



The Construction of Empire-Garden in Sir Philip Sidney's *New Arcadia*

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Abstract: The yearning to return to an idyllic ideal or a paradise of a long-lost past seems to be inherent in all men regardless of time and situation, and the poets have been the spokesmen for this dream. Garden poetry is variously reflected in the works of Hesiod, Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Ariosto, Tasso, Petrarch, Dante. The emblematic meaning of garden poetry during the European Renaissance and the prevalence of real garden at the time enormously inspires the imagination of the English poet to invent an ideal "England garden." In addition, the progression of the spirit of nationalism that results from Reformation enables the court poet with political ideal ardently anticipates the coming of Elizabeth an empire garden. The Renaissance English poets metaphorically take a state or a "body politic" as a garden, which could be evidenced in the tradition of literature, politics, culture and religion at the time. Sir Philip Sidney, a courtier-poet-warrior of the sixteenth century England, zealously wrote his ideal of Elizabethan England into his pastoral romance, *New Arcadia*. This paper, while centering on the courtly culture, literary tradition and political ideal, attempts to present Sidney's imagination of Elizabethan empire as a garden that is literally constructed in *New Arcadia* and hopefully reflects the humanistic ideal of the intellectuals of English Renaissance---the construction of a harmonious Elizabethan garden.

Keywords: Renaissance, Garden, Empire-garden, Feminine

1. Introduction

Though considered as a spare-time writer, Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) won the title as one of the best, and certainly one of the most influential poets of his time. His masterpiece, *Arcadias*, since the first publication in 1590 (*New Arcadia*), has received numerous interpretations. Early critics mainly concern with the literary sources of *Arcadias* and the comparison of different versions of the text so as to trace Sidney's progress as a thinker or a story-teller. Considering occasional topical allusions and speculative remakes about the problems of Elizabethan England and the didactic functions of Renaissance literature, critics of centuries explore allegorical nature of the work, assuming that the work is meant to discover the thematic tension of Elizabethan politics. Based on the religious dispute in Book III, some scholars associate it with the contemporary religious matters. Recently, narrative features of *New Arcadia* are variously mentioned by the critics, among whom some suppose the significance of the interrelationship of the episodes while others focus on the

thematic connection of the main plot and the episodes. Nevertheless, the study on Sidney's imagination of Elizabethan empire as a garden is wanting, which, meanwhile, makes the present study possible and significant. The Renaissance English poets metaphorically take a state or a "body politic" as a garden, which can be evidenced in the literary works of this period. The Renaissance English poets metaphorically take a state or a "body politic" as a garden, which can be evidenced in the literary works of this period. The Renaissance humanist's belief that learned men were born to create an ideal commonwealth [1] (p. 1) nurtures an ideal of service to the court that is the image of the center, an ideal vision of healing and perfection. Celebration of the monarch, such as Elizabeth's metamorphoses into Astraea, Gloriana by Edmund Spenser, Cynthia by Sir Walter Raleigh, and Venus appareled with Diana by Sir Philip Sidney, is usually a convention through which the court poet could apotheosize "Queen Majesty", thereby creates an idealized England under her leadership. Undoubtedly, the actual reality at the time is somewhat contradictory to what the court poet could imagine

in their literary invention, it seems that the Elizabethans, especially those who were learned men and had been taught to use their talent in the service of the commonwealth, share an optimistic view to the future of England and prefer to construct an imaginative England of empire garden. As his contemporaries do, Sidney, the son of the Governor of Ireland and nephew of Leicester, the Queen's favorite, who fully expected to serve the court and actively participated in the matters of the court, reflectively presents his imagination of the Elizabethan empire as a garden in the pastoral world of *New Arcadia*.

2. Garden in Literary Tradition and Sidney's Imagination of Elizabethan Empire as a Garden

Liva Beretta announces that the myth of Golden Age, e.g. the Elysium plain and the Isle of the Blest inspire both garden poetry and the genre of pastoral poetry [2] (p1). Though garden poetry and pastoral poetry are different types, Beretta's announcement does imply the common features of the two: to express a longing for an idyllic ideal. It could reasonably be considered that the pictorial elements qualify the *New Arcadia* as a poem of description of a place with all the standard features, such as, warm spring, green plantation, garden, soft wind and singing bird, with which garden poetry shares. Traditionally, Sidney's *Arcadia* is taken as the pastoral romance where the life of the royal members and the deeds of the heroes are portrayed in the shepherds' world, but with the revision, Sidney put the emphasis on the qualities of pastoral garden that are enclosed physically and metaphorically, and the harmony, ease, order and peace are celebrated under the guiding forces of the female characters whose presence makes Arcadia an earthly paradise.

2.1. Garden in Classical and Christian Tradition

The garden or garden poetry gets its nourishment from European literary tradition. For the Greeks, the places that have names as Elysium, the Isles of the Blessed, Golden Age and the Garden of the Hesperides become the dream land for those who are yearning to return to an idyllic ideal or a paradise of a long-lost past. The Greek tradition of the garden was firmly established by Hesiod's and Homer's description of paradise. While the garden tradition is continued in Latin poetry of Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*, *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, some new features are introduced by another Latin poet Claudian in his *Epithalamium*. Claudian's garden of Venus becomes a spot of sensuality which exerts an importance in secular love poetry [3] (p55-56). Claudian is a link between classical poetry and medieval garden poetry: he establishes the convention of the Venus bower or garden which becomes a model for secular love poetry. A. Bartlett Giamatti and Liva Beterra both agree, though differ in some aspects, that the Greek and Roman paradise are forerunners of the Christian paradise. It is difficult to know where to draw the line between pagan and Christian use of garden imagery,

however, variations concerning the description of Christian garden all began with the delineation of Eden in Genesis and developed in *The Song of Songs* [3] (p67-83). The garden described by Dante (1265-1321) and Ariosto (1474-1535) bears a similar idea of Divine love for which the protagonist struggles to aim. The itinerary of garden follows the experience of the hero on a journey through the lost soul in the wildness and earthly love with the aim of reaching the heights of Divine love. This journey is reflected in the topography of the garden so that the area which symbolized Divine love is situated at the highest point of the garden [2] (p54-56). Ariosto's garden thematically lies in the choice between a life of sensual pleasure or in Christian virtue which is further developed by Spenser in his *The Faerie Queen*.

The classical and biblical paradises survive onto Middle Ages and continued to exert an influence on the literary garden image of the Renaissance poetry. But it witnesses a shift and an innovation both in form and content. The rise of modern science together with the desire to live in harmony among men and with nature makes Humanist turn to the actual source for the subject, a meeting point for science and Art and for nature which was the ideal means for displaying artificial and natural wonders [2] (p37-46). It is in garden that the ancient mechanical art of the automata incorporates an architectural principle (mainly expressed in the symmetrical design) which aims to create a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosms of the universe through the imitation of nature by means of Art. The garden was not only a place of physical experience of visual beauty, but also meant to elevate the mind through meditation or contemplation.

2.2. Garden Image in Renaissance and Sidney's Garden Imagination

As an immediate successor of tradition, English Renaissance garden poetry not only inherits the Italian sources but also modifies the literary tradition in accordance with its national particularity. The poet has not only the literary tradition at his disposal but also the actual Renaissance garden that develops and spread throughout Europe from the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries onwards. The poetry that contains the description of a garden or a paradise that connotes the state of harmony since ancient Greek poetry, obviously stimulates Elizabethan poets' literary inspiration to take Elizabethan England as a garden. Queen Elizabeth I is therefore worshiped as the hostess of British Islands that are girdled around by the sea and the cultural connotation of queen goddess which could bring order, unity and harmony to people and state embeds into the creation of literary practice. Elizabethan poets' common practice of taking England as a garden come from the blending factors of political, religious and personal realities.

Though different sufficiently from the Continental Reformation, the English Reformation is a direct consequence of the spread of Protestant ideas, anti-Romanism that plays a very important role in facilitating the break with the Roman Catholic Church and the launching of the Reformation in England. Under this religious milieu, the Protestant court-poet,

like Sidney, holds that the statecraft is dependent upon the conception of man's purpose in life, a conception which is in turn informed by his adherence to the "true religion". Fluke Greville, Sidney's closest friend, insists that Sidney's "chief ends" were not "Friends, Wife, Children, or himself; but above all things the honor of his Maker, and service of his Prince, or Country" [4]. This dual concerns is everywhere manifested in Sidney's letters, especially, those to Languet, where the most commonplace thought is likely to set off a chain of reflections leading to either religion or politics or both because Sidney's politics is ultimately an appendage of religion whose concern is to further God's cause in the world.

Historically speaking, the island of Britain consists of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, among which England is the most powerful in political and military arena. The sixteenth century sees a move toward state-building. With the progression of the imperial state-building, a sense of national identity shared within the intellectual and ideological dimensions kindles the aspiration of Elizabethan's hearts. England in 1547 was already a second-rank European power with considerable economic resources [5]. Besides, the geographical and political isolation of England from the Continent, especially when confronting the frequent threat of her rivals, France and Spain, propels England to accelerate the formation of territorial consolidation. Correspondingly, the Elizabethan courtiers, especially those who are also intellectuals and poets, such as Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser and so on, ardently anticipate a coming union of the kingdoms and use literature as either an intellectual, ideological adjunct or supplement to sketch the vision of British empire that as described by Spenser, "the light of Great Lady of the greatest Isle that likes Phoebus' lamp shines throughout the world" [6] (p1). During the reign of Elizabeth I, the cult of Queen appeared in many forms of art, including literature. It is literature that is generally and rightly considered as the glory of the age. English men rally to their queen and she becomes "symbol of Englishness and nationalism" [7], and her beauty, her wisdom and her divine mission to guide England become articles of faith. The Elizabethans, in general, enjoy optimism and national pride from which the literary man would easily draws inspiration to sing the eulogy for the Queen's monarch.

Chiefly viewed by his age as the model of perfect courtesy, Sir Philip Sidney makes an impression on modern reader as a critic, probably the first in English literary history, a sonneteer and a prose writer. Many biographers note that Sidney was meant to be raised as a statesman, which is substantially true. When Philip was an eleven-year-old student (1566) at Shrewsbury Scholl, his father Henry Sidney wrote him a rather long letter to urge his study in French and Latin that "will stand you [Philip] in most stand in that profession of life that you are born to live in" [8]. As a part of his training for a public role, Sidney was sent to travel on the Continent as the convention among young Elizabethan aristocrats and gentlemen. The roughly three years (1572-1575) took place at a crucial time in his development when he grew from adolescence to adulthood. Mentored by the humanist Hubert Languet, with whom Sidney maintained a life-long friendship,

he further developed his knowledge of languages and contacts among his Continental peers, and acquired an understanding of political affairs that would advance his career as a statesman. Most important of all, Languet promoted his interest in Continental politics and the Protestant cause, introducing him to men of learning and influence [9]. It seems inevitably that the nature of his family, his friendships, his education; his religious training and his social environment cultivate his goal to become a major political figure at Elizabeth's court. When in 1575 he returned to England after three preparatory years on the Continent, he was ready to assume that role.

3. Sidney's Imagination of Elizabethan Empire as a Garden

Among many courtier-poets of the Elizabethan period, poetry could be used to court the queen directly on occasion, as it was by such courtiers as Sir Walter Raleigh [10]. Poetry could also serve, as Richard Helgerson, notes, as "a way of displaying abilities that could, once they had come to the attention of a powerful patron, be better employed in some other manner" [11]. The entire system of literary "courtship" depended upon an assumed continuity between the literary and social persona, the success of the former bringing favor to the latter. As an aristocrat and patron himself, Sidney did not require patronage in the way that poets of less exalted status did, however, lived in an age of the glorification of the Queen, he could not help but follow suit. The figure of Elizabeth haunts Sidney's work, as we shall see, though not in a way that could have served Sidney's political advancement.

The Lady of May begins with "Her most excellent Majestie Walking in Wansteed Garden, as she passed down into the grove..." [12] which implies Sidney's insistence that his masque has the same kind of reality as everything else at Wanstead. And most interesting of all, there is a traditional invocation with a difference that the inspiration of the work---the Queen, is literally present. It invokes and defines the monarch by first adducing a set of conventional attributes for her, and then qualifying these with another set. S. K. Orgel claims that "both sets of tropes, both the initial descriptions and what subsequently qualifies them, represent traditional attitudes toward the sovereign" [13]. Mr. Orgel's attention is drawn on Sidney's examination of literary convention as an experimental attempt, however, there is another convention that could not be ignored. The mistress (Queen) walks in the country garden and she is seen as a heavenly Muse by the poet and the beam of "thunderthumping of Jove's" by the commoners. She possesses the determining forces from which all the characters, the two suitors, and even the Lady of May, seek help. Sidney defines "her Majesty" as a hostess of the garden of England isles. In *New Arcadia*, Sidney further develops this idea through the foundation of a real and a metaphoric garden, the Arcadia country. The dominant force of the Arcadia is attributed not to the retired Duke, Basilius, though nominally he is a head, but to the female characters.

The virtues of each female collectively embody the different aspects of the Queen's royal attributes under which harmony, balance and order are maintained both in nature and in society. Apparently, Sidney unwittingly follows the tradition to exploit the theme of the female royalty, but treats it with his own innovation in an emblematic way when a woman is compared to the generative force of a garden.

3.1. Garden Depiction in the *New Arcadia*

New Arcadia that bears beauty of pastoral simplicity also carries the features of garden poetry in Renaissance England. In chapter two of the Book I, when Musidorus is saved from a shipwreck and led by the two Arcadian shepherds, Strephon and Claius, into the Arcadian state, the typical illustration of pastoral is presented: the hills garnished with stately tress, the meadow enameled with eye-pleading flowers, thickets, which being lined with most pleasant shade, are witnessed by the cheerful deposition of many well-tuned birds, and the valley comforted with refreshing of silver rivers while the young shepherds' song responds to the lamb's bleating and the young shepherdesses' signing voice rhymes with her knitting. Many houses are "scattered, no two being one by th'other, & yet not so far off as that it barred mutual succour: a shew, as it were, of an accompanable solitarines, & of a civil widlness" [14] (p13-14). This is a field of delight enjoying a life of simplicity, order and harmony that guides the mind of these people who want little and desire not much.

Then the scene moves on to a description of real garden, a noble Arcadian, Kalander's dainty garden-house where the exquisite garden is converged within the harmonious pastoral of delight. This garden is well arrayed behind Kalander's house by which a descending stair leads down to a vast green and delicate ground with a thicket spreading on each side. The beds of flowers are patterned behind the thickets, and the trees above are to the flower beds a pavilion; and the flowers to the tress a mosaic floor. Apart from the symmetrical design, in the middle of the garden, it stands a fair pond whose "shaking christall" mirrors all the other beauties in the garden; as a result, there appear two gardens, one in reality, the other in shadow. In one of the thickets, a naked Venus of white marble poses as a loving mother feeding her baby, Aeneas [14] (p17-18). The description of the garden does not straightforwardly provide or contains in detail all the natural motifs of garden or landscape, but the point is made: there has a conventional closed garden that implies ease, retirement, and harmony. Setting in pagan atmosphere, yet this garden is indeed of Renaissance feature that embodies a belief: the beauty of proportion springs from the concept of the geometry of natural order of universe. Together with this design, the pond carries symbolic meaning of life-giving, and the allegorical use of the sculpture of Venus and Aeneas also symbolizes the life-given force for feeding is the maternal power of woman and therefore, suggests female potency as a source of life.

Sidney later provides another physical garden, the retired Duke, Basilius' lodge-garden with more delicacy and artificiality. The description is divided into clearly defined

parts corresponding to the different parts of the estate. Viewing from the outside, the lodge is set upon a rising ground that is hardly perceived, which is of a yellow stone built in the form of a pentagon, having around a garden framed into like points. The walks are cut out through the garden with each pointing to the angles of the lodge. At the end of one of the angles, it is a smaller lodge where the gracious Pamela, the elder princess, lives, so that the lodge as a whole seems like a comet. As a convention, the account of a garden as being designed as a military fort in the form of pentagon manifests the owner's military past [2] (p85), however, the voluntary retirement of the duke, who apparently succeeds his royal power in a peaceful time and merely maintains it, achieves very little military glory, which implicitly denies his status as an efficient ruler.

Inside this pentagonal shape there are flower beds and thick trees among which a banqueting house is laid under the wrappings of vine branches with a table in the middle cunningly designed with hydraulic engineering and ornamentally decorated. The description of this garden underlines an important aspect of the Renaissance garden, namely, it is a garden of sense or an earthly paradise, a feature that is combined in the conventional motif, the literary allusion and -the application of natural science. Sidney apparently gets inspiration from the Renaissance garden that more or less pure literary tradition incorporates the real garden into its body of features.

As Jessie Herrada Nance argues that apart from the real gardens appeared in the Arcadian state, the Arcadia, on the whole, could be observed geographically and metaphorically as a garden [15]. Basically speaking, the two gardens mentioned above could not exist without a sound and healthy surrounding within the structure of the Arcadian state. Among all the countries of Greece, Arcadia, by stability and peace, is the perfect state that has been a singular reputation for the sweetness of the air, being free from the worldly affair and devoid of social vainness in particular. In the first chapter of Book I, the first two days of Musidorus' journey is annoyed by the barren lands of Locania that is caused by civil war, and then cheered up by the "delightful prospects" of Arcadia with its well-tempered people in a serene life, which forms a striking contrast between the conditions of the two countries. Meanwhile, the neighboring states of Arcadia are being corrupted by various kinds of personal and public evils as the narration in Book II reveals episode by episode through the narrators, Pyrocles and Musidorus. Therefore, Arcadia seems like an enclosed garden immune to the evil forces and corruptions from the outside, and because Arcadia is so peaceful a country, even the Muses has honored it "by choosing this country for their chief repairing place" and by granting the shepherds of the land the gift of poetry [14] (p19).

The opening scene of *New Arcadia* predicts a harmonious union between the emblems of the nature: Before man appears on the scene or the single province of Arcadia is isolated as a setting, the whole earth puts on "her new apparel against the approach of her lover," the sun [14] (p5). Sidney's description begins in "nuptial time," marriage is therefore both conceit

and emblem, the ideal beginning and the wished-for-end, to all of Arcadia. The great union of earth with governing sun can provide a setting and emblem for man who in that being-constructed image of the ideal physical world, may first envision and then realize human virtue within his own life. Within this splendid nuptial time, the first human characters that appear are the shepherds Claius and Strephon, transform their love for the departing Urania into a "love-fellowship" that makes them cooperative friends, not ordinary rival lovers. Then, the saved young prince, Musidorus, who recovers from the temporary loss of his friend and cousin, Prycloes, again sees images of living perfection when he runs a three-day course of journey's grief through the barren Laconia and comes to the land of Arcadia. At its end, nature's rose and violet dawn (recapitulating the opening marriage of sun with earth) blots out harsh Laconia. Similarly, Arcadia opens out before him a kind of national park, a living emblem of the orderly, harmonious state.

More immediately, as if in a reduction from the public to the private, such a golden world is manifested also in Kalander's house. It does not affect "so much any extraordinary kind of fineness, as an honorable... firm stateliness. The lights, doors, and stairs, rather directed to the use of the guest, than to the eye of the artificer...each place handsome without curiosity, and homely without loathsomeness; not so dainty as not to be trod on, nor yet slubbered up without good fellowship; all more lasting than beautiful, but that the consideration...made the eye believe it was exceeding beautiful" [14] (p15). Kalander's house and household are described as vindications of the Arcadian way of life where simplicity does not mean simple-mindedness, and stateliness may be obtained without magnificence.

3.2. *Political Metaphor of the Female Characters in the New Arcadia*

The maintenance of a peaceful life and the Arcadian virtues of temperance and moderation attribute to the good social order and the political stability of the land, but how is the Arcadia keeping its smooth running under the Basilius' nominal reign, even after he withdraws from his sovereign. As a matter of fact, Arcadia is by no means of a simple life of primitive, it is but through the inner drives under the indications of goddess-like women's guiding force that idyllic state is created and maintained, for the prominence of the female characters and their extraordinary existence could not be ignored. Urania as suggested by Myrick, serves as an invocation in accordance with the rules for epic poetry [16], she actually symbolizes Heavenly Love and her associate, Aphrodite Ourania which is professed by Walter R. Davis [17]. Her presence makes Arcadia the ideal state in which love can flourish because she engenders virtue in her admirers: her beauty cause reason to rule over passion, propagates friendship rather than rivalry, teaches the beholder chastity. Sidney places this "description within a clear Neo-Platonic framework by naming 'Urania' after the muse of celestial science" [18]. Departing to the island of Cythera, a center for the worship of Venus Urania, she is made a symbol of the

virtuous love that leads to the contemplation of the heavenly beauty. Her departure may be a symbolic fall into the world of man's experience, and to regain the ordered serenity of the pastoral ideal needs to find some satisfactory substitute for Venus Urania. There are indeed the substitutes who are the princesses of Philoclea and Pamela and serve as the roles of Goddess, and whose virtue and perfection continues to maintain the inner ease and the prospect of Arcadia.

The goddesses who preside over the garden have a long tradition back to Sappho's *one girl* where the image of the girl as a flower is dwelling among the flowers [19]. Ovid's account of the Proserpine story, in *Metamorphoses*, V, 398-401, offers a tentative implication of the image of the girl as a flower, but in his *Fasti*, Flora, the goddess of flowers, by telling of her origins (V. 195-210), finally becomes the primordial force through whose magnificence the beautiful landscape is reflected [3] (p42). An interesting variation on this image is found in Claudian's epithalamium, *De Nuptiis Honorii Augusti*, in which the girl is like a flower; the virtues of the girl become those of the landscape, while the attributes of the landscape reflect those of the girl. Obviously, influenced under the allegorical, philosophic traditions of the medieval literature, especially the *Roman de la Rose*, with the motif of the garden of Rose as a mere misleading copy on the one hand, and the Good Pasture as the real and celestial garden on the other, some poets of the European Renaissance are apt to depict the earthly paradise, the false paradise or enchanted garden possessed by the beautiful but deceitful woman: Venus in Spenser's *the Faerie Queene*, but with an exception that in *Purg. XXVIII*, Dante poses Matelda, the female inhabitant of the earthly paradise, as his guide, who will not lead one astray.

Nurtured in the rich tradition of garden poetry that is thematically connected with woman, Sidney naturally inherits and expands the images of garden and the motifs of women of the earthly paradise in *New Arcadia* where the goddess and the perfection of women are paralleled in their divine qualities which guides one's step to moral consummation.

In the Arcadian garden, there are several women of perfect beauty and virtue, functioning as primordial principles to keep the garden state fertile and harmonious and to maintain the regular run of the land. Sidney's portrayal of the goddess-like woman inherently corresponds to the cult of Elizabeth and the culture of the Elizabethan court. During the period of the Renaissance, in the world that the heliocentric thought is prevailing, with the sun-Queen at the center of awareness, the visibility of the Queen is important as her subject's knowledge of her observation is confirmed. This is no relief from her gaze. The Queen's subjects feel also the satisfaction and security of the knowledge that the subject is a satellite in a stable universe. Influenced by the Neo-Platonism and Aristotle's concept of the first Mover, the English poet of the sixteenth century depicts Elizabeth as *Primu Mobile* to drive a country, as shown in a cosmological picture by John Case in his *Sphaera Civitatis* where the Queen Elizabeth, placed on the ninth sphere, *Primu Mobile*, drives the universe with her hands stretching, which symbolizes Elizabeth as the prime mover of all things [20].

Sidney put his Neo-Platonic imagination of Elizabeth into a shepherdess, Urania. Urania the shepherdess and Urania the Heavenly Venus, embodies the Petrarchan-Platonic idea of beauty that is a reflection of virtue and the “divine spark” descended from heaven. The metaphorical nature of Urania’s beauty creates an underground awareness of the commonplace metaphor, the face of nature when Claius compares Urania’s face to the sun: “...as wee can better consider the sunnes beautie, by making how he guides these waters, and mountains the[n] by looking upon his own face, too glorious for our weake eyes; so it may be our conceits (not able to beare her sun-stayning excellencie) will better way it by her workes upon some meaner subject employed” [14] (p7). Urania’s beauty is an emblem of her inner virtue and correspondingly there is a similar harmonious progression from Urania’s beauty to the virtue of the beholders, Claius and Strephon: “...in her, loue-fellowship maintained friendship between rivals, and beautie taught the beholders chastity” [14] (p8)? She engenders virtue in her admirers: Her beauty causes reason to rule over passion, propagates friendship rather than rivalry, teaches the beholder chastity.

Tillyard suggests that the average Elizabethan would accept the idea that as the sun is in the midst of the planets, giving light and vigor, so is the heart in the midst of man’s members [21], which accordingly the “prince-sun” metaphor reminds us of the correspondence between the sun that maintains the order of the spheres in the universe and the prince that keeps the order of human society. Urania’s role to Arcadia in reference is that of the queen Elizabeth I to England, whose presence is like a guiding star and a spiritual leader to people, just as Spender, in *The Faerie Queene*, says “... O Goddess heavenly bright,/ Mirroure of grace and Majestie divine,/ Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light/ Like Phoebus’s lamp throughout the world doth shine...” [6] (p1). Urania’s divine quality as a goddess retained in the Neo-Platonic terms reflects the ideal attributes of a prince, or Queen Elizabeth. Urania’s abstract divine quality and invisible presence are later transmuted into the more concrete, dynamic and active models of perfection, the princess Philoclea and Pamela, who possess the similar status as the goddesses of the Arcadian garden.

If Urania is the model in a perfect state, the princesses of Philoclea and Pamela are the perfections of their kinds in the pastoral kingdom with a human court. As Kalander says in describing the princesses to Musidorus, there is “more sweetness in Philoclea but more majestie in Pamela;... [Philoclea is] so humble that she will put all pride out of countenance;... Pamela of high thoughts, who avoids not pride with not knowing her excellencies, but by making that one of her excellencies to be void of pride” [14] (p11-12). Philoclea, in her simplicity, her humility, her warmth, and her natural innocence is associated with nature. The natural virtue of humility and emotional warmth is an essential attribute of a land of contemplation, but the Arcadia is not purely engaged in holy meditation, but very often demanded by the activities of the Knight and the ruler. Necessarily, Pamela fills the role she plays in the mode of social life, for her wisdom, her

self-respect, her emotional control, and her queenly sense of her own high estate are associated with civilization. The nature of Philoclea and the civilization of Pamela may give rise to the personal flaw when concerning the matter of love, as Carl Dennis has commented in an introduction to *The Covntesse of Pembrokes Aarcadia* [22], nevertheless, the virtues of the princesses embody the two modes of life preserved and maintained in Arcadia to balance the simple, unsophisticated and humble community within the framework of the civilized virtues of internal discipline and respect for strict hierarchical distinctions.

Philoclea’s nature of love and humility corresponds to the queen’s most important quality—love and mercy that Elizabeth gladly shows to her people, which, as suggested by Nona, is a “task inevitably forced upon a woman ruler” 1] (p, 22). Nona argues that the task Elizabeth sets herself and her publicist is to enlarge her opportunities for virtuous action, and to provide a context to propaganda her role as the merciful Virgin Queen, which can be evidenced in the case of her long-delayed execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1586. Moreover, in a public speech, Elizabeth subtly reminds her audience of her self-referential role of a pastoral maiden who conveys her reluctance to be the agent of Mary’s death, because Mary and her are just two “milk-maids with pails upon our [their] arms” [23]. Just as Elizabeth carefully establishes her public role of mercy and love, so does the court poet invent the ideal of their monarch. The Queen’s power of love always accompanies her power of sovereignty that is fully embodied in the character of Pamela.

The prince Pamela, desperately worshiped by Musidorus as a goddess who “in a definite compasse, can set forth infinite beauty” [14] (p115), is accordingly comparable to the Elizabeth I’s quality of majesty and justice. Pamela, whose reason and majesty, embodies the public and social role the queen has to play to win the reverence mixed with fear from her subjects. Sidney also compares Elizabeth’s public image—and the splendor of her majesty to the sun that “dazzleth” the eyes of the Catholic forces in Europe. In the same letter of the Queen’s proposed marriage, Sidney accentuated Elizabeth’s milder qualities of love, yet also notes that she is the best means to command reverence and fear. Such witty blending seems especially apt when writing to the queen who encouraged celebration of herself a reconciler of opposites—the Protestants and the Catholics. The joining qualities of Philoclea and Pamela are reminiscent of that of Elizabeth who is loved at home and feared abroad, a potent combination.

Apart from the macrocosmic emblems of the female figures as the dwelling goddesses in the Arcadia who achieve successfully the roles of mistresses in the abstract sense, the body of a woman (goddess) is variously compared to the features of a garden (or nature) which gives us a sense of authenticity of identical relation between a woman and a garden.

When lamenting the departure of Urania, the heavenly Venus, the shepherd, Strephon makes lots of comparisons of Urania’s body with natural scenes in the garden: her eyes are more pleasant than the day-shining star and her breath more

sweet than a gentle South-west wind. Urania is not only a goddess who presides over a garden, also a superior one above the natural things and brings magnificence to nature. This type of comparison seems to be modeled on the *Song of Songs* in which the bride is described with similes like “your eyes are like doves” and “your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil” [24].

Arcadia, a pastoral world endowed with natural beauty of simplicity and innocence, ascribes enormously to Sidney's descriptive power that the intensive use of a wide variety of figures brings about a land of nature full of fragrance and freshness. With a careful reading, one could not help discerning the Arcadian field feminized as the narrator's affectionate and tender tone to the natural world is gradually shown, and the feminine terms and images are used to construct the Arcadian garden. Nature (earth) is traditionally seen as the source of nourishment, protection, power and the mystery of cyclic recurrence, and thus analogous to the female [25]. It is only natural that the image would be extended into a comparison of the garden, the daughter of Mother Nature, to a woman. In addition to this analogy, many goddesses and nymphs such as, Flora, Pomona, Ceres and Venus, connected with the garden in classical mythology make it reasonable for a poet to compare the beauty and fertility of the garden to that of a woman, and consequently to extol a woman as the goddess whose beauty and virtue mirror the significance of a garden. Later, Sidney designs a quiet interesting way to exploit the theme of a woman as a garden by letting the mistress walk in the garden. Through the reactions of the flowers we understand the marvel of her beauty and her power to capture the viewer. As Philoclea walks in the garden, the lilies turn pale for envy and the rose grows red from shame when comparing its own color to the color of her cheeks, and the apples fell down from the tree to do homage to the apples of her breast. The cloud gives its place so that the heaven might more freshly smile upon her [14] (p56).

4. Conclusion

As suggested above, Urania, Philoclea and Pamela, whose divine qualities are identical to the Goddesses, or the incarnations of the Queen Elizabeth, and who are the real hostesses of the Arcadian garden, serve as the source of nourishment, protection, power and the significance of the pastoral Arcadia. Their presence and emblematic existence brings a harmonious prosperity to Arcadia. The females' sublimity, majesty, mercy and love implicitly indicate the virtues of the idealized Elizabeth, and the Arcadian world of harmony and order correspondingly echoes Sidney's imagination of the Elizabethan country that he intentionally imitates. Though the Arcadia evolves from an idealized pastoral of harmony, beauty and virtue in Book I to a land of instability full of hidden sins in Book II, and finally into a blood-shedding battle field that ruins the innocence and righteousness, it could not be denied that the garden poetry that reflects the concepts of Elizabethan empire becomes a ever-lasting motif in Renaissance England. Meanwhile, the

prevailing idea that takes England as a garden provides Sidney with an opportunity to mirror his ideal and speculate the reality into the fictionalized Arcadian garden. It is perhaps contented that Sidney's Arcadia is not only a mini-portraiture of political, religious and ethic issues of the sixteenth century Elizabethan England, but also a song of bugle call anticipating a new Elizabethan court comes.

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