagonist: "His witte was nothing, but a minte of knauerie" (27) he says of Greene, echoing both Pierce's image as a knave and his obsession with monetary gain, and Nashe, or rather "*M. Pierce Penni-lesse*" is seen as a "Grammer-schoole witte… [looking for] anie meanes to relieue his estate" (29). Instead of material gain through writing, Harvey posits real profit as dependent on working towards theological and social advancement: "better an hundred Ouides were banished, then the state of Augustus endangered, or a soueraigne Empire infected" (27). Harvey is placing himself as a kind of 'laureate poet' who is conscious of commercial concerns but claims "an elevated office in relation to civic moral and political concerns".[32] This characterisation, however, does not leave rhetoric outside of its scope. Rather it suggests, and Harvey explicitly admits concerning his writing, that "My meaning was not, to displeasure, or discredite any: but onely to satisfie the pleasure, and mainetaine the credite of those, vnto whome I owe many dueties" (45). Instead of potentially usurious material commodity,

[32] Halasz 87. This idea originates with Helgerson's *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), although Helgerson is mostly dismissive of Harvey's "lumbering and pedantic way" (79).

Harvey suggests that writing should produce credit not in the material, financial sense[33] but in the ethical one of reputation, influence and authority as one possessing truth,[34] and that this credit is to be produced not for one's own self but in the service of society's benefactors. It is unsurprising therefore that he ends his letter with an appeal to Nashe to become a "deuine Poet", whose goal is to become like "the excellentest wittes of Greece" (48).

Behind these noble social sentiments, however, Harvey expresses an anxiety not unlike that of Nashe. In its signification of intellect, Harvey's use of wit captures both the excellent wits of Greece that he wishes Nashe to imitate, and the "ranke wittes" (28) that he suggests are the lot of the real Greene and Nashe. The one is always in danger of becoming the other, for Harvey is engaging in precisely that which he rejects as worthless: "still more paltery, but what remedy? we are already ouer shoes and must now goe through" (27).[35] This awareness creeps into Harvey's criticism of Nashe, such as when he rebukes the latter's use of printed marginal notes in *Pierce Penilesse* as facetiously "learned" (29). Paratext has been described by Genette as the "bearer of an authorial commentary either more or less legitimated by the author",[36] and Harvey makes use of this to question Nashe's authority in general. Harvey employed his own authority extensively through paratext, as an annotator of others' works, or had his authority reaffirmed as a recurring figure in the printed marginalia of his friend Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*.[37] But when it came to exerting paratextual authority over his own work in the quarrel pamphlets, Harvey chose to omit printed marginalia. The suggestion is that pamphlets, often seen as insignificant and untrustworthy,

[33] Such as that in OED, 'Credit, N.' II.9.a and II.10.a.
[34] OED, 'Credit, N.' I.1, I.2.a and I.5.
[35] See also Perkins, 'Issues and Motivations in the Nashe-Harvey Quarrel', *Philological Quarterly* 39 (1960): 229-30; and Woudhuysen, 'Gabriel Harvey', *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 616-17.
[36] Genette, 'Introduction to the Paratext', trans. M. Maclean, *New Literary History* 22:2 (1991): 261.
[37] Published anonymously by "Immerito" in 1579. STC 23089. See for example the January eclogue, whose comments by the editor "E.K." present Harvey, or "Hobbinol", as "a fained country name, whereby, it being so commune and vsuall, seemeth to be hidden the person of some his very speciall & most familiar freend, whom he entirely and extraordinarily beloued" (fol.2v).

do not justify the inclusion of such units of authority.[38] In this setting, rhetorical wit threatens to debase the broader intellectual wit, such that Harvey is in danger of becoming like "The wittier sort, [which] tasteth, & flieth as the Dog from Nilus" (29). Certainly, his imperative to proceed in such unprofitable territory lies in a quest to rehabilitate wit, both rhetorical and intellectual, as Harvey suggests following his citations of Pierce Penilesse's pleas: "Now good sweete Muse, I beseech thee by thy delicate witte, and by all the queintest Inuentions of thy deuiseful braine, cast not thy drearie selfe headlong into the horrible Gulph of Desperation" (30). But it is equally certain that, while it may not rise to the level of Nashe's copiousness, Harvey's rhetoric hinders his own efforts. It is at times playful and taunting: "What hee is improued since, excepting his good olde *Flores Poetarum,* and Tarletons surmounting Rhetorique, with a little Euphuisme, and Greenesse inough, which were all prettily stale" (34); at others, it celebrates the power of art to maintain one's credit, seemingly ethical but also suggestive of the material: "But in the plainnesse of my nature, and simplicitie of my Arte, I can easely defie the proudest, that dareth cal my credite in question" (17).[39] As with Nashe's ambiguity, the uncertainty surrounding the use of his pen infects Harvey's social and moral quest.

Harvey and Nashe both see material commodity as morally questionable, and thus qualify their own authority within the text, but their view of the rhetorical wit in which the promises of material gain are contained is opposed. Harvey rejects purely commercialised rhetorical wit, but his idea of wit is both rhetorical and more broadly intellectual, both noble and degenerate, for he fails to separate rhetoric from the profit he envisions as arising out of one's social and moral endeavour. This serves to make Harvey a much more nuanced writer

[38] See also Day, 'Hakluyt, Harvey, Nashe: The Material Text and Early Modern Nationalism', *Studies in Philology* 104:3 (2007): 292-5. On early modern perceptions of the pamphlet form, see Raymond 10.
[39] See also Muldrew (4): "the early modern economy was a system of cultural, as well as material, exchanges in which the central mediating factor was credit or trust".

than the strict pedant he had often been cast as in the past.[40] His expression of wit is familiar and shares much with the wit of the euphuists and of Sidney's *Defence*, but it is not shared by Harvey's fellow quarreller. Nashe, rather, celebrates the amoral nature of wit as almost invariably rhetorical – *verba* without *res* – while facetiously placing it as opposed to material commodity in the person of Pierce Penilesse.[41] The result is an emptying of his text of any value but "the value of the inke and paper" (158-59), reflecting the ambiguity of his writings as material creations produced by his own rhetorical wit. In the full-scale pamphlets that follow this initial exchange, both Harvey and Nashe explore further the destabilised conceptions of rhetorical engagement that they raise in these early works. And through their continual protraction of the controversy, they also reflect the imperative that this engagement becomes for them.

The Wasteful War of Wit in Nashe's *Strange Newes*

Nashe's first full-scale engagement with Gabriel Harvey is found in *Strange Newes, of the intercepting certaine letters, and a conuoy of verses, as they were going priuilie to victuall the Low Countries*, the last piece of the quarrel to be written in 1592.[42] If before, Nashe tautologically argued that texts possess only material value, the message in *Strange Newes* is that this value nevertheless bears relation to the content that is printed on the page. Nashe first reiterates the rejection of material commodity produced outside the text, namely wealth, by depicting Harvey as a merchant and accusing him of chasing money:

> Hold vp thy hand *G. H.* thou art heere indited for an incrocher vpon the fee-simple of the Latin, an enemie to Carriers, as one that takes their occupation out of their hands and dost nothing but transport letters vp and downe in thy

[40] Harvey's utilitarianism is explored later in this chapter. See also Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature* 121.
[41] Compare Nashe's 22 uses of 'wit' and 'witte' in *Pierce Penilesse*, all but four of which directly relate to the production of rhetoric, with Harvey's 16 uses of wit as directly rhetorical and 11 uses of the term as more broadly suggestive of one's intellect, as in "I speake generally to euery springing wit" (49).
[42] STC 18377, entered at the Stationers' Register on 12 January 1593 (N.S.). Citations are to McKerrow, vol. I 248.

> owne commendation, a conspiratour and practiser to make Printers rich, by making thy selfe ridiculous, a manifest briber of Bookesellers and Stationers, to helpe thee to sell away thy bookes (whose impression thou paidst for) that thou mayst haue money to goe home to Trinitie Hall to discharge thy commons. (261)

Selling books raises the question of the value of the text not only monetarily for its author, but also in its own right, as producing value beyond that of the expensive paper on which it was printed.[43] Nashe's criticism, as he moves to examine Harvey's text in detail, engages with this idea through echoing Harvey's own quotation of Nashe in *Foure Letters*, made for the purposes of reforming Nashe's immorality. Nashe, however, make no such reformative claim. Instead, Harvey's lines are broken down and interpreted into oblivion through mockery, such that "*A Letter to M.* Bird" becomes "little matter wrapt vp in many words" (266) and "*but no liberty without bounds, no licence without limitation*" becomes "euery thing hath an end, and a pudding hath two" (281). The implication is that Harvey's text is a failure, nothing but "course paper and want of matter" (280), the product of what is imagined as a young and spirited horse, both inexperienced and out of control: "Holla, holla, holla, *flurt, fling,* what reasty Rhetoricke haue we here? certes, certes brother *hoddy doddy,* your penne is a coult by cockes body" (281).

This is a rather disingenuous claim on Nashe's part, considering his previous rejection of his own text as words lacking matter. But Nashe does not seem concerned with consistency. His attack on his enemies in *Pierce Penilesse* can be seen as a self-serving move, even as Nashe evinces a lack of value and authority in his text. Similarly, his previous objection to pleasure in *Pierce Penilesse*, such as when he described the Frenchman as one who "loues none but himselfe and his pleasure" (177), does not stop him from criticising Harvey in *Strange Newes* for failing to produce the very same: "What pleasure brings this to

[43] "In the world of Nashe there resides the threat that the book will degrade into raw material. If the words have no value, the pamphlet will become old, plain paper" (Chen 110).

the reader? Iacke of the Falcon in Cambridge can say as much and giue no reason for it" (282-83). In the context of Nashe's 'meaningless' text, such inconsistencies become themselves insignificant, but of course the very claim to meaninglessness becomes suspect by virtue of Nashe's inconsistency, a kind of Nashian twist on the liar's paradox. His efforts at besmirching his opponent's name by corrupting it into "*Gamaliel Hobgoblin*" (289) or "*Gregory Habberdine*" (301) while defending his own suggest that Nashe derives value personally from the printed text, but this attack always carries a qualification. "I doe but draw vppon him with my penne, and defende my selfe with it and a paper buckler as well as I might" (262), he claims, conjuring the image of "words and swords, pens and penises" that had traditionally associated writing with masculinity, but which the printing press fails to evoke.[44] Perhaps what characterises Nashe, then, is a deep-seated uncertainty, not entirely dissimilar to that of his rival, regarding their mutual enterprise as a polemic, a state of war that is "the opposite of dialogue and negotiation".[45] This wasteful war, Nashe suggests, both desolates the opponent and squanders one's own resources: "With the wast of my words, I lay wast all the feeble fortifications of thy wit" (321).

Harvey's Self-Fashioning in *Pierces Supererogation*

Harvey responds to Nashe's accusations of lacking matter in his next pamphlet, entitled *Pierces Supererogation or A New Prayse of the Old Asse*. Aware of the difficulty of arguing with Nashe's aggressive inconsistencies, Harvey resorts to Nashe's own weapon, and produces a string of tautologies as representative of their quarrel: "He will confute me, bicause he will: and he can conquer me, bicause he can. If I come vpon him with a gentle reply, he will welcome me with a fierce reioynder: for any my briefe Triplication, he will

[44] Prendergast 175.
[45] Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 11.

prouide a Quadruplication at-large: & so forth in *infinitum*" (60). He similarly uses the quick-witted, alliterative and copious language that he identifies with Nashe to describe him as the opposite of Harvey's own "plaine dealing" (8):

> I looked either for a fine-witted man, as quicke as quick-siluer, that with a nimble dexterity of liuely conceite, and exquisite secretaryship, would out-runne mee many hundred miles in the course of his dainty deuises; a delicate minion: or some terrible bombarder of tearmes, as wilde as wildfire, that at the first flash of his fury, would leaue me thunder-stricken vpon the ground, or at the last volley of his outrage, would batter me to dust, and ashes. (8)

Harvey reflects Ascham's aversion to quick wits in his discussion of the humanist student in *The Scholemaster*, despite their pedagogical differences. Although otherwise mostly respectful of Ascham, in his 1576 Cambridge lecture, published a year later as the *Ciceronianus*, Harvey attacked Ascham's lack of separation between rhetoric and dialectic. Instead, he argued for Ramus' revised system of education in which inventio and memoria are regarded as aspects of dialectic rather than of rhetoric.[46] Harvey's notion of wit as encompassing both intellect and rhetoric in his works, however, rather echoes Ascham's linking of the same with *ingenium*, taken by most early modern scholars, Ramus included, to transcend the boundary between rhetoric and dialectic.[47] Harvey's attack on Ascham is in fact confined to the realm of education for, as Ramus himself suggested, dialectic and rhetoric often coincide in art, where it is the placing of rhetoric's *verba* before the *res* of dialectic – an idea commonly identified with an 'extreme' Ciceronianism – that is the fundamental danger, and to which Harvey equally responds in the passage.[48]

The brand of English Ciceronianism which had begun with Cheke's Athenian Tribe could not follow the extreme Latin Ciceronianism of authors like Bembo or Sadoleto because

[46] G. Harvey, *Ciceronianus* 91-3. On Harvey's prudent choice to not entirely alienate the Cambridge supporters of Ascham, see H.S. Wilson, 'Gabriel Harvey's Orations on Rhetoric', *ELH* 12:3 (1945): 174.
[47] See R. Lewis, 'Francis Bacon and Ingenuity' 121.
[48] See Chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of Ramus.

it was conducted in the vernacular.[49] But in Harvey's eyes its modern, commercial incarnation in authors like Nashe was guilty of similar abuses.[50] It was valuing words over matter much like those who blindly followed Cicero, failing to "make Wisedome the moderatour of Wit" (13).[51] It was also the rejection of the authority of classical authors that legitimated one's own authority, in the same way that the extreme Ciceronians rejected everyone but Cicero: "But alas silly men, simple Aristotle, more simple Ramus, most simple the rest, either ye neuer knew, what a sharpeedged, & cutting Consutation meant: or the date of your stale oppositions is expired" (11).[52] Harvey's objection to the valuing of words over matter is reconfigured into a warning against rhetorical wit's conquest of one's broader 'wits', which is what he suggests Nashe argues for: "Were the pith of courage lost, it might be founde in his penne: or were the marrow of conceite to seeke, where should witt looke for witt, but in his Inckebottle? Arte was a Dunse, till Hee was a writer" (10). And yet, as he had done in *Foure Letters,* Harvey cannot help but celebrate the power of his own rhetoric and its tendency to commoditise one's own name. Rhetoric has the power to conquer, like the wine and herring that killed Greene, in the service of its creator's reputation:

> It had bene a worthy exploit, and beseeming a witt of supererogation, to haue dipped a sopp in a goblet of *rennish wine;* and naming it Gabriel, (for you are now growne into great familiaritie with that name) to haue deuoured him vpp at one bit: or taking *a pickle herring* by the throte, and christening it Richard, (for you can christen him at your pleasure) to haue swallowed him downe with a stomack. (61)

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[49] For more on Harvey's engagement with Ciceronianism, see Binns, 'Ciceronianism in Sixteenth-Century England', *Lias* 7:2 (1980): 206-209.

[50] For more on the notion of English Ciceronianism as aural and empty of matter, or as "quasi-Ciceronian" in essence, see Vos, '"Good Matter and Good Utterance": The Character of English Ciceronianism', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 19:1 (1979): 4. On Harvey's rejection of Ciceronianism as failing to uphold plain speech, see DiRoberto, 'Representations of the Plowman and the Prostitute in Puritan and Anti-Puritan Satire: Or the Rhetoric of Plainness and the Reformation of the Popular in the Harvey Nashe Quarrel', *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012) 759-60.

[51] For his similar thoughts on the extreme Ciceronians, see G. Harvey, *Ciceronianus* 69.

[52] For the corresponding passage about the Italians, see G. Harvey, *Ciceronianus* 55. See Prendergast for the suggestion that this was bound in the enabling presence of the university as "an idyllic site of male homosocial exchange" (178).

Rhetoric can also make an appropriately devalued commodity of one's rival, as Harvey threatens to "make thee a simple foole, and a double swad, aswell with my hand, as with my tongue; & will engraue such an Epitaph, with such a Kyrieeleson vpon thy scull, as shall make thee remembred, when Syr Gawins scull shall be forgotten" (152).[53] Writing's position as an inherently social act suggests that its product always carries a social value, but this is true for good or bad – and Harvey repeatedly reflects an uncertainty regarding where the quarrel's rhetoric falls.

Harvey claims many times that he cannot stand euphuism and that Nashe uses it profusely: "Nash, the Ape of Greene, Greene the Ape of Euphues, Euphues the Ape of Enuie" (141). But Harvey is in many ways closer to the Euphuists than he likes to suggest. He views humanistic studies as crucial in order to shape men as both virtuous and capable in practical matters, but also betrays an anxiety regarding the likely success of this process.[54] Like Lyly, Harvey suggests that experience is lacking in corrupt wits, for wit is the only attribute in which Nashe is likened to a young animal, rather than a mature one: "a Dog in malice, a Calfe in witt, an Oxe in learning, and an Asse in discretion" (9).[55] Most significantly, Harvey also engages in playful rhetoric while rejecting too much sharpness of wit, and his wit, like Lyly's, exists as an interplay of *ingenium* and acquired intellect on the one hand, and rhetorical mastery on the other. Unlike Lyly, Harvey did not seek to balance the need for patronage with commercial success, at least overtly – his focus is social and educational rather than monetary – but his works ultimately explore a similar ambiguity regarding the social power of wit and its relation to profitability.

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[53] A swad here is used in the sense of "A country bumpkin; a clodhopper; a loutish or clownish fellow; a common term of abuse" (OED, 'Swad, n.2' 1.a).
[54] Perkins 226.
[55] For more on Harvey's ideas of experience, and how it was necessary to supplement the learned method, see Prewitt, 'Gabriel Harvey and the Practice of Method', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 39:1 (1999): 20-21.

The Quarrel's End in Nashe's *Have with you to Saffron-Walden*

Accused of being overly copious, Nashe responded by making his rhetoric even more copious than before, as well as by mocking the literary conventions of pamphleteering. The dedicatory epistle to *Have with you to Saffron-Walden,*[56] the last major pamphlet in the quarrel, is facetiously addressed to Cambridge barber Richard Lichfield and makes fun of the conventions of dedication:

> ACute & amiable Dick, not *Dic mihi Musa virum,* Musing Dick, that studied a whole yeare to know which was the male and female of red herrings: nor *Dic obsecro,* Dick of all Dickes, that in a Church where the Organs were defac'd, came and offred himselfe with his pipe and taber… I am sure thou wondrest not a little, what I meane to come vppon thee so straungelye, with such a huge dicker of Dickes in a heape altogether: but that's but to shew the redundance of thy honorable Familie, and how affluent and copious thy name is in all places, though *Erasmus* in his *Copia verborum* neuer mentions it. (5-6)

Nashe admits his copiousness outright, but claims it as a necessary parallel to the abundant affluence which he mockingly connects with Lichfield's familial name and reputation. The link between rhetorical copiousness and profitability, at which Nashe had previously hinted but which he consistently viewed with uncertainty, is again undermined by the satirical tone of Nashe's dedication. It is followed by a similar mockery in the form of "A Grace put vp in behalfe of the Harueys" (11) to which an empty space is affixed for the readers' insults: "Purposely that space I left, that as manie as I shall perswade… may set their hands to their definitiue sentence, and with the Clearke helpe to crye *Amen*…". That this is quite possibly not a profitable use of paper, Nashe suggests in the lines that immediately follow: "Plie them, plie them vncessantly *vnico Dick,* euen as a Water-man plies for his Fares, and insinuate and goe about the bush with them" (13). The man is *ūnicus* or singular, Nashe suggests, but his words are excessive and reiterative. The authority of the paratext is weakened by its

[56] Published in 1596. STC 18369. Only one early edition is known for this text, and it is cited here (McKerrow, vol. III 1).

facetiousness, just as Harvey suggested when he attacked Nashe's "marginal notes" in *Foure Letters* (29).[57]

Having consistently questioned the idea that material texts possess profitability of any sort, authorial or otherwise, Nashe's final pamphlet at last notes the reason for his continued engagement in the quarrel despite its lack of worth:

> High titles (as they of Bishops and Prelates) so of Poets and Writers we haue in the world, when in stead of their begging Friers, the fire of our wit is left, as our onely last refuge to warme vs. *Haruey* and I (a couple of beggers) take vpon vs to bandie factions, and contend like the *Vrsini* and *Coloni* in *Roome:* or as the *Turkes* and *Persians* about *Mahomet* and *Mortus Alli,* which should bee the greatest: and (with the *Indians*) head our inuentions arrowes with Vipers teeth, and sleep them in the bloud of Adders and Serpents, and spend as much time in arguing *Pro & contra,* as a man might haue found out the quadrature of the Circle in: when all the controuersie is no more but this, he began with mee, and cannot tell how to make an end; and I would faine end or rid my hands of him, if he had not first begun. (19)

This is a remarkable admission of futility on Nashe's part. Rather than the polemic "wars of truth" suggested by pamphleteering,[58] Nashe suggests a circular argument, akin to his earlier tautologies regarding the value of the text, in which the reason for the continuation of the quarrel is its own existence.[59] The fuel that powers this cycle, which warms the two warring 'beggars', is their inventive, rhetorical wit. Nashe is once again flirting with inconsistency, now suggesting a preservative role for the same wit to which he had previously denied any profitability. But this role is placed in opposition to any 'real' profit to society, and offers only mere sustenance against those "weake beleeuers in [his] sufficiency" (19).

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[57] See also Day 293.
[58] Lander 12.
[59] For more on Nashe's contrast of rhetoric with truth, see Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric: Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) 100.

Nashe always plays the overly sharp wit, and freely admits it, but his claim is that this is not a sign of moral depravity. For unlike other writers, such as those that he depicts as engaging in defecation in *Pierce Penilesse*, his own creativity is imagined as devoid of value and, it is implied, also of intellectual *res*. This view divorces rhetorical wit from the intellectual and the moral. Instead of echoing the notable authorities of the past, as Harvey suggests, in the service of creating one's own social role for the betterment of society, Nashe suggests that rhetorical wit is a reiterative, stagnant force through which individual change is impossible. This is reflected in the way some critics respond to Harvey and Nashe's social concerns. While Harvey is perceived as reflecting the "modern conception" of social self-fashioning, Nashe espouses the "traditionalist view that one's character is less essential than one's social role and that change caused by ambitious individuals is likely to be detrimental".[60] Rhetoric doesn't advance, Nashe suggests, it merely sustains. Like the monstrous imagery of food with which Nashe frequently connects it, rhetoric becomes an act of feeding, a transient act like the carnivalesque image to which it had often been likened in the past.[61]

Nevertheless, the carnival is a celebration of life, and Nashe certainly celebrates through his rhetoric. For it is in his writing that Nashe expresses a sentiment quite opposed to the traditionalist social ideal with which he is identified by modern critics. Rather than relying on *exempla* and the authorities of the past, Nashe is creating a rhetoric characterised by its claim to novelty, "whose extemporall vaine in anie humor, will excell our greatest Art-masters deliberate thoughts" (**1v), as he claims in the *Menaphon* preface. The traditional view of such rhetoric is that it is unprofitable, becoming "nothing except itself, which is too

[60] Hilliard, *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* 170. For similar expressions of this view of Harvey and Nashe's social concerns, see Halpern 43; Friedenreich, 'Nashe's Strange Newes and the Case for Professional Writers', *Studies in Philology* 71 (1974): 471; McKerrow, vol. V 67-71; and Prendergast 189.
[61] On the ephemerality of carnival, see Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 108. For more on Nashe's monstrous food imagery, see Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* 42-43.

particular to afford any knowledge".[62] For Nashe, in his insistence on the self-sustaining nature of rhetoric, this becomes precisely an act of self-fashioning, though one focused not on the social and moral aims of the past but on an experience, much like that of pastime and the carnival.[63] This is not to say that Nashe completely denies the idea of social capital as a result of one's use of wit. He is in many respects a commercial writer, certainly more so than Harvey, and his claims to originality, like the clownish acts of Tarlton to which they are often compared, are "never purely unscripted".[64] Nashe rather echoes the pull of several opposing forces – commercial concerns and the demands of traditionalism, the desire to shape oneself as a Wit and the need to be witty – in his writings. Perhaps it is better to characterise Nashe in negative terms, for it is easier to see what is rejected in his writings than what is embraced. Both the established norms of humanism and those of the new emerging ideas of social mobility are destabilised in Nashe's rejection of profit – both the social profits of patronage and the monetary profits of commercial success. The rejection of *res*, which his limited use of wit reflects, becomes the rejection of the established, including the new modes of thinking supposedly suggested by Harvey's ideals of social advancement. The result is a strikingly qualified presentation of rhetorical wit, characterised by wariness of the commercial marketplace that never entirely dispenses with it, and a search for individual experience that never quite shakes off its unprofitability.

Away from the Fighting

Harvey and Nashe present widely diverging ideas throughout the quarrel, but these are produced within a very similar setting, that of the polemic language of the printed

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[62] Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 52.
[63] See also Hutson's discussion of the experiential nature of pastime (ibid. 104); and Margolies, *Novel and Society in Elizabethan England* (London: Croom Helm, 1985) 85-86.
[64] Kettnich, 'Nashe's Extemporal Vein and his Tarltonizing Wit', *The Age of Thomas Nashe* 112. See also Perkins 228.

pamphlet. The thinking of the two authors is however packaged quite differently in some of their other works, which do not place the personal quarrel at their centre. Gabriel Harvey, true to his wariness of writing, published few English works besides the quarrel pamphlets, and so it is his published correspondence with Edmund Spenser and some of his extensive marginalia that best reflect his thinking outside the quarrel. For the more prolific Thomas Nashe it is his most enduring work, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, which most clearly develops the ideas he presents in the pamphlets. Freed from the confines of the polemic, the versatility of Nashe's rhetoric is exemplified and celebrated in his fiction as central to his vision. This section surveys these works by the two authors, and their correspondence with each author's discourse on rhetoric, morality and authority, and of the wit that interacts with them, in order to trace this discourse within a rather different context.

Harvey is perhaps best known today for the extensive notes he had written in the margins of many of his books, and in these he often expresses similar ideas to those expressed in his pamphlets. Thus he notes in his commonplace book to "Vex not yourself because of others… when you haue done your uttermost by witt, & trauayle" (88), an advice he would fail to heed, to his own acknowledged chagrin, by entering the fray with Nashe.[65] Harvey's notes, however, also reflect the positive side of eloquence in the form of shaping one's reputation and influence: "The emproofe of witt, wealth: the emproofe of wealth, reputation" (107); and "Duo maxima gratiosi civis ornamenta, Eloquentia, et Urbanitas" (114).[66] In line with the ideal of his pamphlets, Harvey muses on "Self-made men" (196) and suggests that learning must lead to "commodity, & praeferment" (106). As Jardine and Grafton had noted in their seminal study on Renaissance practices of reading, and Harvey's reading in particular, the act becomes not only active but practical, an imperative for and

[65] Citations for Harvey's marginalia are to G. Harvey, *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia*, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1913).
[66] "The two greatest ornaments of a graceful citizen, eloquence and urbanity".

progenitor of social action: "Renaissance readers (and annotators) persistently envisage action as the *outcome* of reading — not simply reading as active, but reading as trigger for action" (40).[67] This is true, as Jardine and Grafton's examples suggest, whether Harvey is reading "with a diplomatic or political end in mind" (44) or with moral and theological goals: "the personal, moralized, ruminative reading to be adduced tellingly to defend a course of action, or to enhance a specifically Anglican point of view" (45).[68] Harvey's marginalia become a record "of an Elizabethan writer's attempts to construct himself as a literary personality"[69] with the implication that such construction carries with it wide-ranging social and moral benefits. In this respect the marginalia echo Harvey's quarrel pamphlets, though it also shows how personal such self-fashioning had become for him. And so, it is in Harvey's only English work published before the quarrel, an exchange of letters with Edmund Spenser known as *Three proper, and wittie, familiar letters*, that the embodiment of Harvey's sentiments of self-fashioning, rather than simply a discussion of them, becomes truly evident.[70]

The published *Letters* contains a dedication "TO THE CVRTEOVS Buyer, by a Welwiller of the two Authours" (3), supposedly written by the publisher and suggesting that the two authors are unaware of the publication, for which the publisher apologises: "if they thinke I haue made them a faulte, in not making them priuy to the Publication: I shall be alwayes readye to make them the beste amendes I can" (4). This is picked on by Nashe as he later mocks Harvey in *Strange Newes*, suggesting that it was really Harvey himself who published the letters for his own social promotion: "for an Author to renounce his

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[67] Jardine and Grafton, '"Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past & Present* 129:1 (1990).
[68] See also Richards, 'Gabriel Harvey, James VI, and the Politics of Reading Early Modern Poetry', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71:2 (2008): 305.
[69] Nielson, 'Reading between the Lines: Manuscript Personality and Gabriel Harvey's Drafts', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33:1 (1993): 44.
[70] Published in 1580, containing also a second, separately-title section entitled *Two Other, very commendable Letters*. STC 23095.

Christendome to write in his owne commendation, to refuse the name which his Godfathers and Godmothers gaue him in his baptisme, and call himselfe *a welwiller to both the writers,* when hee is the onely writer himselfe" (296). Nashe's taunts shouldn't perhaps be taken at face value, but evidence in the form of a copy of the *Letters* containing marginal notes in Harvey's handwriting suggests the probable part Harvey had played in publicising his correspondence with Spenser.[71] The correspondence should be understood then as a public affair, not a private one, and one probably written "with publication in mind" and for the purposes of social self-fashioning.[72] This links Harvey and Spenser with the tradition of Petrarch and especially Erasmus, both of whom oversaw the publication of their letters as part of a project of self-representation.[73] As Jardine's study of Erasmus suggests, it was a constructed persona and not the 'real' Erasmus which was presented in his letters.[74] Ostensibly exhibited as unmediated and personal, Erasmus' letters explore not authenticity in the modern sense but rather what Jardine calls "affective *presence*" which turns the absent author into a "vividly present force" whose goals are practical – in Erasmus' case, pedagogical.[75] The published correspondence of Harvey and Spenser, in turn, can similarly be seen as dealing with the practical construction of social personae rather than with the real lives of Harvey and Spenser.

What is it, then, that characterises the persona of Harvey within the *Letters*? He is firstly a powerhouse of intellectual wit, called upon both by Spenser and within the narrative of his own letters to exhibit his "Uniuersitie Cunning" (12), provide explanations for a recent

[71] See Quitslund, 'Questionable Evidence in the Letters of 1580 between Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser', *Spenser's Life and the Subject of Biography* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) 86.
[72] Quitslund 87.
[73] See Burke, 'Representetations of the Self from Petrarch to Descartes', *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1997) 23.
[74] Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015) 148.
[75] Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters* 173.

earthquake and advise on English versifying.[76] Harvey's erudition, of course, is not only meant for Spenser and for Harvey's interlocutors within the letters, but also for the readers to appreciate. When he engages in instruction on proper style and eloquence, for example, it is aimed not at the real Spenser, already a skilful poet himself, but at the readers of the *Letters* to which Harvey is exhibiting his own knowledge:

> Mine owne Rules and Precepts of Arte, I beleeue wil fal out not greatly repugnant, though peraduenture somewhat different: and yet am I not so resolute, but I can be content to reserue the Coppying out and publishing therof, vntil I haue a little better consulted with my pillowe, and taken some farther aduize of *Madame Sperienza*. In the meane, take this for a general Caueat, and say I haue reuealed one great mysterie vnto you… (32)

Claiming to not be ready to publish his complete thoughts on the rules of art just yet, Harvey precludes them from the letter, although he immediately proceeds to offer 'interim' advice. The implication is that the letter itself amounts to publication, and thus that Harvey is shaping himself as a master of wit, both intellectual knowledge and rhetorical mastery, in relation to a wider readership of the published correspondence. Harvey's rhetorical mastery is also made evident in his expressions of knowledge directly, especially in the letter claiming to explain the earthquake that had struck England in April of the same year. Initially addressed to an audience of gentlewomen, Harvey's account of the earthquake leaves them confused, with the aptly-named Madame Incredula declaring: "I can neither picke out Rime, nor Reason, out of any thing I haue hearde" (13). The reason for their confusion is clear, for Harvey is focusing not on the earthquake but on men, made later apparent to be the Cambridge dons against which he was harbouring animosity:

> But I beseech you, what Newes al this while at Cambridge?…
> *Tully*, and *Demosthenes* nothing so much studyed, as they were wonte: *Liuie*, and *Salust* possiblye rather more than lesse: *Lucian* neuer so

[76] The word 'cunning' here playfully suggesting "The capacity or faculty of knowing; wit, wisdom, intelligence" ('Cunning, N.' 2).

> much: *Aristotle* muche named, but little read: *Xenophon* and *Plato,* reckned amongest Discoursers, and conceited Superficiall fellowes: much verball and sophisticall iangling… (27)

Harvey's purpose, it appears, is to posit the corrupt rhetorical wit of these Cambridge men as figuratively responsible for the earthquake: "and there is suche a Generall dub a dubbe amongst them, and such horrible Thundering on euery syde, and suche a monstrous cruell shaking of one an others Forces and Castels, that the whole Earth agayne" (15). His own "great Doctorly learning" (15), on the other hand, is versatile and capable of both jest and serious instruction, of both rhetorical playfulness and intellectual force: "now you haue playde your part so cunningly with the Gentlewoomen… I pray you in earnest, let vs men learne some thing of you too" (16).

But what kind of learning is it that Harvey suggests in the *Letters*? It has been suggested before that in the quarrel pamphlets Harvey defers to traditional sources of authority, but at the same time suggests the importance of experience over learning in a vein similar to Lyly's.[77] In the correspondence with Spenser, the rejection of learning as Harvey sees it in contemporary Cambridge is echoed by a presentation of himself as a peddler of marketable commodity, a position opposed to that of the university scholar. Presenting an original poem, 'Speculum Tuscanismi' (36), Harvey frames it in terms of the marketplace: "But seeing I must needes bewray my store, and set open my shoppe wyndowes…" (35), and follows with a wish to be compared to two great poets, Sidney and Dyer: "Tell me in good sooth, doth it not too euidently appeare, that this English Poet wanted but a good patterne before his eyes, as it might be some delicate, and choyce elegant Poesie of good *M. Sidneys,* or *M. Dyers*" (36). The connection of reputation and monetary profit is evident in these lines, but Harvey is making a more significant claim by alluding to Sidney and Dyer,

[77] See discussion of Harvey's *Pierces Supererogation* earlier in this chapter.

whom he had previously depicted as examples of experience's supremacy over learning: "I doubt not but their liuelie example, and Practise, wil preuaile a thousand times more in short space, than the dead Aduertizement, and persuasion of M. Ascham to the same Effecte" (31). Harvey's poem is presented as a product of experience rather than merely learning, a sentiment close to that expressed in the quarrel pamphlets. As Richards suggests, this experience – produced through "experimentation and in debate with other poems"[78] – is precisely what the correspondence exhibits. The *Letters*, then, both describe and embody the self-fashioning social ideal promoted by Harvey, of the man shaped through experience into a master of both intellectual and rhetorical wit.

Such a reading influences the possibility of understanding the work's structure as a whole. The paratextual elements of the *Letters* are destabilised by the conception of the work as meant for print, so that Harvey's postscript instruction to Spenser in his first letter: "This Letter may only be shewed to the two odde Gentlemen you wot of" (30) becomes a purposefully ironic request.[79] Whether or not it succeeds in creating a sense of intrusion onto private affairs in the readers, this request blurs the distinction between text and paratext within the work, just as it blurs the lines between private correspondence and public persona. Along with the *Letters*' preoccupation with authority and instruction, this places the published work as a kind of feigned paratext – specifically as *epitext*, that which surrounds art at a distance, like a newspaper interview given by an author[80] – to Harvey the public person, calculated to shape his persona and to contribute to the dissemination of his name, reputation, and work.

[78] Richards, 'Gabriel Harvey, James VI, and the Politics of Reading Early Modern Poetry' 306.
[79] See also Quitslund 87.
[80] Genette, 'Introduction to the Paratext' 262-4.

For Nashe, the embodiment of thinking on the topics explored in the pamphlets is produced most obviously in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, published in 1594 during Nashe's four-year hiatus from quarrelling with Harvey.[81] In the dedication to the Earl of Southampton which prefaces the story, Nashe expresses the hope that his dedicatee would value his work, however slightly: "Prize them as high or as low as you list: if you set anie price on them, I hold my labor well satisfide". Should it be disliked by the earl, Nashe suggests, his work would deserve the title of waste paper: "Unrepriueably perisheth that booke whatsoeuer to waste paper…" (201) and himself as an author would have to be reinvented: "A new brain, a new wit, a new stile, a new soule will I get mee… if in this my first attempt I be not taxed of presumption" (202). The suggestion, rather than being that of true value, is of pretence, in which intellectual and rhetorical capabilities are made to order and discarded as needed, rather than painstakingly gained through learning and worldly experience.

This pretence is embodied in Nashe's protagonist, Jack Wilton, a page of the court whose position suggestively reflects his place as the material product of Nashe's rhetoric – the page from which his words are read – and whose dedication to the other pages of the court equally confesses his writings to be "bequeathed for wast paper" (207). The positing of the work as unprofitable by both Nashe and Wilton echoes the unprofitability advocated by Nashe's pamphlets, although in Nashe's dedication to a patron and in Wilton's frolics with the Earl of Surrey, a potential appeal to patronage may be seen. Certainly, as Brown notes, an indifference to being wasteful with one's resources is characteristic of the aristocracy, serving to increase one's reputation as Wilton claims when he abuses the Earl of Surrey's identity: "some large summes of monie this my sweet mistres *Diamante* hath made me master of, which I knew not how better to imploy for the honor of my country, than by spending it

[81] Published as *The Vnfortvnate Traveller. Or, The life of Iacke Wilton* (STC 18380). Citations are taken from McKerrow's edition, based on edition B of the text "with collations from" edition A (McKerrow, vol. II 189).

muficiently vnder your name" (268).[82] But Jack Wilton is at times disrespectful of patronage, such as that of the cider merchant who believes himself "dead and buried by these bad tongues" (214) invented by Jack, when it is really Jack's own lies – culminating in the ironic proclamation that "no definitive sentence of death shall march out of my well meaning lips" (214-15) – which are the merchant's undoing.[83] Furthermore, his ability to swap identities with the Earl of Surrey unsettles the patronal relationship while concluding with each resuming their own identity and their natural place in society. As is the case in the pamphlets, Nashe offers no prospect of social mobility while at the same time reflecting an ambiguous social position, suggesting that dealing in waste grants one power, but that it is also morally dubious and demeaning for a professional writer.[84]

In his destabilisation of social conventions, as in his trickery, knavishness and linguistic choices of consummation and defecation, Jack Wilton takes his place as the successor to Nashe's earlier protagonist, Pierce Penilesse. Like Pierce before him, Jack Wilton's identity overlaps with Nashe's own, especially when Nashe uses his protagonist to attack such targets as the Anabaptists[85] or the overly-learned at Wittenberg, even resorting to similar accusations of drawing on the "inkhorn" (247) that, in the spirit of Thomas Wilson's "straunge ynkehorne termes" (IV.2) in the *Arte of Rhetorique*, Nashe had previously used in the *Menaphon* preface.[86] Jack's immorality and his tendency to implicate himself in his criticism, such as when he denounces "reuenge and innouation" (239),[87] reflect back on

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[82] See Brown 65, 68.
[83] See also Ferguson, 'Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller: The "Newes of the Maker" Game', *English Literary Renaissance* 11:2 (1981): 168.
[84] See also Rivlin, *The Aesthetics of Service in Early Modern England* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2012) 54; and Holbrook, *Literature and Degree in Renaissance England: Nashe, Bourgeois Tragedy, Shakespeare* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1994) 27-28.
[85] See Ward, 'An Outlandish Travel Chronicle: Farce, History, and Fiction in Thomas Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 41:1 (2011): 90-95.
[86] For more on the overlapping identities of Nashe and Jack Wilton, see Ferguson, 'Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller' 166; and Lanham, 'Tom Nashe and Jack Wilton: Personality as Structure in "The Unfortunate Traveller"', *Studies in Short Fiction* 4:3 (1967): 203-204.
[87] See Ferguson, 'Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller' 175.

Nashe and produce a similar denial of authority and morality to that experienced in *Pierce Penilesse*.[88]

Instead of authority or morality, Nashe's page celebrates rhetorical aptitude as his chief quality: "Here let me triumph a while, and ruminate a line or two on the excellence of my wit" (225). The uses of his wit, detached in all its meanings from virtue and wisdom and made "a law unto itself",[89] become a catalogue of readings in which different possible 'pages' are examined. At first, these relate to what Hutson defines as the "pragmatic Tudor discourse of prodigality", as Jack recounts his tales of rhetorical trickery for the purposes of his own wasteful indulgence:[90] "Amongest this chaffe was I winnowing my wittes to liue merrily, and by my troth so I did… I could make them spend al the mony they had for my pleasure" (210). One expression of rhetorical wit of this kind is found in the story of the cider merchant, whom Jack seeks to "damne with a lewd monilesse deuice" (211), that is, with his falsified story of libel described previously. Though his words are therefore taken from the start to lack credit, Jack's language nevertheless carries a fatal force: "Nowe was my drunken Lord readie to hang himselfe for the ende of the full point" (213). Eventually the merchant is told by Jack, in carnivalesque language, that he has been made the object of defamation, and responds with acknowledging the power of language: "is it true that I am thus vnderhand dead and buried by these bad tongues?" (214).[91] Jack's response is ironic but equally echoes this sentiment: "no definitiue sentence of death shall march out of my well meaning lips" (214-15). But Jack's rhetoric does bear an effect, of course, as he ends up punished for his trickery and the merchant relinquishes his lands and heeds his own creditable advice: "If

[88] For more on the undermining of authority in the *Unfortunate Traveller*, see Suzuki, '"Signiorie Ouer the Pages": The Crisis of Authority in Nashe's "The Unfortunate Traveller"', *Studies in Philology* 81:3 (1984): 348-49.
[89] Holbrook 36.
[90] Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 220.
[91] See for example Jack's carnivalesque exclamation: "the verie thought that a man of your deserte and state by a number of pesants and varlets shoulde be so iniuriously abused in hugger mugger, haue wepte all my vrine vpwarde" (213).

greedy hunters and hungrie tale-tellers pursue you, it is for a litle pelfe that you haue; cast it behind you, neglect it, let them haue it, least it breede a farther inconuenience. Credit my aduice, you shall finde it propheticall" (215). This prodigal discourse makes plain the inverse relationship between language and commodity. The libel related to the merchant by Jack is fabricated and thus supposedly false, but the implication in the episode is that language itself consistently functions as libel, discrediting and making unprofitable anything on which it touches.

In the discussion of Nashe's quarrel pamphlets it has been suggested that he explores rhetorical wit as self-sustaining, its lack of profitability freeing the rhetorician from social and moral accountability. Jack is certainly sustained through his rhetoric, and his "signiorie ouer the Pages" (227) is crucial to his narrative. And yet when he arrives at Münster to chronicle the siege on John of Leiden's Anabaptist forces, his rhetoric shifts to accommodate a semblance of religious moralising, reflecting Hutson's definition of "a prophetic discourse of apocalyptic judgement".[92] Before embarking on a long denunciation of the "Anabaptisticall errour" (232), Jack describes the Anabaptist forces, playfully suggesting them as overly reliant on semblances and words:

> Iacke Leiden, their Magistrate, had the Image or likenes of a peece of a rustie sword, like a lustie lad, by his side: now I remember mee, it was but a foyle neither, and he wore it to shewe that hee should haue the foyle of his Enemies, which might haue been an oracle for his two-hand Interpretation. (233)

This overreliance on words is then directly addressed by Jack, as he proceeds to claim that the Anabaptists misunderstand Christ's message: "When Christ said, *the kingdome of heauen must suffer violence*, hee meant not the violence of long babling praiers, nor the violence of tedious inuectiue Sermons without wit, but the violence of faith, the violence of good works"

[92] Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 220.

(234). Wit suddenly becomes synonymous with reason as Jack, congruent thus far with his view of words as unprofitable, suggests that, as the most zealous of all, the Anabaptists are prophesied to form "the dim clowd of dissimulation" before "the Latter day" (235) is to arrive. The ironic implication is that Jack's lack of zeal is therefore theologically superior, but of course his own dissimulation and reliance on words call this into question. Undaunted by the irony, Jack proceeds to discuss the Anabaptists' erroneous views of commodity:

> The fault of faults is this, that your dead borne faith is begotten by too-too infant Fathers… none can be a perfect father of faith and beget men aright vnto God, but those that are aged in experience… and haue, with *Zacheus*, solde all their possessions of vanities to enjoy the sweet fellowship, not of the humane, but spirituall *Messias*. (237)

Implicating himself again in his criticism, Jack claims that the poverty advocated by the Anabaptists is not a positive ascetic one, but rather that which foregoes "rich dominion and souereigntie" in the spirit of the Cynics, the corrupt, gain-seeking practisers of "rustie morositie" whose leader Diogenes was caught "coyning monie in his cell" (237). The Anabaptists are shown to exhibit the poverty of their intellectual and rhetorical wits by turning their words against God: "it was a general receiued tradition both with *Iohn Leiden* and all the crue of Cnipperdolings and Muncers… to raile on him and curse him to his face"; and by desiring to loot their enemies: "they had not abandoned their expectation of the spoile of their enimies" (239). Their "lamentable massacre" (240) is then briefly described.

What then is to be made of Jack's moralistic account of the Anabaptists' last stand? It is calculated to examine the unprofitability of the discourse of religious zealots, quite different from Jack's own libellous prodigal rhetoric, but along the way it seems to re-establish the moralising superiority of Jack's own rhetoric. And yet the denunciation of overreliance on words, the desire for commodity and the claim to innovation implicate the

narrator in that which he critiques, and Jack shows an awareness of this before leaving Münster:

> This tale must at one time or other giue vp the ghost, and as good now as stay longer; I would gladly rid my hands of it cleanly, if I could tell how, for what with talking of coblers, tinkers, roape-makers, botchers, and durt-daubers, the mark is clean out of my Muses mouth, & I am as it were more than duncified twixt diuinity and poetrie. (241)

This passage backtracks from the moralising position offered earlier, an untenable one due to Jack's implication of himself in his criticism, and suggests instead a separation between godliness and rhetoric. The episode concludes then in the same vein as Jack's prodigal discourse, and offers only a negative, impoverished model of language.

Between the two poles of Nashe's discourse – practical-prodigal and pseudo-moral – the rest of the *Unfortunate Traveller*'s speeches all end up failing in some way, whether they are uttered by wicked or by virtuous characters. Thus, the virtuous Heraclide fails to convince Esdras to spare her honour (287-92), Esdras himself fails in his attempt to save his soul (322-27), and his killer Cutwolfe, facing justice, fails to prevent his own gruesome execution. Even Nashe's page, fated by his role in the narrative to escape false accusations with his life, does so because a passing English earl rescues him and not by virtue of a "saint-like confession" (296) which he only recaps as "that such and such men at such an howre brake into the house, slew the Zanie, took my Curtizan, lockt me into my chamber, rauisht *Heraclide*, and finallie how she slew her selfe" (296). The cataloguing of 'pages' in Nashe's work is nevertheless of wide scope, and includes pages taken out of the jest books and those who praise "the sacred duty of poetry",[93] pages related to active making in Jack's earlier trickery and pages of the more passive, spectating variety that is characteristic of Jack's later episodes. As a compilation of readings, like an early modern commonplace book, the narrative becomes

[93] Lanham, 'Tom Nashe and Jack Wilton' 207.

insignificant and it is therefore appropriate that Jack ends where he had begun, in one of the king's military encampments. The work is hostile to commonplacing, however, and echoes the ideas presented by Nashe in the pamphlets.[94] It is not a story of social or moral profit, because these are made impossible by the uncertainty of language, so that what sustains the page is not the promise of moral reformation – Jack suggests that the horrors of Cutwolfe's execution set him straight (327), though he then immediately reaches the end of his story – but the promise of pleasure: "if herein I haue pleased anie, it shall animat mee to more paines in this kind" (328).

And yet even this pleasure is uncertain, for there is no further continuation, and no sequel, to Jack's narrative. The pages Jack explores are like the idea of travel into Europe, rejected at length by the banished earl in a satirical imitation of Ascham's warning that "I know diuerse, that went out of England… who returned out of *Italie*, not onely with worse maners, but also with lesse learnyng" ('The Scholemaster' 226). "From thence [i.e. Italy] he brings the art of atheism, the art of epicurising, the art of whoring, the art of poisoning, the art of Sodomitrie" (301) Nashe's earl hyperbolically exclaims, while England is likened to heaven: "The diuel and I am desperate, he of being restored to heauen, I of being recalled home" (303). Jack's initially disdainful reaction to the earl's speech turns to regret when his own "tumble on a sodaine into hell" (303) transpires, but it is a personal hell – his courtesan kissing an apprentice – brought about by a deficiency in character present long before Jack arrives in Italy, an appropriately underwhelming outcome to the supposedly universal warnings of the educator. Even as it questions in these pages the benefits of too much freedom, *The Unfortunate Traveller* explores, as Hutson suggests, the "relativity of all viewpoints, all discourses" – not the strict moralising of Ascham – and therein lies its

[94] Where the "emptying" of phrase books is likened to defecation (246).

strength.[95] Even when it professes to offer nothing of traditional value to its readers, Nashe's story does offer something quite substantial: it places Nashe's novel view of rhetorical wit – the self-sustaining, unprofitable force, akin to pastime, that he describes in his pamphlets – in a context that stresses its versatility, its carnivalesque "boundless world of humorous forms".[96]

End Matter

Harvey and Nashe's reactions to Ascham are indicative of the opposition that characterises the two regarding the conception of rhetoric and ideas of social advancement, and the former's role in producing the latter. Harvey sees rhetorical wit as inseparable from one's broader intellectual wit and thus reflects a serious enterprise with clear goals of social advancement and self-fashioning, one which challenges Ascham's preference for learning over experience or "the tyranny of the schoolmaster".[97] Harvey does so through what perhaps aspires to a Ramist plainness but more often than not embodies Ascham's own traditional rhetoric, going back all the way to Aristotle.[98]

Nashe on the other hand appears to agree with Ascham on the dangers of too much freedom and espouses a more traditionalist view in which social mobility is bound to fail, but at the same time he mocks the old schoolmaster's strictures, and the rhetorical wit with which he expresses his ideas is one of bold self-fashioning. By limiting his wit to the rhetorical alone, he ironically frees it from any social constraints, allowing it complete freedom of the page – much as his fictional page, Jack Wilton, is both a social outsider and a fountainhead of unrestrained rhetoric. Suggestively devoid of moral or intellectual imperatives, it is used for

[95] Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 220.
[96] Bakhtin 196.
[97] Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature* 114.
[98] See also Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* 21-22; and DiRoberto 770-71.

probing into human experience for its own sake and for questioning the nature of both monetary and social profitability.

It is therefore not surprising that critics often note the centrality of misunderstanding in the Harvey-Nashe quarrel.[99] Whereas in his social concerns Harvey is looking forward, Nashe's social ideal is more equivocal. Where Nashe employs a novel rhetoric of self-fashioning, Harvey responds with appeals to the traditional rhetoric of the humanists. The exchange could almost be thought of in terms of two distinct and separate sets of rhetorical responses, each engaging and addressing a seemingly absent opponent. The Bishops' Ban of 1599 put a definitive end to this exercise by banning both Nashe and Harvey, along with other works of satire, from the public literary sphere.[100] The bishops, knowingly or not, seem to respond to Nashe and Harvey's only significant point of convergence – that which regards the futility of their own exchange.

[99] See Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* 54; Perkins 227.
[100] See McCabe, 'Elizabethan Satire and the Bishops' Ban of 1599', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 11 (1981): 188

Chapter 6 – The Wit of Francis Bacon or, The Nature of Wit

In 1620, Francis Bacon published, in Latin, the *Novum Organum* or 'new instrument', in which he laid down the foundations for his new scientific method – a system of inductive reasoning which has since come to occupy a distinguished place in the history of early modern science.[1] Bacon coupled this method with a striking reconceptualization of knowledge, one that challenged the predominant religious, philosophical and literary thinking in which "there was no such thing as new knowledge" and in which everything is old knowledge "which had been mislaid".[2] Bacon's aspirations were revolutionary, but at the same time he was careful to limit the scope of his new project and preclude in his aphorisms the suggestion of reshaping the human intellect:

> It is useless to expect great growth in the sciences from the superinduction and grafting of new things on old; instead the instauration must be built up from the deepest foundations, unless we want to go round in circles forever, with progress little or pitiable. (I.31)
>
> The honour of the ancients and of all the rest remains unimpaired, for I am not comparing wits and faculties [*ingeniorum aut facultatum*] but ways; and I do not take on the guise of a judge but the likeness of a guide. (I.32)[3]

Bacon's discourse of change often moves between revolution and reform, as it does in these two aphorisms.[4] This occurs, at least to some degree, because of the limitations of man's "wits and faculties" – his powers of intellective perception – as Bacon notes on the very same page: "Nor is it easy to pass on or explain what I have in mind, for people will still make

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[1] For more on Bacon's inductive method, see Jardine, *Francis Bacon: Discovery and the Art of Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). On his division of knowledge into history, poetry and philosophy, see Kusukawa, 'Bacon's Classification of Knowledge', *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 47-74.
[2] Wootton, *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 2015) 74.
[3] Bacon, 'Novum Organum', *The Oxford Francis Bacon, vol. 11: The Instauratio Magna Part II: Novum Organum and Associated Texts*, eds. and trans. Rees and Wakely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Citations use book and aphorism numbers.
[4] For more on how Bacon "encompasses [these] two contradictory views of truth and its representation in language" (14), see Whitney, *Francis Bacon and modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).

sense of things new in themselves in terms of things which are old." (I.34).[5] Insistent on the coupling of intellectual speculation with real-world experimentation, when he discusses practical "ways" Bacon the scientist is also Bacon the revolutionary, looking forward in setting down his scientific system.[6] But in his focus on intellectual wit Bacon is also a reformer, looking backward and reacting to problems regarding knowledge, mind and language – like the problems of wit explored previously, from the Euphuists' commoditised and morally indifferent wit to Sidney's antithetical wit, both ideal and practical – that he saw as current to his time.[7]

This aspect of Bacon the writer, and not Bacon the scientist, was identified in the 1960s by Brian Vickers as in need of reappraisal. In Vickers' case, this re-examination focused on Bacon's style and rhetorical theory as more than just anti-Ciceronian or Senecan, although certainly Bacon's rejection of contemporary stylistic copiousness plays a significant part in his philosophical project.[8] But in the last half-century Bacon 'looking back' has been the subject of much critical study that goes beyond his rhetorical choices, from his critical attitude towards the philosophers of old to his views on the human mind as the corrupted product of Adam's fall.[9] Even Bacon's use of wit's Latin counterpart, *ingenium*, has been the

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[5] Compare to Bartholomaeus Anglicus' description of bodily wit in *De Proprietatibus Rerum* as that power of the soul "whereby shée knoweth things sensible and corporall" (13v).

[6] On Bacon's rejection of systems that emphasise only the experiential and the disputative, see Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 237-8; and Wootton 312-13.

[7] Full length biographies of Bacon abound. See for example Zagorin, *Francis Bacon* (Princeton University Press, 1998); and Jardine and Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1999).

[8] See Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968). In a more recent article, Vickers suggests that Bacon is misunderstood when he is proclaimed as "hostile to Renaissance humanism" and "a foe of poetry and rhetoric" (Vickers, 'The Myth of Francis Bacon's "Anti-Humanism"', *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, eds. J. Kraye and M.W.F. Stone [London: Routledge, 2000] 135). For earlier works reflecting on Senecan aspects in Bacon's rhetoric, see Williamson, *The Senecan Amble: A Study in Prose Form from Bacon to Collier* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951); and Croll, *"Attic" and Baroque Prose Style: The Anti-Ciceronian Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969). See also Kiernan, 'Introduction', *The Oxford Francis Bacon, vol. 4: The Advancement of Learning* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000) xx.

[9] For the former, see for example Rossi, *Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science*, trans. S. Rabinovitch (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968). For the latter, see for example Park, 'Bacon's "Enchanted Glass"', *Isis* 75:2 (1984): 290-302.

subject of comprehensive research by Rhodri Lewis, who notes that Bacon's art of discovery concerns two distinct parts: the *experientia literata* or a kind of disciplined experience, to which *ingenium* belongs, which is necessary but also that which leads one along paths "whose course and location must remain hidden in darkness" (137); and the intellective *interpretatio naturae* or interpretation of nature which is the ultimate goal of Bacon's system, for which *experientia literata* is a necessary but subservient prerequisite.[10] Although touching occasionally on his Latin works like the *Novum Organum* – especially when these relate ideas that are already found in Bacon's earlier works – this chapter turns to Bacon's use of 'wit' in English, especially in his late Elizabethan and early Jacobean works including the early *Essayes*,[11] the unpublished *Valerius Terminus*[12] and, especially, *The Advancement of Learning*.[13] Bacon's use of 'wit' in these works, as a multivalent term encompassing broad intellectual and rhetorical significances, echoes the scope as well as the tensions within his scientific project. Examined in relation to some of the thinkers discussed in previous chapters, especially Castiglione, Lyly, Harvey and Sidney, Bacon's use of 'wit' explores similar interests: the means for using language, the possibility of knowledge, and the social function of rhetoric, as these are then turned into a wide-ranging platform on which Bacon's scientific project, necessarily in correspondence with "what is old" as the *Novum Organum* admits, can be constructed, and in which the conceptual complexity of 'wit' plays a reduced part.

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[10] R. Lewis, 'Francis Bacon and Ingenuity' 113-63.

[11] First published in 1597 (STC 1137) *as Essayes Religious meditations. Places of perswasion and disswasion. Seene and allowed*, also including 'Of the Coulers of good and euill'.

[12] Likely written by 1603. Citations in this chapter are to Bacon, 'Valerius Terminus: Of the Interpretation of Nature', *The Works of Francis Bacon, vol. III*, eds. Spedding, Ellis and Heath (London: Longman, 1870) 215-52.

[13] Published in 1605 (STC 1164) as *The twoo bookes of Francis Bacon. Of the proficience and aduancement of learning, diuine and humane. To the King*. Citations are to Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. M. Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000).

Bacon's Multivalent Wit

In his examination of the Latin *ingenium*, Lewis considers the following definition to be prevalent in Bacon's writings:

> … in using the term *ingenium* Bacon for the most part does not refer to anatomical or physiological aspects of the human mind, but to the cognitive powers that human beings possess by virtue of their rational souls. Bacon follows standard early modern usage in describing this sort of ingenuity as the driving force behind poetic and rhetorical invention, historical writing, political maneuvering, and artisanal activities of various kinds.[14]

Connected with "good natural parts" and with "teachability", Lewis claims that Bacon thus excludes *ingenium* from the logical part of his project.[15] This leaves ingenuity as particularly concerned with the mind's creative powers, and especially its rhetorical capacities, or the rhetorical wit discussed throughout this thesis. But although such a distinction is perhaps apt for the Latin, in his early English writings Bacon's use of the term 'wit' betrays rather the heritage of the preceding generations of English prose writers, for most of whom the term inheres in the dual capacity of both broader intellect, which includes logic, and rhetorical capability.[16]

Bacon devotes a significant part of the second book of aphorisms in the *Novum Organum* to producing a system of division which suggests a search for simple, unequivocal meanings. When he discusses a certain subdivision of investigated nature which he terms Collective or Constitutive Instances (*Instantias Constitutiuas*) for example, Bacon reflects on the significance of properly dividing and defining nature:

> Thus, then, the special power of *Collective Instances* is great indeed, seeing that they contribute a great deal both to definitions (especially particular ones),

[14] R. Lewis, 'Francis Bacon and Ingenuity' 126.
[15] R. Lewis, 'Francis Bacon and Ingenuity' 118.
[16] Lewis himself notes this multiplicity of meaning when discussing the English term: "the early modern English wit can legitimately be said to have signified talent, ability, intellect, intelligence, cleverness, judgment, imagination, reason, mind, understanding, and spirit" (115).

> and to the divisions or partitions of nature, concerning which *Plato* rightly said that *he who knows well how to define and divide, is to be counted as a god*. (II.26)

Bacon has been said to argue that "ideally a language should have one word for each basic, simple thing or notion".[17] Even in theory, however, his divisions are far less rigid than Ramus' dichotomies, and in practice his use of 'wit' is multivalent.[18] Certainly, the term is often used in its rhetorical capacity and treated with suspicion. In the 1597 *Essayes*, for example, Bacon suggests that discourse should be marked by judgement and not by a boastful capacity for rhetoric: "Some in their discourse desire rather commendation of wit in being able to holde all arguments, then of iudgement in discerning what is true, as if it were a praise to know what might be said, and not what shoulde bee thought" (2r). This kind of 'wit' is clearly separated from the dimension of right thinking and consists of *inventio* without proper judgement, leading to an undesirable rhetorical excess. In other places, however, 'wit' serves a much more versatile function for Bacon.

In the unpublished *Valerius Terminus* Bacon examines various "impediments of knowledge", obstacles that he attributes not to the subject being investigated but to "the crossness and indisposition of the mind of man to think of any such thing, to will or to resolve it" (224). The first of these impediments, whose source Bacon locates in the ancient world but whose consequences can still be felt, is found "in the diversion of wits" (224), that is, the lack of universal knowledge that results from people's geographical and cultural isolation:

> For at that time the world was altogether home-bred, every nation looked little beyond their own confines and territories, and the world had no through lights then, as it hath since by commerce and navigation, whereby there could

[17] Slaughter, *Universal Languages and Scientific Taxonomy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 88.
[18] On Bacon's rejection of Ramist dichotomising, see Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* 34-35.

> neither be that contribution of wits one to help another, nor that variety of particulars for the correcting of customary conceits. (225)

The vision of a post-Babel society is often connected with the corrupting elements of language, such as in Thomas Dekker's "Lantern and Candle-light".[19] In the pamphlet, the Tower of Babylon's collapse and man's subsequent retreat into nations is followed by a wilful desire by society's undesirables to not be understood. This culminates in the creation of canting – a language which has no "certain rules" (217) and yet one from which any man may "coin words" (220) for one's own pleasure and profit – which is where Dekker begins his examination of "the theme of life as hell".[20] Bacon's focus is different, and he reflects on the benefits of colonial and commercial explorations which, as discussed later in this chapter, are central to his search for knowledge. He then proceeds to examine the role of language in hindering this search through the second impediment, "the want of a true succession of wits". This concerns primarily the failure to transmit knowledge, such that "hitherto the length of one man's life hath been the greatest measure of knowledge" (226). The succession of wits suffers from a major shortcoming, namely the desire to believe and be believed, rather than to search and deliver truth: "He that delivereth knowledge desireth to deliver it in such form as may be soonest believed, and not as may be easiliest examined. He that receiveth knowledge desireth rather… not to doubt than not to err" (226). This, in turn, leads to the tendency of "the most popular and not the trueth" (227) to prevail. This shortcoming directly relates to common rhetorical anxieties regarding the power of persuasion to stifle truth, an idea that features frequently in Elizabethan rhetorical manuals such as that of Thomas Wilson, who warns that when commending a noble person "they which speake otherwise then trueth is,

[19] First published in 1608. STC 6485. Citations are to Dekker, 'Lantern and Candle-light', *Rogues, Vagabonds, & Sturdy Beggars*, ed. A. Kinney (Barre, MA: Imprint Society, 1973) 207-60.
[20] In Kinney's forward to Dekker's text (210).

minde not the commendation of the person, but the setting forth of their owne learning" (I.13).

If 'wit' as *ingenium* is susceptible to the corruption of language in Bacon's setting of the problem, it is nevertheless also the key to its resolution in making the intellective interpretation of nature possible. Proceeding from Cicero's famous repudiation of the Socratic division of knowledge – especially the division between right speaking and right thinking – Bacon confesses himself ambivalent:

> Nevertheless I that hold it for a great impediment towards the advancement and further invention of knowledge, that particular arts and sciences have been disincorporated from general knowledge, do not understand one and the same thing which Cicero's discourse… intend[s] (228)

Instead, he suggests a complementarity of knowledge in which "sciences distinguished have a dependence upon universal knowledge… as well as the parts and members of a science have upon the *Maxims* of the same science, and the mutual light and consent which one part receiveth of another" (229). This mutual shedding of light, which is to do with the intellective interpretation of nature and not with the experimental knowledge of *ingenium*, is defined as the "conference of wits" (231) by Bacon.[21] When applied to the impediments of knowledge, the result is a true succession of wits, rather than a pretended one, and a contribution of wits instead of their diversion, or divergence. The term, then, serves Bacon in a dual capacity, in a way that *ingenium* does not.

Bacon's most important English language treatise, *The Advancement of Learning*, displays a similarly diverse use of 'wit', although it does not pit one meaning against each other in quite so obvious a way as Bacon does in *Valerius Terminus*. Nevertheless, 'wit' serves both rhetorical and intellectual functions. The *Advancement* reflects a wariness about

[21] On the image of light as connected to the *interpretatio naturae*, see R. Lewis, 'Francis Bacon and Ingenuity' 137.

rhetorical wit that is similar to that explored in the *Essayes*: "for men haue rather sought by wit to deride and traduce much of that which is good in professions then with Iudgement to discouer and [sever] that which is corrupt" (144). At the same time, it also establishes limits to intellectual wit – whether it engages its own sophistry or with the external world – and its products are limited in either scope or substance:

> For the wit and minde of man, if it worke vpon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God worketh according to the stuffe, and is limited thereby; but if it worke vpon it selfe, as the Spider worketh his webbe, then it is endlesse, and brings forth indeed Copwebs of learning, admirable for the finesse of thread and worke, but of no substance or profite. (24)[22]

Nevertheless, it is in its intellectual capacity that wit, when in possession of knowledge, can offer a prospect of certainty: "But that vse of wit and knowledge is to be allowed which laboureth to make doubtfull thinges certaine, and not those which labour to make certaine things doubtfull" (91). Bacon's approach to the term 'wit', as reflecting both intellectual capability and reason on the one hand and potentially dangerous rhetoric on the other, is certainly conventional, as the similar use of the term by earlier prose writers suggests. But it nevertheless reflects a duality in Bacon's views that is central to his ideas on language and knowledge. The subject of the rest of this chapter, these ideas consistently reflect an intellectual ideal, whether that of the wise counsellor, the perfect poet or the colonising scientist. At the same time, these ideas serve to undermine that ideal through considering the practical shortcomings of language.

Bacon on the Dangers of Rhetoric

Bacon's conception of 'wit' in the narrowly rhetorical sense reflects the by-now familiar early modern apprehension regarding the possible dangers of rhetoric. This

[22] The use of the hendiadys "wit and minde" itself obfuscates the precise relation between its parts, man's mind and his wit. See also G. T. Wright, 'Hendiadys and Hamlet', *PMLA* 96:2 (1981): 169.

apprehension is exhibited in Bacon's critique of contemporary practices in the *Advancement of Learning*, especially the commonplace criticism of Ciceronian rhetoric as supposedly putting *verba* (words) before *res* (matter). It is similarly found in his conception of the Idols of the Market, one of the four idols that befuddle the intellect and which first appeared in *Valerius Terminus* alongside the discussion of the socially-mediated impediments of knowledge. As the following discussion suggests, Bacon's own use of rhetoric and his attitude towards rhetorical theory reveal not a complete rejection but an ambiguity in which Bacon himself is implicated.

In the *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon presents the placing of words before matter as the first of his three "distempers (as I may tearm them) of learning" (21):

> This grew speedily to an excesse: for men began to hunt more after wordes, than matter, and more after the choisenesse of the Phrase, and the round and cleane composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their workes with tropes and figures: then after the weight of matter, worth of subiect, soundnesse of argument, life of inuention, or depth of iudgement… Then did *Car of Cambridge*, and *Ascham* with their Lectures and Writings, almost deifie *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*, and allure, all young men that were studious vnto that delicate and pollished kinde of learning. (22)

Originating in early sixteenth-century Italy, this criticism of Ciceronianism as empty of matter and too directly imitative of Cicero's words has been discussed before in both Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*, published in 1528, and in Gabriel Harvey's identically-titled *Ciceronianus* of 1577.[23] In the cited lines, Bacon levels this criticism at Ascham for his claim that Cicero is nearly singularly worthy of learning: "Now, let Italian, and Latin it self… bring forth their lerning, and recite their Authors, *Cicero* onelie excepted, and one or two moe in Latin, they be all patched cloutes and ragges, in comparison of faire wouen broade clothes"

[23] The first work to debate and denounce such "slavish imitators" was Gianfrancesco Pico's *De imitatione*, written in 1512. See DellaNeva, 'Introduction', *Ciceronian Controversies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007) xx. For more on Erasmus' and Harvey's *Ciceronianus* and on extreme Ciceronianism, see Chapters 1 and 4.

('The Scholemaster' 213).[24] Matter's scope is much wider than that of words, Bacon suggests: "as substance of matter is better than beautie of words: so contrariwise vaine matter is worse, than vaine words" (23). This is much like the scope of superior intellectual wits, as opposed to ordinary ones, in Castiglione's almost identically-phrased comparison of the two in *Il Cortegiano*: "And therfore where nature now bringeth forth muche better wyttes [*molto migliori ingegni*] then she didde tho, even as they that bee geven to goodnesse doe muche better then didde those of theyr tyme, so also they that be geven to yll doe muche worse" (L2r). Bacon's knowledge of Castiglione's work is attested to by his imitation of Bembo's speech on divine love in the essay 'Of Tribute', and it doubtless held a personal importance to him as its English translator, Thomas Hoby, was Bacon's uncle.[25]

The reference to intellectual wit is not incidental, for in Bacon's writing language plays a central role in the workings of the "Idols and false notions which now garrison the human intellect and are well dug in there" (*Novum Organum* I.38). The theory of the idols first appears in *Valerius Terminus* but its most developed form is found later in the *Novum Organum*. In a clear nod to the marketplace engagement of recent rhetorically-aware writing such as that of Greene or Nashe, it is the Idols of the Market to which language particularly belongs:

> But *Idols of the Market*, which have slipped into the intellect through the alliance of words and names, are the greatest nuisances of the lot. For men believe that their reason rules words but it also happens that words turn and bend *their* power back upon the intellect… For words are generally imposed according to common capacity, and divide things up on lines most obvious to the ordinary intellect. (I.59)

[24] Although the label of a strict Ciceronian is perhaps unfair, as Ascham lists and cites a large variety of classical sources throughout his educational treatise. See also Butler, 'Sir William Cornwallis the Younger (c.1579-1614) and the emergence of the essay in England' (University of Oxford Diss., 2013) 97-98.

[25] For more on Bacon's borrowings from Castiglione and on his acquaintance with his uncle's translation of *Il Cortegiano*, see Gaukroger, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 48; Martin, *Francis Bacon, the State, and the Reform of Natural Philosophy* 65; and Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier* 83.

It is in the commonalty of ordinary intellects, Bacon claims, that the convention that is language is formed, with the result that words are used as names of things that either do not exist or are ill-defined (I.60).[26] This is an inversion of Castiglione's preference for using one's contemporary language, his response to the *Questione della Lingua* and specifically to Bembo's attempts to standardise Italian into the Tuscan of Petrarch and Boccaccio: "For in oure owne tounge, whose office is (as all others) to expresse well and clearlye the conceites of the minde, we delite in darkenesse, and callinge it the vulgar tounge, will vse in it woordes, that are not onely not vnderstoode of the vulgar people, but also of the best sort of menne and that men of learninge" (G1v).[27] Castiglione is opposing the imposition of artificial constructs on one's own native language, claiming that this can only lead to loss of clarity. Many in the seventeenth century, in contrast, envisioned the creation of an artificial universal language as the solution to the problems posed by Bacon.[28] Bacon's own message, however, is one of wariness. Rhetoric is excluded in the *Valerius Terminus*, just as it had been in the *Advancement of Learning*, from the full scope of the interpretation of nature. For in the violent imagery of the struggle to divide the natural world, when "a sharper intellect or more careful observation wants to move these lines [of the division of things] the better to match them to nature, words drown them out" (I.59).

Hoskyns, Bacon, and the Role of Rhetoric

That rhetoric exists in a constant struggle with the intellect is apparent in the works of Bacon's fellow lawyer and parliamentarian, John Hoskyns. Known throughout his life as a sharp rhetorician and a frank speaker, Hoskyns was imprisoned in the Tower of London for a

[26] In the *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon similarly defined words as deficient "*Notes of Cogitations*" which exist "*Ad placitum*" (120) or by convention, and contrasted them with another kind of notes, which include hieroglyphs and gestures, that have a certain affinity with what they represent.
[27] For more on the *Questione della Lingua*, see notes to Castiglione's work in Chapter 1.
[28] For more on the seventeenth century universal language movement, see Slaughter 104-25.

year in 1614 due to "his own excessive liberality of speech".[29] In a poem written by Hoskyns during his incarceration he claims to care not a whit for his own life, property and even family. His only concerns are the offences caused to God and especially to the King, to whom the poem is addressed: "My wife & childrens teares moue not at all / Nor moues my litle famylies great fall / That these my lipps which I may say were madd / Haue God & thee displeased that makes me sad" (15-18).[30] His excuse, a few lines later on, is that his words do not obey him – they are free and unrestrained, like the apples that constantly escape the lips of the punished Tantalus, and in turn lead to his own loss of freedom: "If for my wordes my woe must last for euer / with Tantalus in paine I shall perseuer. / The more his lipps the apple striues to stay / by so much more they Swim & glide away / when after freedome greedily I gape / Then most of all it hastens to escape" (31-36). The struggle between mind and words becomes a struggle between freedom and restraint in which, as Hoskyns suggests in another poem about his incarceration, "he that offends not doth not liue" (47).[31]

Hoskyns shares Bacon's view that the violence inflicted by misplaced rhetoric does not merely offend but also hinders the interpretation of nature. In the prefatory epistle to his unpublished *Directions for Speech and Style*, Hoskyns maintains that:[32]

> The shame of speaking vnskillfully were small if the tongue were only disgraced by it, But as the image of the kinge in a Seale of waxe ill represented, is not soe much a blemish to the waxe or the signet, that sealeth itt, as to the king whome it resembleth, Soe disordered speech is not soe much iniury to the lipps which giue it forth, or the thoughts which put it forth, as to the right proporcion & Coherence of things in themselues soe wrongfully expressed… (116)

[29] Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 240.
[30] Verse XXXIII in L. B. Osborn, *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns, 1566-1638* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937) 205-206.
[31] Verse XXXIV in L. B. Osborn 206-8.
[32] Probably written in 1599. Styled "Direccõns For Speech and Style", in L. B. Osborn 103-166.

The thrust of Hoskyns' message is that rhetoric does not simply celebrate (or blemish, as the case may be) its user's rhetorical wit but rather that it affects the power of representing things in themselves – their proportion and coherence, in Hoskyns' terms. Hoskyns' treatise was influenced by Bacon's 'Of The Coulers of good and euill', appended to the 1597 *Essayes*, and similarly tracks such rhetorical colours as division (136) and praise (138), though its main source of examples is Sidney's *Arcadia*, to which Bacon does not refer.[33] Despite their theoretical similarities, however, the two thinkers approach rhetorical excess in practice quite differently.

While Hoskyns excuses and celebrates his own liberality, Bacon is much more cautious in his approach to rhetorical excess. This is evident already in one of his earliest tracts, which directly concerns the way in which rhetoric ought to be used. Written in 1589, *An advertisement touching the controuersyes of the Church of England* is Bacon's response to the Marprelate controversy which had begun a year earlier. In the tract, Bacon sides with neither the anonymous author behind the Presbyterian Martin Marprelate nor with his equally rhetorically copious responders, often thought to include John Lyly, Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe.[34] Instead, he denounces both:

> … it is more then tyme there were an end and surceance made of this vnmodest and deformed manner of writing lately entertayned whereby matters of religion are handled in the stile of the stage. Indeed bitter & earnest writing may not hastely be condemned, ffor men cannot contend couldly & w*i*thout affection about thing*e*s w*hi*ch they hold deere & p*re*tious… But to leaue all reuerend & religious compassion toward*e*s euell*e*s or indignation toward*e*s fault*e*s & to turne religion into a comedy or Satyre… is a thinge farre from the devout reu*er*ence of a Christian and scant beseeming the honest regard of a sober man. (163-64)

[33] For more on Hoskyns' and Bacon's conceptual similarities, see Norbrook, 'Rhetoric, Ideology and the Elizabethan World Picture', *Renaissance Rhetoric* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994) 147-49. On their shared preference for a simple Senecan style, while not being wholly disregarding of Ciceronian rhetoric, see Whitlock, *John Hoskyns, Serjeant-at-Law* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982) 141.

[34] See Chapter 4 for more on the controversy and for how these rumours set the stage for the Harvey-Nashe quarrel.

Bacon's views on the nature of church government are not certain, and what concerns him here is rather decorum, or the lack of compatibility between lofty matter and immodest rhetoric.[35] While acknowledging that rhetorical copiousness is an inevitable expression of man when dealing with stimulating matter, Bacon, unlike Hoskyns, does not consider this to be an adequate reason for engaging in its abuses.

Instead, Bacon posits the importance of wise and restrained counsel in his writings. Like Castiglione, whose vision of the counsellor celebrates honest counsel and argues against "flaterers, railers and lyers" (N1r), Bacon's ideal counsellor in the essay 'Of Counsell' is "in Nature, Faithfull, and Sincere, and Plaine, and Direct; Not Crafty, and Involved" (66).[36] It emphatically rejects someone like Hoskyns, a supposedly frank speaker whose writings yet flirt with libel, and whose own rhetorical advice in the *Directions* both mocks those who "make business of kyndnes" by seeking preferment in letters and at the same time advises them on how to gain favour through "the vnderstanding of the person to whome you write" (118). And yet, Bacon's attitude towards counsel is ultimately one of trepidation, as he ends his essay on counsel with a warning:[37] "A *King*, when he presides in *Counsell*, let him beware how he Opens his owne Inclination too much, in that which he propoundeth: For else *Counsellours* will but take the Winde of him; And in stead of giving Free Counsell, sing him a Song of *Placebo*" (68). An essay which had begun with celebrating counsel as so elevated that even "*God* himselfe is not without" (63) ends on a low note, with empty words exercising deception.

[35] See also Black, 'The Rhetoric of Reaction: The Martin Marprelate Tracts (1588-89), Anti- Martinism, and the Uses of Print in Early Modern England', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28:3 (1997): 722.
[36] First appearing in the second edition of the *Essayes*, published in 1612 (STC 1141). Citations are to the third, 1625 version in Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels*, ed. M. Kiernan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
[37] For a discussion of how Bacon's notion of counsel both establishes the rule of law and at the same time subverts it, see Holcomb, 'Kings and Counselors: The Politics of Francis Bacon's Rhetorical Theory', *Philological Quarterly* 74:3 (1995): 239-40.

This ambiguity regarding the merits of counsel is carried also into Bacon's discussion of the philosophy of language. His objections to obsequiously following Cicero nonetheless do not prevent him from using Cicero's traditional model of rhetoric or from citing Cicero as the authority on persuasion at the beginning of 'Of the Coulers of good and euill'.[38] Similarly his attitude towards Aristotle regarding the use of language is both approving and critical. Bacon's own definition of language as conventional in the Idols of the Market echoes Aristotle's own: "A noun is a sound having meaning established by convention alone".[39] But Bacon is also highly critical of Aristotle's disregard for language and accepted wisdom, despite the fact that Bacon is similarly apprehensive of both in his discussion of the idols:

> And herein I cannot a little maruaile at the Philosopher *Aristotle*: that did proceede in such a Spirit of difference & contradiction towards all Antiquitie, vndertaking not only to frame new wordes of Science at pleasure: but to confound and extinguish all ancient wisedome… *the comming in a Mans owne name,* without regard of *Antiquitie*, or *paternitie*; is no good signe of truth; (*Advancement* 81)

Bacon accuses Aristotle of having "caused men to be the 'slaves of words' by awakening their passion for vain subtleties and sophistry", an accusation similar to that made against the imitators of Cicero.[40] The accusations against Cicero and Aristotle, although distinct, have a common historical provenance in the works of Ramus, which often attack Cicero for following Aristotle and both thinkers for confusing dialectic and rhetoric.[41] Though often at-odds with Ramus, such as when he assigned invention to both logic and rhetoric in the *Advancement of Learning* (112) or when he attacked the French thinker directly in *Temporis Partus Masculus* (published in 1603) as even worse than the sophists, Bacon shared Ramus'

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[38] See also Rossi 145-46.
[39] Aristotle, 'On Interpretation', *Aristotle, Categories. On Interpretation. Prior Analytics*, trans. H.P. Cooke (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938) 16a20. See also Elsky, 'Bacon's Hieroglyphs and the Separation of Words and Things', *Philological Quarterly* 63:4 (1984): 449; and Snider, *Origin and Authority in Seventeenth-Century England: Bacon, Milton, Butler* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 23-24.
[40] Rossi 43.
[41] See for example Ramus, *Peter Ramus's Attack on Cicero* xxvii-xxviii.

preference for an unadorned, utilitarian style of rhetoric.[42] And yet Bacon's attitude towards the use of language is anything but straightforward.

Even though words are "ful of flattery and vncertainty", Bacon writes in the *Advancement of Learning*, they are "not to be dispised, specially with the aduantage of passion and affection" (166). That is to mean that words, as "the foot-steppes and prints of Reason" (121), both articulate and at the same time exercise control over the passions of the mind, for "the Poet doth elegantly cal passions, tortures, that vrge men to confesse theyr secrets" (166).[43] Rhetoric is defined by Bacon as "*Imaginatiue,* or *Insinuatiue Reason*" (106) which is generally better suited for good than for evil (128), though at the same time words "doe shoote backe vppon the vnderstanding of the wisest" (117) and must be strictly governed.[44] In whichever field they are employed, words reflect a degree of uncertainty for Bacon that seems to clash with his project, realised through language, of pursuing the interpretation of nature and the appropriation of knowledge. It is to this project that the discussion must now turn.

Bacon and the Poet's Knowledge

The linking of words and matter with degrees of intellectual capability seems to imply that a qualitative, rather than quantitative difference exists between 'ordinary' and 'sharp' wits. This is also apparent in Bacon's discussion of persuasion in 'Of The Coulers of good and euill', where it is "the ordinarie iudgement either of a weake man, or of a wise man, not

[42] For more on Bacon's attacks on Ramus, see Walton, 'Ramus and Bacon on Method', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 9:3 (1971): 289-90.
[43] See also Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric* 95; and Gore, 'Francis Bacon and the "Desserts of Poetry": Rhetorical education and The Advancement of Learning', *Prose Studies* 29:3 (2007): 359-60. The idea that words articulate affections goes back to Aristotle in 'On Interpretation' (16a5): "Words spoken are symbols or signs of affections or impressions of the soul". For a discussion of how even animals' voices were thought in the early modern period to communicate passions, see Serjeantson, 'The Passions and Animal Language, 1540-1700', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:3 (2001): 434.
[44] For more on Bacon's ambivalent claims regarding rhetoric's relation to the good, see Briggs, *Francis Bacon and the Rhetoric of Nature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 31; and Colclough 61-62.

fully and considerately attending and pondering the matter" (17r) that is at risk of being deceived by the colours of rhetoric. The ideal intellect, Bacon implies, is different not in scale but in kind from the ordinary, and is uniquely in possession of the potential to withstand the assaults of rhetoric and to reassign linguistic meaning in a way that is truer to nature. But Bacon's own rhetoric shows rather an equivocal position in which the doubtfulness of language is given centre stage, and not easily overcome. The following section traces the workings, and limitations, of the ideal intellectual wit, by turning to Bacon's conception of knowledge in its relation to the rhetorical.

The starting point for Bacon's discussion of knowledge, from the *Valerius Terminus* onwards, is inauspicious. The intellect's search for knowledge, he intimates, is frustrated by the false idols of the human mind from both within and without. To the Idols of the Market's deception via the means of language or the common intellect of the masses is added another external attack, that of the Idols of the Theatre, which is to do with the dogma of supposedly authoritative sources and especially established philosophy (*Novum Organum* I.62-63). From within the human intellect itself, the Idols of the Tribe reflect "the evenness of the substance of the human spirit, or… its preconceptions, its narrownesses, its restlessness" (I.52), namely the general limitations of the human mind; and the Idols of the Cave reflect the dangers attributed to "the peculiar nature of the individual, both body and soul, as well as from education, custom and accident" (I.53).[45] The result, as Bacon notes in the *Advancement of Learning*, is that the human mind does not inherently possess a clear and direct access to the truth:

> For the mind of Man is farre from the Nature of a cleare and equall glasse, wherein the beames of things should reflect according to their true incidence;

[45] For more on Bacon's idols of the mind, see O'Briant, 'The Genesis, Definition, and Classification of Bacon's Idols', *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 13:3 (1975): 347-51; R. Lewis, *Language, Mind and Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007) 8-9; Jardine, 'Discovery and the Art of Discourse*'* 80-82; and Rossi 160-72.

> Nay, it is rather like an inchanted glasse, full of superstition and Imposture, if it bee not deliuered and reduced. (116)

It is suggested that Bacon's new method is to deliver the mind from this state of opacity, for Bacon is on a quest to ameliorate knowledge, not deny its possibilities.[46] But even this idealised view of the inquiring mind, like the scope of rhetoric, is not without limits.

Very early on in the *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon suggests that ultimately nothing is beyond man's potential capacity for knowledge: "For that nothing parcell of the world, is denied to Mans enquirie and inuention". The key words in this claim are 'of the world', for Bacon echoes the Hebrew King Solomon in setting aside the workings of the divine from the perceptible: "*The worke which God worketh from the beginning to the end, is not possible to be found out by Man*" (7).[47] Bacon accepts that even though the laws of nature are not beyond the scope of man's probing intellect, the law of God which in turn determines the laws of nature is indeed beyond its reach.[48] The distinction is maintained by Bacon throughout the *Advancement of Learning*: on the one hand, the ancient philosophers were wrong to suggest that senses are insufficient to report an objective worldly truth: "They charged the deceite vppon THE SENCES; which in my Iudgement (notwithstanding all their Cauillations) are verie sufficient to certifie and report truth" (111);[49] on the other hand, Bacon disallows attempting to appropriate the knowledge of the divine:

> *Ascendam, & ero similis altissimo*: By aspiringe to be like God in knowledge man transgressed and fell. *Eritis sicut Dii scientes bonum & malum*; But by aspiring to a similitude of God in goodnesse or loue, neyther Man nor Angell euer transgressed or shall transgresse. (155)

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[46] Park, 'Bacon's "Enchanted Glass"', 290-91.
[47] "Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek *it* out, yet he shall not find *it*; yea further; though a wise man think to know *it*, yet shall he not be able to find *it*", *The Holy Bible, King James Version*, Eccles. 8.17.
[48] See also van Malssen, *The Political Philosophy of Francis Bacon: On the Unity of Knowledge* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014) 116.
[49] For the idea of objectivity and the problems of attaining knowledge in Bacon, see Zagorin, 'Francis Bacon's Concept of Objectivity and the Idols of the Mind', *British Journal for the History of Science* 34:4 (2001): 379-93.

This is a striking qualification of the interpretation of nature – it excludes the intangible sense of knowing things "not material but intelligible, as God, Angel, and other such"[50] and so lumps the interpretation of nature with experimental knowledge – at once both desirable and limited. When Bacon separates "DIVINITIE, or INSPIRED THEOLOGIE" (*Advancement* 80) from philosophy both divine and natural, he implies that the quest for knowledge that is his natural philosophy encounters its boundary in "revealed theology".[51] Bacon's early conception of knowledge recalls the workings of another Protestant thinker, Philip Sidney, especially in *The Defence of Poesy*. Some modern critics maintain that the two thinkers had a close acquaintance through the 'Areopagus' group of poets in the late 1570s, in which Sidney supposedly played a key role as the young Bacon, returning from France in 1578, made his first foray into London literary and political society.[52] Others see the 'Areopagus' as nothing more than an invention of Spenser and Harvey, an inside joke meant to enhance their own social positions.[53] Bacon certainly took a different approach to that of Greville, Fraunce and Hoskyns, and his references to Sidney in both his personal correspondence and published works are scarce. But while their personal acquaintance may be in doubt, their similar educational and theological backgrounds lend themselves to similar interests regarding the limits of knowledge and how this is reflected in rhetorical practice.

When Bacon first divides and defines the sciences in the *Advancement of Learning*, he establishes poetry as a 'fained history', a part of humane learning alongside philosophy and history in which words are "restrained" but matter is "extreamly licensed" (73). Bacon's

[50] As the *intellectus* is defined in Bartholomaeus Anglicus' encyclopaedia (13v-14r).
[51] Rees, 'Bacon's Speculative Philosophy', *The Oxford Francis Bacon, vol. 6: Philosophical Studies, c.1611 - c.1619* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) xlix. For similar ideas regarding *Valerius Terminus*, see Milner, 'Francis Bacon: The Theological Foundations of Valerius Terminus', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58:2 (1997): 261.
[52] Gaukroger 53. See also Martin 25-29.
[53] See Hadfield 106-107; and Woudhuysen, 'Leicester's Literary Patronage: A Study of the English Court, 1578-1582' (University of Oxford Diss., 1980) 97.

concerns elsewhere are with the great scope of matter over the limited one of words, and so it is not surprising that his initial assessment of poetry is a favourable one:

> [Poesie] doth truly referre to the Imagination: which beeing not tyed to the Lawes of Matter; may at pleasure ioyne that which Nature hath seuered: & seuer that which Nature hath ioyned, and so make vnlawfull Matches & diuorses… The vse of this FAINED HISTORIE, hath beene to giue some shadowe of satisfaction to the minde of Man in those points, wherein the Nature of things doth denie it, the world being in proportion inferiour to the soule: by reason whereof there is agreeable to the spirit of Man, a more ample Greatnesse, a more exact Goodnesse; and a more absolute varietie then can bee found in the Nature of things. (73)

Bacon claims that poetry can outdo nature because it is the product of a soul that is superior to it, hinting that he is referring to the intellect rather than to bodily wit. His description recalls Sidney's praise for poetry, similarly encountered in the common triad that also includes philosophy and history in *The Defence of Poesy*, in which the power of the poet's invention to deliver a "golden" alternative to nature's "brazen" (185) world is celebrated. Indeed, in defining what poetry is, Sidney and the early Bacon have much in common. Bacon echoes Sidney's ideas regarding the poet's tools ("wit and eloquence", *Advancement* 75), the ambiguous nature of these tools (in the multivalent conception of wit itself), and poetry's role in producing a moral effect on man's obstinate will.[54]

It is also suggested by both authors that poetry deals not with knowledge of the real world but with a different, elevated kind that is related to divinity. Sidney expresses this sentiment directly in the *Defence* when he writes that God set man "beyond and over all the works of that second nature [i.e. imagination]: which in nothing he showeth so much as in poetry, when with the force of a divine breath he bringeth things forth surpassing her doings" (205-207). This admission is immediately qualified: "with no small arguments to the

[54] Compare Sidney's claim that the poet "doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it" (601-602) and Bacon's assertion that "*Poesie* serueth and conferreth to Magnanimitie, Moralitie, and to Delectation" (*Advancement* 73).

incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam, since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it." (207-10). The implication, however, is that an ideal moral clarity is possible, even if one then necessarily falls foul of this morality's demands. Poetry's benefits as an instrument for teaching, capable of moving because it "may be tuned to the highest key of passion" (516-17), remain intact.

Sidney joins poetry with reason, such that "the poet doth so far exceed [the historian] as he is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable" (509-11), in his quest to outdo nature. Bacon also admits that poetry "was euer thought to haue some participation of diuinesse" (*Advancement* 73) but when he lumps it with reason, it "doth buckle and bowe the Mind vnto the Nature of things" (74), subjecting the mind to the natural world rather than seeking to overcome it. The result of this union is rhetoric, whose duty Bacon defines as "*To apply Reason to Imagination*, for the better moouing of the will" (127).[55] While Sidney celebrated reason in the service of imagination, Bacon claims the opposite. Imagination, alongside passions and sophism, is a possible hindrance to the work of reason, useful only insofar as it is subservient to it:

> For wee see *Reason* is disturbed in the Administration thereof by three meanes; by *Illaqueation*, or *Sophisme*, which pertaines to *Logicke*; by *Imagination* or *Impression*, which pertaines to *Rhetoricke*, and by *Passion* or *Affection*, which pertaines to *Moralitie*… The end of *Rhetoricke*, is to fill the Imagination to second Reason, and not to oppresse it. (127-28)

The reason for the emerging differences between Sidney and Bacon is their different concept of truth, an idea with which rhetoric exists in an ambiguous relationship. Sidney's answer to objections against poetry's deceitful nature in the *Defence* seeks to establish, in the words of John Searle, "the logical status of fictional discourse".[56] Accusations of lying are dismissed

[55] For more on the different registers of knowledge contained in poetry, and on its role in practical matters, see Harrison, 'Bacon's View of Rhetoric, Poetry, and the Imagination', *Essential Articles for the Study of Francis Bacon*, ed. B. Vickers (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1968) 253-71.
[56] Searle, 'The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse', *New Literary History* 6:2 (1975): 321.

outright on the grounds that the poet never claims to tell the truth: "But the poet (as I said before) never affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes" (939-41). Poetry for Sidney, as discussed in Chapter 3, is not about what is but about "what should be" (952) and as such it is "a profitable invention" (958) whose aims are both to teach and to delight, rather than to delight alone. When Sidney explores fiction, the distinction between truth and falsehood becomes meaningless.

But for Bacon such a distinction becomes increasingly more crucial. In the third edition of his *Essayes*, the first of which is titled 'Of Truth', poets are acknowledged as peddling lies for the purpose of pleasure but at the same time such lies are seen as not necessarily hurtful: "One of the Fathers, in great Severity, called Poesie, *Vinum Dæmonum*; because it filleth the Imagination, and yet it is, but with the shadow of a *Lie*. But it is not the *Lie*, that passeth through the Minde, but the *Lie* that sinketh in, and setleth in it, that doth the hurt" (7). This statement rescues poetry from moral depravity but it also empties it of significance, certainly when made by a naturalist like Bacon: poetry is only harmless because it is a shadow. In the *Advancement of Learning* it was already hinted that it is but a "shadowe of satisfaction" for the mind, and in the *Essayes* it is made even clearer that poetry is but a "shadow of a *Lie*", which does not settle in the mind. Already in his earlier writing Bacon considered poetry, for all its intellective power, to be ephemeral and fleeting, a mere shadow. Even allegory, which is seen by Bacon as the most important part of poetry and which finds significant expression in his myths, is ultimately admitted to offer wisdom rather than knowledge.[57] Bacon's concerns lie elsewhere – in subordinating rhetorical conceit to the

[57] R. Lewis, 'Francis Bacon, Allegory and the Uses of Myth', *The Review of English Studies* 61:250 (2010): 366, 385.

exploration of nature itself, even as this same exploration relies on notions of *poesis* that echo Sidney's – of the poet as a maker who possesses great knowledge about the world.[58]

In a sense, both Bacon and Sidney see wit as projecting outward onto the world in the service of the *vita activa*, but in vastly different ways. While Sidney's wit projects into the minds of his audience in order to transform them, Bacon's wit ventures into the natural world in order to reveal it: it is not "too high an elevation of man's wit" to dig "deeper and deeper into the mine of natural knowledge" (*Valerius Terminus* 219).[59] Appropriately therefore, the two thinkers imagine wit's rhetorical functioning in the world quite differently. For Sidney poetry is singled out as superior to both philosophy and history in the advancement of learning, for "truly neither philosopher nor historiographer could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great passport of poetry, which in all nations at this day where learning flourisheth not, is plain to be seen" (87-90). Bacon, on the other hand, sees poetry, history and philosophy each as possessing both 'extant' and 'deficient' parts, all to be used as part of the interpretation of nature.[60] Sidney's view of poetry, his admittance of man's post-lapsarian imperfections notwithstanding, downplays the possibility of interpretation, for he "pictures his readers as an audience swayed to action by passionate speech".[61] But Bacon, whose audience is to be concerned with the careful extraction of knowledge, is appropriately more cautious, and more willing to admit "euen in diuinity, that some Interpretations, yea and some writings haue more of the *Eagle*, then others" (*Advancement* 162).[62]

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[58] See also Altegoer, *Reckoning Words: Baconian Science and the Construction of Truth in English Renaissance Culture* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000) 30.
[59] See also Gaukroger 52-55; and Solomon, *Objectivity in the Making: Francis Bacon and the Politics of Inquiry* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998) 96.
[60] See for example his division of history into four parts, "wherof the three first I allow as extant, the fourth I note as deficient" (62).
[61] Werlin, 'Francis Bacon and the Art of Misinterpretation', *PMLA* 130:2 (2015): 247.
[62] See also Werlin 237-38.

Bacon's goals are increasingly different from Sidney's. Centred not on an ideal but fictional Golden World to outdo the corrupt post-lapsarian one, his work aims at the world as it really is and seeks to elevate man's knowledge towards the reinstatement of a pre-lapsarian integrity, "the sovereignty and power… which [man] had in his first state of creation" (222) as Bacon states in *Valerius Terminus*.[63] The result is a growing difference between Sidney's idea of poetic wit and its role in Bacon's emerging scientific platform. Imbued with an ambiguity that conflates reason and rhetoric, Bacon all but abandons the term 'wit' in his later writings and, with the exception of when he cites others in the *Apophthegms*, in the few instances 'wit' is used it denotes intellect alone without referring to rhetorical capacity.[64] In Bacon's most notable late English-language publication, containing both the *New Atlantis* and *Sylva Sylvarum*, the term and its derivations appear a total of five times (zero in the *New Atlantis*) and refer to intellectual capacity even when the usually rhetorical 'witty' is used: "And that the same *Heart* likewise of an *Ape,* applied to the *Necke,* or *Head,* helpeth the *Wit;* And is good for the *Falling-Sicknesse:* The *Ape* also is a Witty *Beast,* and hath a *Dry Braine*" (260).[65] This aligns the late Bacon with the linguistic tool of his new system, the aphorism, or "brief and scattered sentences not restrained by rhetorical method" (*Novum Orgamum* I.87). It is also reminiscent of Sidney's tendency to use 'wit' more sparsely in the *New Arcadia*, although the two author's aims are opposed – Sidney's are theological while Bacon moves towards investigating the world itself. With the Latin *ingenium* equally unambiguously excluded from intellective interpretation, Bacon sets the stage for a clearer vision of his bipartite art of discovery. It is in line with Bacon's project of disambiguating language and is a necessary consequence of his focus on actual knowledge to be found in

[63] See also McKnight, *The Religious Foundations of Francis Bacon's Thought* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2006) 104; Zagorin, *Francis Bacon* 45; and R. Lewis, *Language, Mind and Nature* 15-16.
[64] See Bacon, 'Apophthegmes', *The Oxford Francis Bacon, Vol. 8: The Historie of the raigne of King Henry the Seventh: and Other Works of the 1620s*, ed. M. Kiernan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 215, 274, 647.
[65] *Sylua Syluarum* and the *New Atlantis* were posthumously published together in 1627 (STC 1168).

nature. And yet Bacon's earlier use of 'wit' foreshadows the limitations of his later quest of knowledge and its two parts, *experientia literata* and the *interpretatio naturae*. These, through an investigation of Bacon's own rhetorical choices and explicit vision for the exploration of nature, are the subject of the next section.

Bacon and Knowledge Commodified

The rhetorical apprehensions in Bacon's discussion of natural language and counsel are also evident when Bacon's own rhetorical choices are examined. This is especially true in light of the transactional nature of the Idols of the Market, in which language is seen as a result of an intellectual give and take in which common understandings prevail. For Bacon "The means through which the human mind reflected on the world were linguistic".[66] In line with his own admissions that the new must yet be explained in the terms of the old, Bacon's language acknowledges its own shortcomings and occasionally makes use of the transactional elements of rhetoric: "like as many substances in nature which are solide, do putrifie and corrupt into wormes: So it is the propertie of good and sound knowledge, to putrifie and dissolue into a number of subtile, idle, vnholesome, and (as I may tearme them) vermiculate questions" (*Advancement* I.24). Some critics note, in passages such as these, Bacon's debt to the euphuism of John Lyly, and both writers certainly explore, if somewhat differently, the idea of mercantile, marketable language.[67] Bacon also draws, as Lyly does, on the "unnatural natural history" of authors like Pliny the Younger, even as he rejects them for being "fraught with much fabulous matter, a great part, not onely vntryed, but notoriously vntrue, to the great derogation of the credite of natural Philosophie" (*Advancement* I.26).[68] The tendency to both reject rhetorical copiousness and simultaneously engage in it is evident throughout

[66] R. Lewis, *Language, Mind and Nature* 6.
[67] See Vine, 'Commercial Commonplacing: Francis Bacon, the Waste-Book, and the Ledger', *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700* 16 (2011): 203-209; Solomon 62-65; and Williamson 116-18.
[68] See also Editor Michael Kiernan's note to these same lines.

Bacon's writings. In *De Sapientia Veterum*, first published in Latin in 1609, Bacon explores the myth of Pan as symbolising Nature, concluding that his love is appropriately lent to Echo and not to Syrinx – that is, it rejects the "quaint" speeches of Syrinx in favour of the plain, true reflection of the world in Echo, "being nothing else but the Image or reflection of it, not adding any thing of its own, but only iterates and resounds" (33).[69] The irony, of course, is that Bacon himself is describing and elaborating on a myth – an allegorical expression of ideas, rather than a plain and direct one.

The depiction of Pan, or Nature, as bound to the linguistic fidelity of Echo reaffirms the idea that the quest for scientific knowledge is inherently linguistic. Bacon's theory, though not always his practice, rejects verbal copiousness and unnatural imagery and so it seeks a different path from the commodification of rhetoric and of rhetorical wit that was pursued by the Euphuists.[70] Bacon similarly reflects a more cautious approach to the qualities of the rhetorician than does Sidney's erected wit. This is not to say that Bacon does not advertise his own wit, for he tends to locate lacunae in contemporary science and to promise that his future works will provide rectification.[71] Even more telling, his discussion of man's view of his own self suggests that the active person operates out of a favourable impression of himself:

> For men ought to take an vnpartiall viewe of their owne abilities and vertues: and againe of their wants and impediments… First to consider how the constitution of their nature sorteth with the generall state of the times: which if they find agreeable and fit, then in all things to giue themselues more scope and liberty, but if differing and dissonant, then in the whole course of theyr life to be more close retyred and reserued… (*Advancement* 169)

[69] STC 1127. Citations are to 'The Wisedome of the Ancients', the first English translation by Arthur Gorges in *The essays, or councils, civil and moral, of Sir Francis Bacon* (1696).
[70] For more on Bacon's view of the corruption inherent to human language, see Slaughter 88-89.
[71] See Kiernan xxviii.

At the time already a long-serving Member of Parliament, Bacon's own life trajectory leaves no doubt as to which kind of man he considered himself to be. The practical role played by rhetoric in civic business, a role also explored earlier by Gabriel Harvey, is therefore appropriately significant for Bacon.[72] Nevertheless, what Bacon seeks to commoditise above all else is not his wit but rather knowledge, and specifically natural (as opposed to moral) philosophy.[73] Rhetoric is therefore subservient to the value of knowledge because language, once reformed, is but a means of bringing the mind to "accurately mirror, represent and transform the natural world to human advantage".[74]

In Stanley Fish's seminal work, *Self-Consuming Artifacts*, Bacon's *Essayes* are examined as an example of a work that invalidates its own findings so that the very concept of understanding is destabilised.[75] In Bacon such self-consuming, Fish argues, manifests not in complete destruction of the possibility of understanding itself, but in what he terms "self-regulating", or the retaining of value in the work "for future consultation" (154). Much as he does in the discussion of the idols, Bacon posits his work as useful in pointing towards misunderstandings, such as "the inadequacy of the commonly received notions about love" (93), for it can serve to regulate the mind (and its language) for the purposes of getting closer to the Baconian truth "about the phenomenal world" (153).[76] Rather than serving as a commodity in its own right, rhetoric for Bacon consistently serves as a tool for the attainment of Baconian knowledge, prized despite its limitations as the highest commodity of civic enterprise. It is to a kind of mercantilist language quite apart from euphuism, namely that which evokes colonial exploration, to which Bacon owes a bigger debt, and one on which he

[72] See also Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* 276.
[73] See also Martin 65.
[74] R. Lewis, *Language, Mind and Nature* 21.
[75] Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974).
[76] Fish contrasts this with the truth of Plato and Augustine (as well as John Donne), which is "above the phenomenal world" (153).

reflects with less distaste. Somewhat paradoxically, this practical sentiment is expressed most clearly in Bacon's utopian work, *The New Atlantis*.[77]

The unfinished novel portrays the people of the island of Bensalem as living in a perfect society, embodying the idealisation of Bacon's scientific project. Language has a place in this kingdom – it is through writing that the mariners first gain access to the island, and the people of Bensalem have many books in their possession – but it is only the tool through which knowledge is acquired, as the people of Bensalem are characterised by not succumbing to disputations and "fruitless battles over words".[78] The most important society on the island, "the very eye of this kingdom" (464) is that of Salomon's House, instituted "for the finding out of the true nature of all things (whereby God might have the more glory in the workmanship of them, and men the more fruit in the use of them)" (471). Although occasionally referred to in terms of divinity, such as when Bensalem is compared to Jerusalem by the mariners' exclamation that "our tongues should first cleave to the roofs of our mouths, ere we should forget either his reverend … or this whole nation in our prayers" (463),[79] the knowledge that the people of Bensalem seek is only that of nature, the same one which Bacon defines by citing Solomon in the *Advancement of Learning*. And yet, for the people of Bensalem it is this knowledge that is the pinnacle of their achievement, their most prized commodity in a community that does not use money (462) and does not trade with the outside world:[80]

> … every twelve years there should be set forth out of this kingdom two ships, appointed to several voyages… whose errand was only to give us knowledge of the affairs and state of those countries to which they were designed, and especially

[77] Citations are to Bacon, 'The New Atlantis', *The Major Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. B. Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 457-90.
[78] Funari, *Francis Bacon and the Seventeenth-Century Intellectual Discourse* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 24.
[79] "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Ps. 137.6).
[80] See also Attie, 'Selling Science: Bacon, Harvey, and the Commodification of Knowledge', *Modern Philology: Critical and Historical Studies in Literature, Medieval Through Contemporary* 110:3 (2013): 416.

> of the sciences, arts, manufactures, and inventions of all the world; and withal to bring unto us books, instruments, and patterns in every kind… we maintain a trade, not for gold, silver, or jewels; nor for silks; nor for spices; nor any other commodity of matter; but only for God's first creature, which was *Light:* to have *light (I* say) of the growth of all parts of the world. (471-72)

Where the commodification of rhetorical wit had dominated euphuism, Bacon introduces a commodification of knowledge about the world, whose ideal culmination is in the intellective *interpretatio naturae*. Indeed his suggestion of a "levelling of wits" in the *Novum Organum* rings false when viewed in light of the *New Atlantis*'s model of a commodified knowledge kept close by a select group.[81] The transactional nature of this commodification rests in colonial language, in which the Bensalems are both "an imperial state" and at the same time "an ideal natural philosophical community".[82] For Bacon, the New World serves to supply an abundance of natural knowledge, and "the figure of the voyage" is to do with reaching truth.[83]

Bacon, like Harvey, sees rhetoric as a useful tool and seeks both social and moral advancement, but in a completely different context. Through the commodification of knowledge – which rhetoric aids, though it is in itself suspicious – Bacon indirectly highlights his own social and moral adequacy through the creation of a new society founded upon principles of knowledge, where the natural scientists are society's elites and where the search for the Light of God produces a true conference of wits. Colonial language, as Bacon had noted already in *Valerius Terminus*, is particularly well suited to such an enterprise because it rectifies the diversion of wits and can lead to their true conference, such as that of

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[81] Ash, *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise in Elizabethan England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) 204-205.
[82] Martin 135.
[83] Raman, *Framing "India": The Colonial Imaginary in Early Modern Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001) 36. See also Irving, '"In a pure soil": Colonial anxieties in the work of Francis Bacon', *History of European Ideas* 32:3 (2006): 251. For more on Bacon's public support for the imperialist project, see Clement, 'English and French mercantilist thought and the matter of colonies during the 17th century', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 54:3 (2006): 300; and Whitney, 'Merchants of Light: Science as Colonization in the New Atlantis', *Francis Bacon's Legacy of Texts* 255-68.

"the king of Spain in regard of his great dominions" (231). At the same time, colonialism is a project of exploration and as such its knowledge is based on "actual experience and practice".[84] Despite its utopian setting, it is therefore the experiential part of the quest for knowledge, not the ideal interpretation of nature, which Bacon's *New Atlantis* evokes.

It was noted before that Bacon's early use of 'wit' outstrips for scope his use of the Latin *ingenium*, linking the term with both a rhetorical significance in the spirit of *ingenium* and with a broader intellective capacity which reflects Bacon's idea of the interpretation of nature in the *Novum Organum*. In a sense, the *New Atlantis* does the same, as it links the attainment and commodification of the light of knowledge with the exploration of *experientia literata*. This concept, which Bacon identifies with the Hunt of Pan in the Latin expansion of the *Advancement of Learning*, is problematic.[85] Unlike the *interpretatio naturae* which can lead to "the *light it selfe*" in the form of axioms, *experientia literata* is an indication made "from *Experiments* to *Experiments*", albeit one that is guided "by direction and order" (226) and not random stumbling. A deficient "sagacity" (226) rather than part of philosophy, it is overtly linguistic, both metaphorically and literally, as Bacon compares the "stuff of the universe" to the "stuff of books".[86] The metaphor of *experientia literata* equates gaining a mediated experience, so that one could eventually interpret Nature, with gaining literacy for the purpose of making sense of written language.[87] Literally, *experientia literata* is experience set in writing, for similar purposes: "indeed experience has yet to be made literate [*neque adhùc Experientia literata facta est*]. And no discovery should be sanctioned save that it be put in writing" (*Novum Organum* I.101). And finally, like rhetorical wit itself,

[84] Raman 70-71.
[85] Entitled *De Augmentis Scientiarum*. Citations are to Gilbert Watts' first English translation, published in 1640 as *Of the advancement and proficience of learning; or, The partitions of sciences. Nine books* (STC 1167).
[86] Passannante, 'Homer Atomized: Francis Bacon and the Matter of Tradition', *ELH* 76:4 (2009): 1029.
[87] See also Giglioni 85-86.

experientia literata is marketable and profitable, "like interest payable pending thorough knowledge of the enterprise itself" (*Novum Organum* I.115).

In a 1990 article, Lisa Jardine identified Baconian science as interpreted along two competing lines: it is either "well-confirmed, rigorously tested generalizations about those external qualities [of natural phenomena]" (47) which she appropriately identifies with *experientia literata*; or, alternatively, a system that is "intent on finding the indemonstrable first principles of science – the hidden essential natures of things" (48).[88] Those thinkers who subscribed to the first interpretation, according to Jardine, tended to exhibit an uncertainty regarding how one could ever complete the project of natural philosophy and "ascend to metaphysics" (59). Those who saw Bacon's quest as resting in first principles were equally sceptical of the possibility of his *Novum Organum* to live up to its promises. Bacon's reliance on *experientia literata*, as does his early use of 'wit', reveals him to be in agreement with his own critics. In his Latin work on the *Novum Organum*, Bacon attempts to live up to the demands of the interpretation of Nature and to write in aphorisms, although even then his initial brief statements grow to multiple-page aphorisms, hardly compact and condensed, by the end of the first book. But it is in his utopian prose in the *New Atlantis* that Bacon most explicitly acknowledges the linguistic medium of his project, such that the role of the "Interpreters of Nature" is relegated to a single mention towards the end of the work: "Lastly, we have three that raise the former discoveries by experiments into greater observations, axioms, and aphorisms. These we call Interpreters of Nature" (487). The "Merchants of Light" (486), on the other hand, have a much greater role, and evoke a more passionate response in the visitors: "For indeed we were all astonished to hear so strange things so probably told" (472).

[88] Jardine, 'Experientia Literata or Novum Organum? The Dilemma of Bacon's Scientific Method'. See also pp. 51-57 for Jardine's discussion of the profitability of *experientia literata*.

Final Thoughts

Bacon's wit, perhaps more so than any of the other authors discussed in this thesis, abandons the self-reflexive engagement with a multivalent wit in the spirit of euphuism or of Sidney's *Defence*, and his works eventually leave aside the idea of writing for the purpose of propping up an image of the author as a Wit. Rather, Bacon aims at exploring the world using the rhetorical and intellective tools which 'wit' so often evokes, the results of which are to be set down, in what he terms a 'conference of wits', for the benefit of humanity as a whole. The image of the knowledge-trade in *The New Atlantis* reflects Bacon's view of knowledge as a process, realised in language, in which materials gathered in the world – in the voyages of the ships – are coupled with a processing performed in the mind – in the society of Salomon's House.[89] But it also reveals Bacon as a product of Elizabethan sensibilities for whom rhetorical anxieties are bound with intellectual limitations. *Experientia literata* and *interpretatio naturae*, language and knowledge, words and matter – these are all appropriately embodied in Bacon's early multiplicity of 'wit' which even his later works, though they make scant use of the term, do not entirely resolve. The anxieties of rhetorical wit, instead of undermining Bacon's quest for scientific axioms and objective knowledge, come to reflect rather the Baconian frame of reference – that of a very early proponent of scientific exploration both reacting against the Elizabethan preoccupation with the dangers of rhetoric and the multiplicity of 'wit', and at the same time greatly influenced by its (and reformed theology's) limitations. Bacon's correspondence with the earlier prose writers presents a picture of language's aphorisms as the "vehicles of pure truth",[90] both aspiring to the restoration of man's original integrity and at the same time acknowledging his post-lapsarian limitations.[91] In this context, words still possess the probabilistic nature they are

[89] R. Lewis, *Language, Mind and Nature* 6-7.
[90] Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* 73.
[91] See also R. Lewis, *Language, Mind and Nature* 17.

traditionally given and universal knowledge, prized though it may be, is nevertheless unreachable, and in any case not complete because it excludes the divine.[92] Bacon's method may not be an entirely satisfactory one. But with practical implications for the creation of a scientific society and for morally aspiring to a better understanding of God's created world, Bacon posits his method as both revolution and reform, a body of work whose role in the birth of modern science is undeniable.

[92] See also Kiernan xviii; Briggs 177.

Conclusion

The research contained in these pages deals with the related, supposedly antithetical pairs of concepts that form the heart of the Elizabethan embrace of (and release from) Ciceronianism: *verba* and *res*, the copious and the plain styles, moral edification and subversion via rhetoric, and divine certitude and the potentially dangerous probabilities of linguistic expression. The term 'wit' is significant to all of these considerations, as its divergent denotations often encompass both sides of these rhetorical questions, revealing the underlying relationships to be equivocal rather than antithetical. As this thesis labours to demonstrate, however, the way in which 'wit' is presented by Elizabethan authors accomplishes more than to simply reveal a certain intellectual confusion related to the use of language. Rather, it reveals deeply rooted anxieties regarding the pervasiveness of rhetoric and its inseparability from thinking, which cannot be shaken off even when authors seek to distance themselves from dwelling on rhetoric itself.

In the first half of the thesis, it is indeed wit's capacity to point at seemingly opposing concepts that is highlighted in a variety of prose works. Beginning with the popular rhetorical manuals of the mid-sixteenth century by Thomas Wilson, Thomas Hoby (translating Castiglione), and Roger Ascham, 'wit' is shown to reflect both intellectual acuity and rhetorical mastery in a way that ultimately leaves the term as ambiguous – epistemologically suspect and morally capable of both corrupting and elevating. This ambiguity is then shown to be central to the Elizabethan concept of the author as a Wit, a brilliant but unpredictable master of rhetoric whose writings explore and celebrate the ambiguity of his own wittiness. For the University Wits this is best manifested in the euphuist prose first used in the late 1570s by John Lyly, in which the creation of rhetorically able but morally corrupt characters and an elaborate, copious rhetoric using parallels and comparisons are all used to place the Wit between the demands of patronage and the emerging marketplace. Ultimately self-

serving, these works nevertheless betray a deep-seated anxiety about the possibilities of rhetoric that echo the social uncertainty of the emerging Wit. For a non-commercially-minded author like Philip Sidney, a similar ambiguity is evident when he responds to Stephen Gosson's euphuistic attack of poetry and discusses the wit of the poet in the *Defence of Poesy*. In Sidney's treatise the term is placed in a binary opposition between an erected wit that is potentially capable of perceiving divine certitude and a more mundane wit that is fraught with uncertainty. Bound to try and make the most of his position within fallen reality, Sidney's poet is celebrated for, and in spite of, the material tangibility of the profit his work produces.

The second half of the thesis chronicles how 'wit' loses its multivalent vigour when authors move away from exploring the marketable, self-reflexive idea of wit in the service of its wielder's personal and social concerns. But this move does not signal an end to rhetorical anxiety. For Sidney, this results rather in an incomplete *New Arcadia*, as rhetoric, the medium for communication with that which is beyond the author's mind, clashes with an increasingly theological focus. For Thomas Nashe, in his quarrel with Gabriel Harvey and in his fiction, the flexibility of rhetoric clashes with the precariousness of social freedom so that any attempt at moral instruction is shaken off entirely, leaving behind only a subjectivity of experience in the spirit of the carnivalesque. And finally for Francis Bacon, although he advocates a system for the interpretation of nature, the tools of the trade remain deeply uncertain because they are inherently linguistic – bound in the idea of an *experientia literata* through which one gains an empirical understanding of Nature, in a process likened to becoming linguistically literate – a process inseparable from the possibility of misunderstanding.

The denotations of 'wit', then, are inherently tied to the matter being explored. This is a fitting conclusion to how Elizabethan authors use the term, for even when they align their

use of 'wit' with the subject matter at hand – a less multivalent wit for less ambiguous subjects than rhetoric – they essentially reaffirm that a divide between *res* and *verba* is never really maintained, and that a different way to use words is appropriate to different subject matters. The interwoven wits described in this thesis, it is my contention, serve as a meta-rhetorical signpost, reflecting through their use and disuse both the issues at hand and the inherent self-reflexivity of any attempt to deal directly with rhetoric. This is an echo of what Douglas Hofstadter, a modern-day philosopher, describes when he speaks of the Strange Loop as a model of consciousness:

> My belief is that the explanations of "emergent" phenomena in our brains – for instance, ideas, hopes, images, analogies, and finally consciousness and free will – are based on a kind of Strange Loop, an interaction between levels in which the top level reaches back down towards the bottom level and influences it, while at the same time being itself determined by the bottom level. In other words, a self-reinforcing "resonance" between different levels…[1]

Elizabethan authors are far from thinking along these terms, but their model of language emerges as an apt forebear to the modern idea of the Strange Loop. Rather than an all-encompassing consciousness, a concept alien to pre-Cartesian, early modern thinking, the emergent phenomena that Elizabethans discuss consists of language as inseparable from the broader idea of the mind. Their emerging model of rhetorical subjectivity – in which intellect and perception shape language and are in turn shaped by it – is certainly far from trivial even for modern thinkers.

Perhaps this is also why the narrative of Ciceronian copiousness making way for a Baconian, plain language in the early seventeenth century doesn't really prove entirely persuasive. Rather, the idea of a 'plain' language seems almost oxymoronic considering the ideas that emerge from the Elizabethan treatment of rhetoric. It was noted before that the

[1] Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999) 709.

critical opinion of the past held that "the English Ramists had almost no rivals among their own countrymen in the dissemination of rhetorical ideas" in the post-Bacon climate.[2] It does not account, however, for Bacon's own inability to decouple the exploration of nature from the linguistic medium, nor for his distaste for Ramus' dichotomising. Rhetoric and its ambiguities remained a significant force for Jacobean writers, and the legacy of the Elizabethan wit echoed well into the seventeenth century.

The uses of 'wit' did shift significantly in Jacobean England, however, away from the meeting place of Ciceronian and Ramist rhetoric. In the marketplace, 'wit' was largely realigned with popular collections of amusing sayings or rhymes, and often appears on title-pages in conjunction with 'mirth'. These include works like John Taylor's *Wit and mirth, chargeably collected out of tauernes, ordinaries, innes, bowling greenes, and allyes* and Robert Guy's *The new-found Northerne deedle: or, Mirth and wit according to the times, fancies to fit, are in these following rimes*.[3] In the second half of the seventeenth century the presence of 'wit' in titles of drolleries was even more commonplace, with works such as John Cotgrave's *Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus* or John Phillip's *Sportive wit: the muses merriment*, reflecting a more low-brow, popular engagement with entertainment than that explored by the Elizabethans.[4] In the private sphere, "wits" became the unifying term for the societies emerging from the Inns of Court, whose members included John Donne, Ben Jonson and John Hoskyns, and whose engagement in "learned play" through satire and parody is explored in Michelle O'Callaghan's *The English Wits*.[5] The public endeavours of these wits are primarily dramatic and poetic, the latter relating to what

[2] W. S. Howell 364.
[3] STC 23814 (1629); STC 12547 (1633).
[4] For a listing of some of the many drolleries with 'wit' in their titles, see Chan, 'Drolls, Drolleries and Mid-Seventeenth-Century Dramatic Music in England', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* 15 (1979): 120.
[5] O'Callaghan, *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

has come to be known today as the "metaphysical wit", or the conceits of metaphysical poetry. This is a more limited expression of the term, however, confined to "an artificial trick of style, an arbitrary coupling of unlike images… which shows off ingenuity".[6] In any case, this research reaches its natural conclusion in the Jacobean deemphasis of 'wit' as a term central to self-reflexive, highly rhetorically-suggestive prose.

But this is also revealing of the limits of the research. Certainly, it is not my intention to single out 'wit' as the quintessential term by which the entire Elizabethan engagement with rhetoric is understood and measured. It is a useful term that often crops up in Elizabethan prose, whether as the central theme (as in Lyly's *Euphues*) or otherwise. It is perhaps even a necessary term for grasping the interrelationship of intellect and rhetoric as it is first imagined in the English language, for it emerges as central to the very earliest encyclopaedias' treatments of mind and speech. And yet it is only one term, and no understanding of this complex conceptual field can be complete through an investigation that focuses on 'wit' alone. Research that emphasises other elements of the rhetorical vocabulary, or that focuses on poetry and drama rather than prose, might prove stimulating and engaging in casting a different light on the many faces of 'rhetoric'. Even the limited research contained within these pages, however, reveals just how potent the Elizabethan concept of 'wit' and its engagement with rhetoric truly are.

[6] Smith, *Metaphysical Wit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 3. Other contemporary critics of seventeenth century poetry tend to make a similar use of the term. See for example Hammond, *Fleeting Things: English Poets and Poems, 1616-1660* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990) 16.

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