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"stronge and tough studie": Humanism, Education, and Masculinity in Renaissance England

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“stronge and tough studie”: Humanism, Education, and Masculinity in Renaissance England

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Dedication

For

my wife

Kim Yantis

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"stronge and tough studie": Humanism, Education, and Masculinity in Renaissance England

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In the English Renaissance, a new kind of manliness arose in response to an increasingly centralized bureaucratic state. This humanistic manliness was characterized by practical wisdom, pragmatic conviction, busy-ness, rhetorical plainness, plain dealing in affairs, mental and physical discipline, and concern with diplomatic negotiation rather than military action. Humanist masculinity offered ideals of *negotium* and the *vita activa* to distinguish itself from the unmanliness of courtiers and clerks—instead offering the counselor as its ideal figure. The humanist program for upbringing boys, including study and exercise, instilled the new manliness in youth. Humanists presented formal education and book learning—properly oriented—as masculine endeavors opposed to a bellicose aristocratic masculinity. Humanists also used archery, both its practice and especially the act of writing about it, in forming an ideal of the scholar-archer who appropriates and redirects the martial energy of the knight. If humanism offered a manliness to resist

the older elite masculinity of medieval aristocrats, the humanist ideal begot resistance in turn. The Petrarchan sonnets of Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and the warlike manhood of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*—while on their face seeming to support traditional patriarchal power relations—at the same time offer resistance to or negotiations with the new manliness. Through *Astrophil and Stella*, Sidney opposes both the communally oriented stoicism of the new manliness and a feminized courtliness with a psychic trope of boyishness. Refusing to "grow up" into the adult worlds of counselor or courtier, Astrophil indulges in boyishness as a way to explore a kind of authentic interiority not governed by a judging external audience. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part 1* negotiates with and threatens the humanist ideal. *Tamburlaine* negotiates between the manly thought of pragmatic humanism's *vita activa* and the effeminate thought of Neoplatonism's *vita contemplativa*. Marlowe's sublime blank verse mirrors the expansive mental movements of the neoplatonic contemplative, rather than the pragmatic aphoristic wisdom of the trained humanistic counselor. However, by orienting that sublime thought to political and military action, Tamburlaine masculinizes Neoplatonism in a way that threatens early modern patriarchy.

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Introduction

At a panel for the Group for Early Modern Cultural Studies several years ago, I remember listening to a presentation on violence and masculinity. The presenter, a young professor at a prestigious east coast university, reflected on the ways violence was definitive of masculinity in early modern France. During the Q & A, I asked about resistance to this ideal of violence, about ways men might have battled (as it were) the idea that violence made the man. The panelist responded that there was, essentially, no resistance to this ideal. Engaging in violence was manly, and to be a man one had to engage in violence. There was no was no other conception, he said, no other way to imagine "being a man" in that time and place. He seemed to be saying that the equation of violence and masculinity was, not an orthodoxy, but *doxa*—as Bourdieu has it, "the class of that which is taken for granted, . . . the sum

total of the theses tacitly posited on the hither side of all inquiry" (168).

This felt wrong to me. I seemed to have remembered Ascham criticizing violence in *The Scholemaster*, though exactly how I couldn't remember. And I had to believe that, as a member of a broader international humanist movement, Ascham couldn't simply be a voice crying out in the wilderness. When I got home, I began looking out for places where the idea of violence was criticized, and so began what has now developed.

This dissertation is much more than an argument that violence was not equated with masculinity during the early modern period in England (on things French I claim no expertise). But it started with a concern about what I perceived to be an oversimplified reduction of social and individual psychology, and there is where I want to focus my attention in this introduction. I was, and still am, concerned that categories like "men" and "masculinity" could be understood as unified, coherent, singular, that all men could be thought to believe one thing, that "masculinity" could be asserted

to be a single category of experience for all these men (even if the deep experience of this masculinity was contradictory and anxious)—in this particular time period especially. And I was even more concerned at the implication that thinking and acting "outside" such a clearly exploitive cultural mythology, or even recognizing it, was impossible for Renaissance males—cultural Others too often treated as the One. A central assumption underlying much of the analysis I offer in this study is therefore that to speak of English Renaissance masculinity already distorts the picture, and that we must instead address the masculinit*ies* of early modern England.

The exigency of conference presentation may have led the above scholar into a simplistic portrait of early modern masculinity. But there is a more complex portrait that has gained some currency in critical circles but which similarly regularizes the orbit of early modern masculine subject formation. The most powerful articulation of this view appears in Mark Breitenberg's *Anxious Masculinity*, a book arguing "that

the phrase ‘anxious masculinity’ is redundant” because “masculine subjectivity constructed and sustained by a patriarchal culture . . . inevitably engenders varying degrees of anxiety in its male members” (1). Breitenberg believes that “masculine anxiety is a necessary and inevitable condition that operates on at least two significant levels: it reveals the fissures and contradictions of patriarchal systems and, at the same time, it paradoxically enables and drives patriarchy’s reproduction of itself” (2). The unequal distribution of power in Early Modern England, maintained by psychic violence and founded upon a notion of sexual and gender difference that mistakes nature for culture, creates the need for continued psychic violence in asserting the superiority of men and protecting their privileges. Men are anxious because, at some level, they know the story they tell justifying their own power and privilege is not true. This anxiety, however, leads to more of the same behaviors and beliefs that create it in the first place.

Reading anxiety as the engine of cultural reproduction is one form of what I call the "Complex Homeostasis" argument. Note first that Breitenberg is fairly comfortable jumping between masculinity in Early Modern England, a specific time and place, and "patriarchal systems," an uprooted abstraction. This fact exerts an inevitable pull on Breitenberg's trajectory, on the way he sees (or fails to see) historical process. The "stasis" in accounts like Breitenberg's is represented as a seething one, filled with activity, anxiety, doubt, frustration, violence, exploitation. But these forces somehow resolve themselves into a disturbingly elegant symmetry. Anxiety produces the need to redouble efforts/behaviors that create anxiety in the first place, the circle quickly closes, and social relations in the culture of early modern Others end up as organic as Tillyard represented them, though now the plants are poison where they had been assumed sweet.[1] The question that comes

[1] Breitenberg himself almost recognizes this fact. Indeed, he states: "once identified and brought to the surface, masculine anxiety appears as ubiquitous as E.M.W. Tillyard's discoveries of 'order' in every facet of Elizabethan life" (1). He does

immediately to mind when faced with the almost functionalist coherence of the "patriarchal system" as articulated in Breitenberg and similar accounts is—how does change occur?

I would like to provide a loose explanation of one set of possibilities in this introduction, a kind of frame in which the more specific analyses that follow in the body of the work might be understood. I want to make it clear, though, that I am not setting up a template here that I will use to process the analyses to follow in the body of this study. Instead, I am attempting to provide some justification for what might otherwise seem a quirky method.

Synchrony and Diachrony: Where is the possibility of Change?

As Ian Hodder once noted, the very idea that some kind of homeostasis exists (be it ecological, internal, or individual) means it will only change under the influence of things *outside* the social system (3).

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not give enough play, however, to the ways the "cauldron of bubbling anxieties" he sets in the place of "order" ends up being at least as orderly as "order."

Extrapolating from this insight, if there is ideological equilibrium, in the form either of simple doxa or in the form of Complex Homeostasis, then there are two possibilities for change. Either a change at some other "level" of social formation must motivate it, or it must come from another system outside the one in which it occurs. In the first case, for example, a new technology (like the printing press or improved optical glasses), or a new administrative organization (like bureaucracy), might cause changes that result in different kinds of ideas. In the second case, a society might be influenced by ideas that come forth in an encounter with another culture, or, again, such an encounter might cause changes at a different level that ultimately impact what people think. But if there is ideological equilibrium, ideas cannot change themselves, but only perpetuate. If there is to be change motivated by the human political activity of thinking and arguing about stuff, then the seeds of change, or something that would allow for change, must already be present *within* the social system.

So much is obvious. The problem, though, lies in trying to identify the source of such change, or even recognize changes as they occur. Given that there are almost always dominant ideas, how do new or different ideas take shape, let alone gain momentum? I have become convinced that such ideas usually are already there in some form, often *within* a set of ideas that seem to support the status quo. Dominant ideas can mean different things in different contexts, and are often, like Burke's proverbs, put to a variety of practical uses.[2] Consider, for instance, what James Faris has said in his study of Southeast Nuba Social Relations:

> Indeed, it is constantly amazing, if not frightening, to see how specific ideological constructs – specific discursive practices – are appropriate to a wide variety of social relations. There is, then, no *necessary* relationship between any specific ideological form and any specific social practice.

[2] See "Literature as Equipment for Living" for a discussion of seemingly contradictory proverbs whose contradictions can best be explained in terms of these sayings' *use* in a variety of practical situations.

> Certainly some may seem more 'appropriate' to some social practices than do others, and in some cases it is difficult to see how a given discourse could have anything but specific political consequences in social practice. But it is important that the correspondences not be established universally or outside the given contexts, assignments of local significances, and specific effectivities. (15; emphasis in original)

At the level of "discourses," humans often exhibit Humpty-Dumpty-like powers in making discourses mean what we want them to mean.

Foucault gets at something similar (though with less faith in human agency than I suggest above—more in a bit) in his explanation of the tactical polyvalence of discourses:

> [W]e must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of

> discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects—according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated—that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilizations of different formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes. (100)

At this point Foucault uses "homosexuality" to exemplify a discourse tactically polyvalent. We could insert others—violence, wounding, cuckoldry. None of these operate in a tactically univocal way. Military metaphors can be used to degrade violence; cuckoldry

jokes, which would seem always and everywhere to reflect and amplify masculine anxiety, can in certain situations be used to deflect, alleviate or dispel it. Burke's dialectical method, as expressed in *A Grammar of Motives*, makes even clearer than Foucault the ways a variety of factors, the act-agent-scene ratio, for instance, impact the meaning and effects of symbols humans use.

Viewed from Foucault or Burke's vantage point, both the simple unity and the complex homeostasis begin to break down and offer some sense of how change, change motivated by ideas, might be possible. However, despite Foucault's warning about looking for "the dominant discourse and the dominated one," I think it is useful to recognize that at any given time certain ideas will have more currency than others, and that such ideas do something to structure how people think without absolutely determining "the thinkable." For practical purposes, then, I rely on a concept of competing hegemonies, a sense that certain clusters of ideas, often clusters in conflict with each other, confer power

and therefore are most readily deployed not only in a variety of tactical situations but also in ways that help individuals make meaning in their lives. But these dominant ideas do not exist to the absolute exclusion of other ideas, which with justice could be understood as "subordinate" so long as that word does not necessarily denote "dominated" or "excluded."

Agency and the Will

The previous section hinted at but left unresolved a position on where we might locate agency in the process of change. Obviously I am not going to provide a very full account of such a complex problem here, a problem which has vexed and will probably continue to vex philosophers, theologians, scientists, and the rest of us for centuries. Agency was always the big fuzzy question in Foucault's work, which seems to ascribe to discourse the power to create order from chaos, though unlike the physical universe discourse obeys no laws which would help us to understand patterns, the only "rules" Foucault was willing to lay down tending to reveal more complexity and chaos, not more order.

Let me reiterate that when I talk about historical change here, I am referring to changes brought about directly by people discussing and arguing about stuff. Technology, the environment, the production and distribution of surpluses—these factors all bring about changes. I will not here provide an argument for why I believe it is possible that the language people use to do things can effect historical changes as well, but take it as a given and draw attention to this language as my current subject.

An idea that has guided this study is that people have some level of consciousness about their social environment and make choices. We sometimes act as if early moderns require our intervention, that they were somehow incapable of recognizing the conditions of their existence or of acting to address them. In seeking to reconstruct the concept of the will, Frank Whigham reflects on its checkered recent history in Renaissance studies:

> Postwar criticism of English Renaissance literature frequently consisted in blaming

> willful early modern victims in the name of an "order and disorder" hermeneutic. Such a stance, as Raymond Williams has taught us, generated an authoritative or authoritarian Tradition by selection, for needs specific to the analysts' own historical situation. More recently, in reaction many have turned to various categories of large external determination as a way of rescuing early modern oppositionalities from a condescending and obsolescent humanist moralism still at work at four centuries remove. (This too, of course, is a practice specific to the conflicts of our own time.) (*Seizures* 2)

Indeed, more recent critical attitudes share not only historical interestedness with the older humanism, but, too frequently, the condescending moralism as well. Whigham turns to practice theory, as developed by social theorists like Bourdieu or Giddens, to develop a sense of willing subjects who nonetheless are not the free, self-begotten and self-sustaining individuals of some

earlier (and current) liberal theory. In making room for at least semi-conscious subjects, aware of the nature of their social world and consciously acting in it, practice theory, pragmatism (at least in a backhanded way), and strains both of feminism and of old-fashioned post-war humanism might find a common language.

One way to envision the "semi-conscious" subject would be through Foucault's metaphor of tactical and strategic deployments of discourse. We might say that individuals operate tactically, using the tools at their disposal to affect their immediate environment, aware of their own short-term interests and making long-term plans as best as possible. Tactical operations unite into strategic ones as a variety of actors recognize (shifting) common cause (within virtual as well as real communities), and similar symbolizations cluster as actors recognize their usefulness in achieving other tactical ends. Allow me to be more specific. I argue that the emergence of the bureaucratic state created the need for individuals with diplomatic skills more than

military ones, and as a result a new kind of elite masculinity emerges in the English renaissance as a response to the increasingly centralized bureaucratic state. At a tactical level, usually lower-born men seek to augment their power and so deploy a discourse about state service, and the proper way to prepare youth to serve the state, that valorizes their seizing power from the hands of better-born nobles. As these local tactics come together, a new version of masculinity emerges, and the strategic redefinition of masculinity in turn affects the tactics individuals use in local contexts. The strategic redefinition of masculinity finds a tactical deployment in the early modern grammar school, a place where boys were brought up to conform to new ideals of decorous and confident reserve, patience, sobriety, and hard-headed pragmatism.

As masculinity is strategically redefined, however, this redefinition creates a variety of tactical reactions. I have to say from the outset that I do not particularly like what I argue are the dominant renaissance versions of masculinity—the noble warrior

and the humanist counselor. But I have to admit that, as far as I can tell, they were compelling ego ideals for many people at the time (and still are to this day), that a great many men seem to have derived comfort from them, and that these ideals were productive, often productive of much good as well as evil. At the same time, like any dominant ideas in any context, they inspired resentment, resistance, anxiety, struggle, opposition, negotiation, half-hearted submission, disavowal, and indifference.

This study is broken into two parts, an experiment in the kind of analysis for which I have tried to provide some (admittedly loose) theory and method so far. The first three chapters explore the historical development of a new manliness in the English Renaissance, a masculinity inspired by humanism and fed by the early modern state's gradual shift from a traditional aristo-monarchy to a bureaucratic polity. The second part looks at poetic productions that, while on their face seeming to support traditional patriarchal

power relations—the Petrarchan sonnets of *Astrophil and Stella* and the warlike manhood of *Tamburlaine*—at the same time offer resistance to or negotiations with the new manliness. Resistance to feudal masculinity, through the figure of the bureaucratic counselor, begets resistance in turn.

The first chapter explores and explains in broad terms a view of selfhood, self-construction, and performance that informs my thinking about how masculinity was itself assembled in the time period. It also accounts for ways humanist masculinity offered ideals of *negotium* and the *vita activa* to distinguish itself from the unmanliness of courtiers and clerks—instead presenting the counselor as its ideal figure. The second chapter builds on this foundation by looking at the humanist program for the upbringing of boys as a way to instill the characteristics of the new manliness in youth. It first demonstrates the ways humanists presented formal education and book learning—properly oriented—as fully masculine endeavors opposed to a bellicose aristocratic masculinity. Humanists develop a

new vision of the manly counselor even in the process of arguing for such a concept. It then argues that humanists used archery, both the practice of archery and especially the act of writing about it, in forming an ideal of the scholar-archer who appropriates and redirects the martial energy of the knight. The third chapter observes humanist educational reforms, the main purpose of which was to inculcate a painstaking manliness in scholars who would then be prepared to assume bureaucratic responsibilities.

When I embarked on this project I had not planned on rediscovering truths about humanism's influence that others had discovered before me, but the fact of the matter is that the impact of humanism on the lives of educated Englishmen in the sixteenth and seventeenth century was enormous. In fact, *that* there were so many educated Englishmen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a direct result of humanist educational and political reforms. Any originality I can claim in these three chapters is a question of emphasis. For one, they look closely humanist arguments against the older feudal

ideal. Lorna Hutson has provided one way of viewing these arguments. But many observations, while recognizing the opposed camps (humanist vs. aristocrat), are keen on observing the contents of the opposed systems without really getting into the nuts and bolts of how these groups disagreed with each other, how humanists went about actually promoting their new ideals in opposition to the aristocratic values. There was a culture war in 16th century England, one that in many ways (as Margo Todd has recognized) anticipates the hot civil war in 17th century England. Part of my argument rests on the idea that this culture war was intense enough to dominate the ideal conceptions of masculinity, and that all other ways of being manly ultimately had to be measured, *for their masculinity*, against the ideal figures of noble warrior and humanist counselor.

In a sense, these chapters might be seen as a counterpoise to Frank Whigham's *Ambition and Privilege*, which explored the influence of courtesy literature as represented in manuals such as *The Courtier*. Whigham demonstrates some of the ways more properly humanist

texts partake of the same energies that animated the courtly manuals, which they do.[3] I have focused on texts with a more specifically humanist orientation (which often are much more concerned with formal education), in order to suggest that an ethos opposed to courtliness informed many individuals' thinking when it came to questions of identity, and specifically that the manliness of the humanist counselor was offered (or argued for) as the attribute distinguishing him from the courtier. Whigham views the humanist manuals as being continuous with courtesy literature; I read them as being continuous with educational curricula, especially as evidenced in the early modern grammar school. The difference is a question of emphasis, because there is

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[3] On the distinction between humanist and courtly manuals, see Charlton, 82 - 85. Charlton finds both difference and similarity, and views Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* to be the epitome of the courtly type and Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke named The Gouernour* of the humanist. Charlton explains that "together these two works provide the pattern of the scholar-gentleman, yet each had its own emphasis" (82). Charlton includes on the courtly side Della Casa's *Galateo*, Guazzo'd *La Civile Conversazione*, William Jones' translation of Giovanni Battista Nenna writing titled *Nennio, or a Treatise of Nobility* and Romei's *Discorsi*, in John Keper's translation *The Courtier's Academy*. Under the humanist aegis he lists the anonymous *Institucion of a Gentleman*, Laurence Humphrey's *The Nobles: or of Nobilitie*, Ascham's *Scholemaster*, Lyly's *Euphues*, James Cleland's *Instututions of a Young Gentleman* and Henry Peachum's *The Compleat Gentleman*.

not finally one way books like Ascham's *The Scholemaster* were read, understood, or used. I hope that my investigations of early modern education bears out the emphasis I have chosen.

Having, in the first three chapters, painted a broad-stroked portrait of humanism's new manliness, I turn to explore how individuals reacted to and resisted the demands of humanist masculinity. In Chapter Four, I argue that through *Astrophil and Stella*, Sidney opposes both the communally oriented stoicism of the new manliness and a feminized courtliness with a psychic trope of boyishness. Refusing to "grow up" into the adult worlds of counselor or courtier, Astrophil indulges in boyishness as a way to explore a kind of authentic interiority not governed by a judging external audience. Ultimately the strategy fails, however. Though boyishness enables Astrophil to think and feel in ways not permitted by the ego ideals of counselor and courtier, it also leads him into a self-indulgent and willful misunderstanding of Stella's attempts to let him

down easily. When she finally and clearly rebuffs his advances, Astrophil is shattered.

Whereas Chapter Four observes Astrophil rejecting humanist masculinity, Chapter Five turns to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part 1* to examine its negotiations with and threats to the humanist ideal. *Tamburlaine*, I argue, negotiates between the manly thought of pragmatic humanism's *vita activa* and the effeminate (to humanists) thought of Neoplatonism's *vita contemplativa*. Marlowe's sublime blank verse mirrors the expansive mental movements of the neoplatonic contemplative, rather than the pragmatic aphoristic wisdom of the trained humanistic counselor. However, by orienting that sublime thought to political and military action, Tamburlaine masculinizes Neoplatonism in a way that threatens early modern patriarchy.

My readings of Sidney and Marlowe are meant to be indicative of possibilities, ways to understand how literature, while fulfilling a variety of social functions, might at the same time include those "counter-hegemonic discourses" that undercut its various

and multiple semi-official purposes. If, for example, the sonnet form exists to valorize a particular set of heterosexual relations, variously masculinist and feminist, at the same time Sidney's sonnets repair to a realm of being fundamentally outside all narrative of development, resisting masculinity and sexuality even in the act of producing them. It may be that literature still deserves something of the specialness with which it has been treated in the past century (though Renaissance humanism offers as potent a criticism of literature's elevated status as does the post- or anti-humanistic writing in English Studies over the past few decades). And it may deserve something of this because it is complex in the ways I have struggled in the readings of Part Two to reveal—always meaning infinitely more than it says, never finally useful for any particular agenda, enabling forms of resistance and ways of thinking outside all ideologies, ours included.

Note on texts/spellings

In some places have had difficulty deciding on the spelling of "counselor/councilor." Part of the political story of the English Renaissance, and a part not incidental to this study, involves the transformation of the counselor into the councilor, a shift from the governor's personal advisor and household member into a professional bureaucrat in the service of the state. I have settled on "counselor" because it describes a functional relationship in keeping with the role humanists envisioned for the new man.

I generally use old spellings in my citations from Renaissance texts. I have, however, silently expanded macrons and altered the long s. In some cases there are no modern editions of the texts and I have had to rely on original documents, many of which are now thankfully available via the Early English Text Society's Online Archive. In other cases, I have had to rely on early books because I could not find a modern edition that preserves the old spelling, and I wanted to be consistent to the extent possible. In instances where

original texts are incomplete (usually I assume due to printers' errors) I have silently collated available editions. Unless otherwise noted, Latin cribs are my own, although I have checked them against twentieth century translations when available.

Chapter 1: Performing Masculinity

My primary assertion in this chapter (and the two that follow) is pretty simple. In the English Renaissance, a new kind of manliness arose in response to the needs of an increasingly centralized bureaucratic state. This manliness was characterized by practical wisdom, pragmatic conviction, busy-ness, plainness in writing and speech, plain dealing in affairs, mental and physical discipline, and concern with diplomatic negotiation rather than military action. That these characteristics became *manly*, where they had before been the traits of bookworm clerks, helped both to legitimate bureaucrats as members of the elite and to encourage the development of these necessary characteristics. This new masculinity found its ideal figure in the wise counselor.

I do not want to suggest that this new manliness was the only, not even the only dominant, form of masculinity in the time period. I do want to assert,

however, that its star was rising, and that the other dominant elite masculinity, the noble warrior, was slowly, but not without considerable struggle, declining. Though I will throughout these three chapters sketch the contours of this new manliness, I want to make clear from the outset that it was rarely held *in toto* by any single individual, and that it interacted with other masculine ideals, shaping and being shaped in turn. A more detailed exploration of how two male writers, Philip Sidney and Christopher Marlowe, reacted to the new manliness is reserved for subsequent chapters.

I am fortunate in being able to build on the work of scholars who have explored English humanism's civic orientation, exploring a system of learning that encouraged participation in an active life of state service.[4] However, because cultural constructions of

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[4] Woolfson's review of recent literature on English humanism makes this point clearly. Finding disagreement among scholars in areas of humanism's take on literature and religion, he nonetheless notices that "in the realm of the broadly political . . . scholars from different disciplines are united in attributing to Tudor humanism a complex of relatively coherent and influential . . . ideas and methods" (9). Woolfson goes on to characterize the scholarly portrait of

masculinity have lately come under close scrutiny, I believe it will be useful to assess the impact of humanism on the ways early moderns understood the manliness they tried to achieve. So while others have discussed civic humanism, especially with regard to the commonwealth men of the early sixteenth century, and

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England's civicly-oriented humanism as including "a commitment to the 'vita activa', to the pragmatic application of a fairly eclectic range of classical learning, to service to the common weal, and to quasi-republican traditions of political participation, drawn especially from ancient Roman rhetorical, historical and broadly political sources" (9). This characterization accords with the view I have gotten from both primary and secondary sources, and I will not here repeat the list of studies Woolfson reviews. A few studies I would add, not all of which are recent, include: Joan Simon, who sees Colet as a key figure in "plac[ing] learning at the service of living, . . . preparing the individual to live well himself, and to do good in society" (80); James McConica, who discusses political reforms initiated by humanists during the Henrician and Edwardian eras; Antonia McLean, who en route to explaining the combined impact of humanism and the printing press on the development of modern science, has observed not only that humanism generally moved from an intellectual to a political and religious movement, but also that England's native Common Law tradition and the lay training available in the Inns of Court sharpened its civic bite in England; and Susanne Saygin's recent history of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, which has challenged the tendency to separate his status as an important early humanist patron from his political thought. Saygin argues for the interrelation of the Duke's politics and his patronage that goes beyond the by now conventional representation of them in terms of Henry modeling himself after Italian Prince-Patrons with little understanding of the scholarship he commissioned. Also of note are Altman and Rebhorn, who, while taking very different perspectives on humanism's particular politics, both see humanist rhetoric (not exclusively in England, though including it) as being oriented to the vita activa.

while a number of individuals have mentioned in passing the "manly" spirit of this new orientation, few people have sustained their focus on the humanists' cultural impact specifically from the vantage point of the construction of masculinity. It therefore escapes mention among these scholars that humanism *redefined the nature of masculinity* during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.[5] Likewise, few of those who concentrate on masculinity in the time period have carefully built on the work of scholars whose main interest has been the impact of humanism on English education and culture throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It therefore escapes mention among these scholars that *humanism* redefined the nature of masculinity during the sixteenth and seventeenth

[5] The notable exception is Lorna Hutson, who in *The Usurer's Daughter* argues that humanists forwarded a Xenophonic ideal of good husbandry, simultaneously transforming an elite gift economy based on the exchange of tokens with a gift economy based on textual exchange, in order to transform a dynastic military masculinity into a rhetorical one, noting that replacing traditional signs of credit or exchange, including women, with textual ones created instability and anxiety. In this study I focus more carefully on the preeminent area where humanists shaped people's masculinity, and where their cultural impact is clearest—education—than does Hutson, who is more concerned with the new humanist romances and stage plays.

century.[6] A third group of scholars has looked carefully at ways the Elizabethan older generation, which seems to coincide with early Elizabethan humanists, created an ego ideal that the Elizabethan younger generation found stultifying.[7] I have found this work especially inspirational and influential, and intend to extend it by focusing specifically on conceptions of masculinity. However, Helgerson in part, and some prominent studies of humanism in other contexts, such as Mary Thomas Crane's *Framing Authority*,

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[6] Mark Breitenberg argues that Elizabethan masculinity, based on patriarchal assumptions about the naturalness of gender divisions and the innate superiority of males, was inevitably anxious about its contradictions, but also that this very anxiety produced the need to continue policing and enforcing sexual difference. Lynn Enterline's Lacanian account of melancholy in the early modern period reads literary obsession over loss signaling a disruption (that is at the same time enabling) of the male subject's attempt to author and to establish the autonomy of the self, including its sexual identity. Headlam Well's less theoretical *Shakespeare on Masculinity* focuses closely on a heroic masculine ideal, as do those areas of Mary Beth Rose's *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern England* that deal specifically with masculinity, though she is more focused on what the heroic ideal does both to and for women, those who appropriate it and those who are its victims. Bruce Smith's *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, again lightly tinged with theory, includes humanism as a force shaping masculine roles, but does not accord it the kind of primacy I argue it had.

[7] Helgerson's *Elizabethan Prodigals* is the most important work here, especially from a literary perspective. Also of note is Anthony Esler's *The Aspiring Mind of the Elizabethan Younger Generation*.

sees a dramatic shift in the late Elizabethan era from which humanism, as it were, never fully recovered. I find that humanism continued to exert a powerful influence into the seventeenth century, and follow in the area of masculinity where Margo Todd has led in the area of Christian humanism and politics, that is, seeing the parliamentarians and middle-class reformers of the early Stuart years as inheriting the traditions of Erasmian humanism from the commonwealth men of the sixteenth.

I begin this study with observations on the ways selfhood, especially masculine selfhood, was viewed ontologically in the English Renaissance. I am especially interested in understanding their views about how the self could be changed, or managed, about how and why a person could in some measure shape the self. The question, which we have been batting around in early modern criticism for a while, is crucial in this study because so much of the Renaissance literature on masculinity insists on the moral and ethical dimensions of masculine development. Indeed, one of the

characteristics of the new manliness was its *demand* that young men, with careful guidance, shape themselves in accordance with ethical principles. Though there is a considerable critical literature on Renaissance self-fashioning, I believe it is important to revisit the question of man's ability to shape himself because so much of our theory and criticism, with reference both to the "self" generally and to gendered being specifically, has tended to overemphasize the groundlessness of Renaissance self-fashioning. Though I agree that the lived experience of the masculine self in early modern England was in some measure performative—in the sense of an actor performing a role—I part ways with much postmodern criticism in believing that this performance was generally felt to be grounded in a concrete, fairly coherent, and hierarchical system, a solid script, if you will. The system was generally ethical with an ideological veneer of ontology, and I believe that, for those who adapted themselves to it, this ethical grounding inspired more confidence than anxiety.

i. Another Fable of Self-Fashioning

I begin with two familiar tales of Renaissance self-fashioning, Pico's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* and Vives' *Fabula de Homine*. I want to use these pieces as templates to view two points I take to be crucial in the humanist view of selfhood. First, Pico reveals that the individual constructs the self within a clear hierarchical system. Self-construction is a kind of freedom, but this freedom is given direction and meaning by the moral hierarchy God has fixed in the nature of things. Second, Vives points to the ethical dimension of a performative identity by appropriating Pico's moral hierarchy and adding a performance before the Olympian gods. In English humanism, and the bureaucratic responsibilities that it trained men to assume, the audience for a writer or speaker came to help define elements of his being. Humanist ethics grows from the community standards located in the right audience.

In his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, Pico della Mirandola famously provides a portrait of man's ability to improve his nature. Having created the universe and

populated it with a variety of creatures, Pico's scholastic deity provides each being with its unique essence. Coming to man, God finds that there is no place in the hierarchy of forms left for him, no pattern to provide man with a unique spiritual shape. But this is part of his plan, for God announces that man's unique essence is not to have an essence. Instead, he can mold himself to the shape of any other creature:

> *Nascenti homini omnifaria semina, & omnigenae uitae germina indidit pater. Quae quisque excoluerit, illa adolescent, & fructus suos ferent in illo. Si uegetalia, planta fiet. Si sensualia, obbrutescet. Si rationalia, coeleste euadet animal. Si intellectualia, angelus erit & Dei filius. Et si nulla creaturarum sorte contentus, in uniitatis centrum suae receperit, unus cum Deo spiritus factus, in solitaria patris caligine qui est super omnia constitutus, omnib. antestabit.*

> As man was born God put in him seeds bearing everything and the embryos of all kinds of life. Whichever seeds each man cultivates will come to maturity, and bear in him their own fruit. If vegetative, he will be made into a plant. If sensitive, he will become brutish and stupid. If rational, he will come out a heavenly being. If intellectual, he will be an angel and God's son. And if eager for the lot of no created thing, he carries himself into the center of his own oneness, his spirit made one with God will surpass them all in the solitary darkness of the father who is placed above everything. (1: 315)

As the being not given "a definite place nor his own individual form [*Nec certam sedem, nec propriam faciem*]" man's lot is not to fulfill his nature, but to create it, not to exhibit a preformed essence, but to perfect his own essence, rising, if he has the courage, above the angels to live as one with the Almighty (1: 314).

In Renaissance studies, Pico has often been taken to represent a Burckhardtian spirit of limitless human freedom. In Burckhardt's view, the Renaissance manifested itself in cutting men free from the bondage of nation and class. The independent and individual will now directed men's destinies, and they became their own creatures. As a paradigmatic example of this new spirit, Pico's *Oration* seems to suggest that human aspirations are properly boundless and that the human will has become a magnificent and creative power. But human freedom in Pico is not limitless, indeed is quite constrained. God has implanted in us the seeds of all kinds, and our job is to decide which ones to cultivate, not invent new breeds from scratch. More important, there is a clear moral hierarchy implied in the decision to cultivate one or another seed. Even if one nurtured his lust or greed or sloth, still the decision to cultivate these characteristics would make a man brutish. Finally, as the remainder of the *Oration* makes clear, the higher up the chain of being one strives, the more difficult the effort involved in achieving an

elevated status. It is not as if one can simply decide to be intellectual and imagine that the work is done. Self-construction is a lifelong project, requiring constant and consistent effort, effort always measured in the degree to which we live up to the ideal of moral hierarchy. Human nature is both a "being" in its orientation to a fixed ideal and a "becoming" in that it never settles finally in place on the hierarchical ladder, despite its orientation to a specific place. While Pico has lifted the ontological ceiling for humanity, *the value* of our choices, and the *path to perfection*, remain outside of human control. And for many, this would be a comforting thought, a burdensome responsibility removed.

In a tale similarly celebrating man's protean nature, the Spanish humanist Juan Louis Vives, tutor to Catherine of Aragon and friend to Erasmus and More, weaves a slightly different story. In Vives' *Fabula de Homine*, Jupiter creates the stage of the world to honor Juno's birthday celebration. The gods, while enjoying their banquet, are delighted at the spectacle of animal

and plant life, but their attention is quickly drawn to the greatest of all characters in this drama—man. Man's ability to assume the form of all other creatures awes the Olympian audience. Like Pico's man, this human "would appear under the mask of a plant, living a life without any sense [*ut sub persona plantae prodiret, agens unam vitam absque ullo sensu*]" (4). He can also act the part of animals as a "satirical mime [*Ethologus*]" appearing as "the raging and furious lion, the greedy and gluttonous wolf, the savage wild boar, the crafty little fox, the voluptuous and filthy swine, the cowardly hare, the envious dog, the stubborn ass [*leonem . . . iratum et furentem, rapacem voaracemque lupum, saevum aprum, astultulam vulpeculam, voluptuosam sordidamque suem, timidum leporem, invidium canem, stolidum asinum*]" (4 – 5). Man next impersonates himself, a being who "in all ways was civic and social [*nullus non erat civilis sociusque*]" (389). As in Pico, sub-human choices are morally weighted. Unworthy characteristics—fury, cowardice, gluttony, lust, stubbornness—are represented as animalistic, and

senselessness as vegetative. As Vives continues, the gods become enthralled when man breaks down the fourth wall, imitating not only the other stage creatures, but the Olympians as well and eventually Jupiter himself:

> *Non expectabant dii eum pluribus visum iri formis, cum ecce adest repente in eorum speciem reformatus, supra hominis ingenium, totus innixus sapientissimae menti; summe Jupiter, quantum illis spectaculum! Primum, stupescere se in scenam etiam introductos, expressosque ab hoc tam Ethico mimo, quem plerique multiformem illum Protheum Oceani filium esse affirmabant. . . . [tum] exit homo ferens sustinensque ipsum deorum optimum Max. Jovem, miris et inenarrabilibus gestibus patris effigiem reddens.*

> The gods did not expect that they would see him changed into so many shapes, when behold! he suddenly approached, remolded into one of their kind, above the nature of men,

> supporting himself only through a most wise mind. Oh high Jupiter, what a show for them! At first, they were amazed that they were also led onto the stage, represented by such an ethical mime, whom most asserted to be that multiform Proteus, son of the Ocean. . . . [Then] man went out bearing and upholding the highest of the gods, the Great Jove himself, with astonishing and inexpressible gestures rendering a likeness of the father. (5)

Delighted with his impersonations, the gods invite man to join their feast, and he puts off his mortal costume to enjoy ambrosia and Olympian nectar, sharing his knowledge with them. Like Pico's man, Vives' wins a new status through his self-transformations. And in both instances, these transformations imply a clear moral hierarchy.

By beginning with Vives and Pico's visions of universal hierarchy, I am not trying to resuscitate the static and by now moribund Elizabethan World Picture. But I *am* trying to reconstruct a conception of moral and

natural hierarchy that clearly existed, was acknowledged, and reappears consistently in much writing during the time period. As far as I can tell, individuals, humanists especially, used this hierarchy where and how it suited their needs, and introduced other dynamic elements into their understanding of selfhood to build a flexible and thoroughly pragmatic understanding of manly development. Vives' "world is a stage" conceit, with man as a player on the stage, of course became a Renaissance commonplace for the idea that human identity was a dynamic performance. But the performance in Vives is not unlimited, groundless, nor relativistic. In Vives both the moral and the ethical dimensions of the performance are clear. As in Pico, man can become either less than himself or more than himself. As importantly, the performance has a definite, and worthy, audience. Were Vives' man performing for an audience less elevated than the gods, his jovial impersonations would be wasted. Understanding the gods' values, he builds a crescendo into his impersonations, moving from plants to animals

to humans to the gods to Jupiter, a presumption that both shocks and pleases the gods because it combines audacity with the revelation of a natural hierarchy. An actor who can control his performance, the part man must play is still to a large extent not of his own choosing. His performance is successful because he has an elevated audience and develops his performance to suit them. Into the fibers of his transformative being, then, man has incorporated the value system of the gods who are his audience.

Living up to a value system upheld by a worthy audience is what I mean by the term "ethical," and humanist masculinity was ethical in this sense. For humanists of Vives' stripe, a performative identity, correctly guided, is itself an ethical one. Vives shows that Pico's ideas of moral hierarchy were borrowed by northern, Erasmian humanism. At the same time, northern humanists emphasized the ethical dimensions of good living above what they regarded as the metaphysical indulgences of Florentine-style neoplatonists. If neoplatonists sought to unlock divine mysteries through

scholastic logic, comparative religious syncretism, and magic, northern humanists found a more quotidian and useful truth in the received wisdom of Scripture, of the ancients, and of upstanding contemporaries. In these exemplary sources they had a great deal of confidence. Within the worthy community humanists located the guarantor of good values, the instructor of appropriate conduct, and the spur to energetic self-improvement. The right audience, the worthy community, served two functions for humanists. First, it provided what grounding they thought possible for verifying the truth of their way of life. The proverbial sayings that were held ready to tongue, and the historical and contemporary examples that these sayings illuminated, were applicable to men in their daily affairs, and the fact of their applicability confirmed their truth. And this very stress on the applicability of oftentimes trite commonplaces, the ground-level pragmatism of this approach to life, was an important characteristic of the new manliness. Second, understanding life as a performance before a fit audience—pleading in open

assembly, writing to diplomats and counselors—was a constant spur and reminder of the values one tried to live by. Take, for instance, the curious fact that Cecil always kept a copy of Cicero's *De Officiis* in his pocket. One would assume that by the time he was created Lord Burghley, Cecil would have had nothing new to learn from this volume. But when he woke in the morning, dressed, and placed the book in his pocket, he would remind himself once again that today he would try to live up to its principles. Cicero was always with him, judging his diligence, patriotism, and humaneness in fulfilling his duties. Consistent effort in those matters obviously true but difficult, not continually learning new material, was the characteristic that made the man.

The humanist counselor's real audience could be found in the law courts, in parliament, in church and at court. But his ideal audience lived in the various classical and Biblical texts—and contemporary humanist texts like Erasmus' *Adagia*—that they held in common. For the new manliness, this ideal audience helped to

provide some stability in identity formation, some grounding to oppose the hermeneutical circle of courtly performance. Both Stephen Greenblatt, in his influential discussion of More, and especially Frank Whigham in his analysis of Elizabethan courtesy manuals, have attested to the maddening complexity and ungroundedness of performing one's identity in the arena of the early modern English courts. Relying on Burke's concept of the performer-audience dialectic, Whigham traces the effects of performing in an arena where one is never quite sure who the audience is that can confer legitimacy on one's self-presentation. So, for instance, the newly arrived courtier could develop friendships and rivalries with the right sort of people to signal membership in the older aristocracy. But the signs of genuine membership were difficult to read, and one might mistakenly align oneself with other arrivistes and only end up showing off one's own lower class status. But even knowledge of the audience's status was no guarantee that legitimacy was being conferred: "The approbation of a noble could be clouded by knowledge of

his false pedigree hiding newcomer status; conversely, deference might seem to be mockery if irony were suspected" (*Ambition* 39). Within the specifically courtly mode, these interpretive anxieties seem fair enough, but humanists developed a kind of masculinity that transcended (while attempting to enable) the kinds of courtly power grabs scholars like Whigham and Greenblatt have explored. Furthermore, because England's was a less courtly society than other European polities, the maddening complexity of a specifically courtly mode was mitigated.[8]

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[8] I have in mind here Norbert Elias' definition of a court society. For Elias, "In the countries of the *ancien régime* where the sovereign ruled almost without intervention by assemblies of the estates, . . . the princely court still combined two distinct functions," these two functions being its roles as "the first household of the extended royal family, and the central organ of the entire state administration" (1). For a variety of reasons, most notably but not exclusively England's native common law traditions, a growing separation between the royal household and the organs of government, the traditional independence and privileges of the aristocracy, and a native and increasing, though quite nebulous, constitutionalism, England does not fit as easily into the category of court society as does the France of the *ancien régim* where Elias focuses his energy. And though Tudor monarchs did successfully break some of the nobility's independence, they could not achieve this end without enhancing the independence and power of the middling sort, a fact that haunted the early Stuarts. For the separation of royal household and official organs of state, see Elton, *Tudor*

Because the new manliness found an ideal audience in commendable individuals and texts, northern humanists developed, as many critics have pointed out, a practice of finding exemplary materials and imitating them. Mary Thomas Crane, in a study that informs much of my thinking about this matter, has provided insight into the processes of "gathering and framing" through which humanists educated youth and guided the development of the individual's character.[9] As Crane explains, reading and writing were a matter of locating commonplaces in sources, gathering textual fragments in a commonplace book, and then reframing these fragments in different situations in order to highlight both the applicability of commonplace wisdom and also one's understanding of it. Other people, including Terrence Cave, O.B. Hardison, Victorian Kahn, and Lorna Hutson, have demonstrated important elements of this exemplary

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Revolution. On Tudor constitutionalism, see Elton, *Tudor Constitution* and Levack.

[9] Crane would herself probably prefer the phrase "formation of the humanist subject" to "development of the individual's character." I hope that my discussion in this chapter and the two to follow help justify the validity of my phrasing, at least in terms of how humanists understood their own efforts and themselves.

practice in a variety of contexts. Cave explains the process of reading and writing as follows:

> A text is read in view of its transcription as part of another text; conversely, the writer as imitator concedes that he cannot entirely escape the constraints of what he has read. In this respect, imitation is also germane to interpretation, since the interpretative act can only become visible in a second discourse which claims to be a reconstitution of the first. (35)

Cave reflects the idea that gathering and redeploying textual fragments helped to build a loose system that confirmed that individuals learned the appropriate lessons. Like actors, writers would develop a performance that demonstrated their understanding of the cultural script, a script drawn from the reservoir of pithy sayings and commonplaces. These adages and common topics were themselves not necessarily *answers* so much as *ways of thinking about* an issue—a pragmatic thought. The only problem I see with Cave's wording here is the

suggestion that humanists were explicitly conscious of the hermeneutical circle in which their work was involved. If "a text is read in view of its transcription as part of another text," then there is no grounding for any of the examples outside an exclusively textual realm, thus repeating in the textual domain the interpretive difficulties Whigham identifies in the courtly one. I would assert, though, that humanists believed that their exemplary practice had an observable grounding in the real world, and that parcels of wisdom located in sayings or commonplace tables were valuable, ultimately, not as ways to produce text for its own sake but as ways to live one's life. Hence history, a newly validated field of humanist study, was understood to be part of the same exemplary practice as keeping a commonplace book. History provides concrete *exempla*, in the form of real men's lives, of how and why adages and epigrams contain a measure of truth. One could imitate the life of Cicero as well as his epistolary style. Indeed, each implied the other.[10]

[10] I am, for the sake of simplicity, conflating two different imitative practices. One was the practice of imitating a

ii. Performance and Hegemonic Masculinities

I am suggesting that a new kind of masculine identity arose in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, manliness viewed as an achieved status, guided and measured by the man's ability to rehearse the humanist role of pragmatic thinking, disciplined rhetorical performance, and ethical living. Appropriate selfhood neither sprung from a romantic well of individual authenticity, nor was it an absolute property of nature, generically human or gendered. The

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writer's style, which finds its epitome in the Ciceronianism of people like Ascham. The other is the "notebook method," wherein writers collect textual fragments for later reframing in their own compositions. I take the notebook method generally to have been the more influential in practice, though the emphasis of such writers as Ascham or Erasmus on eloquence was influential as well. For more on the commonplaces, see Sister Joan Marie Lechner and Zeitlin. Although if attention to style grows excessive the two can be at odds, a balance between the two is usually advocated. See, for example, Bacon in *The Advancement of Learning*, who encourages both keeping a commonplace book and developing rhetorical eloquence through imitating the best models, including Demosthenes and Cicero (269 - 72; 296 - 97). Languet's advice to Sidney on writing letters is to read both volumes of Cicero's letters. However, he cautions against slavish imitation (especially overtraining in double translation), and laments those who "pass their lives in labouring at it." (Pears 20). On the history of the Ciceronian debate in the Renaissance, see Izora Scott.

achievement required intense effort, but also found a concrete grounding and reinforcement in the pragmatic attitudes of contemporaries and ancients. In the English Renaissance, masculinity itself was not naturalized. Or it might be better to say, humanists regarded "natural" masculinity as bestial, and recognized a higher manhood. Masculine selfhood tamed, bridled, regulated, and redirected the natural, given self. One of the key distinctions between men and women, between men and boys, and between men and animals (and therefore between effeminate, immature or brutish men, and manly men) lay in the accomplished fact of a performative self. Men were made to realize, and became fully masculine when they did *real*ize, that the identity that mattered was the one they performed for their comrades. Natural capacity is not insignificant, but for an achieved masculinity it is not as significant as the fact that one has worked to achieve, and succeeded in achieving, a performative self that lives up to community standards. And here is a crucial point: achieving manliness was hard to do. Despite appearances,

acting is difficult work. Any clown can improvise for the groundlings, as Hamlet reminds us. Good actors stick to the script. The script for the new manliness valorized pragmatism, mental discipline, and tireless involvement in worldly affairs.

Failing to account for the conscious sense of achievement built into the humanist understanding of masculinity, to my mind, is where much postmodern gender theory goes astray when applied to the Renaissance. For instance, Lynn Enterline has argued that:

> literary versions of melancholia . . . offer an eloquent index of the price paid—the price for having continually to consolidate a functional identity in language and in the cultural discourses of sexuality and sexual difference. . . . if we take the hypothesis of the unconscious seriously, this means confronting both the persuasiveness of these fictions of sexual difference *and* the impossibility of ever becoming either 'male' or 'female.' (9)

Based on these observations, she offers to "interrogate what melancholia reveals about the subject 'in process'—a process by which self and sexual identity are fractured, dislocated, by the very movement in which they take shape" (9). This reading assumes, as any psychoanalytic and especially Lacanian reading must, that the people writing the texts it studies (including the text of the self, which within Lacanianism is a function of language) are unaware of the forces shaping them, including recognition that the gendered "subject" remains in process. Furthermore, the "price paid" suggests an inevitable gloom (melancholy being taken as the paradigmatic symptom of the "subject in process") accompanying the individual's sense of masculine or feminine identity, or any identity. In his own anxious study of masculinity in early modern England, Mark Breitenberg refers to Judith Butler's idea that forms of theatricality "expose the contingent acts that create the appearance of a naturalistic necessity" (Butler, 33). Although Breitenberg believes the early modern theater "also functioned in many cases to contain the

dangerous prospect of non-essential gendered identities that its very composition inevitably opens up," he nonetheless throughout his analysis grants the basic terms Butler establishes—one source of masculine anxiety lay in mistaking nature (gender essentialism based on biological dimorphism) for culture (gender as a human construction) (11). But early moderns had already discovered, in a mode considerably less anxious than the postmodern rhetoric deployed to analyze it, that identity, including masculine identity, lay in the arena of the will as much as brute physical necessity. Breitenberg's analysis makes sense to the degree that masculinity had the appearance of naturalistic necessity. But if masculinity was itself viewed as an achieved status, was not a necessary property of maleness, then its contingency is already assumed within the belief system.

Perhaps not as abstract or rational as postmodern historicists, early modern males nonetheless did often have a considerably nuanced understanding of their own contingency. Although this understanding lacked

philosophical rigor, the imprecision did not cause any particular anxiety, any more than humanism's general lack of philosophical rigor compared to scholasticism did. At the same time, the humanist understanding of masculine contingency actuated itself in the demand to act, not theorize, to develop a constructed male self—a project both ambitious and difficult. And a project many men resisted or felt ambivalent about. Insofar as the performance was a specifically masculine one, it partook of that spirit of achievement that David Gilmore has found definitive of masculinity crossculturally:

> Among most of the peoples that anthropologists are familiar with, true manhood is a precious and elusive status beyond mere maleness, a hortatory image that men and boys aspire to and that their culture demands of them as a measure of belonging. . . . Its vindication is doubtful, resting on *rigid codes of decisive action* in many spheres of life: as husband, father, lover, provider, warrior. A

> restricted status, there are always men who fail the test (17; my emphasis).

From what I can tell, the felt experience of masculinity in early modern England shared this sense that decisive action in performing certain duties made the man, and that people could fail the test.

However, early modern culture was not "rigidly" coherent, did not retain a *consistent* set of beliefs or "codes" to which every person would unquestioningly subscribe. Thus, it is probably better, when thinking of Renaissance English masculinity, to think in terms of hegemonic masculinit*ies* and their subordinate variants. I borrow these terms from Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, who seek "ways of looking at 'masculinity' which take us beyond the strictures imposed by continued use of a single category, 'men', on the one hand, and the endless play of fragmented identities on the other" (10). They thus "call privileged forms of masculinity which masquerade as being unitary 'hegemonic masculinities.' Such dominant constructions determine the standards against which other masculinities are

defined. We will refer to these latter, contingent masculinities as 'subordinate variants'" (20). For my purposes, I would probably want to trade in "masquerade as being unitary" for "achieve a high degree of approval and thus confer power." But the ideas that: (a) there is more than one dominant form of manliness, but that; (b) there are not an infinite number of equally validated forms of manliness, and that; (c) the other ways of being a man are measured in relation to these dominant forms, all seem accurately to describe the situation in Renaissance England. Allow me to elaborate a little further.

(a) There is more than one dominant form of manliness. Headlam Wells finds early modern masculinity, in its essential form, in the heroic idea:

> For the Renaissance the heroic ideal is essentially masculine. The qualities it evokes—courage, physical strength, prowess in battle, manly honour, defiance of fortune—may be summed up in a word whose Latin root means 'a man.' As English Renaissance writers

> understand the term, *virtus* signifies an ideal of manhood that derives partly from classical epic, partly from medieval chivalry, and partly from Italian *realpolitik*. (2)

And Wells follows Eugene Waith in regarding this heroic manliness as inspiring "a sense of awe and wonder at the transgression of normal limits" (3). But men in the Renaissance had to deal with the humdrum of quotidian existence, and there were other versions of masculinity that suited themselves to normal life, and indeed defined themselves as *manly* precisely because they did not escape to fantasies brute power whose pitch justified violent transgression. The heroic ideal existed, but it was a specific kind of aristocratic ideal, not shared universally. An alternate hegemony began to arise, one that valorized serious, sober, plain, and painstaking immersion in the tasks of daily life. The heroic ideal, itself most powerfully formulated in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, might best be understood as part of the "aristocratic revival" of that period, the nostalgic

reaction of Renaissance English patricians against incursions from proponents of the new manliness.[11]

(b) There are not an infinite number of equally validated forms of manliness, and (c) the other ways of being a man are measured in relation to these dominant forms. When Bruce Smith discusses masculine ideals, he treats types like the Chivalrous Knight, the Herculean Hero, the Humanist Man of Moderation, the Merchant Prince, the Saucy Jack, and the Gentleman on more or less equal grounds (39–66). But the Merchant Prince, a potential ego ideal, did not achieve hegemonic status in the way the ideal types of the noble warrior and the humanist counselor, the two elite hegemonic masculinities, did. (The counselor would, over time, morph into something like the Merchant Prince, today's CEO masculinity being a later development of the Renaissance's new manliness.) The counselor is filled with masculine substance, and derives his power directly from the manliness of his being, while the "Saucy Jack,"

[11] See Chapter 5 for a reading of *Tamburlaine, Part 1* that suggests this play's Herculean Hero is formed to resist humanist masculinity through a classical, merit-based aristocratic ideal, with a dash of Florentine Platonism.

for instance, derives his power from a certain casual wit and sexual legerdemain, the latter of which was often represented in the time period as effeminating. Measured against the ideal of either the noble warrior or the humanist counselor, the Saucy Jack comes up short *in the category of manliness*, and is attractive precisely for that reason. Measured against the Saucy Jack, the counselor may be dull, but is not less manly. The warrior and the counselor, it seems to me, are the two most powerful ideals of manliness, and therefore made the most insistent and consistent demands for attention upon the early modern male psyche.

I have said that the masculinity of the counselor was produced in rhetorical performance, that the right audience is important to the performance and that the manly humanist incorporates elements of this audience into his being. I have likened the grounding of the humanist performance of masculinity to a cultural script, which is a good metaphor as far as it goes. Another appropriate metaphor for the grounding of the humanist self would be to say that humanist actors had a

"method," a set of lifelong activities and exercise that got them "into character" in a way that deeply affected their personality. Consider this summary of the goals behind Stanislavski's famous Method:

> [Stanislavski] developed a series of exercises and techniques for the performer which had the following broad aims:
>
> 1. To make the outward behaviour of the performer – gestures, voice, and the rhythm of movements– natural and convincing.
> 2. To have the actor or actress convey the goals and objectives – the inner needs of a character. Even if all the visible manifestations of a character are mastered, a performance will appear superficial and mechanical without a deep sense of conviction and belief.
> 3. To make the life of the character onstage not only dynamic but continuous. Some performers tend to emphasize only the high points of a part; in between, the life of

the character stops. In real life, however, people do not stop living.

4. To develop a strong sense of ensemble playing with other performers in a scene. ("Stanislavski")

As "the Method" seeks to help the actor become the person she plays, so humanist training, especially educational practices, had as their goal to enable young men to become the ideals, as lived in their personality, that it held to be important. I do not mean to suggest that there was an unalterable "nature" which the humanist actor's gestures, for instance, embodied. Rather, the gestures would "seem natural" to the extent that they embodied an altered interiority that upheld ideals of decorous and confident reserve. The point is that the performance of humanist masculinity was convincing, and would win the approval and participation of "other [humanist] performers in a scene," to the extent that it grew from deep changes in the psyche.

Unlike Pico's man, the man of English humanism did not construct himself on a foundation of metaphysical

knowledge. (Indeed, too much metaphysics was a sign of effeminacy, as I will explore in the fifth chapter.) Instead, he was constituted in accepting the received wisdom of the ancients and moderns, in refashioning himself in the image of that wisdom, in learning to apply that wisdom to all aspects of his life, and in incorporating that wisdom into his being. Ben Jonson's advice to William Roe on how to travel might be taken as a metaphor for the humanist's project in confronting the body of received wisdom: ""T'extract, and choose the best of all these known,/ And those to turn to blood, and make thine own." (*Epigrams* "CXXVIII. To William Roe" 3 – 4). As the schoolboy extracts sayings from texts, places them in a commonplace book, and reframes them in a composition and, eventually, in his life, so Roe is advised "t'extract, and choose the best" from among the manners of foreigners. Jonson urges more than a mechanical textual reframing, though. He encourages Roe literally to incorporate the best parts of foreign manners, turning them "to blood" and making them his own. As Jonson's lyric reveals, humanists had adopted

travel as a significant option in the education of the new man. But grammar school, and then time at the university and possibly in the Inns of Court, contained the core of the subsistent and, perhaps more important, psychic instruction in the new manliness. But to make it an effective tool in shaping manners, humanists had to valorize education as a manly activity. This it did by arguing that learning prepared men for an active life. Humanists used activity and involvement in secular affairs as a way to buttress the masculinity of the humanist counselor, an idea that bears some explanation.

iii. Negotium and the Vita Activa

The humanist educational program intending to tame and bridle the boyish ego emphasized, and justified itself with reference to, two synonymous concepts: *negotium* and the *vita activa*. On one hand, the *vita activa* opposes itself to the *vita contemplativa*, and was a specifically educational ideal. Learning was to express itself not in holing oneself up to contemplate

obscure theological or metaphysical problems, not in retreating from the world to meditate or repent for the sins of the laity, not in producing works only available—physically and intellectually—to other contemplatives, but in engaging in worldly affairs. *Negotium*, on the other hand, opposes itself to *otium*, leisure, emphasizing involving oneself in business. In rejecting *otium*, the new manliness again opposed itself to the noble warrior, who, when not out maiming and killing, spent his time either in "useless" pursuits such as dancing, writing love lyrics, and gaming, or in more or less martially oriented exercises such as hunting and hawking. In lieu of these otious pastimes, youth were to keep themselves busy with educative and morally enhancing tasks that would help prepare them for the practical affairs they would conduct as adults. For mature men, negotium meant continuing this business, not just involving oneself, wherever possible, in affairs of moment—financial, administrative, legal—but also in *taking pains* in conducting that business: corresponding regularly, keeping good records, organizing oneself to

be as productive as possible even, in fact especially, if such organization meant paying close attention to tedious details. Painstaking and consistent effort helped bureaucratic men to maintain their masculinity, to continuing becoming the men they had worked so hard to be. The concepts of the *vita activa* and *negotium* thus served a dual role in distinguishing humanist man from two of his counterparts, the monk and the aristocratic courtier.

Because learning had previously been the mark of a lack of masculinity, humanists needed a way to distinguish themselves from the unmanly monks and canons of the middle ages. The regular clergy of the Middle Ages were neither as secluded nor as unworldly as humanists sometimes painted them. Nonetheless, the idea of a clerical caste that concerned itself with otherworldly affairs in living the *vita contemplativa* helped humanist counselors distinguish themselves as beings for whom learning meant equipping oneself with practical tools for living and governing in this time and place. Piety was not shunned, far from it. But

godliness was enlisted in the service of making wise and discrete counselors. In the Erasmian tradition, lay spirituality became the focus of concern, and the educated counselor brought together clerical spirituality with the secularism of the governing class. As Margo Todd explains, "the search for practical solutions to real problems in this world came to be seen by [Erasmian humanists] as the believer's true calling," furthermore emphasizing that the action occurred "in the context of an institutional framework itself subject to reformation"(34).[12] Such an emphasis on religion's worldly emphasis can be witnessed in a passage from Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue between Pole and Lupset* (ca 1533):

> Few you schal fynde in al holy scrypture wych wel dyd use thys worldly prosperyte, for the wych purpos as I thynke many men of gret wysdome & verture, flye from hyt, setting themselfe in relygyouse housys ther quietly to

[12] See Todd, 33 – 36 for a fuller explanation of the vita activa as a religious response that specifically opposed itself to the vita contemplativa, including numerous examples from figures like Erasmus, Vives, More, Starkey and Colet.

> serve god & kepe theyr myndys upright with les jeopardy, wych thing surely ys not a mys downe of them, wych perceive theyr owne imbecyllytye & wekenes prone & redy to be oppressyd & over throwne, with thes camme & quyat plesurs of the world, by whome they see the most parte of mankind drownyd & overcomyn, how be hyt me semyth they dow lyke to fereful schypmen, wych for drede of stormys & trowblus sees kepe themselfe in the haven. (29)

Starkey emphasizes the masculinity of the *vita activa* by associating it here with courage and opposing it to the "weakness" of cloistered monks. Other humanists emphasize the relationship between pragmatic spirituality and the vita activa in other ways. Elyot, for instance, insists that the end of all doctrine and study is not to achieve contemplative purity, but to provide counsel, and even enlists Plato to support his emphasis on counsel and governance:

> The ende of all doctrine and studie is good counsayle, . . . as it shall appere to them

> that will rede the bokes of the noble Plato, where he shall fynde that the wise Socrates, in euery inuestigacion, whiche is in fourme of a consultation, useth his persuasions and demonstrations by the certayne rules and examples of sundry sciences . . . wherin vertue may be founden, beynge (as it were) his proper mantion or palice, where her powar onely appereth concernynge gouernaunce, wither of one persone only, and than it is called morall, or of a multitude, which for a diuersitie may be called polityke. (293).

Thus, not only religious doctrine, but also the philosophy of a Plato, which for so many had been a spur to a different kind of pure contemplation, is enlisted in the service of moral and political *action*.

If the vita activa distinguished the educated humanist from the medieval cleric, at the same time the ideal of negotium distinguished the humanist counselor from the noble courtier. Although martially oriented, hunting and hawking serve no useful purpose in and of

themselves, and other aristocratic pastimes suffered even more from their perceived uselessness. Ascham, following Cicero, finds the perfect youth to be "*otium, quietum, non languidum* and *negotium cum labore, non cum periculo* [peaceful, not slothful, and busy with work, not with mischief or dangers]" (77). Aristocratic otium revealed itself not only in sport (though humanists universally saw value in exercise), but also in dancing, writing poetry, and gaming, all the marks of status that showed one had the leisure time to devote to useless activity and was thus a member of a privileged group.[13] Humanists attacked otium on two fronts. On one hand, they attacked the idea of leisure and the degenerate pastimes that wasting time resulted in by representing its effeminizing or imbruting influence. On the other, they appropriated some traditional pastimes for their own projects, reorienting those pastimes to the development of the manly humanistic counselor.

Humanists tended to denigrate aristocratic leisure, which they portrayed as effeminate laziness and sloth,

[13] On the aristocratic "fetish of recreation," see Whigham, 88 – 93. Crane, *Framing* 101 ff, distinguishes aristocratic leisure from humanist discipline.

by emphasizing its most damaging appearances in gambling, cards, dice and whoring, often aligning these clearly degenerate pastimes with pursuits like hunting and hawking or writing poetry. In his *Dialogue*, for instance, Thomas Starkey expresses displeasure with the "educatyon of the nobylyte whome we see custumably brought up in huntyng & haukyng dysyng & carding etyng and drynkyng & in conclusyon, in al vayn plesure pastyme and vanyte . . . as though they were borne thereto" (86). Idleness was the seed for these vanities, and games were often regarded as the gateway to serious degeneracy. Thomas Elyot contrasts the industry of Xerxes to the torpor of Sardanapalus, a favorite humanist exemplum of the fruits of idleness. Having abandoned "all company of men, enclos[ing] hym selfe in chambers with a great multitude of concubines," Sardanapalus, "for that he wolde seme to be sometime occupied, or els that wanton pleasures and quietnesse became to hym tediouse, . . . was founde by one of his lordes in a womans atyre, spinning in the distafe amonge persones defamed" (108). Immediately after relating the

story of Sardanapalus' overthrow and burning at the hands of his people, Elyot opines, "And I suppose there is nat a more playne figure of idlenesse than playinge at dise" (108). Dice playing opens the door for a decent into the animalistic and even vegetative characteristics (recalling Pico and Vives) of avarice, swearing, anger, mistrust, gluttony, sloth, and lechery, all of which is inspired by the wayward youth's "tediousness of virtuous occupation" (109). However if dice players "happe to bringe in their company, lerning, vertuouse business, liberalitie, pacience, charitie, temperance, good diete, or shamefastnes" they will be refused entrance by the porter of "Euill custome" (109).

These sorts of vanity humanists regarded as effeminizing, as the example of Sardanapalus emphasizes, while distracting the dutiful subject from his proper orientation to serving the state profitably. In Thomas Moffet's early biography of Philip Sidney, itself intended as the presentation of an exemplary life to Sidney's nephew and Moffet's pupil, William Herbert,

Moffet claims that Sidney put away such trifles precisely when he entered into state service:

> Later, when he had begun to enter into the deliberations of the commonwealth, he did not cling to his own pleasure, but gave up love, poetry, sport, trappings, lackeys, pages, carriages inlaid with ivory, and the other clogs upon the mind and a more favorable fortune. He devoted himself wholly to watching over the interests of his fatherland, concerned with nothing but that he might be acceptable to the Queen and to virtue. (qtd,. in Herman, 19)

That Moffet makes it seem Sidney willingly gave up a retinue he could never have afforded in the first place makes the target of this passage clear—this is not so much a description of Sidney as a criticism of the nobility's pursuit of all the various mental and physical "clogs" that divert them from their proper orientation. The catalogue of clogs takes on a feminine quality of over-decoration when compared to the austere

"interests of his fatherland." Furthermore, the assurance that Sidney's mind is wholly bent to the interests of his "fatherland" wards off any effeminizing contamination service to the "Queen" might introduce.

Humanists could complain about the effeminacy of idleness and distraction, but not all pastimes were open game. A counselor who railed against dancing in Henry VIII's court, for example, would not have won much ground. In these instances, humanists often tried to turn traditional aristocratic pastimes to new uses or to encourage new kinds of pastime cognate with the old ones. As an example of the latter, humanists offered archery as an appropriate scholarly exercise set against traditional martial aristocratic pastimes.[14] For an example of the former, we could turn to a moment in Elyot's *Gouernour* where he refers us to dancing as the perfect blending of male and female attributes, encouraging *prudence*. This is an odd way to characterize the effects of dancing, which has always,

[14] See below, Chapter 2, for an extended discussion of how humanists used discussions of archery to redirect the masculine energy of military training into an exercise appropriate for scholars.

even in tamer times than ours, been an expression of *eros*.

Elyot begins the section on dancing by explaining the natural essence of maleness and femaleness:

> A man in his naturall perfection is fiers, hardy, stronge in opinion, couaitous of glorie, desirous of knowledge, appetiting by generation to brynge forthe his semblable. The good nature of a woman is to be milde, timerouse, tractable, benigne, of sure remembrance, and shamfast. (95)

Elyot's masculine characteristics seem especially well-fitted to aristocratic warriors. Masculine fierceness has pride of place, hardiness has obvious advantages for the warrior, and Shakespeare's Hotspur appears in the man "stronge in opinion [and] couaitous of glorie." If there is something more than euphemism in "appetiting by generation to brynge forthe his semblable," clearly this ideal supports the nobility's desire for familial immortality.

But "natural perfection" may imply *merely* natural as well. In other words, man's highest animal nature is exemplified in the characteristics Elyot displays. What man needs is something more than nature—culture. Elyot reforms dance to enhance its civilizing influence, which blends masculine and feminine characteristics, creating a being worthy to govern:[15]

> Wherfore, whan we beholde a man and a woman daunsinge to gether, let us suppose there to be a concorde of all the saide qualities, beinge ioyned to gether. . . . And in this wise *fiersenesse* ioyned with *mildnesse* maketh *Seueritie*; *Audacitie* with *timorositie* maketh *Magnanimity*; willful opinion and *Tractabilitie* (which is to be shortly persuaded and meued) maketh *Constance* a vertue; *Couaitise of Glorie*, adourned with *benignitie* causeth honour; *desire of knowledge* with *sure*

[15] Norbert Elias, in the *Civilizing Process*, first traced various factors of a "civilizing influence" in the Renaissance. In observing the changes in manners, he finds western civilization's progress into "modernity" to be articulated through subtle reforms of manners that express greater distance between outer and inner worlds.

> *remembrance* procureth *Sapience*; *Shamfastnes* ioyned to *Appetite of generation* maketh *Continence*, whiche is a meane between *Chastitie* and *inordinate luste*. (95)

Man must strive beyond natural perfection, and aim for a higher *social* ideal. In context, the natural perfections of masculinity now appear bestial—violence, lust, irrational willfulness—characteristics similar to those Vives' moral satirist lampoons, evidence of Pico's "sensitive" brute. The result of this blending is to produce the first moral virtue: prudence. Dance, which blends masculine and feminine in producing a higher man, tames, channels, and redirects the natural, given self, allowing him to govern responsibly.

The continuing project of being and becoming manly perforated all areas of humanist life. Although education and later activity in the daily affairs of life were the main places where the individual was trained in and continued to assert a busy, industrious masculinity, even pastimes were oriented to shaping the

psychology of men, encouraging in them a performance of confident reserve, wisdom, and prudence. However, to emphasize the masculinity of the counselor against figures of leisure, otium, and contemplation was not a difficult task. More challenging for humanists was to suggest ways the counselor embodied a masculinity to match that of the aristocrat in armor, which therefore made him worthy of his bureaucratic responsibilities. How they attempted this redefinition is the subject of my next chapter.

Chapter 2: Justifying the New Manliness: The Educated Man and the Ignorant Warrior

In this chapter, I explore the ways humanists directly combated the violent warrior's masculinity, proposing instead an ideal educated man. This educated man includes all the characteristics of the new manliness—sobriety, painstaking achievement of educational ideals, rhetorical authority, and an ethical attitude rooted in the performance of appropriate conduct before a worthy audience. None of the transformations I observe with relation to the new humanist masculinity, with the counselor as its ideal figure, could have occurred unless education, schooling, and book learning (which are not synonymous terms) were validated as masculine activities. In the Renaissance these all became ways to train the humanist actor, parts of the script he was to learn, imbued with techniques in the method of masculine performance. In the next

chapter, I will look more closely at how these techniques operated. In this chapter, I focus on tactics the advocates of humanist masculinity used to defend learning as virile and to impugn the manliness of the aristocratic warrior.

In a history of masculinity, the educational revolution that swept Europe generally, and England specifically, in the sixteenth century cannot be overemphasized. Not only did grammar schools and universities witness burgeoning (male) enrollments, but the very structure of education itself underwent a shift under the guidance of humanist reformers. With the increased number of young men receiving at least a grammar school education, which meant training in Latin, some Greek at the better schools as the sixteenth century wore on, and perhaps a smattering of Hebrew, and with a renewed emphasis on exemplary moral education based on the classics and, increasingly, on the Christian Bible, some sorts of changes in the boy's progression to adulthood were bound to take shape.[16]

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[16] On increased religious component in grammar school education around the mid-sixteenth century, including emphasis

But the new emphasis on education was not a homogeneous system. Humanists, even those most deeply committed to the ideal of liberal education, did not shape public attitudes in a political vacuum, and their educational reforms were not oriented merely toward making the populace, as a whole, smarter. Political changes made acquiring a formal education valuable, and the education that humanists provided was oriented to shaping manners in particular ways, to instilling in students a particular version of education, and to providing a store of useful attitudes for the aspiring statesman. The educational revolution was a success because the early modern state needed the literate, educated men humanists helped shape. However, manliness exhibited itself not simply in being learned. Indeed, humanist masculinity is piebald with anti-intellectualism, which helps to distinguish the usefully learned and manly humanist from his feminized clerkly or philosophical counterparts.

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on religious conformity, see Alexander, 189-93. On the development of Greek instruction, see *ibid.* 188-89.

Humanist educational reforms occurred hand in hand with the centralization and bureaucratization of England. The bureaucratic state needed able administrators as much as, in many ways more than, it needed violent warriors, and the success of Tudor monarchs would depend on their ability to bring to heel the old feudal nobility. New virtues would be espoused in the process, for the monarch's power rested more securely on the heads of sober counselors than on the shoulders of jealous warriors. In time, the very political reforms that centralized the state and shored up monarchical power created both the conditions and the desire to wrest power from the monarch and place it in the hands of less personal state organs like parliament and the courts.[17] As these reforms were instituted, the administrative and scribal tasks that had once been the almost exclusive province of clerics fell more and more to laymen, which expanded the pool of administrators, helped break the traditional powers of the medieval church, and encouraged a view of state service as participation in an active, rather than contemplative,

[17] See Kerrigan and Braden, (37 - 41).

life. A new version of masculinity helped to valorize lay education as a key component in this active life, providing ideological justification for administrative reforms.

Because Tudor monarchs, and their bureaucratic appendages, consistently promoted men of the new learning, gentlemen and prosperous commoners eagerly sought formal education for their sons. Henry VIII's rich rewarding of butchers' and glovemakers' sons trained in the humanist style created hope among the gentry and professional classes that they would rise within the ranks of the Tudor bureaucracy. And even if fewer gentles and especially commoners were able to rise as high in Elizabeth's administration, due in no small part to Burghley's tight control of royal favors, still Burghley himself and other administrators of less-than-noble blood signaled that the Elizabethan regime relied at least as heavily on hard-headed administrative capacity as on blood in determining where to spread its goodwill. The clientage system, too, which had built momentum during Cromwell's term as principle secretary,

continued to reward individuals with a solid humanist education in arts and letters, regardless of nobility, even preferring the gentry, professional classes, and those agricultural workers who either had money or who could take advantage of the many scholarships available to poor youth of promise.

At the same time, the aristocracy realized that their position would be compromised if they did not garner new credentials.[18] Attendance at grammar school became much more acceptable for aristocratic youth and grammar schools like Westminster and Eton began to tailor themselves to higher born scholars than the medieval grammar schools were used to seeing. By mid-century, a two-track system had developed at the universities—one track for serious students, many of them poor or of limited means (though not all), and another track for aristocratic sons who had no intention of pursuing a degree, but who recognized some university education as an important attribute in the

[18] See Stone, 301 - 18 for a more detailed overview of the ways pressure for administrative jobs from an educated underclass pushed the gentry and aristocracy into greater educational accomplishments.

administrations of the day. Schools were happy to have paying students who promised some day to become wealthy donors, so despite complaints from the more serious students about aristocratic playboys, there was never any serious question of ending the practice.[19] The Inns of Court also swelled with attendees who had no intention of pursuing a law degree. Although non-degree-seeking students had always appeared at the Inns, their increase helped the total number of attendees more than double during the sixteenth century.[20]

During all of this, England's native legalism and the success of the Tudor monarchs in both centralizing and bureaucratizing the state ensured that the royal court was not the only center of political authority in the land. The growing rift between country and city, parliament and court, Puritanism and high-church Anglicanism witnessed in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England ensured that the inheritors of the humanistic values of the commonwealth men had an outlet

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[19] On the "two-track" system and humanist reactions against it, see Alexander, 124, 157, and 171 - 73. For a less invidious representation of it, see Stone, 311 - 312.
[20] Alexander, 218.

for their activities despite the aristocratic, courtly revival of these times. If we understand the bureaucracy to include not only ambassadors and Lord Deputies but also tax collectors, justices of the peace, bridge keepers, pipe office clerks, diplomatic secretaries, scriveners, if we understand the ruling class to include MPs and aldermen as well as Privy Councilors, then we can see that there are many places beyond the court where these new ideas could and did take shape.[21]

The transformation I speak of here can be witnessed in changing attitudes to education. In a famous anecdote from *De fructu qui ex doctrina precipitur*, Richard Pace presents the opinion of a nobleman from Henry VIII's court:

> (Corpus dei iuro) uolo filius meus pendeat potius, quam literis studeat. Decent enim generosorum filios, apte inflare cornu, perite uenari, accipitrem pulchre gestare & educare.

[21] In viewing the *Mirror for Magistrates* as revising the medieval Mirror for Princes tradition and offering itself as " a sort of 'Mirror for Bureaucrats,'" Paul Budra finds that this book was aimed both at "high civic authorities . . . [and] those more highly placed bureaucrats and nobility who surrounded and advised the Queen" (29 - 30).

> Studia uero literarum, rusticorum filiis sunt reliquenda.
>
> By the body of God, I would more wish that my son hang than love reading. It is proper for noblemans' sons to blow the horn well, to hunt expertly, to carry and rear a hawk with grace. Truly, zeal for letters ought to be left to the sons of bumpkins. (22)

The free living and martially oriented sportsmanship of the nobility is offered in opposition to the awkwardness of pale bookworms. During Henry's reign, martial capacity was still seen as a key component of patrician masculinity. But humanists gradually mounted a criticism of this attitude, first insisting that education benefited the lordly warrior, then coming to criticize the violent nobility's lack of manly restraint, and finally presenting military service as the last resort of those whose lack of education left them with no alternatives.

As Lorna Hutson has discerned, humanists offered literate capacities, the ability to produce persuasive discourse, as an alternative to the masculinity of the medieval warrior. Hutson focuses her attention on prose romance of the mid to late Tudor years, observing the ways this literature emphasized a Xenophonic ideal of good husbandry as the primary characteristic of masculinity. Arguing against the tendency to see prose romance as a genre adapted to the desires of a female readership, Hutson finds that "humanism relocated the space of trial for masculine *virtus* from battlefield to text" and that prose and poetic compilations "appear[ed] in print before other men's eyes [and] became the new place in which men displayed the cerebral equivalent of chivalric prowess, the virtuoso deployments of their skill in probable argument" (99). Though I am not as confident in the centrality of romance to the humanist project as Hutson, her observation that rhetoric is viewed directly as a replacement for battle skill as a predominant masculine attribute, as well as her acknowledgement of the importance of a judging audience

("before other men's eyes") seems exactly right to me. That humanism sought to trump warrior masculinity with the masculinity of the educated, diplomatic rhetor seems clear enough from Hutson's and other arguments. For the remainder of this chapter, I want to focus on two strategies through which humanism carried on the redefinition:

1. They argue against the warrior ideal, demonstrating the equal or even superior manliness of the educated, also appropriating the symbolic power of the aristocratic warrior in discussing of the power of learning;
2. They develop a discourse valuing the counter-aristocratic exercise/military preparation of archery, an appropriate (and affordable) form of exercise for the middling sort, and one which afforded as much chance for textual exercise as physical;

i. Scholars against Warriors

In the early sixteenth century, humanists fired their first salvos against the warrior ideal by asserting that learning benefits military commanders. In *The Boke Named the Gouernour* (1531), Thomas Elyot defends learning against its gentle detractors. He states:

> For those persons be some, which, without shame, dare affirme, that to a great gentilman it is a notable reproche to be well lerned and to be called a great clerke: whiche name they accounte to be of so base estymation, that they neuer haue it in their mouthes but whan they speke any thynge in derision. (49)

Against these individuals, Elyot refers us to examples from history. He begins with an example close to home—England's Henry I, whom he reminds his readers "was openly called Henry beau clerke" (50). He opposes Henry to his brothers, "william called Rouse, and Robert le courtoise," distinguishing them as "nat hauyng semblable lernyng with the sayd Henry" (50). After reminding his

readers that William, hated by his people and nobles for tyranny and dissolute living, was assassinated, he turns to compare Robert le Courtoise to Henry Beau Clerk. The opposition Elyot clearly intends between ideals of courtliness and "bookworm" learning appears in their monikers. Elyot explains that Robert was "a man of moche prowesse, and right expert in martial affayres" (50). Yet his subsequent invasions of England were repelled because Henry, "more by wysdome than power, also by lernynge, adding polycie to vertue and courage, often tymes vaynquisshed hym, and dyd put him to flight," finally capturing and imprisoning him. Elyot then lists great leaders of classical vintage, including the emperor Antonine, "surnamed philosopher," and Philip of Macedonia, whom he reminds us "subdued al Greece," and hired Aristotle to tutor his son Alexander (whose military exploits Elyot feels need no mention). Next he lists Epaminondas of Thebes, Julius Ceasar, whom he claims "nexte to Tulli, in the eloquence of the latin tonge excelled al other," Hadrian, Constantine, Charlemagne, and others (51). Here Elyot defends

learning by revealing that many of the most able military commanders in history were simultaneously well educated. Nothing in learning diminishes the manly capacity of great warriors; indeed it augments it. Furthermore, Elyot's own learning in the newly valorized discipline of history reveals itself in his ready collection of exemplary leaders, Elyot's exemplary discourse itself being an important characteristic of the new humanist counselor. Thus Elyot performs the new manliness even in arguing for it.

Thomas Wilson similarly insists that eloquence and learning achieve military goals more effectively than fighting, highlighting the desirability of peace over bloodshed. His dedicatory epistle to the soon-to-be-disgraced John Dudley (son of his namesake the Duke of Northumberland), that opens *The Arte of Rhetorique*, relates the story of the power of Pirrhus' orator Cineas.

> When Pirrhus King of the Epirotes made battaile against the Romaines, and could neither by force of armes, nor yet by any

policie winne certaine strong Holdes: He vsed commonly to send one Cineas (a noble Orator, and sometimes Scholer to Demosthenes) to perswade with the Captaines and people that were in them, that they should yeeld vp the saide Hold or Townes without fight or resistaunce. And so it came to passe, that through the pithie eloquence of this noble Orator, diuers strong Castelles and Fortresses were peaceably giuen vp into the handes of Pirrhus, which he should haue found very hard and tedious to winne by the sworde. And this thing was not Pirrhus himselfe ashamed in his common talke, to the praise of the said Orator openly to confesse: alledging that Cineas thorough the eloquence of his tongue, wane moe Cities vnto him than euer himself should els haue been able by force to subdue. . . .If profite maie perswade, what greater gaine can we haue, then without bloudshed achiue to a Conquest? (A2, verso-recto)

Like Elyot, Wilson provides an historical example, drawn this time from classical history, to demonstrate the superiority of learning and eloquence to military might even in the realm of martial affairs. Peace is better than war, and the orator is the most powerful general in the king's army. Furthermore, Wilson self-consciously argues his case for the readers here, appropriate for a humanist manual on the art of persuasion, and does so by proposing the superiority of peaceable conquest to bloody action.

But if Wilson and Elyot first represent learning as an adjunct to military might, Elyot sharpens the attack by maligning the bestiality of physical accomplishments:

> Verily they be ferre from good raison, in myne opinion, whiche couaite to haue their children goodly in stature, stronge, deliuer, well synging, wherin trees, beastes, fysshes, and byrdes, be nat only with them equall, but also ferre do excede them. And connynge, wherby onely man excelleth all other creatures in erthe, they reiect, and accounte unworthy to

> be in their children. What unkinde appetite were it to desyre to be father rather of a pece of flesshe, that can onely meue and feele, than of a childe that shulde have the perfecte fourme of a man? What so perfectly expresseth a man as doctrine? (52)

Elyot's insistence that the mind differentiates men from beasts, a topos drawn from classical literature, is also a key point in the humanist redefinition of masculinity.[22] For Renaissance "manliness" is not only a matter of inferring differences based on biological dimorphism, or gender oppositions between men and women. The differences between men and boys, and between men and animals, are as important to the new conception of masculinity as the differences between men and women. Aristocrats choose to cultivate the seeds of a lower

[22] Near the beginning of the *De officiis* (1.11), an important humanist text which Cecil was said always to have in his pocket, Cicero explains similarities between men and beasts, including self-defense, avoiding harm, acquiring necessities such as food and cover, reproducing, and caring for young. Men are distinguished by reason, which allows them to see cause and effect, and thus to consider long-term goals in the light of past events.

kind, and cannot perfect the "fourme of a man" because they ignore learning, or "doctrine."

If Elyot's defense of learning's masculinity, and attack on the sub-manliness of the warrior's might, balances itself between an idea of learning as an adjunct to strength and learning as the perfect embodiment of the man, Roger Ascham will push the pacifist argument further in his criticism of medieval romance. Lamenting the popularity of romance among aristocratic sons and daughters, he remembers with shame when "Gods Bible was banished the Court, and *Morte Arthure* receiued into the Princes chamber" (164). Ascham accuses romance of being the product of idleness, "made in Monasteries, by idle Monkes, and wanton Chanons" (164). Ascham's prime example, famously, is the Arthurian tradition represented by the "*Morte Arthure*"[23]:

[23] I had always assumed Ascham refers here to Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*, because he frequently refers to the "Morte Arthure" as a single "booke" (Caxton having printed Mallory's text in 1485), and because Mallory's ended up being the single most influential version of the romance. But various versions of Arthurian romance would have been floating around aristocratic circles, including the English alliterative *Morte Arthure* and stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur*, as well as the French *Mort Artu*. As well, in other places, such as *Toxophilvs*, Ascham seems to refer to Arthurian romance as a class of stories (always

> the whole pleasure of which booke standeth in two speciall poyntes, in open mans slaughter, and bold bawdrye: In which booke those be counted the noblest Knightes, that do kill most men without any quarell, and commit fowlest aduoulteres by subtlest shiftes: as Sir *Luncelote*, with the wife of king *Arthure* his master: Syr *Tristram* with the wife of king *Marke* his vncle: Syr *Lamerocke* with the wife of king *Lote*, that was his own aunte. (164)

Ascham's rhetorical strategy here contaminates the traditional manly power of warriors with emasculated figures—idle monks and sexual perverts. Militarism, traditionally a place for active masculine endeavor, is the imaginative product of the effeminizing leisure of the regular clergy, whose wantonness finds its outlet in the dishonest sexual escapades of Arthur's knights. Ascham refers us to the female readership of these pieces in order to suggest that the pleasures violence and lust afford appeal as strongly to women as men:

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insinuating they were produced by idle members of the regular clergy) instead of singling out one text.

"What toyes, the dayly readyng of such a booke, may worke in the will of a yong ientleman, or a yong mayde, that liueth welthelie and idlelie, wise men can iudge, and honest men do pitie" (164-65). The grammatical parallel at the end of this sentence provides Ascham the opportunity to introduce mother figures as well as fathers; he could have discussed the reactions of wise men and honest women just as he exposed the reading habits of young gentlemen and maids. By sticking with father figures, Ascham aligns masculine wisdom and honesty against feminized courtly behavior, and suggests that the noble warrior's simple brutality is itself somehow, like sex, an effeminate and effeminizing indulgence. As well, these textual performances, writerly and readerly, are being judged by wise and honest men, the worthy community who enforce the ethical and moral patriarchal codes of the new manliness.

Criticisms of the aristocracy's open manslaughter reappear in the writings of humanist-oriented scholars, diplomats, and administrators throughout the period, often relying on the commonplace that warfare reduced a

man to brutishness. Erasmus famously excoriated bloodthirstiness in his writings.[24] In letters to his apprentice Philip Sidney, the respected continental protestant humanist Hubert Languet also criticizes the folly of noble warriors. In an eerily prescient moment, Languet warns Sidney against accompanying his uncle Leicester on his military expedition to the Low Countries:

> Let not therefore an excessive desire of fame hurry you out of your course; and be sure you do not give the glorious name of courage to a fault which only seems to have something in common with it. It is the misfortune, or rather the folly of our age, that most men of high birth think it more honorable to do the work of a soldier than of a leader, and would rather earn a name for boldness than for judgment. (Pears 137)

Criticizing the vanity of foolhardy nobles, Languet finds that the desire to win fame through military

[24] On the early English humanists measured, hopeful, and ultimately disappointed pacifism, see Adams.

prowess shows a lack of restraint, and a negligence of an aristocrat's duties to the state. Later Languet again reproves noble warriors:

> But most men of high birth are possessed with this madness, that they long after a reputation founded on bloodshed, and believe that there is no glory for them except that which is connected with the destruction of mankind. . . . And yet, let them be never so strong, in this respect they are inferior to many of the brutes. (Pears 147)

The argument against warfare enacts a class struggle, the peaceful middleclass humanist expressing his superiority as man over the aristocrat who cannot even surpass the beasts he becomes in opting for feats of strength. The aristocrat jumps down a rung on Pico's ladder, now sensitive and brutish instead of rational and heavenly. Furthermore, Languet sees Sidney's educational accomplishments as what could set him free from the crippling attitude of his class: "Ought not you, adorned as you are by Providence with all those

splendid gifts of the mind, to feel otherwise than men feel, who are buried in the most profound shades of ignorance, and think that all human excellence consists in physical strength?" (147). Education, protestant humanist education, provides the man with the knowledge that ignorant animalistic contemporaries lack.

If the sixteenth century witnesses a growing sense among humanist-influenced administrators and educators that the nobility's battle lust reduces them to brutes, by the early seventeenth century it became possible to speak openly about the possibility that warfare was not a path any man would choose, but rather the last resort of the ill-educated and indigent. In his *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), Henry Peacham makes just such a charge. Nominally addressed to William Howard, the third son of the Earl of Arundel and Surrey, *The Compleat Gentleman* in many ways repeats the organization, structure, and ideas of *The Scholemaster*, which itself borrows heavily from similar tracts of both classical and modern lineage, including Elyot's *The Gouernor*. But the printed volume clearly addresses a

broader audience, both gentle and common.[25] In one of the early passages, Peacham relates news of the soldier's plight:

> I haue knowne many Commanders and worthy Gentlemen, aswell of our owne Nation as strangers, who following the warres, in the field and in their Armes, haue confessed vnto me, Nature neuer ordained them for that profession, had they not fallen accidentally vpon it, either through death of friends, harshnesse of Masters and Tutors, thereby driuen from the Vniuersitie (as an Honorable friend of mine in the Low Countries hath many times complained vnto me:) or the most common mischiefe, miserablenesse of greedie parents, the ouerthrow and vndoing of many excellent and prime wits; who to saue charges, marrie a daughter, or preferre a yonger brother, turne them out into the wide world with a little money in their purses (or perhaps none at all)

[25] See Whigham, *Ambition*, for a complex analysis of the audience and purpose of courtesy manuals.

> to seeke their Fortunes, where Necessitie deiects and besots their spirits, not knowing what calling or course to take; enforceth them desperate to begge, borrow, or to worse and baser shiftes (which in their owne natures they detest as hell) to goe in foote, lodge in Ale-houses, and sort themselues with the basest companie, till what with want and wandring so long in the Circle, at last they are (vpon the center of some hill) constrained to say (as *Hercules* between his two pillars) *Non vlterius*. (35)

Peacham is careful to insist that these troubles are not the predicament of common soldiers, but rather of "Commanders and worthy Gentlemen." The passage appears in the chapter where Peacham elaborates parents' duties in educating their children, and is intended to instill in such parents fear of failing to provide an education, lest their children end up like these hapless gentlemen. The fact that a soldierly profession can be spoken of in these terms, especially in a book dedicated to a Howard,

reflects the inroads humanist arguments against the honor of a martial life have made.

ii. The Scholarly Archer

Humanists were not entirely consistent in defending the sober bookish statesman's masculinity over and against the aristocratic warrior in their arguments. They are predominantly concerned with the education of leaders, and therefore of gentlemen, and all of them recognize not only the importance of exercise, but especially exercise that will in some measure serve as military preparation. However, their second strategy for redefining masculinity to favor the educated layman over the well-born warrior lies in downplaying the importance of exercise within the entire educational program of youth while valorizing counter-aristocratic exercises such as archery. Peacham's chapter on exercise retains a fairly traditional hierarchy of exercise forms. He regards horsemanship, swimming, and hunting as the most appropriate exercises for gentlemen (although he too spends a good bit of time on archery).

Hunting and swimming he regards as useful military preparation. He is careful to point out, however, that tournaments no longer serve a useful purpose. Referring to lances, he claims, "neyther in our moderne practice of warre haue they almost any vse at all. The Prince of *Orange* hath abandoned them, hauing Carbines in their roome. *Spinola* hath some troopes of them, yet not many" (179). By Peacham's time, the nobility's traditional military horsemanship had been dislodged by technology, so tilting is a mere indulgence. As importantly, Peacham opens the Chapter on exercise by regarding it not as an activity important for itself, but rather as a way to refresh and strengthen the mind:

> I now from your priuate studie and contemplation, bring you abroad into the open fields, for exercise of your Body . . . since *Aristotle* requireth the same in the Education of Nobilitie, and all youth. Since the mind from the Ability of the Body gathereth her strength and vigor. (177)

In keeping with this attitude that exercise is a supplement to study, Peacham devotes only a short chapter near the back of his manual to this activity, having devoted entire chapters previously to education in general, to behavior at university, to history, geography, cosmography, poetry, and other disciplines. For Peacham, education is clearly the distinguishing attribute of worthy men and of the nation's leaders.

Not all of learning's defenders, however, downplay exercise to the degree Peacham does in *The Compleat Gentleman*. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witness a sustained encouragement of archery as an alternate to traditional aristocratic military exercises. Archery in Renaissance England is itself a complex subject, and fully to account for all the legislation, manuals, arguments, royal proclamations and the like would take me too far afield. I want to assert, however, that archery came to offer for humanists a textual domain in which to contest the military masculinity of knights with the masculinity of a kind of middling scholar-warrior. As importantly, it

provides an arena for the deployment of exemplary discourse, focusing on the values of a shared community, which concentrates on the performance both of this discourse and of the physical exercise of archery itself openly before other men's eyes. "Archery," as a physical exercise and as a discursive exercise, provides an arena for the training and performance of humanist masculinity.

As a military exercise, archery offers a way for people of all social classes to unite themselves for the common weal. One common theme in the archery treatises is that archery is a fit form of exercise for all social classes, from princes to paupers, and these books often emphasize the fact that even the poor can afford a bow and arrows. Furthermore, a common example of archery's military utility appears in discussions of Agincourt and Cressy, where England's mere archers, badly outnumbered by the French, destroyed the French aristocratic cavalry and won stunning victories for England. So by praising archery humanists are able to offer a counter-aristocratic military preparation, which metonymically

valorizes the seizure of administrative power by those not to the manor born. Simultaneously, these nationalistic examples allow the substitution of national solidarity for class solidarity.

But the discourse on archery toes a careful line between appropriating the masculine spirit of military preparation and downplaying the violence that humanists associated with aristocratic masculinity. Seizing the obvious military energy that praising the long bow offers, humanists channel that energy into ideals appropriate for the peacetime activity of the counselor. They do this primarily by representing archery as the most appropriate pastime for scholars, and claiming it is valuable as an adjunct to serious study or business more than a useful form of military preparation.[26]

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[26] The qualifications in this last statement are important. I speak of general trends when asserting that discourses on archery subordinate its military utility to its usefulness as a study-break. Again, this is where the evidence starts to get sticky and threatens to divert attention from the main thrust of my argument, which I would maintain in full recognition that it does not tell the whole story. The royal statute from the 33rd year of Henry's Reign and the Royal proclamations and commissions enforcing it, even up into Charles I's reign, have much to do with regulating hand-guns, providing for the defense of England (at least in Henry's reign), regulating pastimes, and even enforcing class boundaries in ways similar to sumptuary legislation

We have seen how Peacham subordinates all exercise to study. Roger Ascham's *Toxophilvs*, the first and most influential of the archery treatises, is keen to emphasize that archery is both a chance to refresh the melancholy scholarly mind and the most appropriate pastime for scholars. Toxophilus' interlocutor, Philologus, while granting archery's utility to "temporall men" because "they may the better and stronglyer defende the commune wealth withall," objects that it "nothing belongeth to scholers and learned men, which haue an other parte of the commune wealth, quiete and peaceable put to their cure and charge" (8 recto).

(aristocrats, for instance, are permitted to maintain firearms, while common people are not). The third and longest part of R.S.'s *Brief Treatise* (1596) leans on one Sir John Smith's arguments that favor archery over firearms to claim bows and arrows remain the most effective form of field artillery, and therefore that archery is worthy of continued maintenance. Gervase Markham's *Art of Archery* (1634) also argues that maintaining companies of archers to supplement the companies of Musketeers and pike men at muster would still have genuine military use, especially considering the English preference for fighting in the open field over maintaining walled towns and strongholds. Even in these last two cases, though, the exemplary and oft-repeated anecdotes about archery's traditional virtues (illuminated below) lead the way into the texts. And the legislation and royal proclamations enforcing the maintenance of archery, though potentially more conservative than my account here would allow, certainly helped to provide the spark for a humanist consideration of how archery could be used to further a pacifistic and class neutral re-visioning of masculinity.

Important here is the *assumption* that scholars and learned men have the quiet and peaceable part of the commonwealth put to their charge, an issue not at all settled at this time, and part of what this treatise is meant to support. Instead of archery, Philologus supports musical training as the fittest pastime for scholars. Toxophilus answers by asserting the feminizing influence of musical training, which was increasingly considered a significant part of aristocratic upbringing. He relies on the classical distinction between the soft Lydian airs and the Doric mood, reminding Philologus that Plato and Aristotle deny Lydian music to "studentes for vertue and learning, for a certain nice, softe, and smoth sweetenesse of it, whiche woulde rather entice them to noughtines, than stirre them to honestie" (9 verso). The better music, the Dorian, is "verie fyt for the studie of vertue & learning, because of a manlye, rough and stoute sound in it, whyche shulde encourage yong stomakes, to attempt manlye matters" (9 verso). Referring to the commonly taught music of his time, Toxophilus then urges, "Nowe

whether these balades & roundes, these galiardes, pauanes and daunces, so nicelye fingered, so sweetly tuned, be lyker the Musike of the Lydians or the Dorians, you that be learned iudge" (9verso). The manly encouragement fit pastime presents to the scholar is not encouragement to go to war, but rather to study. So, "these Instrumentes make a mannes wit so softe and smooth so tender and quaisie, that they be lesse able to brooke, stronge and tough studie" (10 recto). Finally, Toxophilus concludes, "the minstrelsie of lutes, pipes, harpes, and all other that standeth by suche nice, fine, minikin fingering . . . is farre more fitte for the womannishnesse of it to dwell in the courte among ladies, than for any great thing in it, whiche shoulde helpe good and sad studie, to abide in the uniuersitie amonges scholers" (10 verso). Like listening to Dorian, military music, pulling manly bowstrings, not plucking lute strings, helps develop the "stomakes" for "stronge and tough studie."

The chief values that archery has, and that make it a proper training for the performance of humanist

masculinity, lie in the frank, open, manly values it upholds. Ascham repeats these consistently, near the beginning using this pithy phrasing:

> [Archery is an] honest . . . pastyme for the mynde, . . . holsome . . . exercise for the bodye, not vile for great men to use, nor costlye for poore men to susteyene, not lurking in holes and corners for ill men at theyr pleasure, to misuse it, but abiding in the open sight & face of the worlde, for good men if it fault by theyr wisdome to correct it (Epistle 1 verso).

Archery promotes a vision of humanist manliness: honesty, wholesomeness, meritocratic in being appropriate for men of all classes, performed openly before other men and therefore judged by the wise community (just as romantic textual pastimes were in *The Scholemaster*). In this open performance archery shades into training the public psyche of the new manliness. In drawing a parallel between physical and mental toughness, aligning these attributes to open

performance, and distinguishing them from the secretive, private and softening effects of idleness, Ascham spells out the elite manliness of archery:

> Princes beinge children oughte to be brought vp in shoting: both bycause it is an exercise moost holsom, and also a pastime moost honest: wherin labour prepareth the body to hardnesse, the minde to couragiousnesse, suffering neither the one to be marde with tenderrnesse, nor yet the other to be hurte with ydlenesse: as we reade how Sardanapalus and suche other were, bycasuse they were not brought vp with outwarde honest payneful pastimes to be men: but cockerede up with inwarde noughtie ydle wantonnesse to be women. (7 recto)

The "inward[ness]" of Sardanapalus is here located in a metaphorical space that makes no definite distinction between physical location and psychic formation. Sardanapalus "became" a woman, even to the point of dressing in women's clothes and spinning at the distaff, because he indulged his sexual appetite indoors with a

room full of concubines. Furthermore, the effort matters here—"payneful" effort in acquiring this "outwarde" personality is part of what makes it manly. Just as Pico's self-constructed man worked to attain the self he was always becoming, the manly humanist takes pains even in taking pleasure, enveloping all life in an orbit of hard-headed and hard-bodied effort.

One of the primary vehicles for the expression of humanist masculinity is control. If the humanist deploys painful effort, that effort is aimed at achieving a golden mean, a stoic state of being where the emotions are held in check. One therefore finds frequent reference to the Aristotelian observation that finding the golden emotional mean is like shooting at the mark. R.S.'s *A Briefe Treatise, To prooue the necessitie and excellence of the vse of archerie* (1596) repeats this authoritative snippet that had appeared elsewhere, including Ascham's *Toxophilvs*,

> By Shooting is the minde honorably exercised, where a man always desireth to bee the best (which is a word of honor) and that by the

> same way that vertue it self doth, coueting to come nighest a most perfect end, or meane standing between two extreams, eschuing *short* or *gone*, or on eyther side, *wide*, for which causes *Aristotle* himselfe saith: that Shooting and Vertue be very like. (B2)

Practicing archery is a physical metaphor for emotional stasis maintained through constant effort. But the use of archery in achieving this emotional end is not merely metaphorical. Humanists recognized that the physical and psychological worked hand-in-hand. Indeed, Ascham comes close to anticipating Bourdieu's notion of physical training as developing a *habitus*, a mnemonic record of cultural values "written" in the body, near the end of *Toxophilvs*. After running over some of the physical necessities for shooting strait, in terms of equipment, weather, and the like, Toxophilus concludes with a statement about the importance of training the self:

> There shal lacke nothynge, eyther of hittinge the marke alwayes, or elles verye nere

> shotynge, excepte the faulte be onely in youre owne selfe, whiche maye come .ii. wayes, eyther in hauing a faynt harte or courage, or elles in sufferynge your selfe ouer muche to be led with affection: yf a mans mynde fayle hym, the bodye whiche is ruled by the mynde, can neuer doe his duetie, yf lacke of courage were not, men might do mo mastries than they do . . . All affections and specially anger hurtheth bothe mynde and bodye. (42 recto)

So, having all the physical requirements properly in line, the remaining challenge (and the opposition between courage and affection makes the masculinity of the challenge clear) lies in mastering the affections, suppressing emotion rather than allowing one to succumb to it. As well, anger, an aristocratic privilege, is the emotion most condemned. The discourse is positively Roman in its collapsing of physical and mental control, revealing that the physical exercise of archery requires and therefore maintains psychological restraint. The military ideal of courage is here enlisted as a mental

discipline appropriate not just for archery, but as other passages about study have made clear, appropriate for the masculine scholarship of the new manliness.

In the archery treatises, the personality characteristics archery develops are important for the scholar more than the soldier. Courage is enlisted not in the service of standing in the face of a violent enemy, but in delving deeply into studies. And archery generally becomes in these treatises a place for valorizing a certain studious attitude, a place where scholars and would-be counselors can display their skills in probable argument and especially in reciting commonplace wisdom, by repeating sayings and listing examples. Manliness thus appears as much in *the way people write* about archery as in the performance of this pastime. In a clever moment near the beginning of *Toxophilvs*, Philologus says to the title character:

> Therefore seing we haue so good leisure bothe, and no bodie by to trouble vs: and you so willinge & able to defende it, and I so redy and glad to heare what may be sayde of it I

> suppose we canne not passe the tyme better ouer, neyther you for your honestie of your shoting, nor I for myne owne mindsake, than to se what can be sayed with it, or agaynste it. (3 verso).

The discussion about archery fulfills the same role of pastime as archery, and exhibits the similar characteristic of a pastime encouraging honesty. If, as Hutson claimed, "humanism relocated the space of trial for masculine *virtus* from battlefield to text," here the space where humanist masculinity is defined and formed similarly moves from the archery pitch to humanist dialogue. As well, Ascham's repetition of a common formula for initiating the humanist dialogue, drawn from such classical examples as Cicero's *De Oratore*, signals membership in the ideal community of humanists classical and contemporary.[27]

The difference between the new manliness' discursive orientation and something like its aristocratic equivalent appears in Richard Robinson's

[27] On humanist dialogue form in the Renaissance and its classical precedents, see Altman.

The Avncient Order, Society, and Unitie laudable, of Prince Arthure*, and his knightly Armory of the Round Table, With a Threefold Assertion friendly in fauour and furtherance of English Archery at this day* (1583). Robinson's curious book is divided into two sections. In the first, Robinson outlines a few basic heraldic principles and then presents each Arthurian knight's device. In the second, he offers a long list of examples drawn from sacred, profane, and modern (English) history—his three assertions—demonstrating the utility of archery. The book offers a curious glimpse of opposed cultural systems, an aristocratic idiom based on symbolism and a humanist one based on exemplary argument. These two military codes, the chivalric and the "toxographic," stand beside each other on the pages of *The Avncient Order*, suggesting a kind of transition between two different but equal dialects.

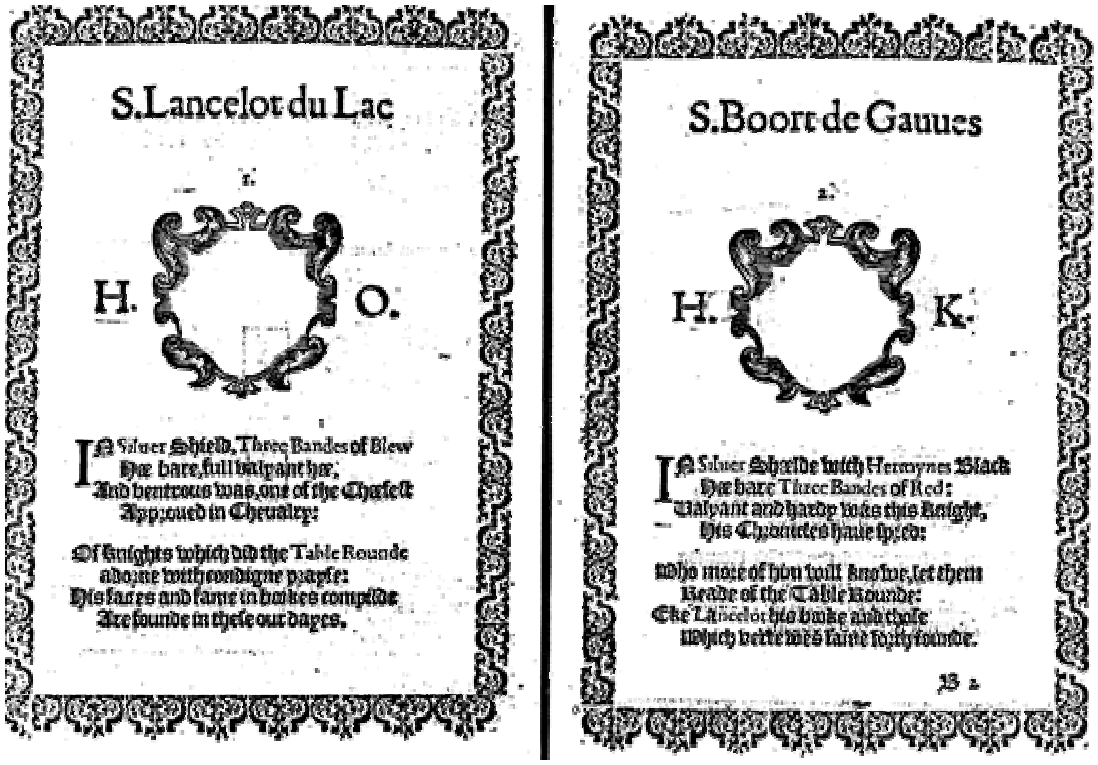
A simplified heraldic system is explained in and forms the backbone of the first part of Robinson's book. An explanation of each knight's device ensues, one per page, with a blank shield at the top. (See Figure 1).

Here is how Robinson presents the first knight, Lancelot:

> In *Siluer* Shield, *Three Bandes* of *Blew*
> Hee bare, full valiant hee,
> And ventrous was, one of the Cheefest
> Approued in Cheualry:
>
> Of knights which did the *Table Rounde*
> adorne with condigne prayse:
> His factes [?] and fame in bookes compiled
> Are founde in these our dayes (B verso)

Interested readers can then turn to the front to discover that Silver signifies humility, beauty, purity, clearness and innocence, and is aligned with the moon, while blue signals renown and beauty, and is aligned with Venus. Heraldry encodes a relatively arcane aristocratic symbolism, a kind of pre-literate visual language not unlike the iconography of the Catholic Church. One imagines interested readers coloring in the shields at the top of each page, enjoying an interactive and highly visual, non-discursive effect.

The second part of Robinson's book is dedicated to three assertions supporting the practice of archery. Here, the



S.Lancelot du Lac

H. O.

IA Siluer Shield, Three Bandes of Blew
Hye bare, full valyant hye,
And bentrous was, one of the Chiefest
Approued in Cheualry:

Of knights which did the Table Rounde
adorne with condigne praise:
His faces and fame in bookes compilde
Are founde in these our dayes.

S.Boort de Gauues

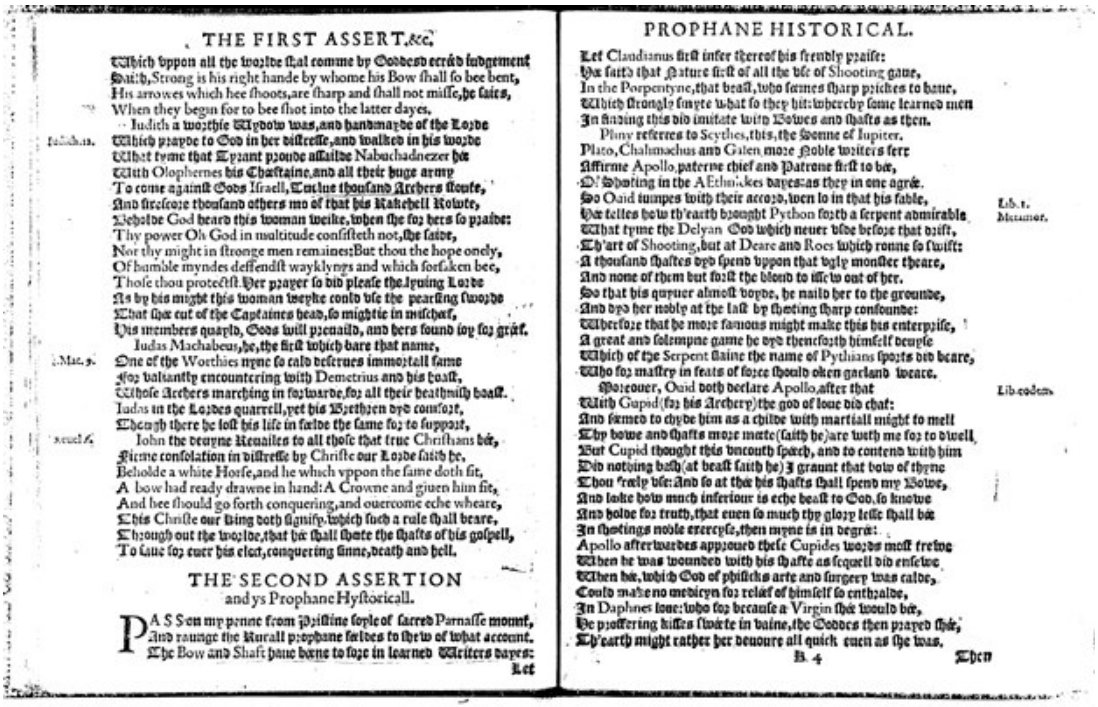
H. K.

IA Siluer Sheilde with Hermynes Black
Hye bare Three Bandes of Red:
Valyant and hardy wase this Knight,
His Chronicles haue spred:

Who more of him will know, let them
Readde of the Table Rounde:
Ehe Lancelot his booke and thale
Which bette was faine forth founde.

B 2

Figure 2.1: Arthurian Devices from *The Avncient Order*



THE FIRST ASSERT, &c.

Which vppon all the worlde shal comme by Goddes ecrad iudgement
Saith, Strong is his right hande by whome his Bow shall so bee bent,
His arrowes which hee shoots, are sharp and shall not misse, he saies,
When they begin for to bee shot into the latter dayes.
Iudith a worthie Widow was, and handmayde of the Lorde
Which prayde to God in her distresse, and walked in his worde
What tyme that Tyrant prounde assaulde Nabuchadnezer he
With Olophernes his Chastaine, and all their huge army
To come against Gods Israell, Twelue thousand Archers stoute,
And fireforie thousand others mo of that his Rakehell Rowte,
Neholde God heard this woman weike, when she for hers so praide:
Thy power Oh God in multitude consisteth not, the saide,
Nor thy might in stronge men remaines: But thou the hope onely,
Of humble myndes deffendst wayklynge and which forsaken bee,
Those thou protectst. Her prayer so did please the lyuing Lorde
As by his might this woman weyke could vse the pearsing sworde
That shee cut of the Captaines head, so mightie in mischief,
His members quayld, Gods will preuaild, and hers found ioy for grief.
Iudas Machabeus, he, the first which bare that name,
One of the Worthies myne so cald deserues immortall fame
For valiantly encountering with Demetrius and his hoast,
Whose Archers marching in forwarde, for all their deathfull boast.
Iudas in the Lordes quarrell, yet his Werthyen dyd comfort,
Though there he lost his life in farde the same for to support,
Iohn the deuyne Reuailes to all those that true Christians bee,
Firme consolation in distresse by Christe our Lorde saith he,
Beholde a white Horse, and he which vppon the same doth sit,
A bow had ready drawne in hand: A Crowne and giuen him fit,
And bee should go forth conquering, and ouercome eche wheare,
This Christe our King doth signify. which such a rule shall beare,
Through out the worlde, that hee shall shake the shafts of his gospell,
To saue for euer his elect, conquering sinne, death and hell.

THE SECOND ASSERTION
and ys Prophane Hystorical.

PASSen my penne from Pristine soyle of sacred Parnasse mount,
And raunge the Rurall prophane fardes to shew of what account.
The Bow and Shaft haue bene to fore in learned Writers dayes:
Let

PROPHANE HISTORICAL.

Let Claudianus first infer thereof his friendly praise:
He saith that Nature first of all the vse of Shooting gaue,
In the Porpentyne, that beast, who farnes sharp prickes to haue,
Which strongly smyte what so they hit: whereby some learned men
In shooting this did imitate with Bowes and shafts as then.
Pliny referres to Scythes, this, the Sonne of Iupiter.
Plato, Chalimachus and Galen more Noble writers fere
Affirme Apollo, paterne chief and Patrone first to bee,
Of shooting in the AEthiickes dayes: as they in one agree.
So Ouid iumpes with their accord, wen lo in that his fable,
He telles how th'earth brought Python forth a serpent admirable
What tyme the Delyan God which neuer vsde before that drift,
Th'art of Shooting, but at Deare and Roes which ronne so swift:
A thousand shaftes dyd spend vppon that vgly monster theare,
And none of them but forst the blood to issue out of her.
So that his quyuer almost voyde, he naild her to the grounde,
And dyd her nobly at the last by shooting sharp confounde:
Wherefore that he more famous might make this his enterprise,
A great and solempne game he dyd thenceforth himself deuyse
Which of the Serpent slaine the name of Pythians sports did beare,
Who for mastery in feats of force should oken garland weare.
Moreouer, Ouid doth declare Apollo, after that
With Cupid (for his Archery) the god of loue did chat:
And formed to chyde him as a childe with martiall might to melt
Thy bowe and shafts more meete (saith he) are with me for to dwell,
But Cupid thought this vncouth speech, and to contend with him
Did nothing doth (at beast saith he) I graunt that bow of thyne
Thou truly vse: And so at thee his shafts shall spend my Bowe,
And take how much inferiour is eche beast to God, so knowe
And holde for truth, that euen so much thy glory lesse shall bee
In shootings noble exercyse, then myne is in degree:
Apollo afterwardes approued these Cupides words most trewe
When he was wounded with his shafte as sequell did ensewe
When hee, which God of phisicks arte and surgery was calde,
Could make no medicyn for relief of himself so enthralde,
In Daphnes loue: who for because a Virgin shee would bee,
He proffering kisses swarte in vaine, the Goddes then prayed shee,
Th'earth might rather her deuoure all quick euen as shee was.
B. 4 Then

Figure 2.2: Assertions from *The Avncient Order*

symbolic system disappears, and we are instead greeted with a long list of examples drawn from sacred, profane, and modern English history demonstrating the utility of archery. Robinson retains his awkward fourteeners as he lists examples that appear in many of the archery treatises. (See Figure 2). Here is a taste from the beginning of his assertion from Profane history:

> *Pass* on my penne from Pristine soyle of sacred *Parnasse* mount,

And raunge in Rurall prophane feeldes to shew
of what account.
The *Bow* and *Shaft* haue beene to fore in
learned Writers dayes:
Let *Claudianus* first infer thereof his
friendly praise:
Hee saith that Nature first of all the vse of
Shooting gaue,
In the Porpentyne, that beasst, who seemes
sharp prickes to haue,
Which strongly smyte what so they hit: whereby
some learned men
In finding this did imitate with Bowes and
shafts as then. (K3 verso)

The tendency of all the archery treatises to repeat this bit that men learned to shoot by imitating the porcupine, despite the fact that porcupines cannot shoot their quills, testifies to the importance of repeating authoritative examples in the new humanist-style discourse. *The Avncient Order*, then, offers these two codes or registers side by side. The arcane and

illiterate symbolism of chivalry finds it counterpart in the exemplary argumentative discourse of humanist archery. This little book, bad as it is, provides a sense of two different, opposed value systems, refusing to choose between them. In this, although both the title and the placement of its sections accords chivalry the first place, archery is a separate but equal second, worthy of the same kind of respect, but also operating on a principal of argument, or *Assertion*, and example.

As Robinson's toxophilic doggerel gathers and reframes common examples of archery's esteem from classical and especially modern literature, so books on the topic of archery tend to lean on each other heavily for common topics and even similar phrasings on the nature of archery. Gervase Markham, in *The Arte of Archerie* (1634), repeats Ascham in a way that would count as plagiarism in an era that expected more originality from its authors:

> Shooting . . . is an honest pastime for the minde, and an wholesome exercise for the Body; Not vilde for Great-men to vse, nor costly for

> Poore-men to maintayne, not lurking in holes and corners, for ill men at their pleasure to misuse it, but still abiding in the open sight and face of the world, for good men (if it be any way faulty) by their wisedome to correct it. (1-2)

The point here is that Ascham's pithy phrasing was catchy enough to bear repeating, and Markham's gathering and reframing (slight though it may be) ensconces him firmly within this humanist practice. And Markham's first example of the antiquity of archery is . . . Claudian's porcupine.

What I am arguing with all of this is that "archery" as a discourse allows and encourages the display of humanist learning. It is a common place where humanists can valorize a kind of counter-aristocratic educational agenda, one that allows them to leech the masculinity of militarism and transfuse it into a version of scholarly masculinity which values open performance of courageous learning, painful effort, disciplined mental achievement, and pragmatic linear

argument rooted in exemplary materials. This version of masculinity opposes itself to knighthood, even to the level of operating by different principles of meaning-making, as Robinson's book clearly attests.

iii. Conclusion

For Roger Ascham, wisdom provides the middling sort with a strength that the nobility lack because they ignore learning: "The fault is in your selues, ye noble men sonnes, and therefore ye deserue the greater blame, that commonlie, the meaner mens children, cum to be, the wisest councellours, and greatest doers, in the weightie affaires of this Realme" (*Scholemaster* 109). He ascribes this to divine providence, noting that God "knoweth, that Nobilitie, without vertue and wisdome, is bloud in deede, but bloud trewlie, without bones and sinews: and so of it selfe, without the other, verie weeke to beare the burden of weightie affaires" (*Scholemaster* 109). Ascham would of course have known that that the "vertue" of which he speaks finds its root in Latin vir, "man," and virtue was associated in

classical Rome and increasingly in modern England with manliness. The weakness of blood alone to bear burdens of weighty affairs, its lack of the sinewy strength that wisdom and learning provide, operate in a traditional metaphorical universe of masculine strength. Learning provides new men, whatever their class, with the muscle to live the vita activa and engage in negotium.

I do not mean by this, or by anything I have said, to assert that Ascham or those of his stripe merely describe a new reality. Ascham's greatest pupil, Queen Elizabeth, certainly did not go as far as her father in promoting the meaner sort. But clearly there is upward mobility, clearly even those who, like Henry Sidney, did not rise like shooting stars within the administrative ranks were being saddled (or rewarded) with tremendous responsibilities in the realm's weightiest affairs, and just as clearly the aristocracy, in order to reclaim their virtue and their traditional powers, had to adopt some of the ideals of the new manliness.

To be sure, martial training never fully went out of style nor wholly lost its reputation for manliness.

As Richard McCoy has shown, "Elizabeth's court swarmed with unruly men of the sword" and military training continued to encourage a traditional notion of aristocratic privilege, solidifying "a sense of aggressive independence and authority" even into the seventeenth century (9, 13). John Milton, an inheritor of sixteenth century humanism if there ever was one, followed Aristotle in believing martial training to be a critical element in the upbringing of youth, and would defend his masculinity by bragging about youthful proficiency with the broadsword. Still, there is something to Anthony Esler, Roy Strong, and Arthur Ferguson's accounts of Elizabethan chivalry as a nostalgic dream, in part at least orchestrated by the monarch to channel the aristocratic aggression that humanists represented as brutishly uncivilized. And in its nostalgia, it also marked an acknowledgement that the living relation between the feudal baron's puissance and his power had been irrevocably altered. As Richard Robinson's *The Avncient Order* helps to illustrate, the sustained humanist assault on warfare and the martial

life resulted in legitimating a new kind of manliness that at least co-existed with the manly warrior—the competent humanist bureaucratic counselor who had mastered the conformist wisdom, reserve, and sound judgment that the new learning inculcated.

Chapter 3: Education and the New Manliness

To this point I have asserted that a new masculine hegemony, one that competed with an older masculine hegemony of the violent warrior, arose in Renaissance England. This new masculinity oriented itself to government service, arguing that manliness exhibited itself in training the mind for administrative duties rather than training and indulging the bestial parts of human nature in violence and warfare. The humanist educational program trained manly men because it encouraged an active public life, and not a life of secluded retirement from worldly affairs, and because it encouraged business and self-denial rather than leisured indulgence. This "new manliness" opposed itself to the violent warrior, an older aristocratic masculinity. This it did first by appropriating the warrior ideal of courage and channeling it into study, and second by rejecting the angry violence and arrogance of warriors, as well as the vain and idle pursuits they engaged in

when not at war, portraying these as sub-human and thus not manly. Instead, they used pragmatic education as the vehicle for developing a higher manhood.

I have alluded to the fact that this new manliness sought to permeate the fibers of men's being, to inculcate in them a set of attitudes to life. Like Stanislavski's Method, humanist education sought to train performers to make an achieved identity seem natural. But unlike the similar courtly ideal of *sprezzatura*, this naturalness included a psychic disposition of painstaking effort, substituting middle class decorum for aristocratic grace. In this chapter, I will look more closely at elements of the educational program humanists used to shape the psychology of the new man. I assert that schooling became a way to shape attitudes of youth to encourage a scrupulous attitude toward the performance of duties. I touch upon several of the ways schooling specifically and education generally became a vehicle through which humanists shaped the psychology of young men. I look at the ways the grammar school curriculum encouraged painstaking

effort, at the ways humanists combated scholasticism through educational reforms, at the incorporation of new subjects in the educational agenda because of their practical utility, at the ideal of the plain style as appropriate for masculine statesmen, and at an ideal of voice and gesture, physical performance, as embodying the new masculinity. The entire progression from boyhood to manhood, from the earliest days of grammar school, was oriented to shaping the psychology of men so they could convincingly perform the new manliness before worthy audiences, the actual ones in court, parliament, law courts, and churches, and the ideal one of virtuous ancients and moderns. As I have said, this performance was the basis of humanist ethics.

i. Hard-witted Masculinity

Education in the Renaissance encouraged this new manliness both in its content and, just as importantly, in its form *as schooling*. Both Walter Ong and William Kerrigan have explored ways Renaissance education operated as a puberty rite, and its usefulness as a male

puberty rite was enhanced by retrenchment in educational opportunities for girls and women. Even though some humanists, like More, were progressive in providing women of their household a demanding intellectual upbringing, still schoolhouses became an exclusively male domain, and the formal education of women as a whole suffered considerably during the Renaissance.[28] With the distinction between formal attendance at school and literate education more generally in mind, we have to be very careful about asserting that the education boys and young men received in Renaissance schools was

[28] Joan Kelly's seminal essay, focusing on Italy, of course found that "there was no Renaissance for women—at least not during the Renaissance" in part because of the ways women were shut out from formal schooling. Margaret King and Phyllis Stock's explorations of learned women in the Renaissance have uncovered exceptions that prove the rule. The essays in Whitehead, again focusing on Europe as whole, challenge conventional notions about what constitutes education while not challenging the idea that access to formal schooling was limited to males. For an essay in Whitehead's volume dealing specifically with humanist attitudes towards women's education in England, see Eskin, who finds humanists wavering between outright rejection of women's education and prescribing a general educational track which denies access to rhetoric. Eskin finds that "by cutting off access to Latin, the educational system effectively cut off women from the only education that was valued in Renaissance society" (110). On the conflation of "Latin" with rhetoric, see my discussion of Cecil and De Quadra, below, 101 - 02. Ong and Kerrigan's discussions can be found in "Latin Language Study" and "Articulation of the Ego," respectively.

any *better* than the education they received in the schools or family homes of the middle ages. Judging from our own period's flirtations with standardized textbooks and curricula, it's unwise to assert that "teacher-proof" materials, like Lily's Latin grammar, fared any better in the Renaissance. Nor is it clear that many hours a week in school where a single teacher was responsible for fifty or more boys spread across four grades, or forms, would result in greater mastery than a few hours a week of individual attention.[29] Humanists *asserted* that this would be the case, and certainly the exceptional students learned exceptionally well in Renaissance schools, but average students might not have fared any better than their counterparts one or two hundred years earlier. Students in Renaissance schools probably learned as much from the organization of their school days as they did from their studies. The typical day in a Renaissance grammar school must have been mind-numbingly boring. Yet, failure to work through the

[29] On problems Renaissance schoolmasters faced, including high turnover among ushers (assistant teachers), overcrowded classrooms, open one-room schoolhouse classrooms, long hours, and recalcitrantly conservative trustees, see Alexander, 197 - 201

exercises and learn certain seemingly irrelevant (so they must have seemed to the boys) basics tended to result in a caning. So the young men, more than learning Latin, learned a capacity for mental drudgery. This capacity I take as the inaugural hallmark of the new man, the primary virtue from which all else springs.

Roger Ascham suggests that such was indeed the case. In his discussion of quick wits and hard wits, Ascham argues that tough mental discipline, which he opposes to a feminized brilliance, is a distinguishing manly attribute. While criticizing the practice of overeager beating on the part of schoolmasters, Ascham counters prevailing notions of what makes a good scholar. He argues that hard wits, those most considered unapt for learning, in fact make the best scholars and, eventually, civil servants. Quick wits, those provided most latitude in the current state of grammar schools, exhibit character defects strikingly similar to women's:

> For maners and life, quicke wittes commonlie, be, in desire, newfangled, in purpose, vnconstant, light to promise any thing, readie

> to forget euery thing: both benefite and iniurie: and therby neither fast to frend, nor fearefull to foe: inquisitiue of euery trifle, not secret in greatest affaires: bolde, with any person: busie, in euery matter . . . (*Scholemaster* 73 – 74)

Here, all the character faults of bad women—inconstancy, modishness, gossipiness, cattiness—appear in the quick wit. Within the context of manly endeavors, these faults render the effeminate quick wit incapable of appropriate conduct. Because quick wits "be, in most part of all their doings, ouer quicke, hastie, rashe, headie, and brainsicke," few end up being "either verie fortunate for them selues, or verie profitable to serue the common wealth" (*Scholemaster* 74 – 75). Effeminate men make lousy bureaucrats.

In contrast, hard wits will make good ones. Things would be easy at this point if Ascham offered in opposition to the feminized quick wit a hard wit with clearly masculine characteristics—valor, courage, physical strength. But he does not. Instead, his hard

wit also displays stereotypically feminine attributes, this time those of the good woman. Ascham finds it lamentable that "a childe that is still, silent, constant, and somewhat hard of witte, is either neuer chosen by the father to be made a scholer, or else, when he commeth to the schole, he is smally regarded" (*Scholemaster* 79). Effeminate men are inconstant, waspish, sharp-tongued, gossipy; manly men are silent, obedient, and, Ascham will soon divulge in his famous discussions of romance and the Italianate Englishman, chaste. In chastity, silence and obedience lies masculine potency. Yet this remains only a potential to be fully developed by the wise schoolmaster. As I explained in the first chapter, the manly self is not given by nature, but must be achieved through decisive and constant action. To achieve full manhood, hard wits need a form of training that will take advantage of their native capacities for drudgery:

> Hard wittes be hard to receiue, but sure to keepe: painefull without wearinesse, hedefull without wauering, constant without

> newfanglenes: bearing heauie thinges, though not lightlie, yet willinglie; entering hard thinges, though not easily, yet depelie. (*Scholemaster* 78)

The burden-bearing, silent hard wit therefore has capacities that prepare him for bureaucratic responsibilities, significantly tied to ethical judgment in the form of esteem:

> They becum wise them selues, and also ar counted honest by others. They be graue, stedfast, silent of tong, secret of hart. Not hastie in making, but constant in keeping any promise. Not rashe in vttering, but ware in considering euery matter: and therby, not quicke in speaking, but deepe of iudgment, whether they write, or giue counsel in all waightie affaires. And theis be the men, that becum in the end, both most happie for themselues, and alwaise best estemed abrode in the world. (*Scholemaster* 78 - 79)

Hard wits have the kinds of capacities the state needs from counselors and diplomats. They do not speak out of turn, and can keep secrets when need be. Their judgment is deep, and they are loyal. Their diligence and loyalty win them the esteem of others, and, according to Ascham, they are able to achieve a pinnacle of ethical being in accepting and living up to communally enforced standards of appropriate masculine conduct. For these reasons, "those which be commonlie the wisest, the best learned, *and best men also*, when they be olde, were neuer commonlie the quickest of witte, when they were yonge" (*Scholemaster* 72–73; my emphasis). Ascham's "best men" implies both moral character and manliness—in short, virtue. Hard wits, when they reach maturity, and with the right training, end up not only the best at being learned, but also the best at being men. Quickness of wit is a pretty accident in one who already brings discipline to the table, but more often than not is at best a hindrance, at worst a fatal flaw. Patience, loyalty, constancy, closeness of tongue and pen, bearing burdens willingly, these capacities all sort with a view

of the new man as a mental mule in the service of the state.

ii. Curricular Change

If the form of humanist education helped instill the primary masculine virtue of hardening the will, the contents of Renaissance education no less inculcated a store of pragmatic attitudes and a structure for understanding and acting in the world. The humanist curriculum taught the skills and the knowledge that men needed to perform the role of manhood. Humanists valorized, outlined, and in large measure achieved sweeping educational reforms that were oriented to shaping the character of a new governing class, instead of, as had been the uneven medieval achievement in the grammar schools and universities, providing students with a background fit for priests, clerks and scribes. They breathed new life into the traditional trivium of grammar rhetoric and logic, downplayed the liberal quadrivium, established poetry as a study fit to encourage young boys and then to wean them from, and

sought a place for the practical worldly subjects of ethics, history, politics, and economics, which they encouraged at the expense of the scholastic Aristotelianism of the universities.

In reinvigorating the trivium, humanist educators sought especially to help students develop competency in fulfilling the various administrative, legal, and diplomatic offices they were to hold in the new administrations. At the beginnings of their studies, boys would of course learn grammar, which meant learning Latin. As always, grammar came first in the formal education of boys, and from their earliest lessons in Latin boys were taught in ways that would encourage a plain, sententious and elegant style, so elements of rhetoric and specifically a view of manly eloquence were always part the program. They were to read proverbs and adages, and learning grammar meant studying pithy, moralistic *sententiae* and proverbial tales. As Mary Thomas Crane observes, the humanist grammar which ended up the victor in the Grammarians' War of the early sixteenth century, "stressed . . . the assimilation of

sentences taken from classical authors" instead of the old practice of memorizing rules and observing their application in sentences composed by the grammar text's author (80). Though the shift seems minor to the twentieth century eye, Crane convincingly explains the ways greater emphasis on a variety of classical sentences was seen as a way to train "not minor clerics but bureaucratic functionaries" by providing more explicit moral guidance, by expanding the subject matter of exemplary materials, and by encouraging less subservient attitudes (83). The classical sayings that boys were to memorize and then redeploy in their own compositions provided a strong basis for a variety of administrative and diplomatic tasks, and gave young men both an ancient audience with a set of ideal attitudes concentrated in these sayings and a set of ready to hand tools for discoursing on a variety of subjects.

Within the trivium, poetry was generally conceived both as part of studies in grammar and as a bridge between grammar and the more mature studies of rhetoric and logic. Poetry nursed the wit so it would grow ready

to receive the more substantial nourishments of philosophy, history, and rhetoric that would be useful for the practicing statesman. Poetry was placed at the service of grammar and rhetoric, providing a store of useful examples both of good Latin style and of authoritative references students could use in their own compositions. In general, though there were many individual differences, humanists followed the hierarchy of genres, with lyric forms including pastoral and georgic at the bottom, comedy and domestic tragedy in the middle, and epic and political tragedy at the top.

In explaining his reasons for diminishing the popular Ovid and preferring Virgil, Elyot provides one clear indication among many that poetry was intended as a means for guiding youth toward virtuous political action. He explains that the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* help the student to understand other poets and to gain insight into the customs and ceremonies of the ancient gentiles. However, "by cause there is litell other lernyng in them, concerning either virtuous maners or policie," he would prefer that schoolmasters simply

lecture students on pagan customs and poets when they come up, lest "a longe tyme shulde be spente and almost lost: which mought be better employed on suche autors that do minister both eloquence, ciuile policie, and exhortation to vertue" (39). Humanists were not only queasy about introducing matter of questionable morals, such as unexpurgated plays of Terrence and Plautus or homosexual pastoral eclogues, but worried as well about poetry that could not combine morality, *civitas*, and eloquence to provide the most profitable possible time investment.

Poetry taught students to focus closely on the rhythms of speech, introduced moral ideas in a sugared form, provided students a medium for learning figures, and introduced the apt placement of common wisdom and pithy expression. Scansion was included in grammar instruction, and in placing greater emphasis on ancient poets, bringing students directly to the source, as their familiar refrain *ad fontes* encouraged, humanists provided a fit vehicle for enhancing students' appreciation of the rhythm of the language. At the same

time, as Elyot's discussion of Virgil and Ovid suggests, time spent with the poets focused on providing practical lessons combining eloquence, ethics, and governance. In addition to introducing broadly republican values, poetry provided rhetorical training by encouraging attention to schemes and tropes. Clark explains that marginal jotting supplemented the notebook method of gathering pithy sayings under various heads, noting that Milton marked over 130 similies in his copy of Harrington's Ariosto, as well as marking pithy sayings, often writing 'proverbe' in the margin when he encountered one (176 – 77). This craft technique was supplemented by a technique of reading poets drawn from Plutarch's essay in the *Moralia*, which encouraged boys to mark and gather moral axioms in their reading.[30]

Because the humanist program was designed not to produce poets, but statesmen, young men were expected to wean themselves from poetry, returning to it perhaps as a pastime or occasional indulgence, but not making a career out of something so insubstantial as composing

[30] See especially John M. Wallace on Plutarch's influence on the practice reading of poetry in the Renaissance.

lies. As Peter Herman has observed, Sidney's early biographer Thomas Moffet revises his life to make it seem that Sidney composed poetry only in his youth, and that as a toy (18). Elyot wants the boy to read poets to the age of fourteen, "In which time childhode declineth, and reason waxeth rype, and deprehendeth thinges with a more constant iugement" (40). But advanced poetic theory, or taking poetry seriously as some kind of moral guide, was not generally advocated. Milton is being innovative when he introduces study of Aristotle's poetics and Castlevetro into what amounts to the Master of Arts curriculum of his ideal academy in "Of Education," as well as introducing other poetic forms throughout the curriculum at the appropriate times.

Whereas humanists saw poetry as a fit vehicle for introducing students to basic moral principles and the essential plain-style device of aphoristic thought, rhetoric became for humanists a kind of educational ideal appropriately pursued throughout one's life. In many educational curricula, for instance Elyot's, it

still occupies the place immediately following grammar. But there are ways that humanists express a desire for this most useful of practical arts to occupy a more prominent position in the upbringing of new men. Some individuals began to express the desire, as Milton does in his tractate "Of Education," for rhetoric to become the new endpoint of study. For Milton, rhetoric replaces divinity as the summation of the Master of Arts curriculum. In practice, though, the colleges resisted this kind of sweeping reform, and humanists had to teach rhetoric formally when and where possible, usually though not exclusively during the grammar school years. But in addition to the formal teaching of rhetoric, humanists encouraged rhetorical self-education throughout life. Surely one reason why so many rhetorical treatises appear during this time period lies in humanists' desire to promote the art of speaking well, and to offset their difficulty in making the dons recognize the importance of composition. In recommending Demosthenes and Cicero during the rhetorical phase of the student's education, Elyot is

careful to explain the importance of rhetoric to the governing class:

> The utilitie that a noble man shall haue by redyng these oratours, is, that, whan he shall happe to reson in counsaile, or shall speke in a great audience, or to strange ambassadours of great princes, he shall nat be constrained to speake wordes sodayne and disordered, but shal bestowe them aptly and in their places. (42)

Elyot's reference to public oratory is typical—the new man speaks and is judged in a performance before an illustrious audience. The freedom to bestow speech aptly in its place was indeed a tremendous advantage for anyone who would involve himself in public affairs. As one instance among many, Conyers Read relates the story of a 1563 conference between the Privy Council and the Spanish ambassador Alvarez De Quadra regarding an affair surrounding De Quadra's harboring of an assassin. The tragic Duke of Norfolk, who presided, told the ambassador that, since his Latin was not so good, he had

invited Mr. Secretary Cecil to speak for the council. Even the bare bones account reported by Read of the case Cecil laid out against De Quadra shows Cecil's mastery of rhetorical invention as taught by humanists like Cecil's friend Thomas Wilson, a efficient deployment of epideictic vituperation (*Mr. Secretary Cecil* 253). The "Latin" in which the Duke admits Cecil surpasses him is as much rhetoric as grammar, and would win Cecil advancement throughout his career. A firm rhetorical training, including time at both university and Inns of Court, and practical experience in administrative and diplomatic missions, has given Cecil the ability to perform in this open assembly that the better-born nobles on the council lack.

For the humanist advocates of the new manliness, the third leg of the old trivium, logic, was gradually absorbed into rhetoric. Humanists perceived that logic as taught in the universities, that is, scholastic Aristotelian reasoning, inappropriately prepared the practical man for conducting his business. Mary Thomas Crane has characterized humanist logic texts as "a kind

of rhetoricized dialectic, a quasi-logical basis for the rhetorical program offered by humanists as a replacement for the Scholastic arts curriculum" (12). Too many obscure questions and too much metaphysics made the schoolmen's focus on the *Organon* at the universities the subject of much humanist criticism, and as Walter Ong has shown in *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue*, humanists were not above resorting to specious anti-intellectual invective in rejecting scholastic logic. Instead of the complicated and subtle logic of the universities, humanists sought a practical logic that could aid the orator/statesman in his duties. Wilson, in his *Art of Rhetorique* (1553), places logic (conceptually at least) before rhetoric, and he had previously written and published the first logical treatise in English, *The Rule of Reason* (1551). For Wilson, logic serves the first of the five traditional parts of rhetoric, invention, or "the finding out of apt matter" (6). In this, Wilson follows Rudolph Agricola, whose *De Inventione Dialectica*, Ong explains, "is calculated to replace the old scholastic dialectic or

logic as the third of the trivium subjects" by "assimilat[ing] the art of dialectic to that of logic" (*Ramus* 100).[31] In other words, humanists rejected the kind of careful symbolic logic represented by syllogistic reasoning, instead focusing on the classical system of common places (or topics) that helped rhetors develop ideas about any subject.[32]

Though the schoolmen with their syllogistic Aristotelian logic remained a *bete noire* for many humanists through the early seventeenth century, and though those who would have removed it from the curriculum were not successful, the old dialectic remained important to advocates of the new manliness for two reasons. First, the declamations and disputations at university did provide students with an opportunity to practice delivery before a live audience. For those who did not continue their studies at the Inns of Court, these public performances were important practice. As

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[31] On Agricola's influence on humanists such as Vives, Erasmus, Melanchton and Ramus, see, in addition to Ong, Mack.
[32] Baldwin, 2.1 - 137 provides a complete and compelling picture of logic-as-invention in early modern grammar schools, and his references to Shakespeare's usage are helpful in noting how these lessons in invention and disposition could be put to use.

Wilson emphasizes, practice was a crucial element in learning the art of rhetoric (4). As well, because the audience for these performances was usually exclusively male, young men received subtle, though not for its subtlety less powerful, practical reinforcement for the concept of performing with a male audience in mind. Second, theological controversy during the period was carried out through the agency of scholastic argument. Cheke, for example, one of the primary advocates of the new learning, remained an energetic scholastic debater. As the partial transcript of a private disputation at Cecil's house regarding the doctrine of the real presence, and in which Cheke participated along with Whitehead and Grindall opposing the Catholic Feckenham, Young and Watson, indicates, the categorical questions, logic, and metaphysics of Aristotelian scholasticism retained quite a bit of force and knowing how to use Aristotelian analytics was a useful skill for public servants of the early modern state (Strype 69 - 70 ff.).

In reviving the trivium, humanists simultaneously downplayed the mathematical quadrivium of arithmetic,

geometry, music and astronomy. The quadrivium had always been associated with the speculative philosophy and magic with which the new men had little patience, and they portrayed the quadrivial arts as dangerously seductive, impractical, and unprofitable. In speaking specifically of music, math, and geometry, Ascham declares:

> Thies sciences, as they sharpen mens wittes ouer moch, so they change mens maners ouer sore, if they be not moderatelie mingled, and wiselie applied to som good vse of life. Marke all Mathematicall heades, which be onely and wholly bent to those sciences, how solitarie they be themselues, how vnfit to liue with others, and how vnapte to serue in the world. (*Scholemaster* 76)

The key problems with the quadrivium are that it does not provide worldly wisdom and that it creates a desire not to live in view of other men, but instead (not unlike the lechery of Sardanapalus) lead one into a solitary inwardness. That this passage appears in

Ascham's discussion of quick and hard wits shows how Renaissance humanists' anti-intellectualism is tied to their conception of appropriate manhood. Languet also advises Sidney against studying geometry, for instance, because it will sap his strength. Even when a humanist advocates close study in these sciences, as Sir Humphrey Gilbert in his *Queene Elizabethes achademy* or Milton in "Of Education" do, he must justify the study with reference specifically to that "good vse of life" that Ascham mentions. Thus Milton' students, who would study physiology, astronomy, physics, and trigonometry after having gotten a grounding in arithmetic and geometry, would then be lead from there to the practical arts of math—"fortification, architecture, enginery, or navigation" (634). And Milton goes so far as to recommend hiring practicing craftsmen, including "architects, engineers, mariners, anatomists" to provide real world support for their studies (635). Gilbert likewise would have students study math with specific reference to practical arts, and would also bring in practicing professionals to help students learn how to

employ their mathematical knowledge in useful activities. So the new men approached the quadrivium warily, supporting it only insofar as it could provide practical guidance, and remaining suspicious of its ability to seduce young men away from their proper engagement with the world.

But their focus on the traditional liberal arts was not the humanists' main innovation in the educational curricula of the day. They opened up new fields of study that were specifically oriented to statecraft, including ethics, history, politics and economics, which meant household maintenance, though that in an age that was sorting out distinctions between the private household of the ruler and the public administration of the state.[33] There were attempts to bring these new liberal studies into the official fold in the universities, though both resistance to them by the scholastic old guard and the political dangers incumbent

[33] Elton's seminal *The Tudor Revolution in Government*, though it has met important qualifications, remains a powerful study of administrative reforms during Henry VIII's reign that moved government offices from the private household of the monarch to official organs of the state and that had a long-lasting impact on the shape of early modern administrations in England.

on teaching politically relevant subjects mitigated these efforts.[34]

The specific ordering of these studies varied. Cheke and Milton prefer teaching ethics before history and politics, in order to set out principles that students can see actuated in historical examples. Elyot, on the other hand, wants to teach history first as a kind of bridge between poetic stories and the more substantial food moral philosophy provides. For Elyot, history occupies a middle ground between poetry and abstract thinking. But always humanists see these studies as a matter of providing men with a set of useful, practical tools, and specifically exempla, to help them govern. The Italian civic humanist Vergerio's

[34] Camden endowed the first history chair at Oxford in 1621 that appears to have been a measured success. It's first incumbent, Degory Wheare, apparently took eight years to cover the first book of Lucius Florus (which is a great comfort to anyone who has taken too long to complete a simple project.) Fulke Greville endowed a similar chair at Cambridge, though its first reader, the Dutch Isaac Dorislaus, who intended to read the increasingly popular Tacitus, was suppressed because Tacitus was seen to be a criticism of the monarchy. Though the prohibition was withdrawn, he did not continue his lectures and no one seems to have filled the chair. See Charlton, 251, Levine, *Humanism and History*, 103.

recommendations in *De Ingenius Moribus* were typical of the attitude in England:

> Among [the liberal studies] I accord the first place to History, on the grounds both of its attractiveness and of its utility, qualities that appeal equally to the scholar and to the statesman. Next in importance ranks moral philosophy, which indeed is in a peculiar sense 'a liberal art', in that its purpose is to teach men the secret of true freedom. History then gives us the concrete examples of the precepts inculcated in philosophy. The one show men what to do, the other what men have said and done in the past, and what practical lessons one may draw therefrom for the present day.[35]

Furthermore, these disciplines often bleed into each other. Xenophon's advice to Cyrus, an important text in economics, Cheke would teach under the rubric of history and politics, which themselves he considers part of the same area of study. Elyot will consider Xenophon to be

[35] Quoted in Charlton, 35.

moral philosophy. Elyot, as we have seen, finds Plato as the place where "vertue may be founden, beynge (as it were) his proper mantion or palice, where her powar onely appereth concernynge gouernaunce, wither of one persone only, and than it is called morall, or of a multitude, which for a diuersitie may be called polityke" (293). Ethics and Politics both fall under the broader category of "virtuous governance," the one self-governance, the other governance of others. Ethics and history, therefore, were a matter of learning the natures of men, with the aim of being able to negotiate with them.

Ancient moral philosophy, especially as represented in the works of Plutarch and Cicero, was attractive to humanists. The topoi of good and bad counsel, flattery, friendship, and the conferment of benefits, all matters relevant to the early modern bureaucrat, were especially appealing topics in their writing. The organization and even the topics of Bacon's essays lean heavily of Plutarch's *Moralia*, which ranges from advice on bridling anger to instructing against intemperate speech to

debating if aged men should manage public affairs. Aristotle's *Ethics* represents another strain in the humanist ethical canon. Though it is not the most popular humanist text for treating of ethical matters, partly because of its abstraction as opposed to Plutarch's concreteness, it was a useful and frequently cited text in moral philosophy, and reinforced Plutarch's emphasis on moderation and emotional control. As we saw in the previous chapter, the archery treatises make consistent reference to Aristotle's observation that finding the ethical golden mean was like shooting at a target. The *Ethics* was especially useful, and influential, in spelling out a variety of character types, examining their strengths and deficiencies, and providing a path for correcting those deficiencies. This was useful not only in teaching self-governance, but also in teaching the manners of men so that the political governor, diplomat, courtier, could negotiate with them.

The most important text, though, was probably not classical but Biblical—Solomon's Proverbs. It is easy

to miss the importance of this basic text, perhaps because it is so basic. The Proverbs were one of the first introductions both to moral philosophy and to the epigrammatic basis of thought in the humanist mode. Baldwin notes that, along with the Psalter and Ecclesiaticus, Proverbs supplied matter for elementary translation and basic composition at St. Paul's school, where in "the first form, the exercise for four days a week consisted of verses from Proverbs; for the second, from the Psalms; for the third and fourth, there were continued exercises upon the Proverbs or Psalms" (1.683). Erasmus, in his *Institutio Principis Christiani*, recommends Proverbs, along with Ecclesiasticus and The Book of Wisdom, as the first books to study after the student has learned elementary grammar (Baldwin 1.208). Lawrence Humphrey, in outlining the reading program for his ideal nobleman, recommends Deuteronomy and Ecclesiastes, but advises "chiefly kenne he *Salomons prouerbes*" (y 5 recto). Baldwin also reprints a letter from Prince Edward's tutor Richard Coxe, commenting on his charges progress,

that makes a point of mentioning that prince, now having gotten his grammar well enough to enter into his studies of Cato and Aesop, "euery day in the masse tyme he redeth a portion of Salomon's prvbs for the exercise of hys reding, wherin he deliteth muche and lerneth ther how good it is to geve eare vnto dyscipline" (1.203 - 04). Whatever the other texts surrounding it—Ecclesiastes, The Book of Wisdom, Deuteronomy, The Psalms, Cato's Distichs—the Proverbs are always mentioned and were in fact set out as the basic text laying the groundwork of moral instruction.

Whether read itself in isolation or assembled along with other sayings in a schoolboy collection of adages, the proverbs provide useful, manageable, ready to hand precepts for guiding and understanding life and acting. They are vague enough to be fit to a variety of situations. They do not argue for any proposition, but present themselves as parcels of practical wisdom. They move from topic to topic with no well-defined connection, but their orientation is always to honesty (condemning flattery), stoical self-governance, taking

one's lumps in stride without complaining, not stirring up trouble, exercising discretion, subordinating short-term pleasures to long-term rewards, industry, chastity, humility. Here is a useful sampling:

> The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.
> Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour *is* humility.
> He that answereth a matter before he hear *it*, it *is* folly and shame unto him.
> The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?
> The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.
> (Proverbs, 18: 11 - 15)

The Proverbs are as hortatory as descriptive, an endorsement of a certain life attitude based on the wisdom of practical experience. It is wisdom that a person can return to again and again over the course of a life, and which takes on deeper meaning as an individual gains experience. As precepts, proverbs lend

themselves to the process of gathering and framing Crane has explained. Precept, however, works hand in hand with example, and the aim of humanist ethics was to enable men to see how to use these kinds of precepts in their daily lives. So in the lower forms of grammar school, for instance, Aesop could supplement the *Proverbs* by providing a tale, a specific narrative, that has a clearly defined "moral," a kind of universal message. As their education continued, young men were to practice the method of fitting precepts to examples, sometimes fictive, as in the case with Aesop, but increasingly real, as in the history of Plutarch's *Lives*.

History was increasingly taken up informally during grammar school education as a place where the student could apply the moralistic *sententiae* he collected in getting his grammar. This was due, in no small part, to the fact that schoolmasters tended to be men who migrated to the new learning, who therefore valued historical knowledge, and who also realized that opportunities for formal historical study would be

spotty at university (for those students who chose to attend). But perhaps more influential than their organization of formal education was the simple humanistic emphasis on the utility of reading history, which helps to account for the popularity of history books starting in the mid-sixteenth century.[36] History introduced youth to actual affairs and the real give and take of conduct, and in this was considered more substantial than the "golden world" of the poet's imagination. Francis Walsingham, along with Cromwell and Cecil one of the great Tudor principal secretaries, strongly recommended reading history in his "Letter to a Son" style advice to his nephew. Walsingham's advice ties history closely to moral philosophy, emphasizing that their combined study will profit the civil servant:

> For that knowledge of histories is a very profitable study for a gentleman, read you the

[36] See Woolf, Reading History, 203 - 254 for a complex analysis of the market for history books during the early modern period, which for Woolf extends through the eighteenth century. In discussing rates of publication, Woolf notes the "almost complete disappearance of new [medieval style] chronicles and the rapid growth of humanist political histories of England, as well as of antiquarian studies, in the seventeenth century" (236).

lives of Plutarch and join thereto all his philosophy, which shall increase you greatly with the judgment of most part of things incident to the life of man. Read also Titus Livius and all the Roman histories which you shall find in Latin, as also the books of State both old and new, as Plato, de Rep., aristo. polit., Xenophon (parecelus?), orations.

And as in these the reading of histories as you have principally to mark how matters have passed in government in these days, so have you to apply them to these our times and states and see how they may be made serviceable to our age, or why to be rejected, the reason whereof well considered, shall cause you in the process of time to frame better courses both of action and counsel, as well in your private life as in public government. (qtd in Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*, 1.18)

Walsingham offers hard-headed advice about the importance of reading history. Moral philosophy and political theory provide a background for understanding history, which Walsingham would have his nephew study for the practical lessons it offers, encouraging an active, thoroughly secular judgment of that history's utility for the would-be counselor.

Humanists' understanding of their own practice was thus at least as interested as the older historiography represented by the medieval chronicle, against which humanists reacted in much the same way they reacted against scholasticism in the realm of rhetoric and logic. Historians of history have had much to say about historiographic developments in the English Renaissance, often promoting a sort of Whig version of historiography, in which humanism played a central role in helping historians separate the chaff of superstition from the wheat of historical truth. This account has recently been challenged by more complex explanations of the development of history in the period. Still, there remains a strong strain of teleology in these

descriptions, partly because historians are interested in the roots of their modern profession. So Joseph Levine's *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography*, which challenges many assumptions about the relationship between humanism and the development of modern historiography, observing a variegated mix of historical genres developing out of humanist critiques of the medieval history represented by the chronicle, still makes its vantage point clear in the title.[37] If humanists placed a higher premium on historical accuracy than their medieval counterparts, it was not because they valued accurate historical knowledge qua knowledge, but rather because they found a practical grasp of history to be useful for governors. Paul Budra emphasizes this point, adding that, although English history written in the early sixteenth century "emphasized the first causes of events, the intervention of God in history," as the influence of humanists was felt history "became concerned with second causes, with

[37] See Bart Van Es for an account of how Spenser's treatment of history is governed neither by medieval notions nor by modern ones, but is instead multivalent, capturing a variety of historiographic strains evident in the period.

the intervention of men into history" (21). At the turn of the century, then, "the lessons sought in history were increasingly secular and public . . . emphasiz[ing] political wisdom and practical, not moral, lessons" (21).

History reading, like poetry reading, was influenced by the notebook method.[38] Although D.R. Woolf argues for a pluralistic conception of reading practices, finding "a much more leisurely form of 'extensive' reading that follows little pattern beyond the individual reader's tastes, personal concerns, and daily whims" to coexist with the purposeful humanist-style reading, yet he finds "extensive reading" to develop steam as the seventeenth and eighteenth century progress, recognizing that the humanist style was "much in evidence" in late Tudor and early Stuart England (9). Budra observes that Tacitus overtook Livy as the preferred model for history writing because his "axiomatic writing style lent itself to pragmatic aphorisms" (22). Bacon advises how to read by keeping a

[38] See especially Grafton and Jardine, "'Studied for Action'".

commonplace book (Levine, 148). With history as with moral philosophy, the humanists emphasized its utility for practicing statesmen. With both, they developed a system of study tied to their rhetoric, which meant organizing thought into common places, and extracting pithy morals and concrete examples to illustrate them, all of which prepared the man to perform arguments before a worthy audience in various spheres of public life, to control that knowledge in a way that made it useful.

iii. Masculine Style

Education shaped the masculine psyche by providing a store of practical wisdom and by shaping the young man's attitude toward how to use that wisdom. I have suggested that this education worked both through form and through content. At the most basic formal level, the organization of grammar schools taught a capacity for mental drudgery and the virtue of taking pains. The nature of the curriculum also taught young men that ancient and Biblical wisdom appeared most efficiently in

sayings they could use to organize their thoughts quickly, and in various "commonplace" organizational schemes which provided useful frameworks through which to understand and evaluate human nature and individual differences, ethics, nations, and politics. Because the new manliness exhibited itself in leading an active life of state service, and because this service did not necessarily coincide (as it does in Aristotle's *Politics*) with military service, humanist education was oriented toward training counselors more than warriors, and has a pointedly middle-class orientation.

But just as in their educational institutions humanists recognized a conjunction of form and content in shaping the psyche, so too in their stylistics they recognized that forms of expression encouraged and instilled particular attitudes, ways of thought, in short, had psychological effects. Ascham presents the most coherent and specific explanation of the conjunction between *res* and *verba*, things and words:

> Ye know not, what hurt ye do to learning, that care not for wordes, but for matter, and so

> make a deuorse betwixt the tong and the hart. For marke all aiges : looke vpon the whole course of both the Greeke and Latin tonge, and ye shall surelie finde, that, whan apte and good wordes began to be neglected, and properties of those two tonges to be confounded, than also began, ill deedes to spring. (*Scholemaster* 265)

Among humanism's educational achievements was this union of words and matter, of (ideally at least) uniting all facets of education in the production of a new kind of man. Crane has found a contradiction at the heart of the humanist emphasis on sayings. She finds that educators "do not want to admit that sayings simply seem true because of rhetorical tricks rather than actually embodying authentic and stable truth, that they are delineated by form rather than content," seeing the humanist rhetoric, not unlike Breitenberg's image of early modern masculinity, as anxiously attempting to "repress" it's "dangerous secret" (44 - 45). The anxiety is less pronounced, though, to the extent that form is

the content. Manly thinking is less a matter of the particular position (for example, "we should garrison forts in Scotland") than of the pragmatic attitude that relying on sayings provides. In other words, the "stable truth" humanist counselors sought was a truth of *habitus*, not "content." It was a matter of embodying the man, allowing him to perform his masculinity appropriately, determining not what he should think but how he should think, so long as we remember that "think" for the humanist makes little distinction between private ideas and the public expression of them in open assembly before other men's eyes and ears. Crane looks at the distinction as a philosopher rather than a rhetorician, through the lens of Plato rather than Burke.

In order to be manly, people were encouraged to think in manly ways and to speak and write with manly expression. There were a series of paradoxes that the young man was expected to recognize and to master. Ideals included both *copia* and brevity. Too little speech was bad, yet too much was womanly. It combined

appropriately loud utterance with the ability to speak on many matters, yet it also enforced an ideal of appropriate silence. It encouraged certain kinds of decoration that suited themselves to the overarching ideal of plainness. And in developing rational arguments it also sought to magnify the effects of epigrammatic or aphoristic expression.

English humanists recognized that style in both oratory and poetry helps to reflect and to shape the way people think. They aimed for a style that was plain, clear and rhythmic, pleasant but not garishly decorated, and carefully ordered in composition.[39] As Thomas Wilson indicates, cultivating a sinewy style was an important element of the orator/statesman's masculinity: "some will bee so fine and so poeticall withall, that to their seeming there shall not stande one haire a misse, and yet euery body els shall thinke them meeter for a Ladies

[39] See especially Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, 160-170, which lays out general principles for elocution. Wilson identifies four parts of elocution: plainness, aptness, composition, and exornation. His discussion of each of these parts clarifies the principles I have identified here and provides numerous counterexamples of bad style, which is often obscure, difficult to comprehend, and draws too much attention to itself.

chamber, then for an earnest matter in any open assemblie" (167). Wilson's sentence itself provides a condensed expression of the ideas I have so far developed. Real men, engaged in the weighty affairs of state, plead in open assemblies. They need a plain, manageable style because that is the most useful style for conducting their business. But the style is not something merely added to matter. Instead, it affects the way an individual thinks. Thus the unfortunate orator who uses this fine poetical style displays the effeminate vanity with which he approaches oratory even in thinking of his speech as a perfectly coifed hairdo. And finally, other men judge this orator's performance, and the "euery body els" who here find this speech unmanly represent the worthy community who enforce, through their judgment, ideals of masculine conduct.

The plain style was recognized as masculine because its perspicuity both imposed order on the mind composing in it and was most useful in conducting weighty affairs. Elizabeth Heale has explained this point while tracing plain style influences on the poetry of Wyatt and

Surrey. Indeed, commenting of Wyatt's choice to translate Plutarch's philosophical treatise, *The Quyete of Mind* (1528), for his patroness Catherine of Aragon in lieu of the Petrarchan moral text she had recommended, Heale reflects on Wyatt's strategy of "attacking Petrarch's prolixity and aligning himself with Plutarch's plainness and brevity" (119). She comments:

> Plutarch's counsellor, following the central plain style rhetorical device of endorsing tradition with experience, provides with his manly style and conformist discourse a highly usable model for the rising courtier or administrator of the Tudor period. (120)

Heale also discusses Wyatt's association of a withdrawal from political life and the life of women, and the mental disorders he sees arising from effeminate idleness (119), all of which points to the association between manly style and manly thought I have traced.

In *The Art of Rhetorique*, Thomas Wilson famously dispatched with inkhorn terms in his discussion of plainness. So dismayed is Wilson at the importation of

loan words from Latin, French and Italian that he insists "neuer affect[ing] any straunge ynkehorne termes" ought to be the first of all lessons (162). Wilson characteristically sets out several counterexamples of sullied practice and characters of those who fail to display the virtues of the plain style. These counterexamples suggest the ideological weight behind the matter, using common images of unmanliness. For example, he claims:

> The fine courtier wil talke nothing but *Chaucer*. The misticall wiseman and Poeticall Clerkes, will speake nothing but quaint Prouerbes, and blinde Allegories, delighting much in their owne darknesse, especially, when none can tell what they do say. The vnleanred or foolish phantasticall . . . wil so Latin their tongues, that the simple can not but wonder at their talke, and thinke surely they speake by some reuelation. (162)

We encounter these characters frequently in humanist writing: the effeminate and (over)fine courtier, the

niggling and unworldly clerks, who if there were any doubt about their inaptitude for the *vita activa*, are described as "Poeticall." And, to complete the great chain of human being, the foolish fantastical provides an image of the simple fellow who will rise above others of his simple rank by filling his speech with obscurity, which awes the groundlings, but which does not deceive those who actually have learning. In each case, the failure to speak plainly hampers the individual's masculinity, often by ill fitting him for the *vita activa*. And in each case, the disordered and unmasculine mind is unified with the style. "Poeticall Clerkes" seem to have a character defect as much as a stylistic one.

So plainness suggests homeliness, the avoidance of complexity when simplicity will do the trick, and the apt placement of sayings. In keeping with the union of *res et verba*, plainness is not only a stylistic device, but also a psychic phenomenon. For this reason, rhetorical plainness maintains a close unity with honesty and "plain dealing." Over-elaboration suggests

that the rhetor is hiding something, be it his true attitude, his limited capacities, the facts, or perhaps a devious scheme. In a letter to England's French ambassador Thomas Smith, William Cecil emphasizes the virtue of plainness. After commenting that his own place is often judged to be a "shop for cunning men," Cecil complains,

> Some cause I have to think, that, knowing before Almighty God my disposition to deal with all men plainly, and indeed my inability, or as I may say of myself my dullness, to invent crafts, yet do I not escape evil judgment. (Read *Mr. Secretary Cecil* 286)

Here Cecil clearly uses "plainly" to mean honestly, but that honesty suggests also a frank and forthright attitude. Cecil, disingenuously perhaps, holds up his dullness as a correspondingly positive attribute, one that keeps him out of trouble, reminiscent of Ascham's "hard wits." Cecil continues:

> I have spoken with Wilson, whom Mr. Sheres friendly advised to be plain with me, but in

> talk with him I think he intended rather to serve his promise made upon a slight ground than his duty, being required by you . . . . God amend them that, meaning to make traps of malice, are for the more part trapped themselves. . . . My Lord Robert [Dudley] showed me your letter sent to him by Barlow, and did much commend your plainness of writing to him, which he confesseth to be both wisely and friendly done, and so I think surely it to be always the best way to deal, for though playing under the board prove sometime the jugglers, yet we see by proof in friendship it lasteth not but bringeth inconvenience. (Read *Mr. Secretary Cecil* 287)[40]

[40] Clearly there is some back story on the letter. Smith was one of two French ambassadors, the other being Nicholas Throgmorton, and the two were frequently at each other's throats, actually drawing daggers on one occasion. Throgmorton at this time was pursuing a belligerent policy toward France more compatible with Leicester's (the "Lord Robert" of the letter) attitude, while Smith's conciliatory approach was more Cecilian. Wilson appears to have tried to convince Cecil that he was needed in France and that current peace negotiations would move along better if he traveled there. But Cecil smelled a rat, seeing that his removal from court would have given Leicester freer reign there.

In this letter, Cecil puts "plain" through its grammatical paces: as an adverb (plainly), predicate adjective (to be plain), and nominal (plainness of writing). In the last two cases, if not the first, a primary signification of "honest" coexists with a sense of stylistic plainness. The shifty Wilson speaks off kilter, and in commending his "plainness of writing," Smith's potential rival and powerful Privy Councilor, the Earl of Leicester, suggests a respect not only for honesty, but also for a style suited to a frank, forthright *ethos*, as the word "of" (rather than "in") would seem to suggest. Cecil's own plain style shows itself in the apt placement of pithy moralistic sayings. Poor Wilson and his complotters "meaning to make traps of malice, are for the more part trapped themselves," while Smith is offered the frank ethical advice always to deal plainly with other men—the advice summed up in a concluding conceit, replete with wordplay on "prove/proof." Wilson, in choosing to withhold intentions, fails in the masculine demand to perform his

ideas openly before others that they may judge him, and thus becomes trapped by his own privacy.

As the above letter suggests, Cecil himself had both mastered a plain and pithy diplomatic idiom and recognized the ethical value attached to plainness. Thus he frequently holds up his own plainness, and corresponding inaptitude for "crynks," as a revelation of his character. In writing to Nicholas Throgmorton about events at the court, Cecil comments:

> Here be no small practices in forging. Some think of the succession if her Majesty should not marry, or lack issue. This song hath many parts, but for my part I have no skill but in plain song. Others be devising how to hinder religion, the rather for that her Majesty seemeth easy therein. (Read *Mr. Secretary Cecil* 237)

"Plain song" here could have a few different significations. As a simple melodic chant, it is aligned with simple manliness. In *Toxophilvs* Ascham praises plain song, comparing it with Dorian music and

opposing it to the "lydian" courtly music that encouraged minikin fingering. At the same time, plain song here suggests a simple and straightforward approach to solving problems related to the succession, a lesson Cecil had learned without the need for bitter firsthand experience, but which was reinforced by it.[41] The comment about plain song also leads Cecil directly to considerations of religion, and plain song in this context would seem to suggest moderate Protestantism. "Plain song" evinces a vaguer metaphorical universe as well, because it is a *style* of song, and thus revolves in a stylistic as well as ideational orbit. Though Cecil may have no skill but in plain song, that manly skill, without appearing so, is formidable.

Although much ink has been shed on literate styles in the Renaissance, there is relatively little on voice and gesture. Yet these factors are important for the developing *habitus* of the young man. Obviously, we cannot directly observe mannerisms of voice or body, but

[41] During Northumberland's attempt to derail the succession and place Lady Jane on the throne, Cecil, who served as Secretary of the Council, developed a mysterious illness that kept him away from court, despite Northumberland's entreaties to help the Protestant cause.

there are written traces that suggest the kinds of vocal and bodily expression that was part of the new manliness. Thomas Heywood, for instance, defends acting in the university drama as a form of training for more appropriate forms of public performance,

> This [acting in plays] it held necessary for the emboldening of their *Iunior* schollers, to arme them with audacity, against they come to bee imployed in any publicke exercise . . . .It teacheth audacity to the bashfull Grammarian, beeing newly admitted into the priuate Colledge, and after matriculated and entred as a member of the Vniuersity, and makes him a bold Sophister, to argue *pro et contra*, to compose his Sillogismes, Cathegoricke, or Hypotheticke (simple or compound) . . . (C3 verso)

Heywood, as we have seen other humanist educators and courtesy writers do, borrows military language to emphasize the manliness of speech. Acting will "*arme* them with *audacity*," "teacheth *audacity*," *embolden[s]* .

. . the Iunior schollers," and "makes him a *bold* Sophister" (C3 verso). However, Heywood quickly revises his vision to suggest that oratorical boldness simultaneously encounters the bridle.

> It not onlely emboldens the scholler to speake, but instructs him to speake well, and with iudgement, to obserue his comma's, colons, & full poynts, his parentheses, his breathing spaces, and distinctions, to keep a decorum in his countenance, neither to frowne when he should smile, nor to make vnseemely and disguised faces in the deliuery his of words, not to stare with his eies, draw awry his mouth, . . . or teare his words hastily betwixt his teeth, neither to buffet his deske like a mad-man, nor stand in his place like a liueless Image, demurely plodding, & without any smooth & formal motion. (C3 verso - C4 recto)

Heywood insists that acting in the university drama, and performing in declamations and disputations, teaches the

manly arts of boldness and decorum, audacity and reserve, in short, control. His judgment about the value of acting in university drama was not universally shared, however. Milton, for instance, lambasted the university drama where he observed young divines "writhing and unboning their Clergie limmes to all the antick and dishonest gestures of Trinculo's, Buffons, and Bawds; prostituting the shame of that ministery . . . to the eyes of Courtiers and Court-Ladies, with their Groomes and *Madamoisellaes*" (*Apology* 14). Milton emphasizes the effeminacy of the context with the Frenchified "Madamoisellaes." Performing not before the ideal audience, as Vives' man does in *Fabula de Homine*, but before this debased and feminized courtly audience, Milton's young clergyman-actor cannot help but prostitute himself, losing his masculinity and with it, bodily control. Although Milton finds none of the decorum in university acting that Heywood complemented, the two visions are as important for what they share as for their disagreements. Manly vocal performance and gesture are controlled—bold but not loose, appropriate,

decorous, and performed with a male audience in mind. In like manner, when Thomas Wilson explains pronunciation and gesture in his *Art of Rhetorique*, he explains:

> Pronunciation is an apt ordering, both of the voice, countenaunce, and al the whole bodie according to the worthinesse of such wordes and matter, as by the speech declared. The vse hereof is such, for any that liketh to haue praise, *for telling his tale in open assembly*, that hauing a good tongue, and a comely countenaunce, he shall be thought to passe all other, that haue the like utteraunce: though they haue much better learning. (218; my emphasis).

Again, aptness suggests fitting the pronunciation and gesture appropriately to the nature of the utterance. And Wilson imagines this working primarily in the masculine arena of "open assembly," the ethical English stage continuous with Vives' stage of the world, the judging audience "public" and male, the context either

legal or political—*negotium* as rhetorical negotiation. And as with Ascham's hard wit, the key ethical attribute is not "learning" in and of itself, not pure smarts, but a pragmatic capacity to display control. What the audience trusts is not, ultimately, the logic of the argument, it's content, but the actor's ability to play the part of rhetor well. If the exterior displays that the interior has been trained appropriately, the audience will therefore believe that this person speaks with wisdom.

iv. Conclusions

Through systems of formal and informal education, humanists sought to control the development of youth and to encourage in them respect for the concept of self-control as signaling a form of masculinity. The boys, aligned on their wooden benches for hours every day, memorizing rules and pithy sententiae to escape a beating, must have found the discipline repressive. And today it would appear that more imagination went *into* devising schemes to assure both boredom and mechanical

repetitions of overworn ideas than could have grown *out of* the monochromatic curricula of grammar school or university. Odd, then, that "sweet" should be a word Renaissance pedagogues use so frequently for everything from the apt placement of words to the experience of boys who give ear to discipline. Is it anything other than a form of perversity that ascribes sweetness to the upbringing of youth within the humanist system, or is there something in it that provided young men with delectation?

I cannot answer the question, even though I believe it is an important one to raise. Certainly the humanists' new manliness had its cultural impact, certainly it helped the middling sort to acquire power and prestige in greater numbers than they had before, certainly it provided some men with a useful diplomatic language, as well as a utilitarian knowledge of history and morals. But it is also certainly true that this new manliness did not inspire everyone to share the values of a William Cecil. The various kinds of repression, not the least of them the anti-intellectualism of a

humanism placed in minds slower of wit than Erasmus or the rigorous exclusion of private selfhood from the psychology of students encouraged to perform their masculinity even in reading choices or pastimes, these repressions were not simply acceded to by all actors trained in the humanist style. Although humanism tried to turn literary production and study to its end of producing and promoting wise, disciplined, sober patriarchs, literary production was one place where men reacted against and negotiated with ideas that helped form the new manliness. In the second part of this study, I will investigate two instances where vernacular poetry, the playful lyrics of *Astrophil and Stella* and the dramatic poetry of Marlowe's mighty-lined *Tamburlaine*, even in promoting versions of masculinity that have come under close scrutiny in recent years, reject the patriarchal counselor of the new manliness in their search for a kind of freedom, psychological and intellectual, that humanist masculinity squelched.

Chapter 4: Boyish Interiority in *Astrophil and Stella*

Literary scholars and biographers have long understood that Philip Sidney was among the most divided of Elizabethan writers. Sensitive to the competing ideas of his age, Sidney admired opposed humanist and courtly values, recognized potential in the roles of both courtier and diplomat, was enthralled with the life of both otium and negotium, and enjoyed the rewards of continental excursion as deeply as he valued retirement to his sister's feminine court at Wilton. Although Sidney's ambiguous sense of art's potential appears most clearly in the *Defence of Poesie*, his sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* has also inspired considerable comment on Sidney's divided muse, whether the dividing forces be seen as love and obligation, acceptance and criticism of conventional wisdom, neoplatonic and

worldly eros, or desire and convention.[42] Despite the variety of terms, and despite differing opinions among critics on the value they see Sidney assigning liberation or duty, all of these readings have maintained a similar formula: Astrophil struggles against some force which he perceives as repressive.

Feminist-influenced Petrarchan criticism, however, turned the tables on Astrophil. Rather than regarding

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[42] David Kalstone's argument, which first appeared in "Sir Philip Sidney and 'Poore *Petrarchs* Long Deceased Woes'" and was expanded in *Sidney's Poetry: Contexts and Interpretations*, that the sequence charts a conflict between love and obligation has found a receptive audience in the many critics who have regarded the sequence in terms of a conflict between reason and desire, e.g., Sinfield "Astrophil's Self-Deception" and "Sexual Puns," and Scanlon. Patricia Berrahou Phillippy builds upon the common understanding of the poems charting a conflict between reason and desire by finding a palinodic structure within the sequence and by arguing, in part, that Astrophil's closing despair "offers a kind of retraction *of* Petrarchism itself, at least as an erotic system if not as a poetic one" (138). Germaine Warkentin has famously found a conflict "between poetry which canonizes accepted wisdom, . . . and poetry which is much more investigative" (39). Thomas W.N. Parker's argument that the poems reveal a conflict between neoplatonic and worldly eros is amenable to the reason/desire paradigm. Richard Lanham asserts that the poems reveal a conflict between desire and convention, though his essay is usually remembered for its argument that *Astrophil and Stella*'s poems are practical attempts to seduce and not a disinterested, objective, unified, purely aesthetic corpus. For reflections on Sidney's ambiguous feelings about art's potential in the *Defence*, see Hardison, "Two Voices," Klein 39-68, and Lamb. For a reading of Sidney's life that argues for irreconcilable conflicts between the various roles he accepted, see McCoy.

Astrophil's desire as a struggle against repressive forces, feminist criticism has often represented Astrophil as a fairly typical Petrarchan lover, whose desire issues in the objectification, dismemberment, and silencing of the female subject, his desire itself the engine of patriarchal oppression.[43] Yet recent gender criticism seems as deeply ambiguous about Astrophil's liberationist and repressive gender strategies as Astrophil, and Sidney, were about the value of literature, otium, and worldly action. The most interesting work on gender in Sidney's canon in recent years witnesses Sidney authoring, and perhaps therefore authorizing, a provisional female subjectivity while still maintaining authorial mastery over it, or encoding some of the Renaissance's deepest contradictions and anxieties about gender identity while struggling to overcome them.[44] While there is nothing "brand new" in these approaches, they represent a new and deepening

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[43] I address feminist-influenced criticism sharply critical of Astrophil at more length in section 4 below.

[44] See especially Nona Fineberg and Mary Ellen Lamb. See Wendy Wall, however, for a reading that recognizes the ways sonneteers problematize absolute male hegemony but that still regards sonneteers generally, and Sidney specifically, mastering their mistresses.

level of complexity, subtlety and sensitivity, a gradual fulfillment of the promise the socially oriented criticism of the past few decades has unevenly realized. I here offer a contribution to, not a new, but certainly a revisionary approach to gender in *Astrophil and Stella*.[45]

Specifically, I will read *Astrophil and Stella* as recording resistance to two of Sidney's identities: the aristocratic courtier and the humanist counselor/diplomat. The courtier and the counselor, as I explained in chapter one, were the two dominant elite male roles in Early Modern England, aligned respectively with a courtly and humanist ethos, neither of which valued what romanticism would celebrate as the authenticity of an individual, personal self. While finding the roles of both courtier and counselor

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[45] Feminist criticism is of course revisionary in its foundation, and so is gender criticism more broadly conceived. But recent forays into gender studies, the best of them anyway, have begun to question some of the assumptions feminism needed in its early stages. See, for example, Stephen Orgel's frustratingly provocative *Impersonations* or the diverse collection of essays in Comensoli and Russell. The analytical tools, if you will, are becoming less blunt, better suited to the complexity which a literature worthy of that old label usually demands. For a powerful revisionary feminist reading of *Astrophil and Stella*, see Dubrow, 99-119.

enticing, Sidney at the same time desires a kind of self not defined by public being, an "existential" self, a personality that can value and delight in experience because it is experience. Sidney uses boyishness to establish a proto-self that resists the stoic, pragmatic, self-effacing demands of humanist masculinity, but which also unstitches the calculated effeminacy of the courtier. Neither *hic vir* nor *haec vir*, the boy both excuses and guiltily embodies a nascent interiority.

Yet if boyishness signals both the desire to escape from and the failure to fulfill publicly demanded roles, it also explains Astrophil's failure to understand Stella, whose subjective "emergence" was explored in Nona Fienberg's crucial if underappreciated essay.[46] To put it bluntly, Astrophil misunderstands, perhaps

[46] Although Fienberg believes that by the end of the sequence Astrophil "manipulates Stella into a silence which, once we have heard her voice, becomes a silence of negation," and that "both the speaker and the reader are denied the dramatization of mutual freedom," she does find that Stella's voice "lifts the burden of [Astrophil's] solopsism" (19). Heather Dubrow, the only other critic to focus as intently on the power of Stella's voice, believes its counter-Petrarchism resists Petrarchan forces in the poems which would enforce silence, though the sequence, she argues, does not resolve conflicts between the two.

willfully, Stella's attempts to let him down easily. As the sonnet sequence progresses, we come to recognize Astrophil's lack of interpretive mastery, a lack aligned with boyishness in Renaissance culture generally and *Astrophil and Stella* specifically.

i. "Love still a boy, and oft a wanton is"

In the winter of 1578/9, Philip Sidney's continental mentor Hubert Languet accompanied Prince Casimir to England on Casimir's bid for active English support of the Protestant cause. The mission failed, and Languet's subsequent letter to Sidney indicates this humanist diplomat's reaction to English court life:

> But to speak plainly, the habits of your court seemed to me somewhat less manly than I could have wished, and most of your noblemen appeared to me to seek for a reputation more by a kind of affected courtesy than by those virtues which are wholesome to the state, and which are most becoming to generous spirits and to men of high birth. I was sorry, and so

> were other friends of yours, to see you wasting the flower of your life on such things, and I feared lest that noble nature of yours should be dulled, and lest from habit you should be brought to take pleasure in pursuits which enervate the mind. (Pears 167)

Languet provides a typical bureaucratic humanist view of the courtier—effeminate in his affectation, enervating the mind with vain pursuits, an illness to the state. The courtier's pursuit of reputation through courtesy leads him into a performative game where the stakes are higher than the game seems to merit. As Frank Whigham has observed in his analysis of Elizabethan courtesy literature, the performative demands of the courtly game lead to a commodified identity, the "self" existing only as presentation to an untrustworthy courtly audience. "Pico's heroically self-fashioning man," Whigham notes of the speaker in one of Raleigh's letters, "recedes before a man whose identity comes close to being a pure commodity, produced (however self-consciously) for conversational consumption" (38). From Languet's

humanist point of view, effeminacy appears precisely in the affected courtesy of this commodified self.

Yet if the humanist diplomat could register anxiety about the ungrounded, courtly self by disdaining its effeminate affectation, humanism did not offer the idiosyncratic individual, true to his own personality, as its manly alternative. The humanist achieves masculinity not through individuation, but through incorporation into a body of accepted practical wisdom. As I argued in the first chapter, Renaissance humanism's innovation was not so much the discovery or formation of the natural individual as an increased objectification of the (specifically masculine) self, a sense that the self could be manipulated, formed, fashioned both by the willing subject and by the will of society. The net result, for men being brought up under the influence of humanism, is not the natural, given, self-apparent bourgeois or Cartesian subject so decried of late, but an externalized self. Indeed, English Renaissance masculinity is an achieved exteriorization of the self, the self's conscious participation in received wisdom

for the purpose of political activity. Masculinity constitutes itself in refusing to indulge the natural subjectivity of boyhood. As has often been noted, the Socratic tag *nosce te ipsum*, so frequently repeated by humanist mentors, father figures and politicians, did not mandate a discovery of one's unique personality. Rather, to know oneself was to recognize one's place in a social, political and moral order, to recognize one's public responsibilities, and to recognize and control the universal drives to self-indulgence that would lead a man to slight his public duty (Ferry 39-45).

Sidney, like most intelligent and complex people, felt keenly the pull of the competing value systems of his historical milieu. Though in his pastoral "Disprayse of a Courtly life" Sidney, similarly to Languet, disdains the empty artfulness of courtly compliment,[47] by all accounts Sidney was masterfully skilled at certain courtly arts, especially tournaments and entertainments. Though he ridicules grave moral

[47]See Ringler, 262-63; lines 31-6. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Sidney's poetry will refer to this edition. References to other editions of Sidney's writing will be indicated parenthetically.

philosophers with their books of humanist precepts in the *Defence*, he nonetheless dispenses more than his share of conventional wisdom in advice letters to his brother Robert and his friend Edward Denny, often to the extent that the delightful wit characteristic of his poetry and literary prose all but evaporates.[48] Sidney also had close ties to the two Elizabethan men who most successfully embodied the alternate roles of courtier and counselor, Robert Dudley and William Cecil. Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, the Queen's favorite, and Elizabethan England's most visible, most successful and most hated exemplar of courtiership, was Sidney's maternal uncle, and until 1580 or 1581 Philip Sidney stood as Leicester's heir.[49] William Cecil, bureaucratic humanist par excellence and Elizabethan England's chief patriarch, had contracted a match between Sidney and his daughter Anne on 6 August, 1569, a match which later

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[48] The letters to Robert appear in Feuillerat, 124-27 and 130-33. They have also been reprinted, with modernized spelling, in Duncan-Jones, *Sir Phillip Sidney*, 284-87 and 291-94, which includes the letter to Denny as well, 287-90.

[49] Sidney was disinherited after Robert, Leicester's only legitimate son to survive infancy, was born. On difficulties nailing down the exact date of birth, see Duncan-Jones, *Courtier and Poet*, 194.

dissolved, but which provided Sidney the opportunity to correspond and gain some familiarity with Elizabeth's Chief Councilor. Furthermore, Sidney's father, who served for years as The Lord Deputy of Ireland and Lord President of the Council of the Marches of Wales, was one of those clear-headed administrators, imbued with deeply humanist values, upon whom the centralized and increasingly bureaucratic early modern state depended. Henry Sidney's letter to his son, which has been frequently reprinted and discussed, exemplifies the kind of sententious wisdom upon which humanism placed such a high premium.[50]

Though Sidney found some satisfaction in attempting to fulfill the traditional roles of both manly counselor and "effeminate" courtier, *Astrophil and Stella* suggests that neither of these roles (which, I should note, are not absolutely distinct) held Sidney's full allegiance. Because neither humanist nor courtly being offered private experience as a legitimate source of identity

[50] For the text of the letter, see Osborne, 11-13. Helgerson provides an account of the letter in terms of Renaissance commonplaces and fatherly demands for sons to fulfill public duty.

formation, some elite males explored alternative roles that could begin to represent a kind of individuality. In *Astrophil and Stella* Sidney figures fairly explicit resistance to humanist masculinity and courtly effeminacy through boyishness. Boyishness in the sonnet sequence becomes the center for a complex of attitudes surrounding the formation of a nascent modern self, including a helpless need for the experience of love, delight in self-indulgent wit, and guilt at not fulfilling public duty. Because the boy is a partially socialized self, it is also a partially unsocial self, which is to say, it provides a partial sense of authentic selfhood or individuality.

Though Sidney resists effeminate courtly affectation, he paradoxically uses conventional maternal self-representations to depict an emasculation aligned with helpless interiority. This division between respect for motherhood and disdain for effeminacy or harlotry is in keeping with Sidney's distinction between matronly eloquence and the courtesan rhetoric in the *Defence*. The image of the poet in the famous opening

sonnet to the sequence as "great with child to speake," (12) and his calling his verses "poore babes" that "do swell and struggle forth of me" (11; 3) in sonnet 50 use the standard association of poetizing and giving birth to represent a sense of unwilled interior experience beyond Astrophil's control. Sidney develops the maternal image in sonnet 95, his apostrophe to Sighs. In opposition to the unwilled interiority of the child-bearing imagery, Astrophil suggests instead that he has cultivated his own painful inner experience, since, claims Astrophil, "with my breast I oft hath nurst" these sighs (3). The tender nurse Astrophil stands opposed to the cruel patriarch sorrow, who "Kils his owne children, teares" (10). In sonnet 95, Astrophil assumes the femininity of the tender matron, nursing sighs at, and also clearly inside, his breast, in opposition to the angrily masculine externalized sorrow. In self-representations of femininity, Astrophil depicts a sensitivity to self-begotten feeling that contemporary humanists associated with indulgent, often over-indulgent, mothers and nurses.[51]

[51] Henry Peacham, with typical Renaissance coyness, presents a

While introducing and occasionally representing his emasculation with feminine self-representations, Astrophil figures emasculation primarily as boyishness. He develops a boyish environment in the sequence through two overlapping image patterns: appearances of the Anacreontic cupid and references to school. By way of contrast, Venus appears in *Astrophil and Stella* only eight times, and of those eight only once, in sonnet 102, as Astrophil's patroness.[52] Cupid, on the other hand, appears in nearly a third (no less than twenty-nine) of *Astrophil and Stella*'s 108 sonnets.[53] When

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common view of indulgent mothers' deleterious influence while also revealing its classical pedigree:

> [A] great blame and imputation (how iustly I know not) is commonly laid vpon the Mother; not onely for her ouer tendernesse, but winking at their lewd courses; yea, more in seconding, and giuing them encouragement to doe wrong, though it were, as *Terrence* saith, aginst their owne Fathers. (32)

Peacham goes on to repeat the common charge that mothers are to be blamed for providing overly generous expense accounts for their children at university and the Inns of Court, which leads to dissolute living and poor study habits.

[52] Indeed, Venus is most commonly associated with Stella, not Astrophil, and then used negatively to distinguish Stella's chastity.

[53] In counting the appearances of Cupid, I have included those poems in which he is either named or in which Astrophil addresses a clearly personified Love. Whenever the personified Love is given gendered characteristics, they are those of a boy. Had I included instances where Astrophil refers to a "love" that could be but is not clearly

Cupid appears, Astrophil usually blames him (or occasionally blesses him) as the source of love sickness, and often takes the opportunity to discourse on the boyish nature of love. Sonnet 73, for instance, explains Love's misbehavior with reference to Venus as the kind of over-indulgent mother just referred to:

> *Love* still a boy, and oft a wanton is,
> School'd onely by his mother's tender eye:
> What wonder then if he his lesson misse,
> When for so soft a rod deare play he trie?
> (1-4)

This sonnet will end up blaming Cupid for the kiss Astrophil has stolen from Stella, which suggests that, though Venus lingers in the background of *Astrophil and Stella*, the nature of the love that inspires Astrophil and damages his masculinity is primarily boyish rather than feminine. Though boyishness here, as in Renaissance culture generally, is aligned with maternal indulgence, it captures a specific kind of naughtiness

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personified, the number of poems in which Cupid appears would be higher.

because the boy is practically, and not just theoretically, a potential man.

To reinforce the adolescent temper of *Astrophil and Stella*, Sidney peppers the sequence with school-related references. Sonnets represent Astrophil or Cupid as young scholars, Cupid as Astrophil's "Doctor" or schoolmaster, Stella as schoolmistress to them both, Astrophil being schooled in some art, or address school-related themes. Though Astrophil clearly refers to university education in Sonnet 61, where he begs "Doctor *Cupid*" to defend him against Stella's "Angel's sophistrie," the school related references in *Astrophil and Stella* have a strong tendency to relate more closely to grammar school (12-13). When Astrophil laments Cupid's case: "Alas poore wag, that now a scholler art/ To such a schoole-mistress, whose lessons new/ Thou needs must misse, and so thou needs must smart" (46.9-11), he alludes to grammar school instructors' notorious reputation for brandishing the rod. In Sonnet 63 Astrophil sings a paean to grammar rules. In Sonnet 16 Astrophil associates the love lesson Stella has taught

him with grammar school practice by stating that "In her sight I a lesson new have *speld*" (12; my emphasis). Astrophil will give the association between love and spelling lessons a slightly different emphasis when, explaining that he will take *no more* than a kiss from the sleeping Stella in the *Second song*, he reflects, "Who will read must first learne spelling" (24). Lisa Klein has argued that Astrophil's boyish and especially infantile self-representations serve "to diffuse the sexual threat of his desire" (82). The grammar school references also highlight an important irony, for, as I observed in the third chapter, in spelling their lessons boys were supposed to observe the morally edifying matter of the sentences they analyzed and translated. Astrophil turns humanist educational practice against itself by learning to indulge adolescent feelings rather than adopting the publicly oriented reserve and conformism humanist educators taught was the mark of mature men.

ii. "his right badge is but worne in the hart"

Sidney's humanistic education prepared him for a life of state service. Like many young men of his class he acquired a grammar school education and attended university without attaining a degree. The goal of humanistic education was to create statesmen, not contemplative scholars, and many of England's most important educators, including John Cheke, Thomas Elyot, and Roger Ascham, spent time attending at court and serving in the Tudor bureaucracy. Sidney's continental tour in 1572-75 would have helped prepare him for a career in diplomacy, an emerging course of bureaucratic service, and an appealing one for Sidney considering his father's occupation.[54] During his continental travels Sidney came under the wing of Hubert Languet, and their relationship was to continue long after Sidney returned to his native island. Languet and Sidney negotiated their sometimes awkward hierarchical relationship (Languet was Sidney's age superior but status inferior)

[54] For a view of Sidney's education and upbringing as preparation for a career in the newly formed English diplomatic service, see Levy.

by alternately assuming the roles of father and son or friends. As both father figure and friend, Languet frequently corresponds with the young Sidney, offering advice, and especially goading him to fulfill his public duty. As the quotation from Languet's letter above shows, Languet felt no qualms about scolding Sidney for neglecting his civic responsibilities. Languet's humanist values saturate his letters to Sidney, which constantly emphasize the value of *negotium* over *otium*, and encourage the pragmatic, commonsensical approach to temporal affairs that was the hallmark of northern humanism.

The Languet/Sidney correspondence preserves for us the voice of a humanist friend who criticized both courtly effeminacy and boyish indolence. Such a voice is heard throughout *Astrophil and Stella*, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly in Astrophil's guilty reflections or semi-interior monologues. Sonnet 21 nicely captures both Astrophil's recognition of manly humanism's rectitude and the boyish inconstancy that leads him to disregard it:

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

Astrophil's friend gives sound humanistic advice to the young lover. Plato is offered not as a model for abstract contemplation, as he would be in neoplatonic

circles, but because he supplies prudent wisdom. The poem reflects humanism's use of morality for bureaucratic training, since Plato's wisdom is tied to preparing Astrophil for public service, as he was in Elyot's discussion of virtuous governance in *The Gouernor*.[55] The internal rhyme in lines six and seven opposes "coltish gyres" and "Nobler desires," suggesting humanism's attempt to tame and channel the libido toward an active life in government. The friend's reference to *coltish* gyres itself indicates that Astrophil's frequent equation of unruly desire and boyishness originates in humanist culture as a criticism of those who fail to achieve masculinity. If the poem opposes the promise Astrophil had shown in "mad March," a representation of boyhood that allows some room for wantonness, with the decline of his fortune in May, a liminal time between youth and maturity, the coltish gyres he now experiences thrust him backwards in time, a regression linked to his social "decline."

Though Astrophil recognizes the advice his friend gives, it has no hold on him because it seems not to

[55] See above, pp 46 - 47.

have prepared him for what he now experiences. Astrophil does not here argue against humanist wisdom; he simply ignores it. The reversal in the last line suggests a kind of distraction or carelessness that leaves Astrophil unable to engage even in so limited a social world as this private discourse. Furthermore, despite the English sonnet form in the sestet, indeed despite the three-syllable off rhyme of "tell me this" and "*Stella* is," Astrophil's sense cuts across the concluding couplet, a verse form whose epigrammatic point humanism's emphasis on aphorism encouraged. In this sonnet, as in many others, Astrophil's thought escapes the boundaries the couplet provides.[56] Both ideationally and formally Sidney presents a coltish mind incapable of confronting the condensed, sensible, conformist thought of the manly humanist.

Astrophil more directly rejects a friend's wise counsel while picturing himself as an impatient scholar in sonnet 56:

Fy, schoole of Patience, Fy, your lesson is

[56] For a detailed formal analysis of the various ways Sidney builds counterpunctual patterns into the sestets of *Astrophi and Stella*, see Williamson.

Far far too long to learne it without booke:
What, a whole weeke without one peece of
looke,
And thinke I should not your large precepts
misse?
When I might reade those letters faire of
blisse,
Which in her face teache vertue, I could
brooke
Somewhat thy lead'n counsels, which I tooke
As of a friend that meant not much amisse.
(1-8)

In failing to learn patience's lesson "without book," Astrophil again inscribes his sequence within the idiom of grammar school practice. By pronouncing, repeating, memorizing, translating, double translating, and paraphrasing pithy sayings or short, morally edifying passages, boys would eventually incorporate them into their being, or be incorporated into them, and thereby achieve masculinity. In wishing to read rather than memorize Astrophil regresses, educationally, into

childishness. The attempt to encourage Astrophil to reject his self-indulgence and embody the wisdom that would enable him to carry on fails, in Astrophil's eyes at least, to account for the power of the interior "fire" that friendly/scoolmasterly wisdom would admonish him to extinguish (56.14).

Though Astrophil's boyishness explains his inability to accept the wise, political selfhood of humanism, he similarly rejects the affectation courtliness demands by consistently referring to a genuine interior feeling that words imperfectly describe and that the judging members of the court fail to discern properly. When Astrophil fails to live up to humanist standards of masculinity, Sidney presents a single friend offering frank advice. To depict courtly judgment, he instead refers to an audience of many members speaking to each other about Astrophil—a gossipy court, filled with backstabbers and envious hypocrites. In the one place Sidney specifically refers to the courtly audience's sex, sonnet 54, they are women:

Because I breath not love to everie one,

Nor do not use set colours for to weare,
Nor nourish speciall lockes of vowed haire,
Nor give each speech a full point of a grone,
The courtly Nymphs, acquainted with the mone
Of them, who in their lips *Love's* standerd
beare;
'What he?' say they of me, 'now I dare sweare,
He cannot love: no, no, let him alone.'
And think so still, so *Stella* know my mind,
Professe in deed I do not *Cupid's* art;
But you faire maides, at length this true
shall find,
That his right badge is but worne in the hart:
Dumbe Swannes, not chatring Pies, do Lovers
prove,
They love indeed, who quake to say they love.

The courtly nymphs enforce a particular form of semiosis here, regulating speech, dress, behavior, even appropriate pronunciation, details given no slight emphasis in Elizabethan courtesy literature. Yet, as I explored in the first part of this study, English

humanism promoted a vision of a male audience, and part of the scholar and counselor's masculinity lay in his conception of an appropriate judging male audience. Sonnet 54 establishes the court as a feminine domain, where women bear a degree of interpretive authority. They promote not the kind of fame that could sustain the genuine poet, but an environment of intense and facile judgment where form matters more than content, where love is considered an art, and where effeminately "chatring Pies," rather than bashfully "Dumbe Swannes," are thought to be, and thought to be thought to be, lovers. Contrary to the courtly system of valuing exterior show, Astrophil valorizes a simple interiority. Though the chattering pies bear Cupid's standard on the lips, "his right badge is but worne in the hart."

As sonnet 54 witnesses, courtliness in *Astrophil and Stella* bears two characteristics associated by humanists like Languet with the unmanly habits of the Elizabethan court: conventional affectation and the judgment of a rumor-mongering audience. Several poems in *Astrophil and Stella*, including Sonnets 3 and 6,

similarly turn a cold eye on love poets so concerned with imitating various poetic conventions that they merely propagate empty forms rather than infusing their verse with a sense of sincerity.[57] Sonnet 15 continues this criticism, attributes the tiresome search for conventional forms to a lack of genuine interiority, and provides an alternate model. Astrophil calls poets to task for using strained and overabundant figurative language (1-4), too much alliteration, or "Dictionarie's methode" (5-6), and relying too heavily on Petrarchan imitation (7-8), several of which faults he used in the *Defense* as examples of courtezanlike rhetorical ornament:

> So is that honey-flowing Matrone Eloquence, apparrelled, or rather disguised, in a Courtisanlike painted affectation. One time with so farre fet words, that many seeme monsters, but must seeme straungers to anie

[57] That Sidney felt providing at least a sense of sincerity was an important element of love poetry is attested to in his oft-quoted comment in the *Defence*, "But truly many of such writings, as come under the banner of unresistable love, if I were a mistresse, would never perswade mee they were in love" (Feuillerat, 3:41).

> poore Englishman: an other time with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a Dictionary: an other time with figures and flowers, extreamlie winter-starved. (Feuillerat, 3:42)

Astrophil attributes the effeminate affectation of poets who use these courtly methods to their underdeveloped interiority: "You take wrong waies, those far-fet helpes be such,/ As do bewray a want of inward tuch" (9-10). Ringler, ever ready to squash romantic misconceptions, glosses "inward tuch" as "natural capacity" (466). Yet nowhere else in his poetic corpus does Sidney's linkage of inwardness and touching refer to anything other than a sense of genuine feeling.[58] The search for exterior shows alienates courtly makers from their emotions.

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[58] In the last poem (67) of the third eclogues in the *Old Arcadia*, Geron refers to obedient children's ability to "touch the father's hart with secret joy" (113). In *Astrophil and Stella* 44, Astophil claims that "when the breath of my complaints doth tuch/ Those daintie dores unto the Court of blisse [Stella's ears]/ . . . the sobs of mine annoyes/ Are metamorphosed straight to tunes of joyes" (10-11; 13-14). More dramatically, the *Eighth song* refers to Stella's speech where she denies Astrophil's suit "as such,/ As not eares but hart did tuch" (69-70). Finally, in the translation of *Psalm XXXV*, the speaker claims to have "prayd with prayers which my breast did touch" (32).

Astrophil argues instead that the right poet's capacity for inwardness originates in the desire for a kind of fame that courtly nymphs cannot provide, one in which the poet must assume the role of an infantile boy:

> But if (both for your love and skill) your name
> You seeke to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,
> *Stella* behold, and then begin to endite. (12-14)

The idea of a nursing, matronly Fame provides an alternative to the shallow judgment of a feminine or effeminate court. And Astrophil ties the lover's usual claim that his beloved is the only one who can inspire good poetry to the idea that she is the one who has touched his inward parts. If one wishes to be an infantile boy, he must allow room for genuine interior feeling.

In presenting boyish interiority as an alternative to painted conceit, Astrophil associates courtly affectation with pretense and show, courtesanlike ornament rather than matronly eloquence. But if

sincerity trumps empty artistry in expressions of love, Astrophil's sincerity is not the manly honesty associated with plain style influence. Speaking of the Muses' famous instruction in the opening sonnet of the sequence to "looke in thy heart and write" (14), Anne Ferry claims, "The program of the plain-stylist seems to be advocated in the closing line by Astrophil's Muse, in a tone of frank manliness associated with this poetic preference" (128). Ferry moves on to discuss the ways Sidney's poetic practice documents, and revolves around, troubles with the plain stylist's conviction that what is in the heart can be frankly spoken. I wonder, however, if speaking (or writing) what is in the heart can here or elsewhere in the sequence really be deemed manly or associated with the plain style. Within the humanist circles which enlisted the plain style's strongest advocates, to write extensively of love at all compromised one's masculinity. Furthermore, as Douglas L. Peterson assiduously documents, the plain style grows out of a native English didactic tradition, which emphasizes exploring commonplace wisdom, not expressing

heartfelt emotion.[59] The plain style's honesty to a centered self is the same kind of integrity reflected in the Socratic tag *nosce te ipsum*, a truthfulness opposed to courtly affectation but not necessarily associated with exploring idiosyncratic experience or feelings. How context and subject matter wed themselves to style are also crucial factors. To speak frankly about court affairs while living in stoical retirement, as Wyatt does in the centerpiece of English plain style lyrics, "Myn owne Iohn poyntz," is one thing. To wallow in the unruly passions of one's heart, however, is quite different.

The poem in which Astrophil would seem most explicitly to advocate a plain style is sonnet 51, a poem in which courtliness and humanism coalesce around issues of stylistic decorum. Here Sidney captures another glimpse of the humanist friend, shows Astrophil's alienation from both his friend and from the court, and characterizes Astrophil's already observed indifference to humanist wisdom in terms of a stylistic breach:

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[59] See especially his chapter on "The Medieval Lyric," 9-38.

Pardon mine ears, both I and they do pray,
So may your tongue still fluently proceed,
To them that do such entertainment need,
So may you still have somewhat new to say.
On silly me do not the burthen lay,
Of all the grave conceits your braine doth
breed;
But find some *Hurcules* to beare, in steed
Of *Atlas* tyr'd, your wisedom's heav'nly sway.
For me, while you discourse of courtly tides,
Of cunningst fishers in most troubled
streames,
Of straying wayes, when valiant errour guides:
Meane while my heart confers with *Stella's*
beames,
And is even irkt that so sweet Comedie,
By such unsuted speech should hindred be.

Though the gravity, wisdom and "referentiality" of this interlocutor's speech sets him apart from the courtiers who "would make speech of speech arise" (27.4), the humanist friend offers advice specifically directed at

surviving in the "courtly tides," whose "troubled streames" are filled with "cunningst fishers." Perhaps, as Languet did, and as the counseling friend of *Astrophil and Stella* does in previous sonnets, this friend reprimands Astrophil's own "straying wayes."[60] It is unclear whether or not Astrophil even recognizes that this friendly advice could apply directly to his own case. What is clear is that he shows utter indifference to the parcels of wisdom, cloaked in figures with which he appears familiar enough, a burdensome bag of traditional, manly sagacity.

Although Astrophil's self identification with "*Atlas* tyr'd" in sonnet 51 would seem for once in the sequence to align him with old age, the fact that he lives a comedy encourages us instead to see him as a youth. Comedy, roman comedy at least, was closely associated with boys' education. Educators recommended that boys read expurgated passages from or plays of Plautus and Terrence in the middle forms of grammar school to introduce them to a plain, idiomatic style of

[60] A potentially neutral reading of line 11, where valiant error refers only to the activity of the knight errant, brings up the possibility that Sidney has Spenser in mind here.

Latin. University students also frequently performed comedies, in Latin and sometimes English, during festive occasions. Yet comedy, like poetry generally, possessed a limited utility for counselors and administrators, and was to be supplanted with history, philosophy and oratory as the young man's education progressed. For Astrophil to depict his experiences as a comedy would place him in the idiom not of an expert courtier or wise councilor, but of, to use Ascham's words, "hard fathers, foolish mothers, vnthrifty yong men, craftie seruants, sotle bawdes, and wilie harlots" (*Scholemaster* 284). Comedy is a genre where undisciplined youth confounds patriarchy. Thus, through reference to stylistic decorum, Astrophil advocates not a plain style aligned with manliness, but a generic code associated with boyishness.

In sonnet 51, we are again given a picture of an exterior world that is alienated from Astrophil's interiority. Neither the friend's grave saws nor the dangerous courtly streams hold Astrophil's attention because his "heart confers with *Stella's* beames." I do

not believe it overly ingenious, however, to observe that the lack of maturity that permits Astrophil's self-indulgence also helps to account for his failure fully to develop a stable, unified, interior source of identity, the individual as both unique person and undivided self. When speaking of interior conditions, as Anne Ferry has observed, Astrophil tends to speak of them in ways to insure "divisions are . . . marked between inward states and their literary portrayal" (135). Astrophil does not claim that *he* confers with Stella's eyebeams, but rather that his heart does. This slight shift recurs throughout the sequence, indicating an interior populated with a heart and wits, Cupid, sighs, tears, desire, will and reason, ink and words, knowledge, wealth, and pride, all of which are personified or given an agency apparently beyond the control of, yet contributing to, the speaking "I."

The sense of a provisional and divided boyish interior comes across clearly in Sonnet 19. Here, Astrophil laments his prodigality in wasting intellectual resources and bemoans his helplessness,

linking these faults to youth and a general aura of boyishness. Sonnet 19 reads:

> On *Cupid's* bow how are my heart-strings bent,
> That see my wracke, and yet embrace the same?
> When most I glorie, then I feele most shame:
> I willing run, yet while I run, repent.
> My best wits still their owne disgrace invent:
> My verie inke turnes straight to *Stella's* name;
> And yet my words, as them my pen doth frame,
> Avise themselves that they are vainly spent.
>
> . . .
>
> O let me prop my mind, yet in his growth
> And not in Nature for best fruits unfit:
> 'Scoller,' saith *Love,* 'bend hitherward your wit.'

The poem begins with Astrophil’s admission that he is the boy Cupid's helpless victim, here with another reference to his heart. It also records the division between joy in the useless experience of love and shame at that indulgence: "When most I glorie, then I feel

most shame." The sense of wasting symbolic and personal resources appears not only in Astrophil's admission that his words are "vainly spent," but also in his recognizing the dishonor of his wits, which "their owne *disgrace* invent." However, Astrophil can recover because of his youth, his "mind, yet in his growth," if he can but "prop" that mind. The last line, however, confirms Astrophil's inadequacy for nature's "best fruits." Cupid's tempting the scholar to "bend hitherward your wit" trumps the claim of moral precepts over what Astrophil will term his "young mind marde" in Sonnet 21.

In addition to its rendering of boyish carelessness, the poem suggests a kind of interior monologue without basing it in a recognizably modern self. Astrophil's attempt to prop his mind does not fail because of something with*in* him that overthrows his will, but through the externalized Love god's temptation. Nor does he "say to himself," or "reflect upon the fact," that he wastes his time, knowledge, and skill in writing love poetry or indulging feelings, but

rather his "*words*, as them my pen doth frame,/ Avise them*selves* that they are vainely spent." Once again we witness discordant interior states revealed in third person objects, here words, which have their own agency. The poem represents in a new way a willing spirit crippled by the flesh's weakness, or in Sidney's formulation, the erected wit overcome by an infected will. Lacking the manly discipline to reject Cupid's temptations, Astrophil renders the distinction between his own erected wit and infected will by writing of an immature mind, yet in its growth, both aware of and unable to perform its duty, and at the mercy of unintegrated forces, Cupid, words and ink, at once part of and external to the self.

iii. "with wit my wit is mard"

To this point I have offered a romantic reading of Astrophil and Sidney's passion, perhaps to the point of naively restating an old view of the poems as laying bare Sidney's heart. However, *Astrophil and Stella* does not in any uncomplicated way document Astrophil's

falling upon the thorns of life and bleeding. Jack Stillinger, who threw a wet blanket on the romantic fervor of early twentieth century biographers and critics, warns that the tone of *Astrophil and Stella* is not of that of a helpless lover consumed with passion. Referring, for instance, to Sidney's tendency to use "extravagant or extended conceits" or highly intellectual puns, Stillinger reminds us, "the prevalent tone of *Astrophel and Stella* is one of wit, urbanity, sophistication, and plain good humor" (181). Stillinger further associates the sequence's wit with courtliness (184) and argues that "Sidney is searching his mind, not his heart" (182). Stillinger's view has influenced other critics who see the self-consciousness of the sonnets' implied author dissolving any claims the poems make to passionate sincerity. Speaking of Sonnet 50 ("Stella, the fulnesse of my thoughts of thee/ Cannot be staid within my panting breast"), Tom W. N. Parker has recently asserted, "the knowing pretence of Sonnet 50 that is explicit in the sestet and implicit in the octet—both describing the necessity of his versing, and

producing an example of a poem scheduled for destruction—would make ridiculous his claims to be enslaved by passion at the expense of reason" (49). We appear to have two alternatives: either Sidney was a slave to passion, had consequently lost control of reason and self-restraint, and thus bled ink that happened to form itself into poems, or else he retained control of his faculties, was concerned with writing self-referential poems rather than expressing himself, and therefore composed careful, cleverly wrought poetry.

Stated in these terms the dilemma is of course a false one. Yes, wit does distance Astrophil from his feelings and objectifies them into thought, often through the agency of Petrarchan convention. But the idea that wit and passion are incompatible betrays the lingering effects of what Eliot called the late seventeenth century's "dissociation of sensibility." In a famous passage very much worth repeating, Eliot explains the difference between poetic passages from Herbert of Cherbury and Tennyson:

The difference is not a simple difference of degree between the poets. It is something which happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual poet and the reflective poet. Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thoughts as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking: in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes. (247)

Whatever we may now feel about “the ordinary man’s experience,” to claim that spinning out extravagant conceits disqualifies a claim to genuine feeling would leave us in a lurch when trying to explain "The Canonization" or "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." I do not claim Sidney was an "intellectual poet" in the same way Donne was. Eliot, in fact, found in Sidney's poetry a prior dissociation which Elizabethan dramatists partly and early seventeenth century poets fully overcame. Yet in *Astrophil and Stella* wit combines with feeling in complex and often surprising ways. At times courtly, at times boyish, wit becomes involved in the divided subject's grasping for interiority.

Though Stillinger and others associate Sidney's wit with courtliness, Astrophil's wit often tends toward a more boyish kind. Courtly and boyish wit in the sequence differ in subject matter, but conceptually and rhetorically as well. Courtly wit is directed outward toward a perceived audience and tries to impress them with the poet's or speaker's ingenuity. It tends to be understated and graceful, demonstrating the primary

courtly virtue of *sprezzatura*. Boyish wit, on the other hand, would seem to be aimed at impressing the poet himself, if anyone, or is marked by a sense of indulgence and play as opposed to courtly wit's restraint. Thus courtly wit, like courtly being generally, emerges from the project of constructing oneself for a sophisticated audience. Boyish wit, on the other hand, refers the self back to itself as a source of delight and either ignores or attempts to negate the influence of the "outside world." Sonnets 26 and 63 give a sense of this opposition in practice. Sonnet 26 begins by condemning the "dustie wits" who "dare scorne Astrologie" (1). In the octet, Astrophil articulates the view of "fooles" who believe the great order of the stars, "Promising wonders, wonder to invite" has no cause but "to spangle the blacke weeds of night" (2, 4, 6). Astrophil, on the other hand, knowing "Nature" to be "unidle" (9), recognizes that "those Bodies high raigne on the low" (11). He concludes the poem by offering his proof:

And if these rules did faile, proofe makes me sure,
Who oft fore-judge my after-following race,
By only those two starres in *Stella's* face.
(10-12)

Here, Sidney has carefully managed an argument about the popular topic of astrology both to refreshen the tired Petrarchan eyes/stars conceit and to turn a graceful compliment. Though his argument is neoplatonic, it uses Platonism rhetorically rather than philosophically. In other words, the end is to impress with grace and delicacy rather than to explore the nature of reality. It is a case where, in Frank Whigham's words "the conduct of argument [is] *primarily* epideictic and formal, rather than substantive" (*Ambition* 29). Speaking of *The Courtier*, Whigham comments, "Emilia Pia makes it clear that sheer philosophy is not welcome at Urbino . . ., privileging the incremental value of clear and witty 'good points' over the complex extended structures of good arguments" (*Ambition* 30). There seems to be no intention seriously to justify a micro-

/macro-cosmic vision in this sonnet; rather, the poem uses a fashionable intellectual pursuit to surprise and delight, demonstrating the speaker's graceful nonchalance even, or especially, in the way it takes astrology half-seriously.

Whereas Sonnet 26 displays Astrophil's facility in courtly arts, Sonnet 63 represents a wittiness that has become desperately self-indulgent. Boyish in both subject matter and style, this wit opposes the apparent effortlessness with which Astrophil elsewhere disguises, even in the act of admitting, a deeply interior feeling.

> O Grammer rules, ô now your vertues show;
> So children still reade you with awfull eyes,
> As my young Dove may in your precepts wise
> Her graunt to me, by her owne vertue know.
> For late with heart most high, with eyes most low,
> I crav'd the thing which ever she denies:
> She lightening *Love*, displaying *Venus'* skies,
> Least once should not be heard, twise said, No, No.

Sing then my Muse, now *Io Pean* sing,
Heav'ns envy not at my high triumphing:
But Grammer's force with sweet successe
confirme,
For Grammer sayes (ô this deare *Stella*
weighe,)
For Grammer sayes (to Grammer who sayes nay)
That in one speech two Negatives affirme.

Unlike Sonnet 26, which surprises with its clever turn on an astrological argument, Sonnet 63 does not surprise. By the end of the octet, we know exactly where this argument is going, and the sestet seems to prolong its inevitable conclusion in order to fill the required fourteen lines. The sonnet's wit could also be characterized as boyishly indulgent, the kind of self-consuming cleverness often characteristic of immature writers trying to tell a joke in their writing: the gratuitous parentheses, the "s" alliteration in the sestet, or the belabored repetitions in lines twelve and thirteen, all betoken a writer taking greater pleasure in his cleverness than readers will. In short, the

effort of the “author” (that is, Astrophil, not Sidney) to tell this joke seeps through at every over-written moment.

Beyond mere rhetorical intemperance, however, Astrophil's boyish wit in Sonnet 63 attempts to overcome a reality he is unwilling to confront. In the sonnet's unique "association of sensibilities," adolescent cleverness combines with frantic avoidance of Stella's rebuff to create the unique apprehension, the feeling, of the poem. The poem does not directly tap into the hidden recesses of Astrophil's heart. Rather, in a process diametrically opposed to his disguising feeling under the cloak of acknowledging it in Sonnet 26, Astrophil's attempt to hide his dejection from himself through this disingenuous argument only exposes his despair. The feeling Sidney creates is not a sense of giddy passion, nor of conventional Renaissance love melancholy, but of a quick intellect searching for and unable to find a way out of its hopeless situation. Boyish wit, far from opposing feeling here, makes it more poignant.

If failed wit marks boyish indulgence and woe, too much wit can also engender self-alienation. Part of what makes Sonnet 63 powerful is its feeling of wit-weariness. Sonnet 35 directly addresses this problem in its portrayal of Astrophil's provisional interiority. The first nine lines are a stichomythic dialogue debating the virtue of writing love poetry:

> Come let me write, 'And to what end?' To ease
> A burthened hart. 'How can words ease, which are
> The glasses of thy dayly vexing care?'
> Oft cruell fights well pictured forth do please.

The poem goes on to consider the shame publication could bring, the foolishness the poems will represent to wise men, the improvidence of writing without the intention of publishing, and the difficulty of not writing when in pain. Yet the sonnet's form, more than its content, delineates a self marooned by its own wit. It externalizes thought into a conventional dramatic dialogue, a hybrid of Greek/Senecan stychomithia and the

formal humanist debate.[61] When Keats contemplates anxieties about his poetic vocation, for example in the sonnet "When I have fears that I may cease to be," he represents an undiluted meditation, a single voice marrying speaker and implied author, giving readers the experience of "overhearing" what the poet thinks through the poem's illusory naturalism. In Sidney's Sonnet 35, on the other hand, the dialogue form presents self-doubt in a way that splits the personality of the speaker and distances him from himself. It does this by representing his interior conflict both in two discrete voices and through a conventional form. Yet Astrophil ends up rejecting the wit-burdened form he has created and reflects on the existential damage he has done by outclevering himself:

> Peace, foolish wit, with wit my wit is mard.
> Thus write I while I doubt to write, and wreake
> My harmes on Ink's poore loss, perhaps some find

[61] Altman's discussion of the humanist debate's influence on Renaissance English drama reveals the power and pervasiveness of this form in early modern elite culture.

Stella's great powrs, that so confuse my mind.

(11-14)

In a moving tone shift, the wit and "plain good humor" of the first nine lines are transformed to suffering. At the same time, Sidney now depicts a speaker similar to Keats'. The final lines of the poem reveal a speaker who can no longer maintain the pretense of an exteriorizing illusion and who must silence the discoursing voices in his head, demanding "Peace." Instead, he now presents a spontaneous, sullen, interior meditation. The spontaneity is indicated by the last, syntactically awkward independent clause, "perhaps some find/ *Stella's* great powrs," a conceptually onomatopoeic representation of Astrophil's confused mind.

Sidney's artistry is here more modernist, or perhaps romantic, than Elizabethan. He creates the illusion of unrehearsed contemplation rather than drawing attention to ornament or wit or other rhetorical embellishments. It may be better to say that, from the vantage point of postmodernity, we can witness Sidney's form striving towards a modernist version of

interiority. The majority of the poem still presents a self whose conflicts are external. The last five lines reject that self because it does not honestly reflect Astrophil's emotional experience. In this sense, Sonnet 35 is a microcosm for the sequence as a whole. Over the course of *Astrophil and Stella* the wit, good humor, and urbanity gradually recede, and we begin to glimpse an authentic self hiding behind Astrophil's elaborate personae. As Astrophil's personae become more strained, the sense of a genuine self in pain crystallizes. Nashe, in his preface to the unauthorized 1591 edition of the sequence, called *Astrophil and Stella* a "tragicommody of loue" with an "Epilogue [of] dispaire" (329). Astrophil's despair in the waning songs and sonnets is palpable, but has been prepared for by his careful handling of wit, courtly and especially boyish, to suggest a self both alienated from and striving to claim its own feelings. What causes Astrophil’s gradual self-realization, the breaking of exterior and interior illusions, is Stella.

iv. "*Stella*, I say my *Stella*, should appear"

Astrophil and Stella uses boyishness to counter the competing hegemonic male roles of effeminate courtier and manly counselor. Boyish carelessness and emotional indulgence oppose the counselor's reserve, sobriety and worldliness. Simultaneously, boyishness enables the expression of a heartfelt, childlike emotional honesty opposed to the affectation of a feminized court. In the arena of wit, boyish wit opposes courtly wit in its capacity to express a real feeling of interior despair. It encourages a species of sincerity, the sense of a self in pain, cloaked imperfectly, and struggling to free itself. From a romantic perspective, at least, boyishness animates a virtuous ideal in encouraging an increased capacity for sincerity, or providing the tools for constructing a sense of identity from private experience. If such boyishness results in or from Astrophil's rhetorical failure, specifically his failure to convince Stella to yield to his desire, then that is a price the romantic will pay for authenticity. In one area, however, boyishness clearly leaves Astrophil

inferior to the counselor or courtier, and that is when boyishness leads to childish literalism. Both humanist educational theory generally and *Astrophil and Stella* specifically link dwelling on the surface of an utterance with boyish interpretation. Sidney enables his audience to recognize that Astrophil hears Stella's words but fails to understand what they really mean.

Sonnet criticism in the past twenty years has focused more of its energy on analyzing the ways sonneteers fail to engage their mistresses as people than on any other area. Nancy Vickers' groundbreaking analysis of Petrarch's strategies of silencing, objectifying, dismembering, and circulating Laura has been so influential that the "Vickers model" now constitutes a critical commonplace.[62] I think it is important to break the stranglehold of the Vickers model on our approach to Renaissance love poetry because, as

[62] Vickers' original insights have been mirrored and developed in such classics of gender studies as Eve Sedgewick's *Between Men* and Patricia Parker's *Literary Fat Ladies*. Analyses of specific sonnet sequences, or love lyrics generally, which lean on Vickers' work are by now too numerous to recount, and the model too familiar to require such indexing. I below provide excerpts from two essays by prominent critics which employ versions of the Vickers model.

Ilona Bell makes clear, it causes us to miss too much.[63] This is not to say that when Petrarchists do objectify or silence female love objects we ought to bury our heads in the sand, but rather that we ought to recognize how and where their activity does not neatly fit the model. Such moments often reveal qualities as essential to particular sequences, and maybe even "Petrarchism" generally, as the Vickers model now appears to. In *Astrophil and Stella*, the clearest division between Sidney the implied author and Astrophil appears precisely in their relationship to Stella as a human subject, a subjectivity that Sidney the poet uncovers and Astrophil the character misreads.

Stella's subjectivity is misrecognized not only by Astrophil, but often by critics who rely on the Vickers model as well. In Gary Waller's use of the feminist-

[63] In *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship*, Bell views Renaissance love lyrics as part of a conversation between men and women. Because women were active readers of male produced texts, were often active participants in lyric dialogues, and thus exercised an interpretive power which helped guide revision, Bell argues that women's perspectives are often more prominent than literary critics of the past twenty years have recognized .

Petrarchan commonplace, for instance, Stella recedes from the sequence altogether. He begins by claiming:

> [Stella] occupies the place not of a woman in a love relationship so much as that of the Lacanian Other—assigned a silent, iconic role notable primarily for her absence. She is the given gap in the discourse, an absence which is required for the poem in which 'she' appears to be written at all, and through which the absent but nonetheless determinative cultural pressures which shape the poem may enter. ("Rewriting of Petrarch" 72-73)

All of which leads him to conclude:

> The longer the seemingly confident [?] and autonomous self of the sequence pursues its goal, the less likely it will be materialized, and the less its signifiers point to some expressive or referential context—they point instead only to the discourse in which they begin and end. Not only does the desired woman of the Petrarchan lyric constantly

> recede—her primary function merely to frustrate the final, unreachable guarantee of the identity of the speaker which praises her—but the very structures of the Petrarchan sonnet collections themselves are designed to express the impossibility of closure. ("Rewriting of Petrarch" 75)

To be fair, this is not Waller's best work on *Astrophil and Stella*, but it does reveal the degree to which Petrarchan critical theory can distract critics from the poems they ostensibly analyze.[64] Stella is not silent. Not only does Astrophil indirectly present her views, she speaks directly in the Fourth, Eighth, and Eleventh Songs. Stella does not recede. Indeed, as Nona Fienberg has observed, she becomes, at least until the final section, a more forceful presence as the sequence progresses.

Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass employ a more supple modification of the Vickers model which

[64] See, for example, Waller's "Acts of Reading" for an approach to *Astrophil and Stella* that allows considerably more (though perhaps too much) room for contested interpretations within the sequence.

allows for the possibility that Astrophil actually addresses Stella. While not condemning Stella to the role of icon enabling a self-referential discourse, they too regard her as an essentially silent object mastered and circulated by Astrophil's, to their mind, successful rhetorical strategies:

> The central rhetorical situation in *Astrophil and Stella* is that Astrophil speaks; Stella is the object of his speech. . . . [H]e controls the experience insofar as he articulates it. This is one of the paradoxes of Petrarchan poetry: although the lover depicts himself as a humble suitor to a dominating lady, he actually performs an act of public mastery, demonstrating his virtuosity in the practice of a masculine convention. . . . Praise and blame, like any other version of the lady's conduct, are the properties of the lover-poet, and Astrophil's speeches to the world as well as to Stella can be seen as strategies—however

> subtle and witty—of manipulation and domination. (54-55)

Stallybrass and Jones' writing is not inaccurate. As they point out, the "central rhetorical situation" in the poem lies in Astrophil speaking to or about Stella, though there are important elements which decenter this situation, such as when Stella speaks. Furthermore, depending on how we want to color it, *any* use of rhetoric is an attempt to manipulate. The question of mastery, too, is a complex one. On one level, Astrophil clearly lacks rhetorical mastery—he does not convince Stella to be his lover. More importantly, as I will argue below, *interpretive* mastery is something that is up for grabs in the sequence. Finally, I hope that my analysis to this point at least disrupts the ease with which we can assert that writing sonnets is a *masculine* convention.[65] Elements of what Waller, Jones and

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[65] Gordon Braden has argued that "within its culture, Petrarchism is a venue in which female aspiration is detectably more welcome than elsewhere, and, insofar as informed guessing is possible, probably did more to encourage than to inhibit female literary activity" ("Gaspara Stampa" 118). Furthermore, in his reading of Gaspara Stampa's *Rime d'amore*, Braden finds its "innovativeness is inseparable from Stampa's commitment to Petrarchan convention" rather than

Stallybrass discuss are clearly there in the poems. And it is understandable that, writing in the mid-eighties, these critics chose to focus on factors illuminated by the Vickers model. Taken as a whole, however, the sequence modifies, even undermines, Astrophil's position as master of the Petrarchan rhetorical situation and of Stella. The sequence decenters Astrophil by showing the

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resistance to it ("Gaspara Stampa" 119). Braden focuses almost exclusively on Italy, which in the mid-sixteenth century witnessed an unprecedented flowering of published woman-authored poetry, and thus may not be directly applicable to England. See also his "Applied Petrarchism" for a view of conventional Petrarchism as a genre which could encourage a fruitful heterosexual mutuality in "real world" erotic relationships. For a view of Stampa's poetry as resisting masculinist Petrarchan convention, see Schiesari, to which Braden often responds directly.

In general, what Stallybrass and Jones here say of Astrophil could be said of female Petrarchists, including Sidney's niece Mary Wroth. Pamphilia speaks, Amphilanthus is the object of her speech, and she praises and blames him. I would be uncomfortable, however, claiming that Wroth demonstrates mastery of a masculine convention or that she manipulates and dominates Amphilanthus, claims which do not at all capture the feel of her sonnets. In fact, Jones' analysis of Wroth's strategies in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* uses recognizably less invidious language than her collaborative analysis of Sidney's. Finding the sonnets to be "strategic attempts to rewrite her disgrace," Jones claims that Wroth "stages Pamphilia's captivity as a spectacle through which she resists her own disappearance into the categories of failed courtier and silenced woman," using Petrarchism to subvert cultural forces aligned against her as a woman (137). Sidney, as I have been arguing, engages in similar kinds of resistance both to the court and to patriarchal culture in his sonnets.

ways his boyish misinterpretation of Stella's discourse ignores the real Stella.

In its early phases, *Astrophil and Stella* does appear to engage in the kinds of objectifying strategies femininst influenced Petrarchan critics denounce. Astrophil speaks of Stella's influence over him and praises her as a beautiful but unreceptive woman. His physical descriptions, moreover, do little to set her apart from catalogues of other sonnet mistresses. Even Stella's black eyes, which typically shine like stars, find their precedent in Petrarch's Laura. Stella is blazoned frequently, even grotesquely, as in Sonnet 9:

> Queen *Vertue's* court, which some call *Stella's* face,
> Prepar'd by Nature's chiefest furniture,
> Hath his front built of Alabaster pure;
> Gold is the covering of that stately place.
> The doore by which sometimes comes forth her Grace,

> Red Porphir is, which locke of pearle makes sure:
> Whose porches rich (which name of cheeks endure)
> Marble mixt red and white do enterlace. (9.1-8)

Astrophil has screwed the objectifying potential of the blazon to its sticking place. The comparison of Stella's cheeks to marble or her lips to red porphir not only cannot express anything individual about Stella's appearance (let alone her mind), but they are also alienated from a general feeling of the body's texture. Astrophil's metaphors hold together only through the rigor with which he elaborates his conceit. In this poem, Stella is indeed the occasion for Astrophil's display of witty ingenuity, as Jones and Stallybrass claim, the silent icon in Waller's self-referential Petrarchan discourse.

As the sequence proceeds, however, Stella begins to come into focus. We first hear of Stella's voice in a group of two sonnets, 57 and 58, where Astrophil

considers the irony that Stella's ability to sing his woeful songs beautifully transforms them into delightful measures. In Sonnet 57 he explains the poetic programme of his sonnet sequence, hoping to find

> The thorowest words, fit for woe's self to grone,
> Hoping that when they might find *Stella* alone,
> Before she could prepare to be unkind,
> Her soule, arm'd but with such a dainty rind,
> Should soone be pierc'd with sharpnesse of the mone. (4-9)

Despite its expressive basis, Astrophil's poetic has a clear rhetorical orientation—he intends to create a specific effect, and affect, in Stella. Yet when Stella sings his sonnets, both the direction and intention are reversed:

> She heard my plaints, and did not only heare,
> But them (so sweete is she) most sweetly sing,
> With that faire breast making woe's darknesse cleare:
> A pretty case! I hoped her to bring

To feele my griefes, and she with face and
voice
So sweets my paines, that my paines me
rejoyce. (9-14)

In this sonnet Stella's subjectivity begins to arise. True, the voice can be, and in this sonnet partially is, fetishized like other body parts. Yet here, Stella's voice has the power to transform Astrophil's writing. Like the female Renaissance readers Ilona Bell refers us to, Stella actively interprets, one might even say strongly misreads, Astrophil's poems. In a move that mirrors the objectifying gesture of the Petrarchist, Stella ignores authorial intention, and therefore its subjective origin. Yet the nature of her misinterpretation reveals something of her approach to Astrophil's love, for it is consistent with her rejecting his suit, at first gently, then ever more forcefully.

Where the voice/singing sonnets establish the power of Stella's unfixed voice singing Astrophil's songs, we soon witness Stella generating her own words. Astrophil

first indirectly presents her rebuffing his advances and attempting to redirect his carnal love in a spiritual direction:

> But this at last is her sweet breath'd defence:
> That who indeed infelt affection beares,
> So captives to his Saint both soule and sense,
> That wholly hers, all selfnesse he forebeares,
> Thence his desires he learnes, his live's course thence.
> Now since her chast mind hates this love in me,
> With chastned mind, I straight must shew that she
> Shall quickly me from what she hates remove. (61.4-11)

We may here have an intensely spiritual woman who, while feeling a strong attraction to Astrophil, insists that they keep their relationship strictly, and literally, platonic. Yet I cannot help feeling, in the light of the entire sequence, that such a literal interpretation

misses the point. Stella's response to Astrophil should be familiar enough to anyone who has been on either side of an unrequited love relationship. Astrophil feels a passionate love for Stella. She, though she does not hate him, feels no such strong feelings. Stella is neither a nun nor a platonic priestess, but a regular flesh and blood person. Here, attempting to deny Astrophil without shattering his obviously frail ego, she tells him, in effect, "I love you, but not in that way." She does so in an appropriate courtly fashion, establishing an elaborate neoplatonic artifice based upon the Petrarchan conventions of Astrophil's own genre in order to speak obliquely. An acute rhetor herself, Stella takes advantage of the assumptions underlying Astrophil's language in her attempt to dissuade him, a rhetorical strategy neither more nor less manipulative, though perhaps more subtle and ingenious, than Astrophil's. Were he to interpret her cues properly, he would understand Stella's intention, and would come to appreciate, as the audience for this sequence should,

Stella's full, though "culturally marginalized," subjectivity.[66]

But Astrophil takes Stella literally, and his failure to discern the true meaning behind words, his tendency to linger on the surface and not penetrate meaning, is a boyish form of interpretation. In earlier lamenting the "boyish kind" with which love "proceed[s] in [his] most serious wayes," Astrophil compares Cupid to a child who, when he

> some faire booke doth find,
> With guilded leaves or colourd Velume playes,
> Or at the most on some fine picture stayes,
> But never heeds the fruit of writer's mind.
> (11.2-3;5-8)

[66] The phrase is Fienberg's (13). Fienberg discusses the ways Stella takes advantage of the rhetorical strategies left her as a woman in a society which enforces female silence, claiming that "the speaker . . . thematizes the difficulty of writing and of understanding the gaps, those alternative discourses through which culturally marginalized groups communicate" (12-13). In ways, however, the need of women to communicate "in the gaps" mirrors the dominant, oblique mode of courtly rhetoric. Stella's rhetoric, therefore, is *both* the communication available to her as a member of a marginalized group *and* the mode of communication practiced by members of the culturally dominant group. This remarkable coincidence helps to account for humanist reactions to the court as effeminate.

Distracted by fair outward shows, boys fail to grapple with the real matter of books. Similarly distracted by Stella's fair protestations of love, Astrophil ignores the person attempting to dissuade him from his suit. Where Astrophil, were he to display either courtly skill or manly wisdom, should play Stella's game as he gradually disengages pursuit, he instead boyishly interprets her comments as cause for hope. "O Joy" he cries in Sonnet 69, rejoicing that the "winter of my miserie" is over because

> *Stella* hath with words where faith doth shine,
> Of her high heart giv'n me the monarchie:
> I, I, ô I may say, that she is mine.
> And though she give but thus conditionaly
> This realme of blisse, while vertuous course I take,
> No kings be crown'd but they some covenants make. (69.1;7;9-14)

Astrophil's celebratory ejaculations ("I, I ô I may say") echo the grammar rules sonnet's manic "*Io pean* sing." Most readers will know what Astrophil fails to

recognize—the conditions, not the fact giving of her heart, are Stella's real point.

Astrophil can only maintain the pretense that boyish interpretation of Stella's communications enables for so long, however. Stella comes to recognize that Astrophil is not getting the message, and she begins to become more explicit. Her looks turn cold in sonnet 86, with the result that Astrophil spews bitter invective at her in the *Fift song*, condemning her in successive stanzas as thief, murderer, tyrant, rebel, a vagabond, a witch and a devil. Even at this point, however, Astrophil holds onto his false hope, rejoining that if Stella will "mend [her] froward mind" he will metamorphose "these cruell words [into] praises" (88;90). The *Fift Song* opens a sequence of five songs, the longest song break in the sonnet sequence and its narrative climax. In the *Eighth song*, as she had in the *Fourth*, Stella speaks directly, responding to Astrophil's renewed attempt to seduce her. The poem introduces Astrophil and Stella through the agency of a third person narrator and thereby achieves a narrative

distance not found elsewhere in the sequence. The narrator's presentation of the lovers would seem to confirm Astrophil's hopeful interpretation of Stella's desire:

> *Astrophil* with *Stella* sweete,
> Did for mutual comfort meete,
> Both within themselves oppressed,
> But each in the other blessed.
>
> Him great harmes had taught much care,
> Her faire necke a foule yoke bare,
> But her sight his cares did banish,
> In his sight her yoke did vanish. (5-12)

Despite the narrator's optimistic portrayal of the encounter, however, Astrophil and Stella's conversation ends up yielding not "mutual comfort," but rather Stella's definitive rejection of Astrophil's continued suit.

Astrophil employs both standard Petrarchan rhetoric in praising Stella ("*Stella*, in whose shining eyes,/ Are the lights of *Cupid's* skies,/ Whose beams, where they

once are darted,/ Love therewith is streight imparted" (33-36)) and the *carpe diem* argument he had used in the *Fourth song*. We then hear Stella respond directly to Astrophil's Petrarchan assault. In her response, Stella uses the utmost delicacy, asserting that she loves Astrophil as much as he loves her, but cannot yield because of her honor. Stella again cleverly redeploys the standard Petrarchan conceits to simultaneously assert her love for Astrophil and reject his advances. At one point, she even subtly ironizes Petrarchan presumption in the process:

> If those eyes you praised, be
> Half so deere as you to me,
> Let me home return, starke blinded
> Of those eyes, and blinder minded.

Stella tells Astrophil that he is more precious to her than her eyes are to him. And insofar as Astrophil's praise of her eyes is unevenly inspired Petrarchan pabulum, she is surely right. Furthermore, the disjunction between standard Petrarchan eye-praise and the grotesque implications of Stella having her eyes

gouged out is, to put it mildly, unsettling. After getting in a subtle jab at lovers' rhetoric, Stella ends the conversation by demanding, albeit gently, that Astrophil stop courting her:

> Trust me while I thee deny,
> In my selfe the smart I try,
> Tyran honour doth thus use thee,
> *Stella's* selfe might not refuse thee.
>
> Therefore, Deere, this no more move,
> Least, though I leave not thy love,
> Which too deep in me is framed,
> I should blush when thou art named. (93-100)

Unlike Stella's earlier responses, especially in Sonnets 61 and 69, which couched rejection in the idiom of a continued courtship, this response attempts to shelter Astrophil's frail ego while clearly requesting that he disengage pursuit. The emotional devastation Astrophil's final acknowledgement of Stella's rejection causes is recorded in the way the narrative frame's third person pretense breaks down in the final stanza:

Therewithall away she went,

Leaving him so passion rent,

With what she had done and spoken,

That therewith my song is broken. (101-04)

The final line's "my" collapses the third person narrator, Sidney the author, and the poet Astrophil. To reread the narrative frame at this point is to recognize that the narrator's point of view, his interpretation of the couple's actions and their meaning, has all along been Astrophil's, even down to noting Stella's "faire necke." Retrospectively, then, the poem creates the effect of an emotional experience so devastating to Astrophil that he must employ the third person narrative to enable distance, like a child who tells the story of a traumatic personal event by using puppets.

Although the distancing technique of the *Eighth song* reveals the despair that Astrophil's adolescent approach to love leaves him subject to, it simultaneously shows Astrophil overcoming his boyish interpretation of Stella's response, recognizing her personhood, and coming to terms with his situation. In

the rest of the sequence, the adolescent mania characteristic of previous sonnets yields to consistent sullenness. The Anacreontic cupid appears only once more, briefly at the end of Sonnet 102, itself the only remaining poem that ends on a hopeful, or at least nondespairing, note. There are no more school-related references. The only remaining reference to Astrophil's youth appears in Sonnet 90 when he insists he is not "so ambitious . . . as to frame/ A nest for my yong praise in Lawrell tree" (5-6). The boyish tenor of the sequence has shifted, and Astrophil no longer relies on images of youthful inexperience to excuse, enable, or validate his emotional self-indulgence.

Astrophil no longer clings to false hope, yet he cannot stop loving Stella. There is little in the rest of the sequence to relieve its sense of brooding sadness, and Astrophil's language grows more pathetic, as when he claims he will be thankful when his heart breaks at the end of Sonnet 95, or when he ends sonnet 98 by finding it unjust "That wormes should have their Sun, and I want mine" (14). In the *Eleventh song*

Astrophil appears under Stella's window, this time clearly not hoping, as he did in the *Eighth song*, to convince Stella to yield to him, but rather because he simply cannot bear her absence. She becomes even more direct with him than she had before, no longer insisting that she loves him, telling him that "in absence" his love "will dy" (11), and even growing short with him, "Peace, I thinke that some give eare:/ Come no more, least I get anger" (36-37). Though he understands that she will never love him, Astrophil still cannot bear her absence. Having abandoned hope of ever becoming her lover, Astrophil now hopes only to see her, and in Sonnet 106 laments:

> O absent presence *Stella* is not here;
> False flattering hope, that with so faire a face,
> Bare me in hand, that in this Orphane place,
> *Stella*, I say my *Stella*, should appeare. (1-4)

But Stella has appeared in the sonnet sequence, and her appearance, and insistence on speaking her mind until

Astrophil finally comes to recognize what she is saying, has initiated the slow, painful process of Astrophil learning to cope with his unrequited love.

Boyishness leads Astrophil away from the masculine, humanist demands to be pragmatic and to ignore an inner self. But boyish self indulgence also leads him away from a mature contact with other people, be they manly humanist friends, effeminate courtiers, or Stella herself. Stella is the one person who can lead Astrophil out of his self indulgence. We do not witness the full development of a mature personhood that incorporates both the boy and the man—one that both establishes itself on the boyish values of self-directed interiority, existential experience, even play, and also recognizes the manly value of negotiating with other people, a recognition Stella has forced upon him where his humanist friend and the courtly nymphs had failed. Astrophil's final calm sadness at the end of the sequence leaves him on the brink of such an identity formation without providing his audience a definite

program for achieving the next step. But readers, male and female, who have suffered with Astrophil and who admire his complex wit while still maintaining a critical distance from his blindness may already have achieved what Astrophil leaves unfinished.

Chapter 5: Masculinity and the Mighty Line: Humanism, Neoplatonism and Charisma in *Tamburlaine, Part One*

In reading *Tamburlaine* as a brutally accurate portrayal of warrior masculinity, Alan Shepard argues that because the play's soldiers "worry especially that 'masculinity' may not be a correlative of 'natural' aggression but a category constructed by language and so subject to its vicissitudes," they continuously engage in genocidal violence to reaffirm this unstable masculinity (744). Indeed, Tamburlaine is a "hypermasculine" character leading "soldier-males" in campaigns of violent aggression, though not without resistance from figures (Agydas, Calyphas and Olympia) "who explicitly renounce male hegemony and thus subvert the violent frame of mind enjoined by Tamburlaine and his comrades" (734-35). Sara Munson Deats likewise sees Tamburlaine as the epitome of warrior masculinity, and argues that the delight audiences might take in Marlowe's title character is, if not sadistic, then at

least stereotypically masculine. Deats like Shepard finds a different point of view upheld by characters who resist, however provisionally, Tamburlaine's oppression, concluding that the play is a "masterpiece of indeterminacy" in not choosing between its masculinist and feminist perspectives (161). Shepard and Deats most explicitly articulate a general sentiment about Tamburlaine's masculinity that seems to undergird much recent analysis. When C. L. Barber complains of Tamburlaine's "homosexual sadism," or Kimberly Benston celebrates "his sword" as "the creative principle of agonistic eloquence," we catch another glimpse of a predilection to see in Tamburlaine the epitome of a particularly ruthless kind of masculinity (72; 207).

An older generation of critics, however, recognized something unmasculine in the play's and in Tamburlaine's ambitions. Claims that the play's charm lies in its irrepressible adolescence present a fascinating counterpoint to critical insistence on Tamburlaine's domineering masculinity. Una M. Ellis-Fermor, in asserting that "to understand Marlowe demands eternal

youth," finds this proposition to be "peculiarly true of *Tamburlaine*" whose title character "is built in proud defiance of all that the accumulated wisdom of the ages has declared to be the lot of man" (133). And Ethel Seaton finds in the Second Part "a final effervescence of boyishness, of satisfaction in youthful cleverness" (186).[67] Rather than regarding Tamburlaine as the archetype of masculinity, Seaton and Ellis-Fermor suggest that the imaginative delight informing Marlowe's remarkable early drama is diametrically opposed to the wisdom and reserve of mature, masculine thought, what I have termed English humanism's new manliness. *Tamburlaine*, for Seaton and especially Ellis-Fermor, displays the advantages of boyishness over manliness.

Critical discussion of Tamburlanean masculinity leaves us with an apparent contradiction: Tamburlaine is masculine because violent, aggressive and imperialistic; Tamburlaine is boyish because enthusiastically imaginative and idealistic. I will argue that these

[67] It is striking that two of the most rapt aficionados of *Tamburlaine*'s youthful exuberance were women writing at a time before feminism had become an established literary-critical praxis.

seemingly opposed readings can be justified with each other not only in terms of *Tamburlaine*'s impact on twentieth century readers, but historically for sixteenth century England as well. For in *Tamburlaine* Marlowe negotiates between two mentalities, humanism and Neoplatonism, that within England's ascendant bureaucratic ideology were represented as, respectively, manly and unmanly. In depicting Tamburlaine's masculinity Marlowe defends Neoplatonism against northern humanism. Tamburlaine thinks with the soaring imagination of the neoplatonist. Yet, such imaginative indulgence was considered unmanly by English humanism, which associated masculinity with pragmatic thought that encouraged a worldly and politically oriented *vita activa*. As I argued in Chapter One, the epitome of Renaissance England's emerging humanist/bureaucratic masculinity is found in the figure of the sober, discreet counselor, master of an efficient moral, linguistic and, increasingly, fiscal economy. Tamburlaine masculinizes Neoplatonism by substituting worldly endeavor and politics for unobservable spiritual

noumena as the objects of his thought. He thus thinks *like* a neoplatonist *about* objects that were appropriate objects of masculine thought in English humanist discourse.

This thesis becomes complicated when we introduce poetic style into the equation. Nonetheless, poetic language is central to the appeal and effects of the play, reflecting Tamburlaine's peculiar mental activity. English humanism encouraged practical, useful poetic styles, best evidenced in the concluding couplet, a verse form that enabled easy memorization and lent itself to aphoristic expression. Marlowe's blank verse, in its expansive movement, mirrors and produces the restless activity of the neoplatonic imagination. In proving more powerful than other verse forms, Marlowe's mighty line demonstrates the masculine superiority of the imagination over the practical mind. I therefore draw a parallel between verse and thought or conception, a parallel endorsed by Renaissance poetics. Marlowe's blank verse trumps the cramped conception of humanist rhetoric—at once *inventio*, *dispositio* and *eloquentia*—but

only because Tamburlaine can orient his grand thought toward worldly, imperial ambitions, actualizing a masculinity subversive of the patriarchal institutions English humanism sought to augment.[68]

i. Masculine Eloquence and Masculine Fancy

Samuel Daniel's humanist influenced verse dialogue *Musophilus* displays the fruit of the northern humanist mandate that education should equip the practicing politician with tools for his trade, aligning that

[68] I here regard northern humanism and humanist rhetoric as supportive of English patriarchy, though the degree to which humanism and its rhetoric was a progressive or conservative force has been debated vigorously. As Wayne Rebhorn has demonstrated, rhetoricians tended to present their art as a necessary adjunct to existing power structures, though they recognized and attempted to stave off the destabilizing implications of their claims to rhetoric's absolute power. Furthermore, because humanist rhetoric encouraged open debate of seemingly dangerous questions regarding the traditional privileges of the aristocracy or the new privileges of the Tudor monarchs (themselves cloaked in traditional justifications), humanist rhetoric would appear at least to open space for dissent regarding certain assumptions underpinning early modern patriarchy. (Altman offers Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres* as a paradigm for this sort of open questioning of aristocratic privilege, 18-25. See also his reading of *Gorboduc* as seriously questioning the rule of primogeniture, 249-59.). However, even while attempting to clear space for certain "heterodox" opinions, humanism tended to ground challenges to early modern orthodoxy upon assumptions fully in tune with early modern English patriarchy, as my reading of *Musophilus*, below, suggests.

practical utility with manliness.[69] Reiterating themes prevalent throughout the sixteenth century, *Musophilus* takes the form of a debate between Philocosmus (world-lover) and Musophilus (lover of the muses) over the utility of eloquence. Philocosmus criticizes poetry and other clerkish pursuits because they are insubstantial and powerless in a world of action, displaying that pattern of prodigality Helgerson deftly analyzes:[70]

> Fond man *Musophilus*, that thus dost spend,
> In an vngainefull Arte thy deerest dayes,
> Tyring thy wits, and toyling to no end,
> But to attaine that idle smoake of Praise :
> Now when this busie world cannot attend

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[69] The analysis I here offer of *Musophilus* is quite close to Klein's. Klein regards Daniel as having followed Sidney in ending up making very modest claims for the power and proper use of poetry, and I would follow her in stressing that Daniel accents the power of *eloquence*, his views of poetry being much more limited. See 161-62, 166-67. For Klein's novel approach to Sidney's *Defense*, see 39-68.

[70] In *Elizabethan Prodigals*, Helgerson argues that Elizabethan images of prodigality tended to refer more directly to wasting one's intellectual resources than to wasting money. While older Elizabethans used prodigal son stories as moral exempla meant to teach respect for father figures and to display the justice of their wisdom, Helgerson demonstrates that the Elizabethan younger generation tended to identify more closely with the figure of the prodigal than their elders would have intended. For a similar view of the Elizabethan younger generation's anti-authoritarian temper, see Esler.

Th'vntimely Musicke of neglected layes.

Other delights then these, other desires

This wiser profit-seeking Age requires. (6-13)

Philocosmus proceeds to argue that action demands "More Artes then those wherin you Clerkes proceede" (489), that too much education leaves one "timorous" (490), and that "sweet inchaunting Knowledge" distracts scholar-poets from their proper engagement with the world (494), concluding, "This skill, wherewith you haue so cunning beene,/ Vnsinues all your powres, *vnmans* you quite" (498-99; my emphasis). Though Philocosmus' view is not, ultimately, the view this humanist dialogue adopts, he expresses Elizabethan commonplaces about the emasculated thinker unable to engage the world. At least as interesting as Philocosmus' charges, however, is Musophilus' response. Musophilus claims that learning has fallen into disrepute because government offices are awarded corruptly to the highest bidder rather than to the most learned man. Were offices awarded based on merit, scholars would show that "true knowledge can both speake and do" and would "make men see the weapons of

the minde/ Are States best strengths, and kingdomes chiefest grace" (836; 841-42). Indeed, Musophilus observes, "No state stands sure, but on the grounds of Right,/ Of Vertue, Knowledge, Iudgement to preserve,/ And all the powres of Learning requisite" (922-24). Focusing his attention on eloquence, Musophilus calls it the "Powre aboue powres" more potent "then all [men's] swords" (939; 942). Indeed, "one poore pen" is greater than "all the powres of Princes" (945-46). In his retort, Musophilus accepts Philocosmus' warrant, that a proper, manly art is one directed toward political action, and argues that the study of (English) eloquence is such an art. Daniel's dialogue is the product of humanist ideas dating back at least to the time of More and Erasmus. To practice a form of eloquence that has no measurable earthly effects unsinews masculinity.

Humanist influenced dialogues over matters such as eloquence, education and politics reveal a degree of real, open debate about how useful such pursuits could be. As such, they are part of that humanist *inventio* through *controversia* that many critics have discussed in

terms of its skeptical, open-ended approach to exploring problems. Thomas O. Sloane, for instance, contends that in learning to argue *in utramque partem* humanists learned to gain perspective on problems and became more willing to consider unorthodox viewpoints.[71] Such scholars therefore stress humanist rhetoric's open nature, as opposed to the closed nature of, say, *gnosis*. However, as the example of Daniel's dialogue demonstrates, while *controversia* did create a fairly open field of opinion, it could at the same time close off questions about the assumptions underlying debate. To use Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, it closed the gap between heterodoxy and orthodoxy while leaving doxa intact. Distinguishing doxa from a field of opinion, which includes heterodox and orthodox viewpoints, Bourdieu explains, "It is by reference to the universe

[71] For a similar view of humanist rhetoric's relationship to skepticism, see Kahn and Altman. For a dissenting view, which argues that Renaissance rhetoricians "stress [rhetoric's] power above all else, specifically the power . . . to control the will and desire of the audience," see Rebhorn (15). Rebhorn also distinguishes Renaissance rhetoric from classical rhetoric as (self-promotedly, at least) imperial rather than persuasive, allowing the rhetor direct control over his audience, a view which accords with Musophilus' characterization of eloquence.

of opinion that the complementary class is defined, the class of that which is taken for granted, doxa, the sum total of the theses tacitly posited on the hither side of all inquiry" (168). Neither Philocosmos nor Musophilus speaks with the voice of absolute authority, so neither point of view can legitimately be called orthodox (nor, as a result, heterodox.) However, their approach to the question of whether or not eloquence is manly is simultaneously a question about whether or not it is pragmatic. The possibility that eloquence is manly because it is useless is not thinkable in this debate. That which is useful is masculine, and unprofitable intellectual labor unmans him who performs it.

But the Platonic ideal, reinvigorated by Marsilio Ficino's Florentine Academy, was precisely such unproductive labor. In Ficino's system, most fully elaborated in his *Theologica Platonica*, the noblest human aspiration lay in honing one's interior experience to such a degree that the world would, for a time, melt away while one directly experienced higher forms of

being. Paul Kristeller, the most careful twentieth century reader of Ficino as a systematic philosopher, characterizes internal experience as

> a heightened state of mind, experienced independently of and even in opposition to all outward events, bearing in itself its own certainty and having in turn an influence on the form and interpretation of all our other experiences. (206)

Akin to mysticism, internal experience encourages imaginative striving toward the infinite, for the mind of man kindled with a desire for divinity is never satisfied with any finite thing (Ficino, 201). Florentine Platonism thus elaborated an ideal of philosophical *otium* that was tied to developing an expansive mentalism.

Because of their distinct views on the pragmatics of knowledge, Florentine Platonism and English humanism were sharply divided over the question of whether or not a proper piety should lead to immersion in secular, temporal affairs. According to Ficino, it is possible

(though something few people achieve) to come into direct contact with the divine while on earth, and the ecstatic contemplative moment adumbrates the afterlife (Kristeller, 226-27). Ficino expresses the nature of this ecstatic moment through a significant maritime metaphor:

> Animus autem rei nullius possessione, tam uehementer, tam pure, tam firmiter gaudet, quantum uel exigua qualibet speculationis diuinae gustatione, pro qua, si quando uere persentiatur, & possessio omnis, & mundus totus, & uita contemnitur. Quisquis enim pie nonnunquam cum Deo uiuit, is clamat se tunc sulum in uita & a malis uixisse semotum, & boni aliquid gustauisse, quasi duntaxat in suum se portum receperit.
>
> [The soul delights in no possession so furiously, so purely, so constantly, as in stealing even a small glance of the divine, through which, if in truth it is ever deeply

> perceived, every possession, and the whole world, and life are condemned. Therefore whoever lives piously with God at some time proclaims that only at that time in his life has he confined himself remote from evils, and savored something of the good, *as if he had no less than retreated into his own haven*.][72]

Ficino locates the highest, noblest human achievement in a contemplative rapture that isolates man from the fallen world, like the sailor who refuses to leave his haven (*portum*). Thomas Starkey, in his *Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset* (1533), uses the same nautical metaphor to different effect:

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[72] My emphasis. I have rendered "speculationis diuinae gustatione" as "stealing a glance of the divine," though "the enjoyment of divine speculation" might seem more direct. While "speculation" characterizes the mental nature of the experience better than my translation, it suggests an element of doubt and a process of logical reasoning not present in Ficino. Divine speculation in Ficino means metaphorically looking into or at (*speculare*, to spy) the divine. It is a real experience, or better, an experience *of* something real, with a firm ontological basis in Ficino's platonic hierarchy of forms, of levels of reality (in Plotinus, *hypostases*). For a nominalist, like Scotus, ideas are literally insubstantial, for reality exists only in particular things. Ficino, a realist like Plato, believes that higher forms of reality, ideas, have real existence, and that human beings can come into contact with them insofar as we can shed our material nature, the binds that tie us to the hypostases of Matter and Quality.

> [M]any men of gret wysdome & verture, flye from hyt [wealth and worldly involvement], setting themselfe in relygyouse housys ther quietly to serve god & kepe theyr myndys upright with les jeopardy, wych thing surely ys not a mys downe of them, wych perceive theyr owne imbecyllytye & wekenes prone & redy to be oppressyd & over throwne, with thes camme & quyat plesurs of the world, by whome they see the most parte of mankind drownyd & overcomyn, how be hyt me semyth they dow lyke to fereful schypmen, wych for drede of stormys & trowblus sees kepe themselfe in the haven. (29)

In the English context, the *vita contemplativa*, whether the rigorously ritualized life of medieval monks or the imaginatively ambitious otherworldliness of Florentine neoplatonists, betokens weakness and cowardice. Masculine shipmen will not shun worldly involvement, but will show pluck in negotiating the stormy seas of the *vita activa*.

The imagination itself, however, did not suffer from an inherent effeminacy in the minds of all Englishmen. Where Daniel's *Musophilus* argues for the pragmatic masculinity of eloquence, Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* makes a similar case for the masculinity of a properly oriented imagination, arguing against the tendency to align poets with philosophers as indulging in useless fantasy.[73] Puttenham presents an invidious representation of a common opinion: "among men such as be modest and graue, and of litle conuersation, nor delighted in the busie life and vayne ridiculous actions of the popular, they call him in scorne a *Philosopher* or *Poet*, as much to say as a phantasticall man" (34). Though he argues against this opinion,

[73] Insofar as they can be distinguished, Puttenham would clearly fall within a courtly rather than humanist camp. However, that a "courtly" writer would share a degree of disdain for Platonism and argue for the masculinity of a pragmatic imagination only reinforces my argument that these were pervasive prejudices in the sixteenth century. For a comparison of Puttenham's "courtly" to Scaliger's "humanist" poetics, see Plett. However, Plett sees Scaliger "reflect[ing] the socio-political abstinence espoused by those humanists who preferred knowledge to concrete action," a preference I follow Margot Todd in arguing was *not* a characteristic of northern humanism.

Puttenham shows that among the Duke Theseuses of early modern England not only lunatics, lovers and poets, but philosophers as well are of imagination all compact. In response, Puttenham argues that all good poets display pragmatic capabilities. He distinguishes between two types of imagination: a false and a true. Like mirrors, which display either refined or distorted objects:

> Euen so is the phantasticall part of man (if it be not disordered) a representer of the best, most comely and bewtifull images or appearances of thinges to the soule and according to their very truth. If otherwise, then doth it breed *Chimeres* and monsters in mans imaginations, and not onely in his imaginations, but also in all his ordinarie actions and life which ensues. Wherefore such persons as be illuminated with the brightest irradiations of knowledge of the veritie and due proportion of things, they are called by the learned men not *phanastici* but *euphantasiote*, and of this sort of phantasie

> are all good Poets, notable Captaines stratagematique, all cunning artificers and enginers, all Legislators Polititiens and Counsellours of estate, in whose exercises the inuentiue part is most employed and is to the sound and true judgement of man most needful. (35)

For Puttenham, a healthy imagination is common to poets and those masculine practitioners of the *vita activa*—engineers, military captains, parliamentarians, politicians and counselors—northern humanists established as their ideal figures. In writing a courtly text, Puttenham finds himself on the defensive against humanist charges, and defends himself in humanist terms. He does not brush off the charge, does not say that poetic imagination is a sign of worth and taste, that it is the intellectual equivalent of hawking and blowing the horn, but says that it is pragmatic.

Though Puttenham argues that poets' imaginations are as pragmatic as engineers' and statesmen's, he does recognize people in whom the imagination is distorted

and who deserve the label "phantastici," among them Platonists. Puttenham begins his treatise by making what might at first appear to be the familiar neoplatonic argument that man expresses his divinity in the act of imitating God's powers of creation. Yet he swears off the metaphysical implications of the analogy even as he makes it. After defining the poet as "a maker," rooting “poet” etymologically in Greek *poiein*, Puttenham says, "Such as (by way of resemblance and reverently) we may say of God: who without any trauell to his diuine imagination, made all the world of nought, nor also by any paterne or mould as the Platonicks with their Idees do phantastically suppose" (19). Puttenham's language here is a kind of short-hand, and he is doing more than simply voicing an opinion about platonic ontology. This comment appears at the very beginning of his treatise written about an art form that he later points out has won the reputation of being the product of fantastical minds itself. Puttenham thus makes a case for poetry by distancing it from the absurd

fantasy he knows his contemporaries associate with platonic philosophers.

ii. Masculine Poetics

As the work of Daniel and Puttenham demonstrate, English intellectuals recognized a masculine potential in both the imagination and in eloquence insofar as they could be put to practical ends. To indulge in either without an immediate worldly goal, however, left one open to charges of effeminacy, cowardice and foolishness. Masculinity resides in the ability to engage with and profit in this world. The masculine spirit of English Renaissance elites realized itself in its relation to a specific conception of political life. This is more than to say that men were encouraged to *lead* an active life, but also that manliness exhibited itself in *thinking* an active life. Elizabethans could join ranks with Italian Platonists and contemplate ideas divorced from this ideological object, but to do so made one boyish, a lover, a philosopher, effeminate, unsinewed his powers. (See Figure 5.1) Humanist

education therefore sought to provide men with a store of useful information, attitudes, and ideas they could draw upon to approach and to solve the kinds of problems counselors, ambassadors, parliamentarians and justices would face in executing their duties. In matters of eloquence, humanists relied upon the idea of a unity between language, thought and ethics to advocate a practical eloquence that would shore up morals and promote good judgment. In matters of poetic style, the humanist emphasis on practical eloquence led to the advancement of verse forms, especially the couplet, that invited compression and encouraged aphoristic thought. It would be a stretch to say that Englishmen self-consciously recognized the couplet

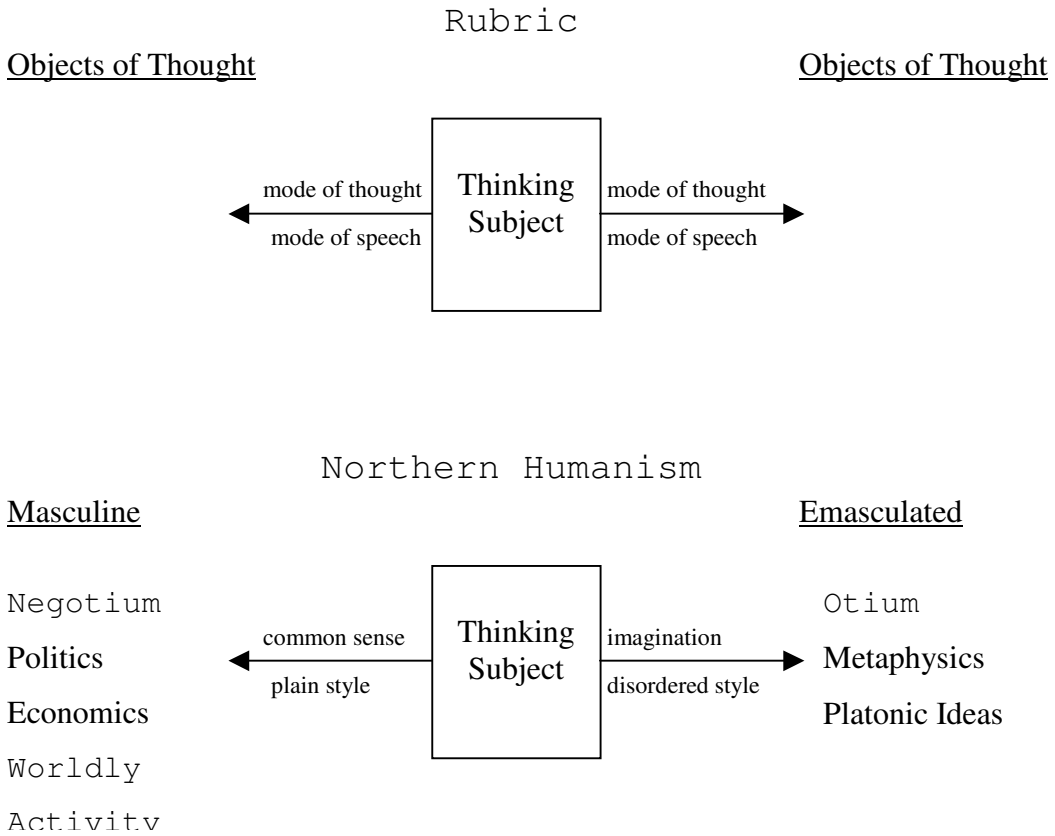

Figure 5.1: Unity of masculine thought and style in Northern Humanism

as a masculine form of expression, and I have found no explicit evidence that they did. However, humanist

poetics does clearly establish a link between style, thought and ethics. This link, combined with its emphasis on the masculinity of pragmatic thought and the unmanliness of useless eloquence or lofty imaginative ascent, leads to a certain premium being placed on sententious verse forms that enable the pragmatic expression and application of shared values.[74] It is

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[74] Though I do not here provide exhaustive evidence that the northern humanist emphasis on pragmatic thought helps to explain the popularity of the couplet in Renaissance England, the ways a concluding couplet encourages the expression of a thematic moral to a poem or verse should be familiar enough. Crane's *Framing Authority*, in exploring the relation between "gathering and framing" as pedagogical and epistemological practices, provides an interesting account of the relation between the activity of compiling a commonplace book and early modern poetics.

I would like to offer the following caveat, however. Writing poetry itself was predominantly seen as an activity appropriate to youth and allowable as an occasional digression. As both Lisa Klein and Peter Herman have demonstrated, Renaissance defenses of poetry tended to make limited claims for it, representing poetry, as humanists in their educational treatises did, as a nurse. Poetry introduced boys to moral topics and was a milk from which they were to be weaned onto the more substantial food of moral philosophy and rhetoric. I am reminded of the mid-century translations of the Seneca project here. The translations into fourteener couplets, of which Jasper Heywood's *Thyestes* is probably the most familiar, were produced by university students and dedicated to members of the Privy Council. These translations were appropriate productions of young men just entering public life as signs of their capabilities, but which were at the same time provisional, non-threatening, first attempts at producing public discourse. The translations offered commentary on public, political life, but in a form that was less presumptuous than, say, a humanist dialogue on

precisely this kind of compressed thought that Tamburlaine's blank verse overwhelms with its expansive imaginative energy.

English humanism inherited from classical rhetoric the idea that style did not merely ornament thought or render it more convincing, but that the style of expression influenced perception and indeed one's character. Such is the force of Roger Ascham's famous explanation in *The Scholemaster*:

> Ye know not, what hurt ye do to learning, that care not for wordes, but for matter, and so make a deuorse betwixt the tong and the hart. For marke all aiges : looke vpon the whole course of both the Greeke and Latin tonge, and ye shall surelie finde, that, whan apte and good wordes began to be neglected, and properties of those two tonges to be confounded, than also began, ill deedes to spring. (265)

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tyranny would have appeared. For an analysis of the Seneca project translations in terms of the development of English prosody, see Hardison, 148-70.

Puttenham too draws a connection between *res* and *verba* in terms of *ethos*, here a slightly more individualistic conception than appears in Ascham:

> And because this continuall course and manner of writing or speech sheweth the matter and disposition of the writers minde, more than one or few words or sentences can shew, therefore there be that haue called stile, the image of man [*mentis character*] for man is but his minde, and as his minde is tempered and qualified, so are his speeches and language at large. (161; brackets in original)

Though Puttenham and Ascham reverse the lines of causality between manner and matter, style and character, they express quite similar conceptions about a real unity between *res et verba*.

In the third chapter, I commented on the ways oratory was meant to be shaped to fit a masculine style. In poetry, the Roman *ars metrica*, whose most familiar exponent in the Renaissance was Horace, taught that different verse styles and prosody not only bore

intrinsic relations to subject matter, but made modes of thought possible. As O. B. Hardison Jr. has explained in his indispensable analysis of Renaissance English prosody, according to the *ars metrica* a successful poem "is not an imitation of a pre-existing reality so much as a model that sets norms for a category of experience" (26). He continues with an illuminating explanation:

> it is because such norms become models of reality within the culture that accepts them that poetry can be understood as didactic in more than a superficial sense. The relation of the Homeric poems to Greek culture and of the Pentateuch to Hebrew culture are cases in point. In both, literature is the mirror by means of which society forms its conceptions of itself. (26)

If verse forms bear an intrinsic relation to their subject matter, and if poetry creates categories of experience, it follows that certain verse forms create mental categories of experience and can therefore shape the mental landscape of social groups. The verse forms

of sixteenth century England did this by cultivating space for aphoristic and epigrammatical expression.

The importance of adages and aphorisms to English humanism has often been remarked, whether in the context of humanist stoicism, of the humanist educational programme, or of humanist influence on political practice. Aphorism, commonplaces, proverbs, adages, all are practical tools, "equipment for living."[75] The humanist emphasis on a pragmatic education meant to equip young men with the tools of a political trade lead naturally to a stress on these pragmatic ethical guides, even to the point that much grammar school education involved the translation of pithy, morally edifying *sententiae antiquae*. The humanist cultivation of aphoristic thought also appears in humanist influenced poetry and poetics. The sixteenth century witnessed the flowering of an astounding variety of new or modified prosodic forms in England. English poets experimented with native medieval meters, imported continental verse forms, and attempted to translate classical quantitative

[75] It bears mentioning that when Kenneth Burke wished to illustrate the concept of "Literature as Eqipment for Living," he did so using proverbs as his examples.

verse into forms appropriate for the modern English language.[76] One of the often told stories about the development of English prosody over the course of the sixteenth century is the story of the dominance of the "ornate" or "eloquent" style over the "plain" style throughout the early and middle decades of the century, followed by a reaction in favor of the plain style as Elizabeth's reign wound down.[77] A less frequently noted but crucial story involves the development of prosodic styles well adapted to sententious expression.

Among classical poetic genres particularly well suited to condensed, pithy expression, the satire, epigram and verse epistle enjoyed considerable success throughout the sixteenth century.[78] Richard Harrier

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[76] Useful overviews of the development of English prosody over the sixteenth century include Hardison, Ing, Peterson and Mazzaro. Saintsbury's monumental work on the history of English prosody, despite important modifications by more recent critics, remains the standard.

[77] See especially Peterson for a well-qualified defense of this view. Peterson recognizes that the story is more complicated than this, that Wyatt, for instance, develops his unique effects by blending the plain and eloquent styles, and that even when the eloquent style was ascendant the plain style was still an acceptable and widely adopted option for certain kinds of poetry.

[78] On the epigram as a genre strongly associated with moral authority before the 1590's, see Crane, "*Intret Cato*." Crane argues against Helgerson's contention in *Self-crowned*

finds that Tudor epic also contains a strong epigrammatical bias that reflects "plain style" influences. After commenting that "the local episodes and the general form of the epic were inescapably commonplaces to be given new dress or to be turned into hidden allusions to commonplaces," Harrier comments that the tendency to refer to commonplaces holds for English Renaissance poetry (and prose) generally. He offers in explanation, "The value of such a tradition lies of course in the conviction that it has identified the central areas of human experience and has given them apprehensible form" (381). In other words, it quite literally creates common sense. The poet's skill manifests itself in showing how a specific situation fits within the common cultural code codified in its commonplaces. In matters of poetry, nothing is better suited to expressing a pithy idea than the couplet, as Samuel Daniel makes clear in his *A Defence of Ryme*:

> And I must confesse my Aduersary hath wrought this much vpon me, that I thinke a Tragedie

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Laureates that Jonson's attempt to build an authoritative poetic identity using epigrams fails because the epigram was too "immature" a genre to sustain such an activity.

> would indeede best comporte with a blank Verse, and dispence with Ryme, sauing in the *Chorus* or where a sentence shall require a couplet. (42)

Though Daniel prefers cross rhyme to couplets, and finds that unrhymed verse is more appropriate for elevated genres, nonetheless the offhand manner in which he indicates that sententious expression *requires* a couplet indicates that he is repeating a common understanding.

There remains room for debate about the relative influence of plain and ornate styles and their relation to opposed humanist and courtly, or protestant and courtly, cultures.[79] Scholars seem to be in general

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[79] Aligning poetic styles with ideological factions makes a certain intuitive sense, but can quickly become an extremely knotty business. For instance, Peterson aligns early English humanism with a native plain style tradition evident in late medieval didactic poetry while aligning a courtly *ethos* with an ornate style influenced by the classical rhetorical cannon of *elocutio*. In his scheme, the plain stylists view words as a transparent medium there to express matter. Ornate stylists, on the other hand, are much more interested in a unity of *res* and *verba* and as a result submit English to the reforms necessary to make it a fully elastic poetic medium. But the matter, as Peterson recognizes, is not that simple, for early English humanists too were concerned with reforming the English language into a more eloquent medium. Indeed, the largely successful humanist grammar school reforms are of critical importance in the development of the English language over the course of the sixteenth century. Thus, while early

accord, however, about three important points. First, the plain style was influential throughout the sixteenth century. Second, its effects can be witnessed in most established genres, even ones closely associated with the ornate style. Third, an important element of plain style influence was the highlighting and application of pithy sayings. And, as I suggested in the third chapter, the plain style was considered manly because it ordered the mind and was useful for *negotium*. Indeed, Ben Jonson clearly aligns the plain style with masculinity in his *Timber*, itself little more than a collection of humanist *sententiae* organized into essay form. Explaining an expressive and psychic unity between *res et verba*, Jonson encourages his audience to see in the good poet, "How he doth raigne in mens affections; how invade, and breake in upon them; and makes their minds like the thing he writes" (588).

English humanists might justly be aligned with the plain style, they can be only if we discard the assumption that plain stylists are less concerned with *elocutio* than are ornate stylists. Furthermore, later intellectuals, such as Ascham, who fit clearly within the humanist tradition, could also reflect the values of ornate stylists. Ascham's notorious Ciceronianism, for example, would find a counterpart in the "plain style" Senecanism that became more popular in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.

Jonson goes on to prescribe the artificer's proper style:

> Then in his Elocution to behold, what word is proper: which hath ornament: which height: what is beautifully translated: where figures are fit: which gentle, which strong to shew the composition *Manly*. And how hee hath avoyded faint, obscure, obscene, sordid, humble, improper, or effeminate *Phrase* (588; italics in original)

Manliness and effeminacy, appearing last in the respective lists of stylistic strengths and weaknesses, take on a kind of ultimate quality, as if to suggest that a well-ordered, clear, apt style can be summed up as a manly one. Furthermore, in distinguishing manly composition from effeminate phrase, Jonson suggests that elements of *dispositio* are part of manly eloquence, whereas effeminate poetry is too concerned with words to the neglect of matter. Nor is it insignificant that Jonson enumerates these principles soon after he has directly attacked Marlovian bombast:

> And though his language differ from the vulgar somewhat; it shall not fly from all humanity, with the *Tamerlanes*, and *Tamer-Chams*, of the late Age, which had nothing in them but the *scenicall* strutting, and furious vociferation, to warrant them then to the ignorant gapers. (587; italics in original)

Tamburlaine's furious vociferation, obscure, obscene and sordid as it is, lacks the decorum of a prudent masculine style.

iii. "we wil walke vpon the lofty clifts"

Combining scorn for prior verse forms with contempt for the limited conception they allow, Marlowe's prologue presents Tamburlaine's masculinity emerging as a function of a new poetic power:

> From iygging vaines of riming mother wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
> Weele lead you to the stately tent of War,
> Where you shall heare the Scythian Tamburlaine

Threatning the world with high astounding
tearms
And scourging kingdoms with his conquering
sword.
View but his picture in this tragicke glasse,
And then applaud his fortunes as you please.
(1.1-6)[80]

The prologue stresses intrinsic connections between manner and matter, thought and style. It throws the "iygging vaines" of the popular fourteener into the same basket as the "conceits" (ideas, images, thoughts) of stage clowns. The couplets that in earlier English dramatic poetry had enabled a condensed expression of manly sap are feminized into the product of "rimimg mother *wits*." Throwing off the weak, silly, stultified didactic thought previous dramatic verse had demanded, this play finds a hero whose terrible ambition breathes individually with his poetry. Tamburlaine's high and aspiring "tearms," implicitly opposed to the *logos* of

[80] All references are to C. F. Tucker Brooke's *Complete Works*. Brooke follows the quartos in providing continuous line numbering, which I follow. I do, however, provide Act and Scene numbers (as does Brooke) for those following other editions.

earlier drama, still marries a sense of "words" with a sense of ideas, or perhaps more precisely "structures of conception." In its own unity of *res et verba*, the prologue couples a dynamic poetry capable of expressing lofty ideas with sheer political, even imperial, ambition. In that combination of expansive thought and a worldly focus lies the fusion of platonic and northern humanist ideals I have been pointing to. Though those pithy couplets, paling in comparison to the majesty of the blank verse here and to follow, nurse on the milk of mother wits, still masculine thought and action need their political object.

Language, the prologue makes clear, is the medium through which the virtues and *virtu* of masculinity will be contested, shaped, performed and animated in this play. It is therefore unsurprising that the age old debate about *Tamburlaine*, about whether the play celebrates a disruptive, amoral hero-villain or whether it "ironizes" Tamburlaine and therefore presents a moral message, should often still focus on the nature of

Tamburlaine's language.[81] Critical union of manner and matter in this regard began as early as 1588, when Marlowe's contemporary and fellow London writer Robert

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[81] Among proponents of the "ironic" reading, Masinton and Battenhouse believe the play supports conventional Christian orthodoxy. Lindley's intellectually impressive analysis updates the orthodox reading with sprinklings of Bakhtin and a postmodernized Augustine (83-111). In a different Bakhtinian vein, Burnett, "*Tamburlaine* and the Body," argues that Tamburlaine's use of the classical body to legitimate his seizure of power is ironized by appearances of the grotesque body, his inheritance as a lowborn shepherd. Weil argues that Marlowe's ironic use of allusion, direct address to the audience, structural analogies, and spectacle all contribute to undermining Tamburlaine's self-conceit. In respectively Foucaultian and post-structuralist readings, Cunningham finds that Marlowe's ironic treatment of Tamburlaine's spectacles of slaughter is a commentary on the absolutist early modern state's tendency to manifest its power through exhibitions of torture, while Thurn believes the play undermines Tamburlaine's attempt to establish specular mastery. Shepard, as we have seen, finds that the play ironically undercuts the way soldier-males mistake culture for nature. While Deats reads the play from a resisting feminist perspective present in the vantage of Zenocrate or Olympia, she is sensitive to the attraction Tamburlaine may present for many readers. Yet her conclusion that the play is a "masterpiece of indeterminacy" amounts to claiming that it confirms its audiences' preconceptions about gender and morality, which feels like a copout (161). Taking a different *via media*, Waith (though sometimes represented as a romantic) argues that Tamburlaine "embodies a force of a different order" and so, while granted extraordinary license in his conduct, does not inspire unadulterated admiration. Among romantic readings of Tamburlaine, Ellis-Fermor and Daiches are most prominent for their sensitive and appreciative handling of Marlowe's poetry. Hope argues with Nietzschean energy for an apotheosized Tamburlaine, and Benston elaborates Hope's celebration of amoral sublimity before revisiting Duthie's argument that the play's structure revolves around an internal conflict between military ambition and beauty. Analyzing contemporary reception of the play, Berek and Richard Levin argue powerfully against ironic readings.

Greene complained, "I could not make my verses iet vpon the stage in tragicall buskins . . . daring God out of heauen with that Atheist *Tamburlan*" (A3 recto). He continues by chiding those who "set the end of schollarisme in an English blanck verse," especially "such mad and scoffing poets, that haue propheticall spirits as bred of *Merlins* race" (A3 recto - A3 verso). Greene's criticism is founded on the humanist principle that literature should provide clear moral profit, and one even catches a whiff of Northern humanist anti-Ciceronianism in his complaint about those who believe the goal of study is to produce a perfectly styled blank verse. Joseph Hall, on the other hand, satirizes Tamburlanean bombast by mirroring pragmatist invective against Neoplatonism's delusional character. In his portrait of a low-born Tamburlanean social climber, Hall describes a "base drink-drowned" man who fancies himself "some vpreared, high-aspiring swaine,/ As it might be the Turkish *Tamberlaine*" (6). The would-be actor "conceiues vpon his fained stage/ The stalking steps of his great personage,/ Graced with huf-cap termes and

thundring threats" (7). Dressed in "side robes of Royaltie,/ That earst did skrub in lowsie brokerie," the fantastical monarch seems to succeed in awing the groundlings:

> There if he can with termes Italianate,
> Big-sounding sentences, and words of state,
> Faire patch me vp his pure *Iambick* verse,
> He rauishes the gazing Scaffolders. (7)

Tamburlaine's "terms" are once again at issue, for Hall draws attention to his at once "huf-cap" and "Italianate" diction, and, presumably, thought. Here, the language's Italian character seems to point directly to its muddled combination of high-minded pretension, hunger for upward mobility, and lack of clarity—a failure, one might conjecture, to mark mental, linguistic, geographic, and social boundaries. Hall deflates the very social aspirations that authority figures in the *Tamburlaine* find so threatening—as Cosroe wonders, "What means this deuelish shepheard to aspire/ With such a Giantly presumption ?" (2.6.812-13). Whether sublime or ridiculous, Tamburlaine's rhetoric

ravishes the scaffolders, sowing discontent with degree and with religion. Most importantly, both Hall and Greene assert a formal unity between Tamburlaine's poetry and his ethics. The mighty line is subversive.

Those modern critics who find Tamburlaine's hypermasculine ambition and cruelty unbearable have similarly sought their origin in Tamburlaine's language disorders. Charles Masinton has argued Tamburlaine uses language "to disguise his will to power," an "abuse of the proper function of language" because he "deceives his antagonists and allies alike into accepting his outrageous, egotistical claims to be fortune's master and even convinces himself that he is godlike" (18). Judith Weil, who argues similarly to Joseph Hall that Marlovian soliloquies are "impressive at the expense of being clear," warns, "once our ears are attuned to the persuasive, moving speech of a Tamburlaine or a Faustus we are less inclined to heed allusions which suggest illogic or self-deception" (182 n. 25; 14). In a more post-structuralist vein, David H. Thurn discovers that, in both its visual and verbal techniques, *Tamburlaine*'s

insistence upon stable relations "between signifiers and signifieds" is "delusional," and that "the play works finally to disrupt its specular empire by breaking it into a structure of repetition and displacement" while paradoxically not disrupting Tamburlaine's "total mastery" (176). Arthur Lindley has exposed the "tissue of fallacies" in Tamburlaine's hymn to the aspiring mind (97-98) en route to characterizing Marlowe's general denunciation of poetic power. "If language is power in Marlowe," writes Lindley, "it is primarily the power to deceive . . . Marlowe's plays can be seen as a virtual catalog of the abuses of art: as deception or distraction or narcotic, the enactment of privative evil's world of shadows" (102). Lindley's interpretation has the unfortunate result of turning Marlowe into a sixteenth-century Puritan, condemning Tamburlaine's poetic making because it is a lie.

To unravel the complex relationships between thought, style, and masculinity in *Tamburlaine*, we need not lean on the ancient critique that poetry is depraved because deceptive. Insofar as Marlowe's mighty line

represents a threat to the educated class of professional men in early modern England, that threat may arise not from Marlowe's deceptiveness but from his radical yoking of a thought style associated with an emasculated otium and the worldly engagement characteristic of masculine negotium. The determination that forms of publicly-oriented being exerted upon early modern males has been fully explored by Stephen Greenblatt in his seminal *Renaissance Self Fashioning*, though Greenblatt sees little possibility in the Renaissance for any sort of being not defined by the subject's relation to political life. And yet, Greenblatt hints that Marlowe is, albeit haltingly, different in his approach to self-fashioning. For example, among the gallery of Greenblatt's authors, Marlowe is the one who's productions render identity not in opposition to the culture's demonized others, but in identification with them (203). And Tamburlaine is the one Marlovian hero who "comes close to defining himself in radical opposition to the order against which he wars" (210). I would suggest that part of Tamburlaine's

radicalism lies in his capacity, through the mighty line, to achieve a form of contemplation less intimately tied to pragmatic politics than masculine thought was supposed to be. At the same time, the mighty line maintains his masculinity in ultimately retaining this "practical" political focus, thereby distinguishing Tamburlaine not only from northern humanism's emasculated poets and philosophers, but also from existentially and politically impotent humanist politicians and counselors. (See Figure 5.2)

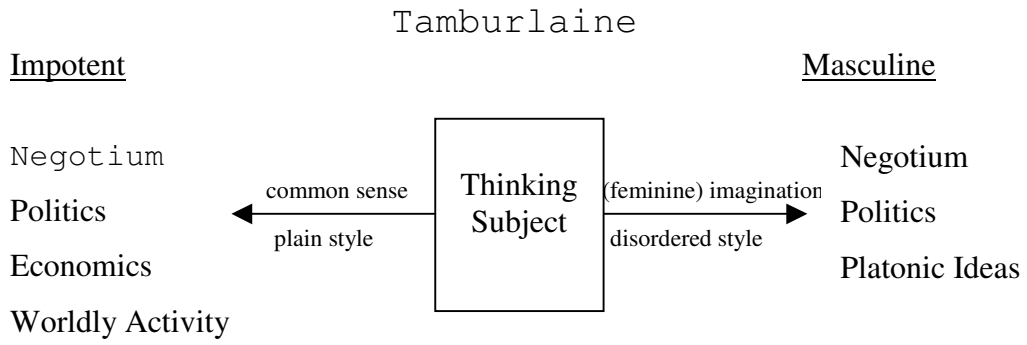

Figure 5.2: Masculine thought and style for Tamburlaine

In its first act, *Tamburlaine* insistently focuses our attention on conflicts over the masculinity of language. As has often been noted, Mycetes' weakness most prominently manifests itself in his hobbled oratory. In the first words spoken after the prologue, the feeble Persian king complains, "Brother *Cosroe*, I find my selfe agreeu'd,/ Yet insufficient to expresse the same :/ For it requires a great and thundring speech :/Good brother tell the cause vnto my Lords" (1.1.9-12). Mycetes constantly seeks a rhetorical prosthesis, be it Cosroe or Meander, and his verbal impotence betokens a mental infirmity which has infected and diminished his empire. When Mycetes does attempt to speak for himself, he often reveals dependence on others, and his emasculated rhetoric is a mixture of ill-conceived figures of thought and speech. In authorizing Theridamas to battle Tamburlaine, Mycetes himself unwittingly provides an image of the "maimed Emperie" his nobles will soon lament in his absence (1.1.134):

> Then heare thy charge, valiant *Theridamas*
> The chiefest Captaine of *Mycetes* hoste,

> The hope of *Persea*, and the verie legges
> Whereon our state doth leane, as on a staffe,
> That holds vs vp, and foiles our neighbour
> foes. (1.1.65-69)

Mycetes' unfortunate metaphor depicts a crippled body politic, and his leaning, stooping and swearing by his "royal seat" in this scene make him ridiculous (1.1.105). The prologue's movement "From iygging vaines of riming mother wits" to "the stately tent of War" is mirrored in the play's movement from Mycetes' court to Tamburlaine's camp in the first two scenes, for Mycetes is the one character inclined to speak in couplets:

> Returne with speed, time passeth swift away,
> Our life is fraile, and we may die to day.
> (1.1.75-76)

> Monster of Nature, shame vnto thy stocke,
> That dar'st presume thy Soueraigne for to
> mocke. (1.1.112-13)

> Go on my Lord, and giue your charge I say,

Thy wit will make vs Conquerors to day.

(2.2.580-81)

Even when Mycetes' speech begins to build some momentum, his riming mother wit reasserts itself and destroys the effect:

Go, stout *Theridamas*, thy words are swords

And with thy lookes thou conquerest all thy foes :

I long to see thee backe returne from thence,

That I may view these milk-white steeds of mine,

All loden with the heads of killed men.

And from their knees, euen to their hoofes belowe,

Besmer'd with blood, that makes a dainty show.

(1.1.82-88)

There is a kind of rough eloquence almost worthy of Tamburlaine in the contrasting colors of milk white and blood red, and in the horses "loden" with freshly severed heads. But "dainty" strikes the wrong note, and

helps make the last line sound like the invention of an immature poet squeezing words in to fit a rhyme scheme.

The insufficiency of humanism's counselorly ideal is most explicitly ridiculed in Mycetes' chief counselor, the aptly named Meander. “Meander” suggests the problems with the humanist counselor, and this character’s commitment to supporting traditional power leaves him wandering aimlessly between rival parties and unable to take a clear moral (or amoral) stand. Though Mycetes speaks of Meander as one "Whom I may tearme a *Damon* for thy loue" (1.1.58), Meander shows remarkable facility in suing for Cosroe's grace "in humblest tearms" and "With vtmost vertue of my faith and dutie" (2.5.720;722) after he and Mycetes have been defeated. Indeed, Meander offers singly wrongheaded advice throughout the play: first sending Theridamas to apprehend Tamburlaine, then dissuading Mycetes from disciplining his brother, then recommending the cockeyed scheme to scatter gold around the battlefield to distract Tamburlaine's band. The last instance is particularly important, for it shows that his assumedly

humanist upbringing leaves him unprepared to understand Tamburlaine and his compatriots' motivations. Meander believes that Tamburlaine's army,

> All running headlong after greedy spoiles :
> And more regarding gaine than victory :
> Like to the cruell brothers of the earth,
> Sprong of the teeth of Dragons venomous,
> Their carelesse swords shal lanch their
> fellowes throats
> And make vs triumph in their ouerthrow.
> (2.2.568-73)

The bitter irony here is that Cosroe and Mycetes, brothers battling each other for the Persian crown, behave more like the mythical dentagenetic warriors than Tamburlaine's troops. Mycetes here asks if there really were such brothers, to which Meander responds, "So Poets say, my Lord" (2.2.576).

Mycetes' childish literalism is balanced by Meander's contemptuous degradation of poets, and neither shows the ability to engage poetic mythology as a living imaginative enterprise in the same way Tamburlaine does.

David Daiches has commented, referring to the "I hold the Fates bound fast in yron chaines" speech,

> One has the feeling . . . that when Marlowe uses classical mythology it is not for decorative purposes or to make literary capital out of references to known legends, but in order to give the myths new meaning by showing their usefulness in illustrating the limitless nature of human ambition at its most magnificent. . . . It is as though Marlowe is showing us for the first time what classical mythology is all about, what it is *for* (321 - 22)

The comment seems entirely just for Tamburlaine's use of classical mythology, though I would suggest that Marlowe shows Meander's mental limitations specifically by having him use mythology for decorative purposes and to make literary capital. It is true that, as Mycetes comments, Meander is "deeply read," at least deeply enough to punctuate his speech with a tale from the

poets, which was a standard humanist rhetorical move.[82] There is an imaginative life to Tamburlaine's deployment of mythology that Meander, trained to use mythology in the limited, humanist way, cannot capture.

While Mycetes' childish stammering betokens an unmanly foolishness, and Meander's undernourished imagination results in an ineffectual pragmatism, the play does not immediately confirm the masculinity of eloquence. True, Tamburlaine does early on display an ability to project authority in his diction. For instance, when the captive Medean lord Magnetes protests, "We haue his highnesse letters to command/ Aide and assistance if we stand in need" (1.2.215-16), Tamburlaine responds:

> But now you see these letters & commandes

[82] An excellent example appears in Ascham's dialogue in defense of archery, *Toxophilus* (1545), 16-19, where the title character defends archery's utility for scholars based on mythological examples. After his interlocutor Philologus laughs at the weakness of Toxophilus relying on poets for his defense, Toxophilus defends the technique because Plato, Aristotle and Galen have used it and immediately moves on to supply meatier arguments based on Aristotle, Erasmus, and Galen's authority. The humanist technique is to provide mythological allusion as a decorative support, but not to take the content of the mythology seriously, as Toxophilus makes clear.

Are countermanded by a greater man :
And through my prouinces you must expect
Letters of conduct from my mightinesse,
If you intend to keep your treasure safe.
(1.2.217-21)

Here, especially in the first two lines, Tamburlaine evinces the mixture of passion and effortless command Othello shows in that line A.C. Bradley has called "one of Shakespeare's miracles" (190): "Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them" (1.2.59). And Tamburlaine urges that feeling of command upon us specifically through repetitions of "man": "these letters & com*man*des/ Are counter*man*ded by a greater *man*." Yet Tamburlaine's masculine control is signaled here more by brevity than bombast. There hovers in the atmosphere impressions that eloquence may indeed unsinew male power. After Tamburlaine delivers his poetically impressive profession of love in the speech that begins "Disdaines *Zenocrate* to liue with me?" Techelles teases, "What now? In loue?" (1.2.302). While rapturous love poetry presents a traditional threat to the young

warriors' masculinity, Techelles soon hints that even martial rhetoric is effeminate. Upon hearing of the approach of the Persian army, Tamburlaine first indicates that his band will battle Theridamas' cavalry, then hesitates: "Or looke you, I should play the Orator?" (1.2.325). His lieutenants understand Tamburlaine to ask if he should marshal the troops with a rousing speech, according to Burckhardt a familiar oratorical genre in the Renaissance (242) (and one that Shakespeare impressively exploits in *Henry V*).[83] Techelles responds: "No : cowards and fainthearted runawaies,/ Looke for orations when the foe is neere./ Our swordes shall play the Orators for vs" (2.1.326-28). We appear to be poised for the play's first great military encounter. Eschewing sissified rhetoric, Tamburlaine's courageous outlaws stand ready to engage Theridamas' cavalry. But Marlowe shifts the nature of the conflict on us. Instead of a battle between armies, we are given a battle of wills, and in the process a

[83] Critics have traditionally taken Tamburlaine's question to refer to the upcoming parley. His confederates' reply, however, indicates they take his meaning in the way I here suggest.

dramatic demonstration of Tamburlaine's poetic power. Tamburlaine marshals a rhetoric to match the manhood residing in his lieutenants' swords, winning Theridamas to his cause and sweeping away any lingering doubts about the masculinity of his oratory.

The speech with which Tamburlaine wins over Theridamas, the play's first realization of the mighty line's full intensity, helps to illuminate what I mean in saying Tamburlaine's mode of thought is more expansive than masculine thought was supposed to be. In this crucial speech, upon which his entire enterprise rests, Tamburlaine harnesses the force of his imaginative hunger for infinitude. He achieves something akin to mathematical sublimity by combining three categories of vastness: immense volume or size, expansive geographical movement, and massive vertical movement—usually concourse between heaven and earth.[84]

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[84] I have been influenced here by Kant's distinction between the mathematically sublime and the dynamically sublime, the *Third Critique* still seeming to me a quite useful book for literary critics. Among the several different explanations Kant provides of mathematical sublimity, the following is most useful with reference to the proceeding speech:

> [N]ature is sublime in those of its appearances whose intuition carries with it the idea of their infinity.

The speech must be quoted at length to get the full effect, and the reader should note juxtapositions of these proportions:

> With what a maiesty he rears his looks :
>
> In thee (thou valiant man of Persea)
>
> I see the folly of thy Emperour :
>
> Art thou but Captaine of a thousand horse,
>
> That by Characters grauen in thy browes,
>
> And by thy martiall face and stout aspect,

> But the only way for this to occur is through the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination to estimate an object's magnitude. In the mathematical estimation of magnitude, however, the imagination is equal to the task of providing, for any object, a measure that will suffice for this estimation, because the understanding's numerical concepts can be used in a progression and so can make any measure adequate to any given magnitude. Hence it must be the *aesthetic* estimation of magnitude where we feel that effort, our imagination's effort to perform a comprehension that surpasses its ability to encompass [*begreifen*] the progressive apprehension in a whole of intuition, and where at the same time we perceive the inadequacy of the imagination—unbounded though it is as far as progressing is concerned—for taking in and using, for the estimation of magnitude, a basic measure that is suitable for this with minimal expenditure on the part of the understanding (112; italics in original).

In other words, to put it a bit reductively, we have the experience of an object being bigger than we can fully grasp, and therefore experience our minds moving infinitely to try to grasp the size of that object. (At several points Kant refers to the sublime as an experience of a restless mind, whereas the beautiful is an experience of the mind at rest.)

Deseru'st to haue the leading of an hoste ?
Forsake thy king and do but ioine with me
And we will triumph ouer all the world.
I hold the Fates bound fast in yron chaines,
And with my hand turne Fortunes wheel about,
And sooner shall the Sun fall from his
Spheare,
Than *Tamburlaine* be slaine or ouercome.
Draw foorth thy sword, thou mighty man at
Armes,
Intending but to rase my charmed skin :
And *Ioue* himselfe will stretch his hand from
heauen,
To ward the blow, and shield me safe from
harme.
See how he raines down heaps of gold in
showers,
As if he meant to giue my Souldiers pay,
And as a sure and grounded argument,
That I shall be the Monark of the East,

He sends this Souldans daughter rich and
braue,
To be my Queen and portly Emperesse.
If thou wilt stay with me, renowmed man,
And lead thy thousand horse with my conduct,
Besides thy share of this Egyptian prise,
Those thousand horse shall sweat with martiall
spoile
Of conquered kingdomes, and of Cities sackt.
Both we wil walke vpon the lofty clifts,
And Christian Merchants that with Russian
stems
Plow vp huge furrowes in the Caspian sea,
Shall vaile to vs, as Lords of all the Lake.
Both we will raigne as Consuls of the earth,
And mightie kings shall be our Senators.
Ioue sometime masked in a Shepheards weed,
And by those steps that he hath scal'd the
heauens,
May we become immortal like the Gods.
Ioine with me now in this my meane estate,

(I cal it meane, because being yet obscure,
The Nations far remoou'd admyre me not)
And when my name and honor shall be spread,
As far as *Boreas* claps his brazen wings,
Or faire *Bootes* sends his cheerefull light,
Then shalt thou be Competitor with me,
And sit with *Tamburlaine* in maiestie.
(1.2.360-404)

Some of the most striking effects occur when two or more of the categories of vastness intersect, as when Jove "raines down heaps of gold in showers," or when Tamburlaine and Theridamas, walking "vpon the lofty clifts," look down on the ships that "Plow vp huge furrowes in the Caspian sea." In these juxtapositions, movement versus size, vertical versus horizontal, intersecting vectors of magnitude create a momentary conceptual confusion as the mind tries to wrap itself around measurelessness in different dimensions. Not a discardable decoration nor sugarcoating for the speech's essential content, sublimity performs the mental operation of the neoplatonic philosopher stretching his

mind to comprehend higher levels of being.[85] The kind of contemplative ascent Tamburlaine enacts seems designed to rout the simple, pragmatic conception Northern humanism encouraged.

Nonetheless, the "poetic" substratum of Tamburlaine's speech finds its material realization in assertions of worldly power. Tamburlaine convinces Theridamas to forsake his king not by presenting him with an opportunity to live a contemplative life secluded from temporal affairs, but by insisting that the object of fantastic conception *is* secular dominion. Indeed, the speech is packed with images of worldly power, economic, military and political: "king," "triumph," "sheild," "gold," "Souldiers," "Souldans," "prise," "spoile," "kingdomes," "Cities," "Merchants," "Senators," "Nations," "name and honor," ending, appropriately, on "maiestie." It builds from a disparaging reference to Theridamas' "king" through a

[85] Literary theorists have traditionally suggested a close correspondence between the sublime's performative and cognitive elements. Longinus, for instance, who argues that "the influences of the sublime bring power and irresistible might to bear, and reign supreme over every hearer," also locates the most important source of the sublime in "the power of forming great conceptions" (77; 80).

crescendo of imperial epithets: "Monark of the East," "Queen and Portly Emperesse," "Lords of all the Lake," "Consuls of the earth." In this orientation to political activity as the primary object of his intentions, Tamburlaine fits within the mainstream of Elizabethan masculinity.

Even Tamburlaine's most outrageous claims would only be possible coming from someone with a thoroughly worldly orientation: "I hold the Fates bound fast in yron chaines,/ And with my hand turne Fortunes wheel about." These lines are at once the most dynamic and the most vague image of Tamburlaine's power in the speech. The wheel of fortune, even in teaching *contemptus mundi*, was a way of imagining worldly, or sublunar, activity. Daiches argues that while the lines clearly defy traditional medieval warnings about worldly inconstancy, they are not "a sign of an almost blasphemous arrogance on Tamburlaine's or on Marlowe's part." Rather, he argues, "it is a way of expressing what it feels like to have limitless ambition and limitless self-confidence" (322). I do not, however,

see "blasphemous arrogance" and "limitless ambition" at odds. The peculiar character of Tamburlaine is to combine concrete political ambition with an unfettered imagination, and the result is a capacity to reimagine the relationships obtaining in the world, almost blasphemously. Neoplatonic philosophers hit upon images of human power that would seem blasphemously arrogant in a deeply Christian culture. The grandest human achievement in Pico's famous *Oration* was to surpass the highest ranks of angels and dwell in the bosom of God. And Ficino explained that, at his most noble, man desired to be a god (305). Yet the neoplatonic philosophers sought a contemplative ascent above the sublunar realm of inconstancy where such forces as fate and fortune held sway. Tamburlaine, on the other hand, seeks to control them on their own turf. He thus figures a specifically worldly power distinguished from Neoplatonism's impulse toward a spiritual world. Like Jove, he and Theridamas will climb the heavens and "become immortal like the Gods," but only as a result of their having conquered kingdoms. While for a Ficino

philosophers and great generals share the desire for immortality, for Tamburlaine only someone who has conquered kingdoms is worthy of this honor. But, the play suggests, only someone as philosophical as Tamburlaine is capable of such conquest.

iv. "To thrust his doting father from his chaire"

In combining imaginative flight with a political orientation Tamburlaine becomes a subversive figure for early modern patriarchal society. Constantly mobilized against lawgiving fathers, Tamburlaine unmakes the bonds of loyalty to patriarchal figures upon which the organization of early modern culture so heavily depended. Tamburlaine disrupts patriarchal law, preeminently, by overpowering sovereigns and setting himself in their stead. Merely describing this activity, however, does not convey the profound disruptiveness of Tamburlaine's actions as they occur and are represented in the play. For Tamburlaine does not leave intact a system supporting traditional power and the rule of fathers, but ruptures the patriarchal

logic of monarchy. Most readers will feel, with Kimberly Benston, that Tamburlaine "has supplanted not simply a king but every traditional idea of kingship" (213). Benston's seemingly innocuous word "traditional" has important sociological ramifications for *Tamburlaine*. Tamburlaine transforms the basis of authority in the world of the play, replacing the traditional legitimacy of monarchs with his own charismatic power. Such a move mirrors and is actuated through Marlowe's transformation of poetic authority. The world of masculine wisdom displayed and disseminated in the pithy couplet is threatened by Tamburlaine's high aspiring terms; the humanist whose highest good was to serve Prince and country deposed by the high-minded charismatic magus.[86]

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[86] Arguing for the influence of Bruno on *Tamburlaine*, Howe reads Tamburlaine quite literally as a hermetic magus. Howe argues that hermeticism was a kind of militant wing of neoplatonism, applying neoplatonic principles, through magic, in an attempt to exercise worldly power. Though Howe dismissively recognizes that "the sense of magic-like powers is often present, though without the trappings of ritual incantations and the like," I find the play's lack of specifically hermetic and magical trappings, and contrasting emphasis on Tamburlaine's own physical and rhetorical power, to put serious strain on the occult reading. Nonetheless, I obviously agree with Howe that *Tamburlaine* represents a secularization of neoplatonic ambition.

In his classic analysis of bases for legitimate authority, Max Weber outlines three "pure" types: legal/rational authority, traditional authority, and charismatic authority.[87] In a legal/rational system, authority is impersonal, invested in a particular office and deriving from a rationalized system of rules outlining the powers (and restrictions) vested in the office. In a traditional system (interestingly aligned with patriarchalism and patrimonialism in Webers's scheme), power tends to reside with an individual or group based upon traditional claims to legitimacy. Like household patriarchy, monarchical patriarchy rests upon a belief in the inviolability of certain traditions and in the legitimate claims of rulers to certain kinds of status, e.g., the monarch as a member of the royal family, possessing royal blood, and having a claim based on hereditary succession. Charismatic authority rests in the perception that a certain individual or group has a special claim to

[87] For Weber's explication of the three ideal types of legitimate authority, see 324-92. Weber conceives of legitimacy in thoroughly pragmatic rather than transcendental terms: an authority people generally recognize.

legitimacy based upon religious inspiration, extraordinary heroism, or some similar kind of exceptional attribute. Weber's pure types do not perfectly fit any particular social system, nor are they intended to. Obviously in the world of practical relations any person's authority is the result of complex negotiations. Yet the ideal types do help us to discern an overarching logic to certain forms of government and authority and to make useful generalizations about them. For instance, Kerrigan and Braden's suggestion that the absolutist state, though formed by and on behalf of absolute monarchs, enabled the personal leader to be replaced by an impersonal (bureaucratic) state would fit nicely within a Weberian framework (37-41).

The dominant bodies of political theory in Renaissance England held that subjects' allegiance was to the (traditional) person of the monarch, rather than to the individual person, to King Henry the Eighth or Queen Elizabeth and not directly to Henry or Elizabeth Tudor. The doctrine of "The King's Two Bodies"

suggested an ambiguous dissociation between the secular individual and the sacred ruler, though both were present, consubstantially if you will, in the person of the monarch.[88] In the world of politics, it is the king's traditional body that matters. When Marlowe's Edward II declares

> Yet shall the crowing of these cockerels
> Affright a Lion? *Edward*, vnfolde thy pawes,
> And let their liues bloud slake thy furies hunger :
> If I be cruell, and growe tyrannous,
> Now let them thanke themselues, and rue too late, (2.2.1005-09)

his hands become the lion's paws of the English king he has failed to be. When Tamburlaine insists, "I hold the Fates bound fast in yron chaines,/ And with my hand turne Fortunes wheel about," or boasts to Cosroe that

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[88] In his classic analysis of what we would now call "early modern" English monarchical theory as a "royal Christology" (16), Ernst H. Kantorowicz tends to draw theological parallels to the Incarnation. See esp. 16-18 and 46 ff. and passim. The most strained expression of divided loyalties to the king's two bodies would be found when Parliament, in [1642], waged a war against Charles Stuart *in the name of* the English King.

his arms "are the wings shall make" his axe "flie as swift,/ As dooth the lightening" (2.3.655-56), his hands and arms are *his* hands and arms, the enforcing appendages of Tamburlaine and not of a traditional figure of authority. Confronting Tamburlaine in the parley, Theridamas' dilemma involves a choice between obeying an abstract bond of loyalty to his sovereign and following the charismatic individual who has captured his imagination. "But shall I prooue a Traitor to my King?" wonders Theridamas; to which Tamburlaine responds, "No, but the trustie friend of *Tamburlaine*" (1.2.421-22).

In transforming the grounds of authority, Tamburlaine's rebellion stands in stark contrast to Cosroe's.[89] Cosroe clearly acts in order to stop his country's slide into a threatening chaos, seeking to maintain the traditional structure of the Persian monarchy, only placing himself in his brother's place. And Marlowe takes pains to assure us that Mycetes'

[89] Here I disagree with Greenblatt, who argues Tamburlaine and Cosroe differ only in degree. Indeed, it seems to me that Marlowe uses Cosroe's usurpation of the crown as a foil to distinguish Tamburlaine's disruptiveness, as the following argument should make clear.

weakness does not merely provide an opportunity for Cosroe to act upon a prior ambition, but rather creates the political conditions that inspire his rebellion. In his opening speech, Cosroe complains about enemies unstitching the cloth of the Persian state: "Now Turkes and Tartars shake their swords at thee [Persia]/ Meaning to mangle all thy Prouinces" (1.1.25). After Mycetes and his train exit, Cosroe and the Persian lords of his faction go on to amplify the Persian plight. Cosroe complains:

> But this it is that doth excruciate
> The verie substance of my vexed soule:
> To see our neighbours that were woont to quake
> And tremble at the Persean Monarkes name,
> Now sits and laughs our regiment to scorne,
> And that which might resolue me into teares:
> Men from the farthest Equinoctiall line,
> Haue swarm'd in troopes into the Easterne
> India:
> Lading their shippes with golde and pretious
> stones:

And made their spoiles from all our prouinces.

(1.1.121-30)

Cosroe clearly conveys a sense of the monarch as the nation's chief. He thus evinces a patriotic fury well within early modern doxa regarding the king's relationship with and duty to his country. The violations of Persian borders alluded to in Cosroe's reference to the swarms raping Eastern India find their counterpoint in Ceneus' description of interior troubles:

The warlike Souldiers, & the Gentlemen,

. . .

Now liuing idle in the walled townes,

Wanting both pay and martiall discipline,

Begin in troopes to threaten ciuill warre,

And openly exclaime against the King.

Therefore to stay all sodaine mutinies,

We will inuest your Highness Emperour

(1.1.148;1154-57).

In referring to both the soldiers and their gentle superiors, Ceneus depicts a kingdom poised on the brink

of a disastrous precipice, since the lesser nobility have apparently allied with that most chaotic of Elizabethan forces, the many-headed hydra of the *mobile vulgus*.

In the context of this dissolving kingdom, Cosroe determines that civil war is the lesser of two evils to befall Persia. If there were any doubt about his motivations, he makes them clear as he accepts the crown from his nobles:

> Wel, since I see the state of *Persea* droope,
> And languish in my brothers gouernment:
> I willingly receiue th'mperiall crowne,
> And vow to weare it for my counties good:
> In spight of them shall malice my estate.
> (1.1.163-67)

I see no reason not to take Cosroe at his word here. True, Shakespeare's Richard III would say no less. But unlike Richard, Cosroe never admits to anything more, either in soliloquy or in private dialogue with a confederate. Thus while Cosroe does have imperial ambitions, he desires empire for Persia, his "countries

good." And in the face of threats both internal and external, his focus is on right rule rather than self-aggrandizement.

The mighty line is again vital in enabling Tamburlaine to transform the conception of earthly authority because only a poetry as expansive and passionate as Tamburlaine's could convince an audience that Theridamas has made the right choice or that Cosroe should not be allowed to fulfill his longing "to sit vpon my brothers throne" (2.5.752). Benston draws our attention to the way Cosroe's desire to *sit* on the throne displays a sense of satisfaction in a "secure, final, thus finite position" that marks him as inferior to Tamburlaine in the breadth of his aspirations (210). Agreeing in principle, I would add that the sense of inertia here is elemental to Cosroe's inscription in a traditional mode of being. He does not want to change things, per se, only to restore the lost glory of Persia, to restore things to the way they were before they changed. When Tamburlaine asks his lieutenant, "Why then *Casane* shall we wish for ought/ The world affoords

in greatest noueltie,/ And rest attemptlesse faint and destitute ?" his performative poetry has already answered the question (2.5.777-79). The "woondrous ease" with which Tamburlaine believes he will win the Persian crown startles, not only for the confidence Tamburlaine displays in hazarding such a momentous enterprise, but also for the way that very confidence sweeps away any doubts about the legitimacy of seeking a kingly crown in the first place.

Tamburlaine's great self-justification, the famous paean to the aspiring mind, fuses the elements of his disruptive masculine striving. In eighteen lines of dynamic blank verse, he reveals the principles of wonder at human powers for cosmic self-fashioning that motivate his ambitious striving while orienting that ambition toward secular power. Likewise, he grounds his subversion of Persia’s government in principles that directly controvert patriarchal wisdom. As he stands over the defeated and dying Cosroe, Tamburlaine begins by invoking Jove's mutiny:

The thirst of raigne and sweetnes of a crown,

> That causde the eldest sonne of heauenly *Ops*,
> To thrust his doting father from his chaire,
> And place himselfe in the Emperiall heauen,
> Moou'd me to manage armes against thy state.
> What better president than mightie *Ioue* ?
> (2.4.863-68)

Tamburlaine here outlines a dramatic new authority. In taking Jove as his precedent, he transforms the patriarchal logic of monarchy. Unlike the Christian heaven, notable both for its permanence and for the Son's absolute obedience to the Father, Tamburlaine's model is a celestial dynasty founded in intrafamilial strife. Psychoanalysis has taught us to read the symbolism of family conflict inward—into the psychology of Tamburlaine or Marlowe.[90] But the play invites us to

[90] Kuriyama's classic analysis of Marlowe's plays revealing a homosexual orientation, though her book remains the most impressive psychoanalytic reading of Marlowe's canon, has drawn fire for uncritically accepting Freud's narrative of homosexual development. For other psychoanalytic readings, see Gailor, who finds that *Tamburlaine*'s two parts represent the fulfillment and punishment of Oedipal desire, and Proser, who thankfully finds a way to be "post-Freudian" without being Lacanian, and who is less formalist than Kuriyama and therefore an interesting supplement. However, Barber's analysis, lightly tinged with psychoanalytic concepts, seems to me on sturdier ground.

read such symbolism outward. Because the early modern patriarchal state often runs metonymically through the family, representations of familial dysfunction more readily evoke an atmosphere of social disturbance than individual neurosis.

Furthermore, over the course of the play Tamburlaine's relationship to the usurping Olympian patriarch varies severely because Tamburlaine, again butting heads with patriarchal logic, refuses to acknowledge any *debt* to the one being he invests with a quasi-paternal quality. English subjects were not loyal to king only, but enjoyed a triple allegiance to patriarchal figures: to God, to King, and to Country, in Latin *patria*. Elyot's proem to *The Governor* captures the tenor of this allegiance:

> I Late considering (most excellent prince and mine only redoubted sovereign lord) my duty that I owe to my natural country with my faith also of allegiance and oath, wherewith I am double bounden unto your majesty, moreover the account that I have to render for that one

> little talent delivered to me to employ (as I suppose) to the increase of virtue, I am (as God judge me) violently stirred to divulgate or set forth some part of my study, trusting thereby to acquit me of my duties to God, your Highness, and this my country. (xiii)

Though Milton rejects allegiance to the person of the monarch, he relies upon the familiar patriarchal sense of debt and boundedness in Sonnet 29 ("When I consider how my light is spent") even while probing its relevance[91]:

> When I consider how my light is spent,
> Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
> And that one Talent which is death to hide,
> Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
> To serve therewith my Maker, and present

[91] I do not here quote the entire poem, which does end up questioning in some ways the idea of a heavenly father who "exact[s] day-labor" (7). Rumrich has recently criticized the view of Milton as an orthodox patriarch, finding pre-Oedipal dynamics much more prevalent in Milton's writing than Oedipal ones.

My true account, lest he returning chide. (1-6)

Unlike so many Renaissance males, Tamburlaine eschews any sense of debt to fathers, earthly or divine. While Tamburlaine claims Jove as his special guardian and his precedent in the early scenes, and claims to carry out Jove's program as the scourge of God, his relationship to Jove grows increasingly attenuated as the play progresses. He tells Zenocrate, "were Egypt *Ioues* owne land,/ Yet would I with my sword make *Ioue* to stoope" (4.4.1713-14), and at the height of his powers proclaims, "*Ioue* [u]iewing me armes, lookes pale and wan,/ Fearing my power should pull him from his throne" (5.2.2234-35). In saying such things of a heavenly protector who before would have stretched his arm from heaven to ward off harmful blows, Tamburlaine dissolves any sense of loyalty to traditional, paternal figures of authority.

In addition to undermining patriarchal principles, Tamburlaine's poetic self-justification expresses and

commands the nature of charismatic authority. As an identifiable type of authority, charisma lacks the formality of traditional power or the Renaissance's nascent legal/rational power. As Max Weber recognized, charismatic authority not only tends to be revolutionary but is also intensely unstable—it has no inherent structures either for its transmission or for a long term institutionalization of its mandate.[92] Tamburlaine's poetry, at its best, is capable of expressing and controlling a fruitful instability. Tamburlaine depicts both a self and a political world riven by violent motion and conflict, and this very instability requires the exercise of an extraordinary (masculine) will to create some kind of form. Where Tamburlaine's parley with Theridamas had juxtaposed different dimensions of vastness to suggest the magnitude of Tamburlaine's enterprise and of his spirit,

[92] Thus, Weber finds that charismatic authority tends to be "routinized" in the direction either of traditional or of bureaucratic authority. Weber sees a third possibility, its transformation into an anti-authoritarian direction. By this he means that a charismatic leader becomes dependant on those who recognize him for his legitimacy, so that the subjects of a charismatic leader may, in certain cases, exercise power in a democratic direction. See 363-92 on the routinization of charisma.

his self-sanctioning rhetoric yokes together, even by violence, seemingly contradictory images of stability and instability.

> Nature that fram'd vs of foure Elements,
> Warring within our breasts for regiment,
> Doth teach vs all to haue aspyring minds :
> Our soules, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous Architecture of the world :
> And measure euery wandring plannets course,
> Still climing after knowledge infinite,
> And alwaies moouing as the restles Spheares,
> Wils vs to weare our selues and neuer rest,
> Vntill we reach the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect blisse and sole felicite,
> The sweete fruition of an earthly crowne.
> (2.4.869-80)

The aspiring mind is the only thing capable of expressing or containing the radicals of order and chaos, stability and fluctuation woven into the fabric of the universe. The elements are "warring" for "regiment." The faculties which "comprehend" the

world's "Architecture" and "measure" even "euery wandring plannets course," these faculties nonetheless are "Still climing" and "alwaies moouing." Not only do Tamburlaine's active participles impel the speech with a kind of kinetic force, as Harry Levin recognized (13), but they also alternate between a sense of goal-directed movement and restless motion: "warring," "aspyring," "wandring" and "climbing." Here at his most poetic, Tamburlaine makes everything, politics, the self, the universe, into a substance at once striving for form and flying apart into chaos—an endlessly transformable medium. He becomes the charismatic prophet who not only recognizes the telos of the universe he invokes, but who can act upon that knowledge, who will "weare" himself by unleashing the full desire and power of his will.

As we have witnessed, Tamburlaine shares a sense of endless striving and unlimited human potential with Renaissance neoplatonists of a Florentine bent. Yet as we also witnessed, Tamburlaine masculinizes Neoplatonism through an insistent focus on political achievement. Tamburlaine's conclusion, his settling on an earthly

crown rather than aspiring to supposedly higher, spiritual goals, is not, as many critics have argued, bathos. Here is bathos:

> Still climing after knowledge infinite,
> And alwaies moouing as the restles Spheares,
> Wils vs to weare our selues and neuer rest,
> Vntill we reach the ripest fruit of all,
> That perfect blisse and sole felicite,
> *To be a wise and expert counselor*.

Such was the appropriate political ambition, however, for aspiring young men. Indeed, I have adapted my emendation from Elyot's *The governor* from a section that begins, "The ende of all doctrine and studie is good counsayle" (238).[93] Given a political orientation, an earthly crown is the only conceivable goal for someone of Tamburlaine's mental powers.

The disruptive potency of Tamburlaine's neoplatonically aligned contemplative ascent sets him apart from every other character in this play, including his most worthy rival, Bajazeth. Bajazeth is

[93] "Howe moche commoditie than suppose ye mought be taken of the sentences of many wyse and experte counsaylours?" (295).

Tamburlaine's closest adversary not only in terms of military strength, but also in terms of majestic oratory. The increasing threat of Tamburlaine's succeeding competitors is represented in an increasing power of speech: Mycetes' weak "riming mother wit" yields to Cosroe's stable if unimpressive powers of expression, which themselves set the stage for Bajazeth's pompous flare. Yet, unlike Tamburlaine, Bajazeth lacks the capacity to apply his imagination to the future; he can apply grand terms only to what is and not imaginatively engage with what is possible. Similarly, Bajazeth cannot wonder at the power of the human mind able to form grand conceptions. Though Bajazeth can form the poetically impressive astrological comparison of his armies having as many men "As hath the Ocean or the Terrene sea,/ Small drops of water, when the Moon begins/ To ioine in one her semi-circled hornes" (3.1.928-30), he cannot like Tamburlaine wonder at the human mind able to "measure euery wandring plannets course." Bajazeth's thought is closer to the ideological object—to his political and dynastic self—

than Tamburlaine's. Therefore, like Cosroe's and Mycetes' before him, his is not a mental power capable of disrupting the patriarchal order of a society. Self-confident to be sure, Bajazeth does not burn with that neoplatonic thirst for infinity that gives Tamburlaine the charismatic individuality that subverts patriarchal wisdom.

v. "To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint?"

The conflict between passionate platonic rapture and pragmatic English masculinity helps to illuminate the most problematic crux in the play regarding Marlowe's dramatic realization of an early modern self in *Tamburlaine*. The main crux is Tamburlaine's last great speech in the final act, which critics have often noted shows an incongruous degree of self-doubt on Tamburlaine's part. The two most popular explanations are either that we witness here the introduction of a feminine compassion which would pacify the violent warrior, or that Marlowe lost control of his materials and the speech is a breech in the unity of his play. In

the speech, Tamburlaine first admits to the power Zenocrate’s plea for her father's welfare has over his determination to defeat the Soldan's armies, then launches into a meditation on the nature of beauty, then chastises himself for "harbour[ing] thoughts effeminate and faint" (5.2.1958), then wraps up with a grammatically confusing passage that self-confidently celebrates his own powers of "conceiuing and subduing both" (5.2.1964), concluding that "Vertue solely is the sum of glorie,/ And fashions men with true nobility" (5.2.1970-71).

Deats provides the most illuminating perspective yet offered on this important speech. Rejecting the idea that eros conquers or pacifies the masculine warrior, as Benston and Duthie have argued, Deats points to the fact that Zenocrate’s beauty was elsewhere explicitly registered as a spur to his ambition, and will again be recorded as such in Tamburlaine's closing speech (143). Deats goes on to explain the ways in which Zenocrate herself is not as important to Tamburlaine as what he makes of her, and thus of himself

through her, citing Virginia Woolf's famous statement about how women have traditionally served as mirrors for male self-regard (144). Yet Deats stops short of investigating the precise nature of the threat Zenocrate's beauty presents to Tamburlaine. She, like those who have come before her, reads Zenocrate's challenge as simply the compassion and (sexual) love that would mollify Tamburlaine's savagery. She accepts the terms that critics like Benston have established, only reading a resounding victory of a tyrannical masculine principal in the protagonist where others have suggested a genuine synthesis of masculine and feminine.

The battle between warlike savagery and feminine compassion in this speech forms its subtext, or perhaps its excuse, but exclusive focus on these ideas still misses the main point. Deats is correct in saying that Zenocrate is not as important to Tamburlaine as what he makes of her. Yet what he makes of her is even farther distanced from the feminine compassion and (earthly, at least) eros Deats believes presents a challenge to Tamburlaine's masculinist ethic, that is, further

distanced from the "real Zenocrate" than even Deats acknowledges. Instead, the interior conflict here presented arises precisely from the contrasting thought styles of the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* I have been tracing. Tamburlaine does not feel threatened by Zenocrate's influence, but by his own attraction to sublime thought. He here consciously reflects upon the problem that contemplative rapture creates for the masculine subject, and willfully exerts his power to overcome the cultural problem of the emasculated contemplative through his powers both to conceive and to subdue.

The speech begins by explaining Zenocrate's beauty, and the power of her "passion" for Egypt and for her father, the first section explaining that in her face (or eyes, it is not quite clear):

> Angels in their christal armours fight
> A doubtfull batell with my tempted thoughtes,
> For Egypts freedom and the Souldans life :
> His life that so consumes *Zenocrate*
> (5.2.1932-35).

We are then treated to an explanation that Tamburlaine finds Zenocrate's sorrow more powerful than his enemies or even his own army. At this point, beauty and compassion seem to be precisely the elements that have most "Troubled [Tamburlaine's] sences" (5.2.1939). Yet what, precisely, is beauty? Tamburlaine attempts to answer this question in the second section of the speech:

> If all the pens that euer poets held,
> Had fed the feeling of their maisters
> thoughts,
> And euery sweetnes that inspir'd their harts,
> Their minds, and muses on admyred theames :
> If all the heauenly Quintessence that they
> still
> From their immortall flowers of Poesy,
> Wherein as in a myrrour we perceiue
> The highest reaches of a humane wit.
> If these had made one Poems period
> And all combin'd in Beauties worthinesse . . .
> (5.2.1942-51)

The amplifications point to a conclusion directed at an object—Tamburlaine's love object—and thus to something like "Yet they would miss the beauty of Zenocrate." But that is not the conclusion Tamburlaine reaches. Instead he says,

> And all combin'd in Beauties worthinesse,
> Yet should ther houer in their restlesse
> heads,
> One thought, one grace, one woonder at the
> least,
> Which into words no vertue can digest :
> But how vnseemly is it for my Sex
> My discipline of armes and Chiualry,
> My nature and the terrour of my name,
> To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint?
> (5.2.1951-58).

The first thing to note is that Zenocrate has disappeared from Tamburlaine's contemplative radar. The object of Tamburlaine's affections is not Zenocrate, but some indefinable thought, or grace, or wonder.

The neoplatonic tenor of Tamburlaine's study should be obvious. The contemplation of a particular human love object leads him into contemplation of something more essential to the human soul, and the particular person (here, Zenocrate) withers away, or is at best relegated to a secondary, facilitating role. So much seems clear when Tamburlaine lists the ideals that love can take as its objects, "And euery warrior that is rapt with loue,/ Of fame, of valour, and of victory/ Must needs haue beauty beat on his conceits" (5.2.1961-63). Love is not exclusively, nor even primarily, love of a person, but is directed toward ennobling ideals. A climactic expression of Tamburlaine's thirst for infinitude, the hymn to beauty directly explains the mysterious and ineffable nature of the desired object. A commonplace of Marlowe criticism holds that Marlowe's protagonists display an inordinate lust for some object that they degrade as soon as they acquire it. In *Tamburlaine*, as Michael Goldman has shown, that object is the crown, which Tamburlaine first calls a "perfect blisse and sole felicitie" and later debases in the

parodic feat of crowns scene. Indeed, acquiring even Bajazeth's crown does not slake Tamburlaine's appetite. Such treatment of desired objects is perfectly in keeping with neoplatonic eros, for as we saw, Ficino explained that the mind inspired with a longing for divinity can never be satisfied with anything finite. Furthermore, in his commentary on the *Symposium*, Ficino explains that true lovers do not desire a physical relationship with the beloved, and indeed that they cannot even explain what it is they desire:

> Hinc efficitur ut corporis nullius aspectu uel tactu amatoris impetus extinguator. Non enim corpus. Hoc autem illud desiderat: sed superni luminis splendorem per corpora refulgentem admiratur, affectat & stupet. Quapropter quid cupiant, aut quaerant amantes ignorant. Deum nanque ipsum ignorant: cuius sapor occultus odorem quemdam sui dulcissimum operibus suis inseruit. (1326/ 322)

> [Hence it is shown that the lover's passion is not quenched by the sight or touch of a body. For it does not long for this or that body, but wonders at, strives after, and is amazed by the brilliance of the divine light shining through bodies. Wherefore lovers do not know what they desire or seek. For they do not know God himself, whose hidden savor distills into His works a kind of sweet essence of Himself.]

Such desire seems to underlie Tamburlaine's contention that there must remain a grace or wonder that no power, not even the distilled power of all erotic poets, can put into words. Furthermore, Tamburlaine shares a numinous language with Ficino here, highlighted by their common use of synesthesia to lend thought a substantial quality. In Ficino, God's flavor is similarly a fragrance *but also* the brilliance of His divine light. For Tamburlaine, poet's feed on thoughts, whose sweetness is a quintessence they distill from poetic flowers.

In the speech on Zenocrate's beauty Tamburlaine comes to characterize the general imaginative desires that have propelled him throughout the play more than he focuses on Zenocrate's love. It is, therefore, more consistent with the rest of the play than some critics have been willing to admit. The doubt Tamburlaine here experiences arises from his realizing both the ungovernable power and the mystery of his own desires. Immediately at the point where Tamburlaine fully admits to the power that contemplative rapture holds for him, he chastises himself for "harbour[ing] thoughts effeminate and faint." He introduces the maritime commonplace we had observed Ficino and Starkey putting to opposite uses, here quite plainly to voice the English humanist prejudice and explicitly to link harboring and effeminacy. The problem for Tamburlaine's masculinity is not so much the potential for feminine compassion, but rather the fact of harboring grandiose thoughts, of valuing a platonic way of thinking. Tamburlaine's solution to the problem famously lies in his twin powers of "conceiuing and subduing," and

therefore in disciplining the imagination and turning it toward pragmatic ends, just as Puttenham's true poet shares a disciplined imagination with engineers, generals, and architects. As I have argued throughout this chapter, he masculinizes a potentially emasculating imaginative energy by giving it the worldly focus of English humanism.

Tamburlaine figuratively achieves this worldly grounding in the last section of the speech by inverting the direction of neoplatonic eros. Ficino explained that love begins with the beauty of physical objects but leads always to higher mental and inevitably spiritual desires, away from the lower hypostases and towards higher, divine ones. For Tamburlaine, however, love is "That which hath stoopt the tempest of the Gods,/ Euen from the fiery spangled vaile of heauen,/ To feele the louely warmth of shepheards flames,/ And martch in cottages of strowed weeds" (1965-68). Love can even bring the gods down to earth, and is therefore not so spiritualized or adverse to worldly engagement as the Neoplatonics would have it. By conceiving and subduing

eros, Tamburlaine claims he "Shal giue the world to note for all my byrth,/ That Vertue solely is the sum of glorie,/ And fashions men with true nobility" (1969-71). Even at the conclusion of a speech informed by neoplatonic thought on the nature of human desire, Tamburlaine concerns himself with the social world, with proving himself both to, and through violent interactions with, other people. Arguing for a meritocracy of the soul, Tamburlaine's merit is nonetheless always manifested in his ability to act effectively in the most challenging and masculine arena of worldly endeavor: warfare. In Tamburlaine's revision of neoplatonic desire, eros leads the sublime soul back toward earthly engagement. Kerrigan and Braden have argued that Pico's achievement lay in his spiritualizing the Greek *thymos*, original source of the Homeric *agon* (121; 127).[94] Tamburlaine takes this spiritualized, imaginatively insatiable *thymos* and redirects *it* back toward violent worldly action, as if to claim that the

[94] Defining the "Piconian moment" as a sort of limitless striving of the individual to achieve some sort of absolute status, Kerrigan and Braden likewise see Tamburlaine motivated toward "absolute and infinite power of command" (126).

boyish or effeminate imagination is not so powerless as northern humanists contemptuously accuse it of being.

Tamburlaine often concerns himself with asserting the value of merit against traditional privilege. Consistent with his rejection of patriarchy and the traditional forms of domination it implies, Tamburlaine's conception of meritocracy is fueled by the same charismatic impulse we observed earlier. Originally an indication of direct contact with divinity, charisma in *Tamburlaine* retains this meaningful association with inspiration, with a divine spark, with genuine nobility that is more than studied rhetorical presentation or personable salesmanship. To be sure, justifying meritocracy and aristocracy was always a part of the humanist project, as can be witnessed in countless humanist tracts on rhetoric, education and governance. Yet English humanists attempted to explain the nobility's *practical* superiority in issues of governance because of their greater wealth and the natural respect accorded them,

while still leaving room for people of lesser birth to advance into important political positions when no suitable nobles could be found.[95] Their approaches to the subject remained pragmatic, balancing the demands of tradition against an emerging bureaucratic ethos. Tamburlaine harkens back to the old idea, traceable at least to ancient Greece, that nobility is a condition of the soul rather than lineage, and therefore by nature meritocractic. Yet at same time the merit is not one gained from assiduous study and entrance into a conventionalized, rhetorical society, but rather the merit of true nobility, which is synonymous with the neoplatonically aligned an imaginatively fired will-to-power.

Such a conception is fine in the world of ideas, but in the world of practical activity, the humanist domain par excellence, it cannot hold. At this point, I believe we come full circle, back to the pronouncements of Seaton and Ellis-Fermor on the eternal youth, the utter boyishness of Marlowe's astounding first popular

[95] For example, see Elyot 12-13 and especially Peachum's complex account of social mobility and the poltical duties and educational needs of the nobility, 2-18.

drama. For *Tamburlaine* is the brilliant youth's wish, despite all knowledge that it cannot be, that brilliance can transform the world in its own terms. It is the product of a noble young spirit who believes that nobility ought to be enough, and resentful enough of a dull-witted humanism to imaginatively visit fantastic violence upon it to win glory. The growing cynicism of Marlowe's later plays represents the skepticism of a more mature idealist (all good cynics, the cliché goes, are romantics at heart.) In his first play, however, Marlowe still clung ferociously to his youthful assurance. Tamburlaine, though not Peter Pan, is nonetheless an eternal boy asserting the precedence of his enthusiasm over the sobriety and reserve of mature, responsible political men.

Conclusion: Boys and Men

I'm a man,

I spell M — A — N,

That represent man,

No B — O — Y,

That mean mannish boy.

I'm a MAN!

I'm a full grown man,

I'm a MAN!

I'm a natural born lover's man,

I'm a MAN!

I'm a rolling stone,

I'm a MAN!

I'm a hoochie-coochie man.

—McKinley "Muddy Waters" Morganfield

I end this study of the Renaissance's new manliness—developed by training boys in humanistic diligence, self-effacement, and pragmatism—not with a renaissance text but with a twentieth century one: Muddy

Waters' "Mannish Boy." Muddy Waters celebrates throughout his corpus a powerful, virile, frankly sexual masculine self. In "Mannish Boy," perhaps his best-known song, he savors this lyrical persona: "All you little girls/Settin out in that line/I can make love to you woman/In five minutes time/Aint that a man?" His power, like that of the "hoochie-coochie man," extends to a magical mastery of nature that again figures sexual prowess, "Sittin' on the outside/Just me and my mate/I make the moon honey/Come two hours late/Wasn't that a man?" He expresses this (hetero)sexual manhood, however, not by distinguishing himself from a woman, but rather from a boy. As the epigraph to this conclusion points out, "B-O-Y" means "mannish boy;" he spells "M-A-N," which represents "MAN." But why, we might want to ask, does "B-O-Y" represent "mannish" boy? The answer, I think, is because it does *not* represent "manly" boy. "Mannish" lays bare some of the workings, some of the constructedness, of gender. I have argued in this study that early moderns had a firm *practical* grasp of the constructedness of gender, and I would argue that a

similar practical grasp of gender-as-performance appears in the simple ability to turn a substantive, "man," not only into an adjective ("manly"), but into a kind of diminutive or pejorative adjective "mannish." The practical-ness of this grasp appears both in the way "mannish" suggests performance *and* in the way it represents that performance as a failure—a performance unable to hide the real essence of the failed man who is not Muddy Waters, a failed man who is also not a woman but rather a boy.

I think what I have said about these lyrics is obvious, is something immediately present and familiar to us. For Muddy Waters, the way to, not *define*, but *recognize* a man, is to distinguish him from a boy - especially the boy who unconvincingly attempts to perform masculinity. A partially submerged theme that has run through this study has been the way early moderns worked to define masculinity through distinctions between men and boys. Although I have not ignored sexual differentiation as a powerful axis both for developing and for figuring gendered identity, I

have stressed the development of boys into men as a kind of masculine initiation. At the same time, because boys are not men, I have been able to observe the use of boyishness, childlike in *Astrophil and Stella*, adolescent in *Tamburlaine*, as a way to resist the demands of humanist masculinity. In focusing on masculinity through the idea of boyhood I have opened two general areas of inquiry, areas that I have not addressed in the body of this study but which suggest themselves. The first is the relationship of the transvestite boy actor to renaissance conceptions of gender, an area of concern that has come to preoccupy early modern scholars, who often refer to boy actors while bearing witness to the Galenic one-sex model's dominance of early modern gender theory. The second area is twentieth-century gender theory broadly conceived, a body of theory based in and growing out of feminism, powerfully articulated by Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, and focusing, even in its critique of heterocentrism, on sexual differentiation as the master paradigm of gender. Although I cannot provide a full or

satisfactory accounting of either area, I want to suggest ways my study supplements, in ways triangulating with and in ways refocusing, the perspectives enabled by these two theoretical lenses.

It may seem odd that a study of English renaissance masculinity produced at the outset of the twenty-first century and focusing so often on boys and the concept of boyishness fails to address the transvestite theater and the gender instability this theater opens up. So much recent work focuses our attention on the dynamic of the boy actor that ignoring this critical literature might seem an oversight. But my decision to hold at bay questions raised by the transvestite theater, even in a chapter on Marlowe of all people, is a strategic (or perhaps tactical) one. The idea that boy actors playing men revealed the instability of sex differences and opened a floodgate of masculine anxiety leading, in some accounts, to a crisis of masculinity is by now familiar enough to those who study the literature and culture of renaissance England.[96] Spurred in part by recent

[96] The seminal formulations of the one-sex model argument appear in Greenblatt ("Fiction") and Laqueur. Adelman, in a

criticisms of scholarship that assumes the centrality of the one-sex model as a central engine of masculine anxiety, I wanted to see if there were *other* ways the idea of boyhood might have functioned in early modern culture, ways perhaps as central to their notions of gender but to which our postmodern preoccupation with the instability of gender might have blinded us.[97] As a

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wry footnote to "Making Defection Perfect," lists many other prominent studies that have relied on the hegemony of the one sex model, which she argues has become "something that people in the know need to show that they know" (43).

[97] Adelman seriously questions the dominance of the one sex model through a careful reading of contemporary English medical texts. She emphasizes both that the female body could be and often was understood to be a unique species, perfect in its kind, and that Shakespeare was not alone in offering counter-discourses to narratives of female physical imperfection. She argues that masculine gender anxiety tends to center more sharply on fears of an overwhelming maternal body, an argument she of course makes at length in *Suffocating Mothers*. Paster's investigation of humoral conceptions of gender provides a corrective to certain tendencies in the "one-sex model." See especially her discussion of menstrual blood, 78 - 84. David Cressy has expressed deep suspicion of arguments that early modern cross-dressing reveals evidence of a sex-gender system in crisis. He surveys a variety of materials, including a court case involving male cross-dressed to attend a birth, several seventeenth century comedies, and complaints about festival occasions, concluding that "cross-dressing in practice was neither the subversive abomination nor the eroticized transgression that some scholars have claimed," adding that "one could argue that the [sex-gender] system was robust enough to play with, with a measure of festive tolerance and allowance for good clean fun" (464). To paraphrase Cressy earlier in the same article, this is a claim that may make literary scholars gasp, but it is one that they cannot, or at least should not, ignore.

result, I have argued here for a more developmentally oriented conception of gendered being than we have grown accustomed to seeing in our critical literature. As Muddy Waters makes clear, the difference between boyhood and manhood is of fundamental importance for modern masculinity, and I am convinced that it was important for early moderns as well.

Perhaps because we are not used to seeing this kind of developmental narrative, but rather sexual differentiation, as the *sine qua non* of gender, it may seem that in this study of early modern masculinity I have at times skirted the question of gendered identity. Developing the characteristics of a wise and expert counselor may seem to be about something other than being a man – may seem to have more to do with class, or with personal ambition, or the development of other facets of the subject, even the humanist subject, than a specifically *gendered* identity. In my discussion of humanist educational theory and practice in the first three chapters, gender may seem not to be the central concern. Instead, it might be objected, gender is a

symbolic realm from which to draw figures for representing something else. Gender functions as the vehicle for humanist power, not the tenor.

However, if instead of seeing sex as the axis of gender, we see age as its axis, we must be prepared to see different things, and to see things differently, than may be our wont. As sex provides what would appear to be a clear division between men and women, so using sex to define masculinity and femininity provides what appear to be clear indications of gendered *identity*. But because the boundary between boy and man is more fungible, so gendered identity drawn along the age axis will less clearly be a matter of ones identity "as a man." Instead, other considerations will inevitably leak into this identity—class and race being obvious ones to postmodern critics—but other things as well such as family, religion, political commitments, self-image, ethics, and sexuality, itself understood to *include* but not be *limited to* sexual orientation.

Even though age offers less definite boundaries to the subject's identity, including what part of the

gendered self it identifies, what it loses in coherence it gains in everydayness. Gender, I argue, is defined and reinforced—performed—in little everyday actions that often seem not to be "about" gender at all. Let me provide a sense of what mean. Conyers Read reports a 1593 argument between Robert Cecil and the Earl of Essex over filling the Attorney Generalship. Essex sought the office for Francis Bacon, sometime suitor to and kinsman of the Cecils, whereas Burghley's son preferred Edward Coke, who in fact ended up with the office. In their dispute, Cecil wonders how the Earl can forward Bacon, asking Essex "to allege him but one only precedent of so raw a youth to that place of such moment" (Read, *Lord Burghley*, 496). Essex, knowing that Cecil, who had been knighted and sworn of the Privy Council in 1591 at the age of 28 (its youngest member ever), was Bacon's junior by two years, objected that he could "produce no pattern" for the attorneyship, but that he did know "a younger than Francis Bacon, of less learning and of no greater experience, [who] was suing and shoving with all force for an office of far greater importance, greater

charge and greater weight than the attorneyship" (Read, *Lord Burghley*, 497). The younger Cecil would eventually win the Secretaryship to which Essex here alludes, the duties of which he was already performing under Old Leviathan's watchful eye. And indeed, Robert Cecil while admitting his youth, "yet weighing the school which he had studied in, and the great wisdom and learning of his schoolmaster, and the pains and observations he daily passed in that school, he thought his forces and wisdom to be sufficient to sway that machine" (Read, *Lord Burghley*, 497). Robert Cecil's acknowledged precocity, the edge of which is kept in self-representations as a schoolboy, is nonetheless excusable because, as a good humanist bureaucrat, he gives ear to discipline, and passes his days in "pains and observations" of the "great wisdom" of his schoolmaster. Youth in Bacon, however, is raw, a rawness that would appear in Bacon's ingenious desire not to accept received wisdom, but rather audaciously to overthrow Aristotle in offering a *New Organon*.

This conversation does not appear to be about gender identity—it is about procuring an office, and about the kinds of characteristics that officeholders ought to have. And yet, I would argue, manliness appears precisely in the behavior expectations this conversation dances around. The demand to act in certain ways, to develop a certain set of behaviors, such as taking pains and accepting patriarchal wisdom, and, as with Stanislavski's method actor, to make those performances seem natural, not mannish but manly, these all crystallize in the ideal masculine characteristics of the Elizabethan officeholder, ideals which are opposed to the rawness of youth. Manliness here may be "about" something other than gender, but in a thousand such articulations, in these constant and consistent ground-level tactical encounters where individuals scrap for an office, for respect, or for a moment of peace, the demand to act like a man becomes real and meaningful. Surely there is room within gender theory and within literary studies more broadly for this reality and this meaningfulness.

I end, then, with a call for us to pay more attention to developmental narratives when we think abut gender, even to the ways ideas of development (from boys to men, from girls to women) might force us to reconceptualize how gender works. Anthropology, especially older style ethnographically oriented studies, reveals that many cultures invest a great deal of energy into lengthy rituals that distinguish thresholds between boyhood and manhood, and in processes that *train* boys to become men.[98] Gender theory too often suggests that this work is all but complete with the entrance of the subject into language. Perhaps I am overly skeptical of the content psychoanalysis imbues in the moment of division between the sexes, in the necessary prohibition on homosexuality and incest that

[98] For an excellent example, see Godelier. In the process of describing male initiation practices among the New Guinea Baruya, Godelier interestingly draws attention to structural asymmetry between initiation practices for men and women, recognizing this asymmetry as marking concretely power and value asymmetries. For a critique of the turn away from the cultural situatedness that old-fashioned ethnography and literary history provides and especially of the Geertzian essayistic ethnography's effect on historicist literary scholarship, see Bruster, 29 - 62. Bruster offers "thin description," akin to cinematic "deep focus," as an alternative to the "thick description" characteristic of New Historicist essayistic scholarship.

is, in Lacan and Butler, the ability to speak, an ability marked (at least in Lacan and Kristeva) by nostalgia for the plentitude before the use of language, or entry into the symbolic.[99] I am not yet convinced that there is much *content* in this division between male and female, instead believing that, since cultures must invest so much energy in training boys to be men and girls to be women, that even at the moment of sexual differentiation, almost everything is still to be decided, not that almost everything has already been decided. I do not know what the energies a culture invests in training youth to assume adult roles says about human beings or gender more broadly. It may be an indication of how unnatural gender is, it may provide the basis for radical political projects that undermine sex/gender systems. It should, however, complicate our understanding of gender by insisting that we account for the diachronic in the lives people live.

Indeed, there is no reason why distinguishing between male and female ought to be seen as *the* formative cultural moment when cultures apparently

[99] See especially Butler, 43 - 66 and 79 - 92.

invest so much more energy in training youth to accept *adult* gender roles. I am not sure how well observations of the cultural work of distinguishing between boys and men, girls and women, youth and adults, lends itself to abstract theorizing. And I also realize that the development of a boy into a man rests upon previous work, previous articulations of the paternal Law if you will, that establish gender binaries in the first place. Still, the rubber hits the road in the systems, formal and informal, cultures build for developing masculinity and femininity. If the boy is to nature as the man is to culture, then is it also true that the girl is to nature as the woman is culture? And if this is true, to what extent does it make sense to continue insisting that human societies tend to draw the dividing line between nature and culture along the axis of sex/gender, when youth/gender operates as a powerful axis to supplement and perhaps displace this first one?

I do not yet have nor do I think this study has provided concrete answers to these questions. But I have tried to lay the groundwork for an approach to

gender generally and to masculinity specifically that allows us to account for what seem to be elements that cross time and place—the practical grasp of gender performance and the developmental institutions designed to train gendered subjects - while at the same time initializing diachronic variables both within the life cycle and within history. If such an approach has sometimes created confusion by activating too many variables at once, it has also provided a means to account both for similarities and for differences between Them and Us. The full theorizing of this relationship remains the great project of the Human Sciences after postmodernism.

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