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**A TRUE ‘HOMER OF WOMEN’?
THE USE OF RHETORICAL FIGURES AND
STRUCTURAL PARADIGMS AND THE
PRESENTATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN
THE EARLY PROSE WORKS OF ROBERT
GREENE**

Gerald Killingworth

Submitted for the PhD Examination

Birkbeck, University of London

2020

I certify that the work in this thesis is entirely my own work.

Gerald Killingworth May 17th 2020

1592*

Robin, not Rob.
 In Norfolk, *Master* Robert.
 Certainly not a good fellow,
 but I sing, oh yes, I sing,
 sharpened by ginger,
 a ginger point to my words,
 a ginger peak for my beard
 and a top-knot
 pointing gingerly heavenwards.
 Ginger humour that.

A ginger stream
 pissed against some wall or other,
 our jaundiced testament.
So make us jolly, Robin.
 Spicy talk
 cutpurse company
 harlots' hair dyed ginger.
By God that peak of yours
could pick a hole through London –
 ginger runnels
 draining life's shit
 to hell or New Bedlam graveyard
 where brown clay, I'm told,
 enfolds me
 jolly red peak and all,
 the bravery of my excrements
 reduced to muck, not dust.
 I can take muck.

GK

*Robert Greene died in penury on September 3rd 1592.

Editions Used

Scholars writing about Robert Greene have generally used as their source material Alexander B. Grosart's fifteen volume edition (1881-1886) of the *Life and Complete Works of Robert Greene* which is readily available in modern reprints. In recent years, critical editions of individual texts, accompanied by extensive critical apparatus, have begun to appear. We now have modern editions of *Gwydonius*, *Menaphon*, *Pandosto*, *Planetomachia* and *Perimedes the Blacksmith*. Thanks to the efforts of *Early English Books Online*, the oldest surviving editions of Greene's pamphlets are now readily available and these can also be purchased as reprints. I have followed these rather than Grosart's sometimes inaccurately transcribed edition as the source material for my exploration of a selection of Greene's early prose works, except for those five named pamphlets whose modern editions I use instead. In my use of quotation from the sixteenth-century editions, I have retained the original (and inconsistent) spelling and punctuation, but not the contractions or the use of ampersand. I have used only the modern letter 's', modern 'j' for the Elizabethan 'i' where appropriate and 'v' for 'u' where modern usage demands it. When quoting from modern editions, I have kept their quotations from Greene in the form in which they reproduce them. In my footnotes throughout, I have given Greene's authorship of a text only in the first, full, citation. Thereafter I have given only the work's title.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to suggest a way of reading Robert Greene that will lead to a better appreciation of his achievement. Too often, he has been dismissed as an obvious second-ranker principally remembered for his connection with Shakespeare, whom he possibly insulted and for whom he certainly provided the outline of the plot for *The Winter's Tale*.

Some literary historians have been drawn to the autobiographical content of Greene's later works, the repentance and cony-catching pamphlets, which purport to be the confessions of a roisterer who had personal experience of Elizabethan London's criminal underworld. Other scholars, interested in the late sixteenth-century phenomenon of the emergence of the professional writer, have concentrated on Greene as a 'hack' desperately and shamelessly churning out anything that would sell to a readership intoxicated by the easy availability of printed reading matter. Nor should we forget the frequent charge that the early Greene is no more than an opportunist imitator of John Lyly's euphuistic style.

The above is, in sum, what is mostly 'known' about Robert Greene, but none of the opinions I have quoted engages sufficiently closely with the texts themselves. It is very comfortable for literary critics and historians to feel that the accepted judgements on Greene are sound because they are so often repeated and therefore do not require challenging. This study offers a series of challenges because it is my view that much of what has been written about Greene until very recently has consisted of distortions and sweeping judgements founded on insufficiently close engagement with the text. An informed close reading of Greene's early pamphlets, of the kind

undertaken in this study, should reveal him as a thoughtful artist with consistent and unexpectedly sympathetic views on women.

G.K Hunter, in his *John Lyly, the Humanist as Courtier*, declares that ‘to approach the works of Lyly by any kind of “direct method” would be ridiculous. No modern reader can be expected to enjoy *Euphues* or the plays without some preparation in the modes of thinking and writing which they exemplify.’¹ Hunter’s comments are equally applicable to our reading and understanding of Robert Greene. A failure to consider contemporary ‘modes of thinking and writing’ accounts for the nature of many of the criticisms levelled at him. Commentators have been remiss in their willingness to accuse him of being, for example, too ‘rhetorical’ or ‘euphuistic’ without offering any explanation of what precisely they mean. There are too many unexamined givens in the history of the critical reception of Greene’s pamphlets. It appears sometimes that it is not even a case of the application of ‘the direct method’ in the reading of Greene’s texts, reading without background knowledge; one senses that critics have felt that they ‘know’ Greene sufficiently well to voice an opinion and see no need to trouble themselves by looking at the text to check.

Much of this study is concerned with the ‘modes of thinking and writing’ obtaining in England in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. It is impossible to understand fully what Greene wrote and how he wrote it without being aware of the contemporary attitudes towards women and the influence of the persuasive form of rhetoric which lay at the core of Elizabethan education, at grammar school and in the two universities. Before I examine Greene’s early romances, I look closely at both of the above. Information about them is easily accessible and it is surprising that the very word ‘rhetoric’ seems to have proved so rebarbative to literary commentators.

¹ G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly, the Humanist as Courtier* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 1.

Greene's early pamphlets rely heavily on the oration, the most important rhetorical construction. He builds narratives from connected series of orations filled out according to the accepted rules of *copia* or amplification.

During the course of this study, I make clear the nature of Greene's rhetorical training, the text books he is likely to have used and what exactly he was taught. In my exegesis of the selected texts, I demonstrate how Greene improvises when employing the structural paradigm of the oration and how he embellishes it with rhetorical *copia*. As so little work of this kind has been done hitherto, I have produced tables to make clear the six part structure of the oration and the frequency of its use in *Mamillia Part 1*, as a single example of many. Occasionally, critics have noted that a particular Elizabethan author has made use of the oration paradigm, but, having pointed it out, they rarely examine *how* the author is putting it to use.² A major conclusion of this study is that the oration is pervasive in late sixteenth-century English Literature and that it is not an occasional occurrence. I provide examples from the writings of Sir Philip Sidney, Thomas Lodge and John Lyly to prove this point.

On the subject of contemporary attitudes towards women and the generally held belief that they should be chaste, silent and obedient, I examine a range of texts to make clear the misogynistic background against which Greene was writing. Again, a close reading of his work reveals a consistent and very sympathetic presentation of his female characters. In tale after tale, he presents women as articulate and courageous and with a strong sense of their own worth. They are at the moral heart of his narratives and when they engage in rhetorical discourse with men, they prevail because they

² For example, Sandra Clark writes, in passing, that, 'Pamphlets were often constructed according to the principles of rhetorical oration with its formal parts of introduction, narration, division, proof, refutation and conclusion.' She does not relate this generalization to any particular work, nor does she examine the orations within pamphlets, which in Greene's case are very numerous. *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers (Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580-1640)* (London: the Athlone Press, 1983), pp. 229-230.

manipulate language far more skilfully than their male interlocutors who are more often than not shifty and venal. Greene has received very little credit for this, but I consider it an impressive achievement and its recognition is long overdue. He was indeed a ‘Homer of women’, but not in the sense intended by Thomas Nashe who coined the phrase ironically in his *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589) to show his disapproval of what he considered Greene’s inappropriate flattery of women.³ Greene was a champion of women and Nashe felt that he was letting the male side down. I am not suggesting that he was a kind of proto-feminist, merely that his narratives, time after time, reveal him to be on the side of his female protagonists who regularly put a flea in the ear of over-confident men.

As is clear from what I have said above, a good deal of this study will consist of detailed exegesis of extracts taken from a number of Greene’s pamphlets. It is only by such detailed textual study that I can prove how much substance there is in his work and how misplaced so many of the negative judgements of him have been. I have provided the texts which I examine closely because the pamphlets are not sufficiently widely known for me to be able to take a working knowledge of them for granted. The only way to carry my points, when discussing Greene, is to offer textual evidence in black and white and then to work through it phrase by phrase. Those who wish to engage with my arguments are thereby provided with ample material to do this.

³ Nashe does not specifically name Greene, but, as Ronald B. McKerrow says, there is ‘much to lead us to think that Greene is referred to.’ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. by Ronald B. McKerrow, 2nd ed. revised by F. P. Wilson, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), I, p.12. McKerrow also goes on to say, tellingly, that, ‘this is yet another example of assumptions about Greene coming, over time, to have the substance of truth.’ Ibid. IV, p.14. That Nashe intends the comparison of Greene with Homer as a criticism is borne out by Lyly’s similar reference to Homer as a byword for unreliable flattery. Lyly writes, ‘he that loved Homere best, concealed not his flattering,’ John Lyly, The Dedicatory Epistle to *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, (1578) in a compendium volume with *Euphues and His England* (1580) and collated with early subsequent editions, ed. by Edward Arber (London: Constable and Company, 1913), p. 202.

As part of my attempt to counter what I consider inaccurate evaluations of Greene's work, I explore its critical reception from his own time until the present. This critical history falls into three periods: Greene's lifetime and the years immediately following; approximately the first seventy five years of the twentieth century and the latter half of the twentieth century up to the present.

Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey, the most vociferous of Greene's contemporaries, were concerned with defending and attacking the man himself. Aesthetically, they engaged with his rhetoric, particularly in its euphuistic form which they both deplored. In the second period I have designated, Greene could now be placed in an historical and literary context. This tended to mean that, although a certain charm was recognized in his writing, he was often patronizingly seen merely as an example of various literary genres and a necessary stage on the way to greater achievements in English prose by those who followed him. Such a position made him historically interesting but his originality passed without notice. In the course of my exploration of Greene's work, I reverse this last evaluation and argue that, although Greene was a man of his time in so many ways, he used its literary conventions to produce work which is often startling in its individuality. From the last two decades of the twentieth century onwards, critics have shown a greater willingness to give Greene his due. The texts have received more detailed scrutiny and it has been conceded that Greene was far more self-conscious as a writer than might be expected if he were a mere hack.

Throughout this introduction I have referred to Greene's published works as 'pamphlets'. They are mostly novella-length works of fiction which run to about one hundred pages or fewer in a modern printing. To call them 'novellas', or 'nouvelle' would be an anachronism, so I have been guided in my choice of terminology by

Greene himself. This is another example of the necessity for twenty-first century readers to do their homework and not assume that a ‘pamphlet’ has always been only a few pages long. For Elizabethans, in the early days of the novelty of widely available printed material, it was a catch-all term for prose of many kinds, and not necessarily fiction, which ran to the length I have stated, or even longer in the case of John Lyly who refers to the 265 page *Euphues his England* as a ‘pamphlet’.⁴

Although Sandra Clark acknowledges Thomas Nashe’s use of the word ‘pamphlet’ in his preface to Greene’s *Menaphon*,⁵ she sees the pamphlet as essentially an early form of journalism ‘addressed primarily to those who were literate but not highly educated or sophisticated in their tastes, who wanted something both lively and instructive with which to occupy their minds, middle-brow-readers.’⁶ Clark’s focus is on pamphlets which contain, for example, the latest news, cony-catching *exposés* (of which Greene, at the end of his career, wrote several), rogue biographies and ‘comic books based on noteworthy events or characters’.⁷ She does, however, agree that there are pamphlets which ‘presuppose an audience capable of recognizing parody, burlesque, the use of rhetorical figures, who knew Aristotle and Ramus, who appreciated, even if they could not necessarily understand, quotations in Latin and French, exempla and marginal references to classical authorities.’⁸

Greene’s early works, which Clark categorizes as ‘romances’, do not fit into her list of the subject matter typical to a pamphlet because her definition is based on content, whereas Greene uses the term ‘pamphlet’ for all of his work and is clearly

⁴ John Lyly, *Euphues and his England the Epistle Dedicatory*, p. 217.

⁵ Robert Greene, *Menaphon, Camilla’s Alarm to slumbering Euphues in his melancholy cell at Silexedra*, Publications of the Barnabe Riche Society 5, ed. by Brenda Cantar (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1996), Preface p. 82.

⁶ Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers*, p. 18.

⁷ Ibid. p. 21.

⁸ Ibid. p. 21.

defining by length in printed pages. Clark also assumes that there was such a person as a typical pamphlet-reader, an assumption which only holds up if the definition of a pamphlet is restricted to the ‘middle-brow’ material she has outlined. Despite Greene’s frequent, and conventional, deprecating remarks regarding the value of his writing, his addresses to the ‘Gentleman Reader’ indicate that he felt his pamphlets contained reading material which matched educated, gentlemanly tastes.

In his address to ‘The Gentlemen Readers’, at the front of *Menaphon*, Greene thanks them for their ‘favour in letting pass my pamphlets’, a reference to his earlier published works.⁹ In the dedication of *Gwydonius, or the Card of Fancy*, to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, Greene calls it ‘this imperfect pamphlet’.¹⁰ This is a self-deprecating phrase typical of authors in the early years of print culture, but it is inconceivable that Greene would presume to dedicate a work he genuinely believed was a piece of middle-brow ephemera to one of England’s most significant and artistically sophisticated aristocrats. *Greenes vision* (1590 or 1592) contains many uses of the word, usually attached to a dismissive epithet such as ‘vaine’¹¹ or ‘fond’.¹² In this work, Greene claims to deplore his years spent in ‘lascivious pamphleteering’¹³ and ‘pamphlet’ has now become for him a pejorative term for fiction of a frivolous and morally suspect kind. At the time he wrote the earlier pamphlets, his use of the term was morally neutral and it is only in his repentance phase that Greene employs it with distaste. The many examples cited above make me confident that ‘pamphlet’ is the most appropriate term with which to describe Greene’s work in this study.

⁹ *Menaphon*, p. 80.

¹⁰ Robert Greene, *Gwydonius or The Card of Fancy*, ed. by Carmine Di Biase, Publications of the Barnabe Riche Society 13 (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 2001), p. 79.

¹¹ Robert Greene, *Greenes vision written at the instant of his death*, 1592, Henry Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd Ed.) / 12261, sig. B3i. Although the *vision* was first published in 1592, internal evidence suggests that 1590 is the likely date of composition.

¹² *Ibid.* sig. C2ii.

¹³ *Ibid.* sig. A4i.

The close examination of the rhetoric in Greene's pamphlets which, I have suggested, is so illuminating, could very usefully be applied to the works of his contemporaries. Like him, many of them have hitherto been seen simply as background figures who provide a context for writers with more obvious talent. A number of significant re-evaluations might lie ahead.

CHAPTER ONE

The Critical Reception of Robert Greene's Work

Certain received 'facts' and opinions about Robert Greene's pamphlets have been repeated so often that the repetition has given them a spurious validity. In this chapter I offer an overview of the critical reception of his work in his lifetime and subsequently.

The two contemporaries of Greene who wrote most about him were Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey, the first a friend and the second an implacable enemy. The two also hated each other. Amidst this swirl of animosity, I have focused on what the two men say about Greene as a writer because it is germane to the thrust of this study. Both disapprove of the rhetorical nature of Greene's prose, Nashe finding it overblown and a distortion of the essential nature and true genius of English. Harvey mocks Greene's abstruse euphuistic similes and also his eagerness to appear in print. He sees this as evidence that Greene had no standards as a literary artist although he grudgingly admits Greene's popularity. I take some time examining these contemporary assessments because I do not believe that they are always accurate or fair, particularly Nashe's misogynistic belief that Greene's stance as a champion of women was a considerable flaw in his work.

I show in my survey of the critical comments made about Greene in the last hundred years that the assessment of him as a slipshod hack has taken a long time to die, if it has actually died. The late nineteenth and early twentieth-century criticism I quote tends to be patronizing and dismissive, evidence of a failure to read the texts with sufficient care or open-mindedness.

In my survey of the criticism written during the second half of the twentieth century, I look at the work of Charles Crupi in particular. His study of Greene marks a turning point in Greene studies because he is willing to admit a greater seriousness in the oeuvre. I set against this the glib dismissals of C.S. Lewis and A.L. Rowse, for example. I pay due respect to René Pruvost's meticulous scholarship which sets Greene's work in its literary context without, in my opinion, giving sufficient weight to what Greene actually meant.

The most recent criticism which I examine has, amongst other areas of study, looked at Greene as a professional writer who created his own brand, as it were. I look at the way that the ready availability of literature in printed form often made Greene's contemporaries uncomfortable because they had to come to terms with an unsettling new and democratic literary phenomenon.

Throughout my survey of the most recent criticism of Greene's work I have kept to the fore my two main arguments in this study, namely that Greene makes considerable use of the rhetorical paradigm of the oration and that his portrayal of female characters is unexpectedly sympathetic.

CHAPTER TWO

The Social Background

In this chapter I place Robert Greene's early pamphlets in the context of the prevailing orthodoxy concerning the rights and position of women. I draw attention to the contrast between the oft-repeated triplet of passive qualities held to be desirable in women, chastity, silence and obedience, and Greene's presentation of female protagonists who are certainly chaste but who have a powerful sense of self and refuse to remain silent. I locate the source of the triplet of desirable qualities in the Bible, particularly in the Pauline epistles, and I explain how difficult it was for women and their male champions to defy what was presented as the pronouncement of the Almighty. It was preached and written down in catechisms. In my survey of the printed material dealing with attitudes to women, I explain that publicly outspoken women appear to have been very few and their champions hardly numerous. This is what makes Robert Greene such an unusual figure in his constant depiction of independent articulate women. I quote and discuss the occasions when he challenges the prevailing orthodoxy and castigates male writers who trot out the standard misogynistic arguments.

I cite a number of works to show how consistent the orthodox arguments were, but I also look at the much smaller number of sympathetic ripostes which appeared during the several pamphlet wars which arose on the subject of a woman's place. Publications to which I draw particular attention are Edward Gosynhill's *Mulierum Paeon* (1542?), Edmund Tilney's *A Brief and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Marriage* (1568) and Thomas Bentley's *The Monument of Matrones* (1582). Several pages in the chapter are given over to a close reading of Jane Anger's *Jane Anger her protection for women* (1589) because it is an important assertion of female

independence. The defiant tone of this work makes it highly unusual for its time, but it is important to know that Greene was not completely alone in speaking out in support of women's freedom. Some authorities suspect that 'Jane' Anger may have been a man and it is true that most of the championing of women was undertaken, in print at least, by men on their behalf. Greene may have taken encouragement for his views from Book 3 of Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, but, as I show in my discussion of that text, Castiglione's elegant ladies of the court at Urbino are valued more for the way they enhance the lives of men than for their intrinsic selves.¹⁴

The triplet of desirable qualities found its way into much of the imaginative literature of the period and this chapter includes a comparative examination of the work of three authors to demonstrate this point: Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*, William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Sir Philip Sidney's *The Old Arcadia*. The prevalence of the triplet is clear in all of these works and I discuss the degree to which each appears to endorse or challenge it. At the end of the chapter I make clear my interpretation of Robert Greene's response to the orthodoxy. This prepares the ground for my detailed exegesis of his work which begins in Chapter Four when I look closely at his first published work *Mamillia, A Mirror or Looking-glasse for The Ladies of England* (1580-1583).

CHAPTER THREE

The Importance of Rhetoric in the Elizabethan Period

The purpose of this chapter, and of my study as a whole, is to explain that rhetoric was a clear set of learnable rules concerning sophisticated verbal expression and that, as it lay at the heart of Elizabethan education, we should take the trouble to be conversant

¹⁴ Baldesar Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*, published in Venice in 1528 and first translated into English by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561.

with it if we are fully to appreciate the work of Robert Greene and his contemporaries. Educated male readers of the time would certainly have appreciated how writers obeyed and also improvised upon these rules. They would have noticed that Greene makes particular use of the six-part oration which we see again and again in his early pamphlets.

I begin the chapter by emphasizing, through comments made at the time, just why rhetoric was felt to be so important and how it underpins so much of the Elizabethan literature that is still read today. T.W. Baldwin has made this point in *Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, his exploration of Shakespeare's debt to rhetoric.¹⁵

I look at the fortunately-surviving curriculum of Norwich Grammar School, which we believe Greene attended, in order to demonstrate both how central instruction in rhetoric was and which textbooks were used. My survey of, and comments on, the major textbooks used in grammar schools and at Cambridge University includes the writings of Erasmus, Quintilian, Susenbrotus, and the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* as well as Thomas Wilson's *Rhetoricke*, a very important work in English which explained rhetoric to those who knew little or no Latin or who were unable to attend university. Wilson's volume provides us with contemporary terminology in English.

By the end of the chapter, I present Greene as armed with certain linguistic tools which enabled him to construct his narratives in a distinct way and to create dialogue of a stylized kind.

¹⁵ T.W.Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* 2 vols (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944). durer.press.Illinois.edu/Baldwin/ Baldwin consistently writes 'Shakespeare'.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mamillia

This is probably the most important chapter in the whole study as I present a detailed exegesis of Robert Greene's first pamphlet, *Mamillia*, in the light of what I have written in preceding chapters about contemporary views concerning women and the importance of rhetoric in sixteenth-century England. Having stressed that Greene makes frequent use of the paradigm of the six-part oration in all of his early works, my analysis of *Mamillia* demonstrates that the narrative of this pamphlet, and that of some of the others I explore in detail, consists of a series of orations with brief connecting passages. I have already said that Greene is the victim of many misconceptions, a major one being that his work is packed with long and tedious digressions. In this chapter I demonstrate that the long 'digressions' are, in actual fact, the orations which make up the narrative.

As there are several aspects of Greene's work which I believe need serious re-consideration, I offer a number of passages for exegesis. Greene's orations are of three kinds: declarations, apostrophes and letters. By examining examples of all three, I show how he manages the different sections of each oration and how he employs a wide range of rhetorical figures by way of *copia* or amplification. The two parts of *Mamillia* also contain instances of Greene's declaration of his championing of women and I have given these authorial interjections due weight.

The first of the two long letters contained in the conclusion to *Mamillia*, *The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries*, is, as I make clear, composed along the lines Erasmus suggests in his letter-writing manual *De Conscribendis Epistolis* (1542).¹⁶ The letter

¹⁶ Desiderius Erasmus, *De Conscribendis Epistolis*, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Ed. J.K. Sowards 89 volumes (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), Vol. 25.

also contains material from Greene's study of dialectic/logic at university. Although there is no room in this study for a detailed examination of Greene's dialectic, in my discussion of this letter and of other passages scattered throughout Greene's work, I make brief reference to it.

Another of the generalizations levelled at Greene is that the language of his work is highly 'euphuistic', an epithet used pejoratively and usually with little explanation of what is meant by it. I discuss in detail Greene's linguistic debt to John Lyly's work, particularly *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*. As with rhetoric, Euphuism is often considered the sterile obsession of a bygone age and one to be dismissed rather than to be explored. To counteract such a view, I tabulate its syntactical and linguistic components and demonstrate how Greene incorporates them into his orations. *Gwydonius, or the Carde of Fancie* provides me with even more examples of unquestionably euphuistic moments than *Mamillia Part I*.

This chapter contains further examples of my challenges of previously-made judgements, whether it be Peter Mack's interpretation of one of Pharicles' orations in *Mamillia Part I* or Carmine di Biase's assertion that Greene's use of euphuistic language in *Gwydonius* is parodic.

The picture I present in this chapter of Greene the literary artist is one that I believe is consistent throughout all the works I explore, both in his use of rhetoric and in his attitude to women. In the chapters which follow I go on to demonstrate this consistency in the romances which Greene penned after *Mamillia*. In order to show the pervasiveness of the oration paradigm, I also look briefly at its use in the works of Sidney and Lodge.

CHAPTER FIVE

Penelopes web

In this chapter and the next I examine Greene's three pamphlets which have eponymous heroines. I begin with a survey of the critical literature pertaining to *Penelopes web* and suggest that it has failed to engage with the way that Greene enfranchises Penelope. I point out, and disagree with, the way that a range of critics has tended to see Penelope only in relation to her husband Odysseus.

During the night, when time and space are completely at her disposal, Penelope is free to shape the world as she sees fit because she is the narrator of all three tales told in this pamphlet. Although her day-time persona as Odysseus' wife is bound to be conventional, in the freedom of the night she is able to be subversive.

Penelope's first tale concerns the harsh treatment meted out to Queen Barmenissa by her husband Saladyne the Sultan of Egypt. In my interpretation, Barmenissa's behaviour is far more strategic and active than critics have suggested. Again, using tabular form, I demonstrate that the narrative thrust of this tale is by way of a series of eight long orations: five declarations, two apostrophes and a letter. In the orations I examine in detail, I point out the technical accomplishment demonstrated by Greene in his handling of this paradigm and the way that these orations are a perfect fit for the characters delivering them and the situations in which they find themselves. Barmenissa's apostrophe is also part dialectical disputation of the kind Greene practised when at Cambridge.

Penelope's second tale is that of Cratyna whose fidelity to her husband is tested by the unscrupulous nobleman Calamus. I point out that, once again, Greene's heroine is articulate and more than a match verbally for her would-be seducer. Greene's

predilection for structural binaries is evident, as I show, in the way that Cratyna exactly matches the fallacious content of Calamus' oration with a flattening series of responses that rout him. I point out the sexual undercurrents, both direct and ambiguous, which arise in this tale.

The third tale extols the virtue of silence but, not in the sense of a compelled muteness. A young wife wins her husband a crown because she holds her tongue, but she makes it very clear that this is not a result of male compulsion but simply that she has said all that she needs to say. The state of silence is one she chooses for herself, thereby rendering it active rather than passive.

My last observation is that when Odysseus arrives home and becomes the centre of attention, the women may be temporarily silent, but they retain the potential to speak out when occasion arises.

CHAPTER SIX

Alcida Greene's metamorphosis and Philomela

Alcida is the narrator of three tales which recount the unfortunate lives and apparently just punishments of her three daughters. Although these tales purport to be no more than illustrations of the virtues of chastity, silence and obedience, I suggest that a subversive counter-narrative undermines the message that the three sisters deserve the metamorphoses which are the punishments for their shortcomings. I challenge the view that in *Alcida* Greene abandons his stance as the champion of women.

As before, I closely examine the language used by the female protagonist of each story as part of my contention that language *per se* is a major preoccupation of Greene. He continues to make use of the oration and my detailed analysis, for example, of Fiordespine's rebuffing of her suitor Telegonus in the first tale is presented as evidence of the way that Greene relishes the feistiness with which his female

characters dissect the speeches of their male interlocutors. There are several occasions when the highly articulate sisters incorporate dialectical paradigms into their talk, as I make clear.

In the second of Alcida's tales, I demonstrate how the moral point is tacked unconvincingly onto a narrative which seems to be going in a different direction. In my exploration of the third tale I point out the double standard, of which I am sure Greene was well aware, that condemns a woman for letting slip that her husband is a murderer while he presents himself as a victim of her unthinking behaviour.

At various points in these tales, Greene incorporates material he earlier used in *Mamillia* and *Arbasto*. I explain that this is not an example of authorial laziness which might lead us to think less of this pamphlet. I examine the interplay between the re-used material and its new context and present this as evidence of Greene's skill rather than of his casual approach to composition.

In my discussion of *Philomela*, I disagree with critics such as Katharine Wilson who believe that the heroine lacks a voice unless she is freed from silence by the agency of one of the male characters.¹⁷ I work through the narrative to demonstrate that at significant moments Philomela is as publicly assertive and as verbally accomplished as Mamillia or Fiordespine.

The narrative arc of this story consists of Philomela being forced to counter a series of attempts at repression, by her husband, by his surrogate and by a lustful sea captain. Her only options are verbal, but she emerges triumphant. Significantly, at the end of the pamphlet, she stands alone, unthreatened and universally admired.

¹⁷ Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives, Euphues in Arcadia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p. 106.

CHAPTER ONE

The Critical Reception of Robert Greene's Work

It has become the norm to describe Robert Greene as simply a jobbing writer who was prepared to write anything so long as it sold and who, in his early works, followed current fashion by aping John Lyly's mannered euphuistic style with its strings of balanced antitheses, unusual similes and its penchant for alliteration. It is noted that he also wrote a series of cony-catching pamphlets which lifted the lid on Elizabethan criminality and that he followed this with a number of self-castigating repentance pamphlets. Such givens are no more than unchallenged critical shorthand which provides a convenient way of summing up the life and work of an allegedly 'minor' literary figure in concise histories of English Literature.¹⁸ In his recent biography of Edmund Spenser, Andrew Hadfield offers a penetrating and detailed exegesis of Spenser's early poems and comments on the poet's career as a secretary 'which was probably preferable to making a precarious living as a hack writer, producing a mixture of pamphlets, prose romances, and jointly authored plays, as the careers of such writers as Thomas Churchyard, Robert Greene (1558 - 92) and Henry Chettle (d.1603-7) demonstrate.'¹⁹ In Hadfield's description, Greene is merely one of a somewhat second-rate group and is dismissed in a sentence. It is a very confident sweeping aside of Greene which offers no appreciation of the fact that Greene had, as

¹⁸ Ian Ousby's, *Cambridge Guide to Fiction in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) does not even offer us this. There is no separate entry for Greene who appears only as a footnote to the entry on *Euphues, the Anatomie of Wit*. We are told that Greene 'attempted a continuation in *Euphues, His Censure of Philautus* (1587)'. p. 100. The mention of *Euphues* may be included in the title of Greene's work but it is not about Euphues and Philautus at all, which suggests that Ousby had not read Greene's pamphlet before writing his history.

¹⁹ Andrew Hadfield, *Edmund Spenser: a life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 231.

a matter of necessity, to write for the market. I intend in this study to offer as close an exegesis of Greene's prose writings as Hadfield offers of Spenser's verse and to demonstrate thereby that Greene, although a professional who wrote to put a roof over his head, was far more than the pejorative term 'hack' would suggest. Katharine Duncan-Jones goes even further when she calls his work 'little more than popular trash'.²⁰

The charge of being egregiously euphuistic is often brought against Greene in response to the elaborate and antithetical sentences of his early pamphlets, replete as they are with references to a dazzling array of animals, birds and natural objects. Such judgements usually fail to explore beneath the harlequin surface of this early prose. Richard Helgerson has tellingly pointed out, in any case, how narrowly the term euphuistic is generally used by present-day critics:

Strange as it may now seem, Lyly's contemporaries were as much taken by the plot, the protagonist, and the moral attitude of *Euphues* as by its Euphuism. Not until Harvey's attack in 1593 did "Euphues" begin to assume its modern connotation as a byword for Lyly's rhetorical manner as distinct from the experience and moral stance of the protagonist.²¹

I shall explore Greene's debt to, and difference from, Lyly in Chapters Two and Four.

Robert Greene was one of the 'university wits', a term coined by George Saintsbury to characterize a number of Oxford and Cambridge-educated young men who wrote for the popular drama in the last decades of the sixteenth century.²² Saintsbury identifies these wits as Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Lodge, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe and George Peele, and, although he is speaking specifically of professional dramatists, 'these ancestors of all modern

²⁰ Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from His Life* (London: Arden, 2001), p. 48.

²¹ Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 59.

²² George Saintsbury, *A History of Elizabethan Literature* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1897; repr. 1920), p.64. www.questia.com/Online_Library.

Englishmen who live by the gray goose quill’,²³ who ‘were all of academic education, and had a decided contempt (despite their Bohemian way of life) for unscholarly innovation,’²⁴ the phrase is often extended to include prose writers as well. Nashe, in any case, hardly qualifies as a dramatist. The phrase ‘university wits’ is used as a convenient catch-all term even today. Greene would probably have appreciated the sobriquet as he was proud of his Cambridge University education and frequently drew attention to it on the title pages of his published works. He was the most prolific, and probably the most notorious, of these writers, producing approximately 30 prose works, 6 plays and a substantial number of poems in a writing career lasting only twelve years.

Contemporary Reactions to Greene’s Work

Any account of the critical reception of Greene’s pamphlets should begin with the comments of his contemporaries. We are fortunate to have a set of responses from his friend Thomas Nashe, by no means an uncritical judge, and his enemy Gabriel Harvey. As well as the *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589) which probably refers to Greene but does not mention him by name, Nashe wrote two works which do refer to him, the preface to Greene’s pastoral romance *Menaphon* (1589), in which he is ‘your scholler-like Shepherd’ and ‘sweet friend’²⁵ but never Robert Greene, and *Strange Newes, Of the intercepting certaine Letters* (1592),²⁶ his impassioned rejoinder to Harvey’s attack on the recently dead Greene in his *Foure Letters and Sonnets*.

In all three of these works, Nashe reveals as much about himself as he does about Robert Greene. He holds very strong views about how literary English should

²³ Ibid. p. 65.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 79.

²⁵ Thomas Nashe, ‘Preface’ to *Menaphon*, p. 81.

²⁶ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, I, pp. 253-335.

be written and how women should be presented in literature, and Greene's work is measured against these criteria. Nashe's agenda was not Greene's, nor is it likely to be ours. In Greene's early pamphlets Nashe saw only the use of out-dated rhetorical structures and figures misapplied to 'amorous discourses'²⁷ and his own rigid agenda blinded him to the value of works which are much more likely to be appreciated by a modern readership which does not balk at presentations of empowered women.

There is a good deal of repetition in what Nashe says. Essentially, he deplores the 'rhetoricall invention' taught in the grammar schools and two universities because he considers it no more than empty, pretentious flourishes intended to conceal a paucity of ideas. He also mocks those who give 'Minerals, stones, and herbes...such cogged natures' and who are generally 'so much Italianated.'²⁸ This is a clear reference to extravagant and showy rhetoric and to the exotic imagery Lyly employed in *Euphues* and which Greene imitated in his first pamphlets.

Nashe's own taste is for a plainer style which reflects the peculiar genius of the English language and he is incredulous that, 'everie moechanicall mate abhorres the English he was borne too, and plucks with a solemne periphrasis, his *ut vales* from the inkhorne.' 'Inkhorne' terms are obscure, *recherché* ones that lie outside the commonality of speech and Nashe despises them. He also prefers directness to 'periphrasis' and will eventually praise Greene for what he, Nashe, believes to be his plainer style in *Menaphon*. His comments on the 'lavish of our copious language',²⁹ are a clear echo of the *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia* of Desiderius Erasmus, an extremely important textbook of rhetoric which was prescribed reading in many English grammar schools and which I shall examine in Chapter Three.³⁰ The *De Copia*

²⁷ Ibid. I, p. 10.

²⁸ Ibid. I, p. 27.

²⁹ Ibid. I, p. 84.

³⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia* (1512). The first edition of the *De*

instructed students on how to amplify their written expression as fully as possible, something that Nashe now rejects. In complete contrast, according to Nashe, is Greene's language in *Menaphon*. Greene offers elegance coupled with a lack of affectation. *Menaphon* is 'comelie', but not 'statelie', that is larded with rhetorical embellishments. Greene has understood Cicero's dictum 'temperatum dicendi genus', the value of stylistic moderation, which is the only 'true eloquence'.³¹

It may be that, even in the *Anatomie*, Nashe acknowledges that Greene, although remiss in both style and choice of subject matter, has something worthwhile to say. Could the remark that there is, 'under the shaddowe of greene and flourishing leaves, most pleasant fruite hidden in secrete'³² be interpreted as meaning that, despite the dubious popularity of Robert Greene's pamphlets and their questionable language, they still contain serious matter worth attending to? I have not seen this interpretation elsewhere, and McKerrow does not offer it, but he is sure that when Nashe writes of those 'who with Greene colours, seek to garnish such Gorgonlike shapes',³³ that is to extol women, 'This is generally taken to refer to Robert Greene, who certainly had written much about women, and it is difficult to resist the conviction that it does so'.³⁴ A capital letter would seem to make all the difference when writers are punning.

Nashe's assessment of the style of *Menaphon* as 'extemporall'³⁵ is suprising and actually quite inaccurate. Perhaps he was lulled into a false appreciation of it by the lack of jangling Lylian alliteration which is a feature of so much of *Gwydonius*, or he may simply not have read it very carefully. *Menaphon* is a highly-polished work

Copia was completed when Erasmus was in England from 1509-1514 and was intended to be used by Erasmus's friend John Colet at St. Paul's School. The first printed edition appeared in Paris in 1512.

³¹ Thomas Nashe, Preface to *Menaphon*, p. 82.

³² *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, I, p. 28.

³³ *Ibid.* I, p. 16.

³⁴ *Ibid.* IV, p. 19.

³⁵ Thomas Nashe, Preface to *Menaphon*, p. 82

which contains all the rhetorical trademarks seen in Greene's earlier prose. Characters apostrophize in orations, sentences are often antithetically balanced and there are *exempla* drawn from unusual details of Natural History. There is much else besides, but the 'old' Greene is still clearly in evidence.

I consider Nashe's observations on Greene's style to be genuine praise and I cannot agree with Kristen Abbott Bennett who writes that, 'Nashe's comment about Greene's perfection of the charming Middle Style is a backhanded compliment exposing the poet's [sic] limited prowess with the other two [aspects of true eloquence]: proof and persuasion.'³⁶ According to Abbott Bennett, Nashe is pointing out that Greene only satisfies the first of Cicero's requirements for true eloquence, that his work should please. This follows a misunderstanding of Nashe's point that Greene has, in a sense, dressed down and made a conscious decision to forgo a more elaborate rhetoric than heretofore; it is not a sign of lack of ability on his part, but an aesthetic judgement. Close reading of Greene's early romances would have shown Abbott Bennett that not only does Greene demonstrate 'prowess' in the art of proving and persuading in his orations, he is a master of it.

On the subject of women, Nashe makes clear that one of the absurdities he castigates in the *Anatomie* is 'the slender imputed praises to feminine perfection.'³⁷ He has no truck with the idea that women may be seen as paragons of some kind and he sneers at those who promulgate this notion, Greene, we assume, included.

In 1592 Greene published *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* in which he made some very insulting observations about Gabriel Harvey and his family. Furious,

³⁶ Kristen Abbott Bennett, 'Negotiating Authority Through Conversation: Thomas Nashe and Richard Jones', in *Conversational Exchanges in Early Modern England (1549-1640)* ed. by Kristen Abbott Bennett (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 102-131 (p. 115).

³⁷ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, I, p. 3.

Harvey responded at the end of 1592 in a similar vitriolic vein in his *Foure Letters*.³⁸

Thomas Nashe sprang to the defence of his dead friend in yet another pamphlet, his *Strange Newes*.

Although much of the *Foure Letters* is a mixture of horror at the nature of Greene's dissolute lifestyle and relish at the squalid manner of his death, Harvey does make some literary observations which provide us with a significant insight into a contemporary evaluation of Greene's work. Lest he should become besmirched by admitting to personal contact with such unsavoury writing, Harvey is at pains to stress that, 'I never did so much as superficially overrune' Greene's work, which means that he cannot 'condemne or censure' it, although this is exactly what he proceeds to do. It is the prim voice of the literary prude who does not need to read such stuff to know what arrant nonsense it is. A willingness to pass comment on Greene without taking the trouble to examine his work closely is a trait which, unfortunately, has undermined criticism of Greene's oeuvre since Harvey's time. Despite his, surely disingenuous, rider, Harvey makes some observations on Greene's pamphlets which are worth noting. He tells us that, 'some few of them occursively presented themselves in stationers shops, and some other houses of my acquaintance.'³⁹ Here we have evidence both of the number, 'some few', of Greene's pamphlets that might be found on the bookstalls, but also of the kind of reader likely to buy them. People Harvey was prepared to admit as being 'of my acquaintance' were surely respectable and, presumably, educated, so it tells us something about the popularity of Greene's work if such people thought it worth the purchasing. Inadvertently, no doubt, Harvey is according a literary status to Greene that elsewhere he strenuously seeks to deny.

³⁸ Gabriel Harvey, *Foure Letters and Certeine Sonnets, especially touching Robert Greene and other parties by him abused* (1592) ed. by G.B. Harrison (London: the Bodley Head Quartos, 1922).

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 41.

To many contemporaries, Harvey may have appeared absurd and pedantic, but he was a highly educated man and there is no doubt that he represented a particular and important kind of literary taste. He appears to see Greene as too much of a free spirit and perhaps a frightening portent of worse to come. Writers like ‘Greene, vile Greene’,⁴⁰ according to Harvey: ‘perillously threaten the Commonwealth, that goe about to violate the inviolable partes thereof.’⁴¹ Harvey does not name these ‘inviolable partes’, but Greene’s work can be seen as unsettling in a number of ways. In his early pamphlets he empowered female characters by providing them with the rhetorical skills that were the prerogative of educated men and in the later cony-catching and repentance pamphlets which were of more recent publication and therefore probably uppermost in Harvey’s mind, Greene exposed to a fascinated, and possibly impressionable, readership the sordid details of the Elizabethan criminal underclass and of his own life.

Harvey seems to yearn for a sedate, unchanging world where taste is governed by a small, educated, literary élite. Setting aside his personal reasons for detesting Greene, he sounds like a man desperate that he and his ilk are losing control in a world democratized by the power of print and where anyone could write anything and everyone was able to read it. As Ronald A. Tumelson II says, ‘Harvey believed, with good reason, that Greene was not only the most culturally mobile author of the period but also a serious threat to what was for Harvey legitimate literature’.⁴²

Harvey glances at aspects of Greene’s writing which Nashe and later critics have also used as evidence of its shallowness. Greene is accused of writing too much and too carelessly for every new market that appeared. He is ‘the very Emperour of

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 37.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 16.

⁴² Ronald A. Tumelson II, ‘Robert Greene, “Author of Playes”’ in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 109.

Shifters', too keen on the 'apishe counterfeiting of every ridiculous and absurd toy',⁴³ 'Greene with the running Head and the scribbling Hand, that never linnes ['ceases', OED] putting forth new, newer, and newest books of the maker.'⁴⁴ One cannot help seeing a degree of jealousy on Harvey's part that Greene was able to come so often into print and that Harvey's own acquaintances were willing to purchase these dreadful pamphlets.

The sheer speed with which tastes changed and writers like Greene were able to produce printed works to satisfy them unsettled Harvey. Greene went from being 'The Ape of Euphues'⁴⁵ with his 'borrowed and filched plumes of some little Italianated bravery'⁴⁶ to being guilty of 'straunge fancies; monstrous newfanglednesse.'⁴⁷ Harvey, the conservative, hated it and other readers could not get enough of it. Harvey laments that, 'I would some Buyers had either more reason to discern, or lesse Appetite to desire such Novels',⁴⁸ the last word meaning 'novelties', of course, but ironic in that critics have tended to set Greene within the timeline of the English novel and see him as an evolutionary false start.

Harvey does offer one crumb of grudging respect to Greene when he admits that Greene is 'som way not the least of our vulgar writers.'⁴⁹ Those who employ the English vernacular, the dismissively named 'vulgar writers', are, according to Harvey, a lowly breed as they work in a non-Classical medium.

In *Strange Newes*, Nashe seeks to defend his *Pierce Penilesse* pamphlet against charges of libelling Gabriel Harvey's brother Richard, but he also feels duty bound to

⁴³ Gabriel Harvey, *Foure Letters*, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 37.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 39.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 37.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 40.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 41.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 39.

counter Gabriel's virulent denigration of his dead friend Robert Greene. Comments on Greene's writing appear piecemeal throughout *Strange Newes*, but they bear consideration as they have to do with the nature and quality of what Greene wrote. Nashe's value judgements do not necessarily arise from the intrinsic worth of individual pamphlets, but are more to do with the extent to which they accord with Nashe's own taste and values, particularly in relation to the presentation of women. Although no specific works by Greene are named, the early ones are surely dismissed as Nashe once again rejects prose written in imitation of Lyly. He suggests that this is a style which appeals to the young and that he has now completely outgrown it. He is anxious to stress that his own prose style is unlike Greene's, 'Is my style like Greenes?' he demands and he mocks Lyly's typical imagery when he asks, 'do I talke of any counterfeit birds, or hearbs, or stones?'⁵⁰ Of *Euphues*, he asserts, '*Euphues* I read when I was a little ape at Cambridge, and then I thought it *Ipse ille*: it may be excellent good skill, for ought I know, for I lookt not on it this ten yeare: but to imitate it I abhorre.'⁵¹

Greene's popularity Nashe both admits and somewhat deplores, perhaps feeling that his own satirical and splenetic squibs are more manly than the romances Greene chose to write. There is a sense of Nashe's damning with faint praise when he writes, 'Of force I must graunt that Greene came oftner in print than men of judgement allowed of, but nevertheless he was a daintie slave to content the taile of a Tearme, and stuff Serving mens pockets.'⁵²

The elements that recur in the observations of Harvey and Nashe are ones that have bedevilled criticism of Greene ever since. The prodigal life and miserable death

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 319.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 319.

⁵² Ibid. p. 329.

are conceded. That Greene was popular with a varied readership is also admitted: he was read by Harvey's friends as well as the lawyers and serving men Nashe mentions in the last quotation. Both Harvey and Nashe point to the fanciful language of Greene's early pamphlets and Nashe criticizes Greene's reliance on the rhetorical paradigms and figures drummed into them when they were schoolboys and undergraduates. Nashe was relieved that Greene, according to his own reading of *Menaphon*, shook himself free of these rhetorical trappings as he penned that particular text.

All the above have been at the heart of most accounts of the work of Robert Greene since he died and it is the challenge of this study to question such observations and to offer a new and more generous assessment of Greene's achievement.

The Modern Critical Reception of Greene's Work

Modern study of Robert Greene's work begins with Alexander A. Grosart's 15 volume *The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene M.A.* published 1881-86. Although the print run was extremely small, Grosart's edition made Greene's complete oeuvre available to scholars through libraries. Serious study of him would henceforth be much easier. The first twentieth-century critical biography of Robert Greene was that of John Clark Jordan (1915) who devotes a good deal of his book to plot summaries and the legend of Greene's sensational life. Jordan's critical comments are of a very general kind. He remarks on Greene's 'artificiality of style, his shallowness of characterization, his inconsistencies of plot, which are real defects', but concedes that Greene 'exhibits a freedom of literary art' and is 'worthy of study'.⁵³ Of *Mamillia* and *The Myrrour of Modestie*, the former of which forms a significant part of this study's exploration of Greene's use of rhetoric, Jordan simply notes, in

⁵³ John Clark Jordan, *Robert Greene* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915), p. 7.

Mamillia, Greene's tendency to 'clog the narrative with pedantic speeches and conversations', and 'of *The Myrrour of Modestie* there is nothing to state except that there was apparently one edition.'⁵⁴

René Pruvost offers a compendium of Greene scholarship up to 1938 when he published his book. He provides a detailed account of many of the likely sources for material in Greene's pamphlets and explores in some detail the rhetoric Greene studied at school and university. His conclusion is that its effect on the writer was regrettable because he was inclined to follow the rules of rhetoric too closely. Pruvost writes that, 'One would criticize him rather for having followed [these rules] too well.'⁵⁵ He continues that, 'in a word he [Greene] makes use of the many constructions taught by formal rhetoric, one can believe one is seeing a reflection of the ways of writing which were drummed into him at school'.⁵⁶ Indeed, Pruvost sees Greene as being armed with an 'arsenal'⁵⁷ of 'medieval rhetoric'.⁵⁸

If it was not rhetoric, it was Lyly's Euphuism that exercised its baleful influence over Greene's language, Pruvost argues, and he suggests that, despite Greene's explicit rejection of Euphuism in *Menaphon*,⁵⁹ 'the habit was ingrained by the practice of several years'.⁶⁰ Although Pruvost frequently refers to rhetoric and Euphuism and gives lists of the devices Greene imitates and employs, he goes no further than making such lists and does not examine the individual items within them.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 165.

⁵⁵ 'On lui reprocherait plutôt de les avoir trop bien suivis.' Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, p. 64.

⁵⁶ 'en un mot, il fait usage des multiples procédés enseignés par la rhétorique formelle, on croit apercevoir en effet un reflet des habitudes que lui avaient inculquées à l'école'. Ibid. p. 65.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 64.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 65.

⁵⁹ As evidence of Greene's rejection of Lyly's use of abstruse details drawn from Nature, Pruvost quotes these lines from Melicertus' Eclogue:

'Stones, herbs, and flowers, the foolish spoils of earth,
Floods, metals, colors, dalliance of the eye,
These show conceit is stained with too much dearth,

Such abstract fond compares make cunning die.' *Menaphon*, p. 160.

⁶⁰ 'd'habitudes confirmées par une pratique de plusieurs années.' *Robert Greene*, p. 365.

For example, he quotes at length Sephastia's speech to Lamedon in *Menaphon*⁶¹ and notes her use of 'balanced phrasing, parallels, antitheses, commonplaces, comparisons drawn from legends, history, geography, a fantastic kind of natural history, most of the elements which contribute to a Euphuistic style,' plus alliteration, assonance and rhyme.⁶² These are all features Nashe fails to mention in his comment on the work. Neither Pruvost nor Nashe points out that Sephastia's speech is an oration.

Pruvost's view of Greene's career is one of a writer struggling manfully to be himself, but rarely able to achieve this. Too often, in Pruvost's opinion, Greene shows himself 'prey to the demon of rhetoric',⁶³ but there are times when he is 'happy to tell things as they are' and, at such times, 'the simple and direct quality of his style makes a happy contrast'.⁶⁴

The characters in Greene's romances Pruvost sees as types who manifest a dominant trait. Greene's interest, therefore, lies not in the psychology of these 'puppets', but in a desire to entertain his readers with the 'delightful complications engendered by the capricious nature of love'.⁶⁵

Pruvost regards Greene as largely sympathetic to his female characters and argues that, after a negative presentation of them in *Alcida* and *Greenes Orpharion*, 'it is very clear that Greene did not wish to proceed too far in this direction'.⁶⁶ The heroines of Greene's romances, Pruvost argues, are passive in the Heliodoran manner,⁶⁷ 'pure young women, faithful to their first love to their last breath, devoted

⁶¹ Robert Greene, *Menaphon*, pp. 105-6.

⁶² 'Balancements, parallélismes, antithèses, lieux communs, comparaisons empruntées à la légende, à l'histoire, à une géographie et à une histoire naturelle de fantaisie, il y a la plupart des éléments constitutifs du style euphuiste.' René Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, p. 360.

⁶³ 'proie au démon de la rhétorique'. Ibid. p. 562.

⁶⁴ 'Greene se contente de dire les choses comme elles sont'; 'la qualité simple et directe de son style fait un heureux contraste'. Ibid. p. 562.

⁶⁵ 'des marionnettes'; 'des plaisantes complications engendrées par la nature capricieuse de l'amour'. Ibid. p. 343.

⁶⁶ 'il est manifeste que Greene ne désirait pas s'avancer trop loin dans cette voie'. Ibid. p. 333.

⁶⁷ Heliodorus of Emesa (3rd century A.D.?), author of the Greek *Aethiopica* which was translated into

women who never abandon their duty, capable of suffering in silence without recriminations or reproaches.⁶⁸ It may even be, Pruvost suggests, that the depictions of such women nobly enduring unjust suffering are a reflection of the history of Greene's own mistreated wife. Pruvost's book contains a great deal of such biographical speculation and it is very thorough in its treatment of Greene's source material. With regard to interpretation, however, it is limited.

The most recent critical biography of Robert Greene is that of Charles W. Crupi (1984) who announces from the outset that he intends to engage with the frequently-stated view that Greene was 'the most prolific and most shameless of Elizabethan hacks'.⁶⁹ With this mission statement, Crupi initiates a more open-minded critical attitude regarding Greene's work. He admits the challenges in reading Greene's work, that it is 'non-realistic', it is prone to 'rhetorical display' and that Greene 'makes extensive use of conventional motifs'. It is important 'to see Greene in his own terms',⁷⁰ Crupi argues, and he considers that 'the best effects are structural'.⁷¹ The emblematic nature of much of Greene's work is at the heart of Crupi's critical assessment. He sees the prose pamphlets as 'narratives designed to illustrate, examine, and even challenge attitudes towards life'.⁷²

Of *Mamillia Part 1*, Crupi notes 'Greene's adoption of the role of women's champion' and considers that this pamphlet shares with Lyly's *Euphues*, *The Anatomy of Wit* a 'concern for rhetoric and logic'.⁷³ His comments on this rhetoric go no further

Latin in 1551 by Stanislaw Warszewicki and into English in 1569 by Thomas Underdowne who called it the *Aethiopian Historie*. Greene could have read it in either of these translations.

⁶⁸ 'pures jeunes filles, fidèles jusqu'au dernier soufflé à leur premier amour, de femmes dévouées, attachées à leur devoir, capables de souffrir en silence, sans récriminations ni reproches'. René Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, p. 553.

⁶⁹ Charles Crupi, *Robert Greene* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), p. 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 2.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 4.

⁷² Ibid. p. 38.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 37.

than to say that, '*Mamillia* portrays it as dangerous and misleading',⁷⁴ and that the two works by these writers 'contain speeches, debates, letters and soliloquies based on various persuasive patterns'.⁷⁵ He does not mention any rhetorical paradigms which might be employed by Greene and describes the 'very simple plot' as 'less the story of *Mamillia* and *Pharicles* than what they represent, namely carnal and rational love'.⁷⁶

Of the language of the second part of *Mamillia*, Crupi says no more than that 'the characters deliver formal speeches', some of which modern readers will find 'tedious enough'. Without going into detail, Crupi tells us that 'rhetoric is, as in the first part, not simply displayed but also examined'.⁷⁷ He does not explain the nature of this examination.

While I applaud Crupi's intention 'to see Greene in his own terms', I cannot feel that he has taken this process far enough. The limitations of his interpretation are shown in his reference to 'formal speeches' which he never explores. Although he is clearly sympathetic to Greene, as with so many critics he does not engage sufficiently closely with Greene's rhetoric and therefore does not appreciate the extent to which Greene's role as 'women's champion' is reflected in the linguistic empowerment of the female characters. In his attempt to offer a comprehensive survey of Greene's work, and we should be grateful to him for this, Crupi has felt the need to provide generalizations which close exegesis of the text cannot help but undermine.

Twentieth-century literary histories, particularly histories of the English novel, were often unsympathetic towards Greene. It is worthwhile summarizing the judgements made in three such histories to demonstrate how the understanding of Greene and the critical attitudes towards him have changed in recent years. The

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 42.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 37.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 41.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 71.

tendency in the past century was to read Elizabethan prose fiction as proto-novels, the authors of which were struggling blindly and ineffectually towards that great literary form. Judged according to the criteria by which we evaluate the novels of Austen or Dickens, Greene's pamphlets may seem artificial, unrealistic and lightweight.

George Saintsbury offers the most extreme of the proto-novelistic arguments. He claims, when writing of 'the pamphlet stories' in general, that they 'do not require much notice' as they 'are mostly marred by a superabundance of rather rudimentary art, and a very poor allowance of matter'. Saintsbury will only tolerate Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* and John Lyly's *Euphues* because they are, in his opinion, novels in embryo and deserve to be respected as such. Even so, he suggests that, for a twentieth-century reader to get at what is valuable in *Euphues*, he needs to take the very elements that make it Elizabethan, 'these knotty, knarry envelopes, insertions, and excrescences', to 'strip them off' and 'he will find the carcass of a very tolerable novel left behind'.⁷⁸ The text will thus have been re-written in order to make it palatable for later ages. Saintsbury's failure to engage in detailed textual exegesis of the work of writers such as Greene means that the greater part of Greene's achievement escapes him.

In a similar vein, Margaret Schlauch uses the criteria of credible plots, realistic presentation and contemporaneity to evaluate Greene's work. She admits that, 'Greene had it in him, in fact, to make brilliant literary use of aspects of contemporary life directly known to him. The conny-catching pamphlets had already testified to this'.⁷⁹ About the romance and pastoral pamphlets she is scathing. Thus, *Mamillia* is one of

⁷⁸ George Saintsbury, In Chapter 2, 'From Lyly to Swift' in *The English Novel* (London: J.M.Dent & Sons, 1913), Project Gutenberg Ebook, [www. Gutenberg.net](http://www.Gutenberg.net), p. 16.

⁷⁹ Margaret Schlauch, *Antecedents of The English Novel 1400 - 1600* (Warszawa: PWN - Polish Scientific Publishers and London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 194.

the ‘euphuistic romances...that were clearly put together in a most perfunctory way’.⁸⁰ Elsewhere, for Schlauch, Greene is guilty of ‘more than a little prurient sensationalism’ and *Francesco’s Fortunes* ‘is another farrago of inherited motifs’.⁸¹ Schlauch finds Greene’s pamphlets, other than the personal repentance and cony-catching ones, wanting because she is once again considering them as inadequate proto-novels. The cony-catching pamphlets she sees as ‘sociological exempla’, rather than free-standing works in their own right, which ‘offered a style and idiom adaptable for low-life scenes on the stage’.⁸² Schlauch has almost nothing to say about the rhetoric underpinning the pamphlets she dismisses as ‘perfunctory’. The point of this study is to show that they were anything but.

Robert W. Dent’s assessment of Greene’s work echoes that of Schlauch as he raises the question of Greene’s borrowings from other writers, specifically in *Gwydonius*, declaring that Greene was, ‘a plagiarist by the carload in his first novels’.⁸³ The suggestion is that these works are simply compilations of copied material, in the case of *Gwydonius* from George Pettie’s *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure* (1576?). I dispute Dent’s description of Greene as a mere ‘literary quilt maker’ because this suggests that the pamphlets do not hold together as well as they do. My exploration of *Gwydonius* in Chapter Four demonstrates that the work is of a piece and that any borrowings are smoothly incorporated into the fabric of the whole. One might equally easily, and inaccurately, describe John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* or *The White Devil* as ‘quilts’, which they are not. Nandini Das offers a different assessment of Greene’s use of borrowings from other authors. She sees him as

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 190.

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 192.

⁸² Ibid. p. 116.

⁸³ Robert W. Dent, ‘Greene’s “*Gwydonius*”: A Study in Elizabethan Plagiarism’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 24 No. 2 (Feb. 1961), 151-162 (p. 151).

‘assimilating’, rather than simply filching and barely connecting, ‘multiple texts as the raw material for its [Greene’s work] own devices.’⁸⁴ Her focus is on the use Greene makes, throughout his career, of the tropes of chivalric and Hellenistic romance. Thus, the idea of displacement (social or through travel), the questing for identity and recognition and basic social survival becomes a way of resonating ‘with the social restlessness of his [Greene’s] contemporary world.’⁸⁵ Far from being the cynical scribbles of a mere hack, Greene’s pamphlets offer, in her reading of them, an insight into significant issues which engaged late sixteenth-century English society.

A.L. Rowse also judges Elizabethan prose pamphlets according to the extent to which they resemble the novel. He writes that, ‘society was not yet ripe for the discursive art of the mature novel’.⁸⁶ In this world of early fiction, *Euphues* is simply ‘a very young man’s book, it must not be judged too severely, or taken too seriously’, and Robert Greene’s imitations of it are ‘unreadable to us’⁸⁷ because of the ‘artificiality regarded as a commendation then’.⁸⁸ For Rowse, the rebarbative artificiality of Greene’s early writings is an incontrovertible given, although he concedes that the cony-catching pamphlets are written in ‘a simple and graceful prose’.⁸⁹ I hope that this study will prove just how readable Greene’s early pamphlets still are.

The three histories quoted above were published in 1929, 1963 and 1972 and give an indication of the opinions held by many scholars during much of the past century. Lori Newcomb’s 2004 entry on Robert Greene in the most recent edition of

⁸⁴ Nandini Das, *Renaissance Romance, The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570-1620* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011, repr. London: Routledge, 2016), p. 120.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 113.

⁸⁶ A.L. Rowse *The Elizabethan Renaissance: The Cultural Achievement* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1972), p. 71.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 71.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 75.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 72

the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, however, makes clear that the newest thinking about the author is much less dismissive and judgemental.⁹⁰ If it is not quite a new orthodoxy which Newcomb establishes, she certainly offers the possibility of a greater willingness to engage in detail with Greene's pamphlets without the hindering prejudice that they are failed proto-novels. She never suggests that they should be regarded in this way and does in fact point towards Greene's unusually sympathetic treatment of his female characters, remarking that, 'The romances continue to address female readers with a regularity beyond convention.' With regard to Greene's language, Newcomb comments several times on the 'euphuistic' nature of numerous of the early works, but she offers no gloss on the term, which might therefore be taken to refer to a number of features of Lyly's work, its subject matter, its perspective, its syntax or its rhetorical figures and vocabulary.

Newcomb's concluding remarks leave the way open for future scholars to find even more of interest and value in Greene's work than has hitherto been the case. She writes that, 'Greene should be credited as an innovator who moved prose romances towards originality and grace, pamphlets towards form of freedom and voice,' and concludes that, 'With renewed interest in Elizabethan authorship and popular culture, Greene's critical fortunes are beginning to rise again.'⁹¹

Stephen Greenblatt's comments on Greene in *Will in the World* are all variations on his judgement that Greene was 'a hugely talented, learned, narcissistic, self-dramatizing, shameless and undisciplined scoundrel'.⁹² He also suggests that Greene provided the model for Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff.⁹³ Stanley Wells, in *Shakespeare & Co.*, is less dismissive than Greenblatt, but, for him, Greene is still 'an

⁹⁰ <http://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11418>.

⁹¹ <http://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11418>.

⁹² Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), p. 203.

⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 216-25.

unscrupulous thief of other men's wit', who also 'has claims to be our first fully professional writer - or literary hack'. Wells sets little store by Greene's prose, the 'best known', *Pandosto*, being well-known 'mainly because some twenty years later Shakespeare was to transform it into *The Winter's Tale*' and we are told that 'Greene's best work comes in his lyrics and his plays'.⁹⁴ A close reading of *Gwydonius*, *Greenes carde of fancie* would have shown Wells just how much of the euphuism of that particular tale is Greene's own invention.

Lori Humphrey Newcomb in her own monograph *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England*, focuses on a single text by Robert Greene, *Pandosto*. She traces the evolution of this text over the 250 years following its first publication in 1588, the many editions of *Pandosto* in its unaltered form and then in a large number of recensions as the popular romance of Dorastus and Fawnia under various titles, some even in verse. Newcomb uses the history of the publication of this one text in its multiplicity of incarnations to explore the complex relationship between elite and popular literature. She argues that the readiness of those who considered themselves members of the elite to denigrate works printed for widespread consumption as mere commodities, and the act of publishing literature in this way as a cheapening and 'commodifying' of it, conceals the fact that Greene was actually read and enjoyed across the classes.⁹⁵ As she says, 'The history of popular reading practices has repeatedly included elite disavowal of reading pleasures that are secretly shared'.⁹⁶ The focus of her book is not on Greene's style or his meaning, but on the consideration of him as an artist functioning in a world where the mere fact of the ease of appearance in print has given rise to the commonly-held view of him as the archetypal

⁹⁴ Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare & Co.* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), p. 67.

⁹⁵ Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 16.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 15-16.

Elizabethan hack ‘calculating and exploitative in his management of his authorial persona’.⁹⁷ Her book is, in a sense, a rehabilitation of the ‘uniqueness’ of Greene and an invitation to see him almost as a victim of the ‘ambivalence about the materiality of print culture’.⁹⁸

Katharine Wilson’s *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives*, is a further example of the new seriousness with which texts by Gascoigne, Grange, Harvey, Lodge, Lyly, Whetsone, and particularly the romances and pastorals of Robert Greene, are increasingly being regarded. The emphasis in her discussion of Greene’s work is on ‘textuality’,⁹⁹ that self-consciousness which is ‘often manifested by the creation of reader figures within the text’.¹⁰⁰ She sees this as suggesting ‘the author’s own uncertainty about the role of prose fiction’.¹⁰¹ Wilson explores the ways that characters within her chosen texts by Greene are aware of their dual nature as participants in a narrative but also as authors in their own right and manipulators of narrative *topoi* they have come across in their reading. This is true not only of male characters but also of the equally self-conscious female ones who ‘cultivate relationships with fragments of literary culture’.¹⁰² Wilson explores in considerable detail what she sees as Greene’s interrogation of John Lyly’s Euphuism, his early imitation of the ‘bizarre’¹⁰³ style of *Euphues* and his gradual distancing himself from it. She sees this not as a simple act of rejection, but a complex one of adaptation and, at times, ironic subversion. She also points out the considerable differences in their

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 25.

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 19.

⁹⁹ Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship in Late Elizabethan Narratives, Euphues in Arcadia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 16.

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 5.

treatment of their female characters, Lyly concluding *Euphues* with a series of highly misogynistic remarks and Greene being a writer who ‘celebrates women’.¹⁰⁴

The two works of criticism cited above encapsulate the current critical approaches to Greene’s works and demonstrate the extent to which evaluations of him have changed. His self-awareness as a writer is the new given in contrast to the older notion that he carelessly ‘yarkt up’ his pamphlets with no thought other than to make money by them.¹⁰⁵ He is now accorded an important place in the emerging marketplace of print as one who was aware of, and who responded knowingly to, the challenges inherent in providing literature which was now considered a commodity and whose status was still uncertain. His engagement with John Lyly’s style is regarded as subtle and various and his creation of female characters has considerable significance for our understanding of the male and, possibly, female readership of his pamphlets. This is all a far cry from the earlier and much simpler portrait of him as a thoughtless hack willing to churn out his own versions of this year’s favoured reading.

Newcomb and Wilson both have essays included in Melnikoff and Gieskes’ collection *Writing Robert Greene* and it is noteworthy that, even now, it is considered commercially necessary to promote a volume of the latest scholarship on Greene with a reference to his notoriety, hence the volume’s sub-title, *Essays on England’s First Notorious Professional Writer*. In their introduction, Melnikoff and Gieskes state that they see this collection of essays as part of the ‘ongoing reappraisal of Greene’s work’.¹⁰⁶ The book offers a range of approaches to the three areas of interest in Greene studies which I have outlined above: his self-consciousness as a writer engaged in a

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 108.

¹⁰⁵ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, I, p. 287.

¹⁰⁶ Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes, editors, *Writing Robert Greene, Essays on England’s First Notorious Professional Writer*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), Introduction, p. 5.

particular literary and cultural context, his relationship with the works of John Lyly and his stance as a ‘Homer of Women’.

Melnikoff and Gieskes emphasize Greene’s self-conscious professionalism within the context of the emerging notion of ‘the writer’ and of the production of literature as a profession, seeing him as ‘an exemplary figure in early modern writing’ and ‘a shrewd and engaged participant in a rapidly developing cultural market’.¹⁰⁷

In her essay, ‘A Looking Glass for Readers’, Newcomb focuses on *The repentance of Robert Greene* which she considers an innovatory work because in it Greene suggests the greater efficacy of the written text in offering spiritual guidance than the oral sermon which had hitherto been the instrument chosen by the church to instruct its congregation. This ‘textualization’¹⁰⁸ of Protestant doctrine Newcomb also sees as ‘a significant landmark in the history of first-person writing’.¹⁰⁹

Katharine Wilson, in her essay ‘Transplanting Lillies’, sees Greene as ‘in the process of rebranding himself’¹¹⁰ as he ‘found ever more varied ways of making his debt to Lyly into a joke, but [he] never escaped from his literary legacy’.¹¹¹ She feels obliged to admit that Greene ‘built his literary career by ruthlessly mining and recycling every usable shard of literature that came his way’¹¹² and, with regard to his presentation of female characters, she notes ‘the extent to which he was preoccupied with the question of female response to the ever present threat of male lust and oppression’.¹¹³ Greene, according to Wilson, was interested in women who displayed ‘a more active and vocal solution to their problems’, who were capable of ‘self-

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 24.

¹⁰⁸ Lori Humphrey Newcomb, ‘A Looking Glass for Readers’, in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 154.

¹¹⁰ Katharine Wilson, ‘Transplanting Lillies: Greene, Tyrants, and Tragical Comedies’, in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 189.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p. 203

¹¹² Ibid. p. 190.

¹¹³ Ibid. p. 191.

reflexivity' and whose level of 'literary knowledge' 'often becomes a crucial factor in deciding their fate'.¹¹⁴ I wholeheartedly endorse this last remark of Wilson's and find it surprising that it is a point made so infrequently in Greene studies.

Robert Maslen, in his essay 'Robert Greene and the Uses of Time' looks closely at Greene's presentation of his female characters in *Menaphon* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Maslen notes the 'unrivalled verbal artistry'¹¹⁵ of the women who 'are always defeating the men in contexts of eloquence, wit, and resilience'.¹¹⁶ He goes so far as to suggest that 'the language of women dominates its [*Menaphon*]'s rhetoric at every level',¹¹⁷ but does not follow this insight with an exploration of Greene's presentation of his female characters.

Helen Hackett's *Women and Romance fiction in the English Renaissance* offers some important caveats for those who might assume that the prefatory addresses to female readers which are placed at the front of a number of romances, Robert Greene's amongst them, are proof of a substantial female readership. Hackett suggests that such addresses may, in fact, have 'rhetorical purposes, probably constructed by male authors implicitly addressing a male audience'.¹¹⁸ She also warns against interpreting the actions of heroines of romance in the light of modern attitudes. The emphasis in the romances on the virtues of chastity, silence and obedience, for example, need not necessarily have prevented female readers from finding 'examples of female strength within these terms highly acceptable as models of female heroism'.¹¹⁹ She contends that 'Greene's supposed championing of women's cause

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p. 192.

¹¹⁵ Robert W. Maslen, 'Robert Greene and the Uses of Time' in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 158.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 171.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 171.

¹¹⁸ Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 97.

was merely a transitory pose'¹²⁰ and in her exploration of the relationship of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* to Greene's *Pandosto*, she writes that 'Shakespeare adds more of the feminine and the maternal to the source material he finds in Greene'.¹²¹ I take considerable issue with Hackett's assertion that Greene's 'championing' of women is either 'supposed' or 'transitory'. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that it was both actual and consistent.

Like Helen Hackett, Steven R. Mentz engages with the question of the readership of Greene's romances. He concedes that, despite the addresses to female readers at the front of a number of them, 'educated men seem to have made up the bulk of the potential and actual readers'.¹²² He sees Greene as 'the most strategic writer of Elizabethan prose fiction'¹²³ who seeks to define 'the semi-elite position' of a 'middlebrow'¹²⁴ writer hoping to appeal to 'heterogeneous readers'.¹²⁵

Mentz makes much of the influence on Elizabethan literature of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. He notes that a distinguishing feature of Heliodorus' romance, and one which had particular influence on English writers between, say, 1580 and 1590 (from *Mamillia* to *Menaphon* and the *New Arcadia*) was its emphasis on 'strategic passivity and active dissembling'.¹²⁶ He further argues that, whereas Greene embraces this passivity, Sidney, in *The Old Arcadia*, strongly opposes it. An important contrast between these two contemporaries, he claims, is that Sidney saw poetry as vatic and a means by which readers might 'glimpse the divine',¹²⁷ but Greene valued the 'commodification' of literature, firmly locating his work in 'the London marketplace'.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 97.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 158.

¹²² Steven R. Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England; The Rise of Prose Fiction* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), p. 17.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 20.

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 22.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 38.

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 49.

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 108.

Greene's paratextual materials should therefore be read as 'practical works of literary theory' in the same way that we read Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetry*.¹²⁸

I question Mentz's conclusions regarding the relative passivity of the heroines in the works of Greene and Sidney. As I demonstrate in Chapter Two, although Sidney's Pamela and Cleophila may attempt to act freely, their efforts are restricted; Greene's heroines may remain strategically mute, and apparently cowed, for a while, but the narratives containing them end with these heroines active and triumphant. Passivity, for them, is a necessary stage and not an end in itself.

In *Mamillia*, Mentz sees Greene playing to 'misogynistic stereotypes' as well as 'celebrating heroically resistant women'.¹²⁹ *Menaphon* is the 'high-water mark of Elizabethan Heliodorism',¹³⁰ with a heroine, Sephastia, who demonstrates an 'extreme passivity',¹³¹ which may entail 'a loss of agency', but which engages the readers' sympathy with 'human powerlessness'.¹³² Mentz also contends that Greene 'remade' the Elizabethan novella, making it more Heliodoran.¹³³ He examines *Perimedes the blacke-smith*, *Penelopes web* and *Euphues his Censure* which all reveal Greene 'to be a master of generic positioning',¹³⁴ so that 'gentlemen, scholars, courtiers and noble ladies each have their own paths through the text'.¹³⁵ I concede that, in his introductory addresses, Greene can promise that a single pamphlet will provide ready material which will please both lady and gentleman readers. However, although we might imagine that each class of reader would have to read somewhat selectively to find his or her own path, this did not inhibit impressive sales of Greene's work. Mentz's list of

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 106.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 113.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 114.

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 115.

¹³² Ibid. p. 119.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 141.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 142.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 147.

possible readers also suggests a more elevated and educated reading public than the comments of Harvey and Nashe would have us believe.

As a final observation, Mentz remarks that the ‘marketing savvy’¹³⁶ which led Greene to ‘recreate himself with each new literary fad’ also ‘foreclosed any lasting personal stance of his own.’¹³⁷ A major line of argument in this study is that Greene’s presentation of his female characters is remarkably unconventional, and, therefore, highly personal.

As is suggested by the title of her book, *The Marketplace of Print*, Alexandra Halasz is concerned with Elizabethan prose pamphlets as marketable commodities and with the uncertainties they engendered. She notes ‘a phobic conception of widely circulated discourses’,¹³⁸ which she locates in the power of the marketplace in ‘producing, disseminating, and mediating discourse independent of the sites and practices associated with and sanctioned by university, Crown and Church.’¹³⁹

Halasz focuses mostly on writers other than Greene, in particular Nashe and Harvey, but what she has to say about them is often applicable to Greene. There were the shared issues of the extent to which the marketplace dictated what was written and the problem of adapting a university education to the wide and unclear readership of printed pamphlets. According to Halasz, Harvey disparages Greene because the latter had disgraced himself by willingly throwing in his lot with the values of the marketplace after having failed, or been unwilling, to align himself with ‘the systems of patronage and institutional high literacy that supported learned men.’¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ibid. p. 156.

¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 183.

¹³⁸ Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2.

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 98.

Quite a different approach to Greene's work is that of Gordon Coggins' *A Quantitative Study of Style in the Prose Romances of Robert Greene*,¹⁴¹ an extremely thorough analysis of 35 elements of style, grammatical structures and vocabulary, which Greene employs in all his prose works up to 1590, excluding the cony-catching and repentance pamphlets. The purpose of Coggins' study is to 'yield insights into other aspects of the work as varied deep structures, clues to the psychological predilections of the writer, a pattern of development of the author's style, the manner and order of composition, or the attribution of authorship.'¹⁴² The main features which Coggins analyzes are numerous kinds of free and bound clauses and specific kinds of vocabulary. These last include five of the seven most frequently used words in *Euphues* ('fire', 'eye', 'stone', 'water' and 'wine') references to Fortune, Nature and wit, the language of logic and rhetoric, and proverbs and similes.

Coggins' major finding is that there is 'a pattern of development discernible and measurable in Greene's style.'¹⁴³ He sees an early increasing mastery of a euphuistic style distinctively Greene's own followed by a 'repetition' period in 1587-8 when Greene wrote quickly and in a slipshod manner. Then, in 1589 and 1590 at the end of the period under scrutiny, there is a greater concern for style and a return of the excellence of the first period.'¹⁴⁴ Such a technical analysis of Greene's work is rare, critics tending not to go beyond general references to his 'rhetoric', a term which remains unexplored.

Coggins' study ends with many pages of statistics. He is able to demonstrate, for example, that in the two parts of *Mamillia* combined, the total of 'Lyly words',¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Gordon Coggins, *A Quantitative Study of the Style in the Prose Romances of Robert Greene*, Unpubl. Phd thesis, University of Birmingham, May 1978.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 190.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 192.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 149.

‘rhetoric/logic terms’,¹⁴⁶ ‘Nature and derivatives’,¹⁴⁷ ‘wit and derivatives’¹⁴⁸ and ‘proverbs/commonplaces’¹⁴⁹ is far greater than in any of his other pamphlets. This is exactly what one would expect from a text consisting largely of orations and heavily influenced by Lyly’s euphuistic style with its reliance on proverbs, commonplaces and similes drawn from Nature. Coggins’ statistics similarly reveal that the text with by far the highest number of ‘religious terms’ is *The Myrrour of Modestie*, Greene’s re-working of the story of Susanna and the Elders from the *Apocrypha*¹⁵⁰ and that *Morando*, a pamphlet consisting of a series of debates, also contains many ‘rhetoric/logic terms’.¹⁵¹ These findings are useful as indications of the flavour of individual texts, but they take us no further than an indication of style or choice or vocabulary. In themselves, they do not reveal Greene’s purpose in writing the pamphlets. They are information crying out for interpretation.

Coggins’ conclusion with regard to *Mamillia* is purely technical rather than interpretative. His findings, he says, are evidence of:

practices which Greene almost certainly learned in grammar school and continued at Cambridge; they were a part of the traditional logic and rhetoric practised at both levels. That they should have been carried into his first published work of fiction is not surprising, and it is equally to be expected that as he developed, he should make less use of them in later works.¹⁵²

In his search for ‘Lyly words’, Coggins focuses on the words most commonly used by another writer whose agenda is not Greene’s. Coggins thus knows exactly what he is looking for and does not leave scope for enumerating other verbal patterns which he has not pre-determined. Both parts of *Mamillia*, for example, do contain

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 150.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 157.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 158.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 166.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 161.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 150.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 169.

highly significant verbal repetitions, but one only discovers the true extent of these by reading the text without preconceptions. In Chapter Four, I suggest, for example, that both parts of *Mamillia* contain many references to ‘chaffer’, the language of commerce, used with reference to the value placed on words spoken in dialogue between the characters. This commodification of discourse exactly reflects the way that the printed literature of the marketplace was seen as a commodity. Throughout this study I also point out the numerous references in Greene’s work to the ‘Siren’ power of language. These reinforce my argument that Greene’s use of rhetorical paradigms is part of a consistent interest in discourse *per se*, in the significance of register and of words as pieces in games of strategy. Coggins’ particular analytical approach fails to reveal this fact.

My survey of the modern critical reception of Greene’s work has demonstrated how little this has been based on an informed close-reading of the texts. Even the most recent critics who have begun to see Greene as worthy of serious study and not simply as an undistinguished minor figure, have only offered pointers for further exploration rather than in-depth analysis. They have certainly shied away from the nuts and bolts, the templates and figures, of his rhetorical constructions, commenting, often dismissively and in a very general way, on his long sentences and the challenge they present to readers four hundred years later when expectations of prose fiction are so different. But how can we read Greene without a knowledge of this rhetoric which, as Gavin Alexander says, ‘took up a position at the centre of Renaissance culture’?¹⁵³ We cannot hope to appreciate the prose written by an educated Elizabethan unless we

¹⁵³ Gavin Alexander, *Sidney’s ‘The Defence of Poesy’ and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), Introduction, p. xxxiv.

understand the rhetorical paradigms in which he had been taught to express his thought. This is why a close analysis of Greene's rhetoric is at the heart of this study.

Robert Greene's Own Assessment of his Work

One voice which has largely escaped notice in the assessment of Greene's work is that of the author himself. I do not mean the voice that we hear in the introductions to his pamphlets which promises different experiences to all kinds of readers. That is the voice of the professional writer eager to sell his work and it is not to be trusted. In 1589 or 1590 Greene appears to have experienced a *crise de conscience* regarding the literary value and the morality of his romances. His soul-searching is externalized in *Greenes vision* (published in 1592, but probably written in 1590) as a debate between the two great Mediaeval poets Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower. Chaucer's comments endorse the aesthetic decisions Greene has taken during his career, and in this retrospective assessment we see Greene articulating some important judgements which we should bear in mind as we evaluate his work. Chaucer/Greene stresses the freedom of the artist to challenge orthodoxies and push boundaries which, I suggest throughout this study, Greene could not help doing, particularly with regard to the presentation of his female characters. Chaucer tells Greene, 'Poets are free and their words ought to be without checke.'¹⁵⁴ He adds that, 'it behoves a Scholler to fit his Pen to the time and persons,'¹⁵⁵ and 'to enter with a deepe insight into the humours of men, and win them by such writings as best wil content their fancies.' These are important statements about a writer's need to engage with, and explore, human nature and his own soul, and to write with a sense of decorum, matching his words to the

¹⁵⁴ Robert Greene, *Greenes vision written at the instant of his death*, 1592, Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12261, sig. C3i.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. sig. D1iii.

characters described and making sure that his register is accessible to his readers. Greene may panic that he has been guilty of peddling ‘the loftie stile shadowing wanton conceipts’,¹⁵⁶ but Chaucer tells Greene that his work has been ‘well-written’ which suggests that Greene was comfortable, and even proud of, both his Euphuism and his rhetoric.¹⁵⁷ Even Gower, the unsettling voice in Greene’s head, admits the ‘sweetnes of his [Greene’s] discourse.’¹⁵⁸ Nowhere is there a suggestion, as Carmine di Biase claims to see, that Greene felt that Euphuism had been foisted on him. He seems to be admitting that the ‘loftie stile’ was his own choice. I take these conversations with Chaucer as evidence that Greene gave serious thought to what he was writing and that he was prepared to be judged by it, not as evidence that he was a hack who pandered to popular taste.

Notwithstanding the apology for his ‘lascivious pamphleting’¹⁵⁹ with which Greene begins the *vision*, Chaucer’s reassuring words represent what Greene would really like to believe about his literary productions. Chaucer tells him quite clearly that the genre in which he, Greene, chose to write was as valid a vehicle for ‘sententious’ [‘serious or deep’]¹⁶⁰ thought as the more overtly moral ‘Axiomes of good living’ suggested by Gower.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

Although Robert Greene’s status as an Elizabethan best-seller has always been recognized, I have shown that his popularity has generally been held against him. It has come to be seen as synonymous with a willingness to plagiarize and slavishly to follow current literary fashions, John Lyly’s two *Euphues* volumes in particular. If

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. sig. B3i.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. sig. C3i.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. sig. C4i.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. The Address to the Gentlemen Readers.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. sig. C3i.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. sig. G4i.

we add to this Greene's notorious lifestyle, then it is apparent why critics have so readily labelled him a 'hack' rather than seeing him as a writer who took care when exercising his craft.

Once a dismissive epithet has been applied to a writer for as long as it has been applied to Robert Greene, scholars may well come to believe that there is little to be gained by challenging it. This will have been clear from my citation of a considerable sample of the critical writing which mentions Greene. The fact that his work has been described as 'rhetorical' since his friend Thomas Nashe took him to task on this very point, has added another barrier to a proper understanding of the selection of pamphlets I explore in this study. It is clear from my critical survey that even modern scholars who are more open to, or even enthusiastic about, a rehabilitation of Greene have tended to stumble over the nature of his debt to rhetoric. An important first step in understanding what underpins Greene's aesthetic is to confront the rules and paradigms of rhetoric and to see them as providing an eminently workable methodology rather than an arcane and obfuscating barrier to a reader's understanding and enjoyment.

I have also examined Thomas Nashe's disparaging comments on Greene's championing of women and compared them with the more appreciative observations made on this aspect of his work by critics during the past seventy-five years. I feel that, although Greene's presentation of his female characters has come to be better understood, it has never been fully explored by way of the kind of close reading of the texts I offer in this study. Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* is often cited as an important source for Greene's work, particularly with regard to the passive suffering of his heroines. I robustly challenge this notion of their passivity and also the idea that their histories should be seen as proto-novels. As I proceed with my study, I take these key elements

of the critical literature on Greene, that he was an imitative and rhetoric-obsessed hack who possibly had something to say about women, and I examine them all. Greene's own retrospective assessment of his pamphlets which we see in *Greenes vision* is, I believe, much nearer the mark.

CHAPTER TWO

The Social Background

Robert Greene's presentation of his female characters must be understood in the light of the prevailing late-sixteenth-century English attitude to women. This manifested itself in an oft-cited triplet of expectations that women should be chaste (a virgin before marriage and faithful after it), silent and obedient. These expectations were a significant part of the ongoing debate about the nature of women, the question of whether they were innately good or bad, their role in marriage and the nature of the education appropriate to them. Suzanne W. Hull suggests that, 'The controversy found expression in almost every form of literature,'¹⁶² while Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus stress the intensity of the debate when they write of 'the rousing popular controversies in Renaissance England about the nature of women.'¹⁶³ Greene's own contribution is a sympathetic one, revealed both in the way he characterizes his female protagonists and in his explicit comments on the unfairness of contemporary attacks on women. Such authorial comments are a particular feature of both parts of *Mamillia*. The desirability of chastity is never questioned in Greene's writing, but his heroines are indisputably spirited and vocal, rejecting at every turn any demand that they submit silently to unreasonable attempts at male domination.

Echoing Hull's observations on the pervasiveness in contemporary literature of the triplet of desirable female virtues, at the end of this chapter I look briefly at their appearance in the work of William Shakespeare (*The Taming of the Shrew*), Sir Philip Sidney (*The Old Arcadia*) and Thomas Lodge (*Rosalynde*). My comments on these

¹⁶² Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient, English Books for Women 1475-1640* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982), p. 82.

¹⁶³ Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind, Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 11.

other writers are necessarily brief, but they do point out how chastity, silence and obedience in women appear regularly as part of the accepted moral background of the period in which the works were penned.

The Prevailing Orthodoxy - Chastity, Silence and Obedience

The ultimate source of the prevailing ideology which stressed this triplet of womanly virtues was the Bible, in particular the epistles of St. Paul, reinforced by biblical exegesis, sermons, homilies and conduct manuals. According to the Bible, very soon after God created Adam and Eve he made crystal clear the relationship between this first couple, and presumably all men and women whether married or not: 'he [the man] shall rule over thee [the woman]',¹⁶⁴ an *ex cathedra* pronouncement that would seem to settle the question once and for all and allow defenders of women no room for manoeuvre. St. Paul took this text and made a mantra of it.

Kate Aughterson has pointed to the focus in the early modern period in England on the message of the New Testament and particularly the Pauline epistles when it came to establishing a moral consensus and defining 'ideal Protestant womanhood'.¹⁶⁵ She argues that the 'Protestant emphasis on the male as head of household religion' and 'the institutionalisation of the Church of England ... helped construct an ideology of femininity which was confined to the domestic sphere, and defined in relation to the power of men.'¹⁶⁶ The message for women about how they should behave was both consistent and persistent. No-one at the time Greene was writing could have failed to be aware of what was expected of women and his readers would, therefore, have been alert to the way that Greene interrogates, and often flouts, the requirements of silence and obedience.

¹⁶⁴ *Genesis*, 3.16.

¹⁶⁵ Kate Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman, Constructions of Femininity in England* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 10.

The teaching of the three most important female virtues in the epistles of St. Paul was readily available by way of English translations of the Bible to be read at home or listened to in church. I have taken all biblical quotations from the *Geneva Bible* first printed in Geneva in 1560 by Marian exiles and which received its first printing in England in 1576. This was a hugely popular translation of the Bible and in all likelihood the one known to most of Greene's readers. According to Gerald Hammond, 'Not only Shakespeare, but probably every literate Elizabethan owned and read the *Geneva Bible*, making it perhaps the single most influential English book ever published.'¹⁶⁷

St. Paul's teachings on the three principal points of female behaviour could not be clearer. He is briefer in his comments on chastity in women, perhaps taking that as a given, but he revisits the desirability of silence and obedience numerous times. On a wife's chastity in marriage he insists that, 'She [a wife] must have been faithful to one man.'¹⁶⁸ On silence the insistence is: 'nor must woman domineer over man; she must be silent.'¹⁶⁹ On obedience he says, 'so let the wives be [subject] to their husbands in everie thing.'¹⁷⁰ The injunction regarding silence should be particularly borne in mind in our reading of Greene's work as his spirited heroines rarely keep their thoughts and reactions to themselves.

Contemporary biblical exegesis drove home St. Paul's instruction, as in John Calvin's commentary on the *Epistles* which was translated into English by Arthur Golding in 1577. In response to St. Paul's teaching to the Ephesians quoted above, Calvin writes that, 'a woman should beare hir subjection patiently, and with a willing

¹⁶⁷ Gerald Hammond, 'Translations of the Bible' in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 166.

¹⁶⁸ 1 *Timothy*, 5.9.

¹⁶⁹ 1 *Timothy*, 2. 11-12.

¹⁷⁰ *Ephesians*, 5.24.

mind.¹⁷¹ If she is contentious and fails to remain silently obedient, she challenges the divine order: ‘when they contend with their husbandes, it is all one as if they should reject God.’¹⁷²

Attendance at church in late sixteenth-century England was obligatory and every member of the community, including Robert Greene and his potential readers of all classes and both sexes, would have received the same moral instruction during their attendance at services.¹⁷³ The consistency of the message regarding the behaviour of women arose from the fact that without an M.A. degree no man could preach his own words in a church service and would instead be required to read from a book of official sermons. These, according to Aughterson, ‘were the texts most people heard.’¹⁷⁴ In *An homily of the state of matrimony* (1562) which was often read at marriage ceremonies, the bride was told that, ‘When the wyves be stubborne, frowarde and malapart, theyr husbandes are compelled thereby to abhorre and flee from their owne houses, even as they should have batayle with theyr enemyes.’¹⁷⁵ The image conveyed in these lines is one we encounter several times in Greene’s narratives, but whereas the author of the *homily* is appalled at the prospect of such behaviour on the part of women, Greene relishes and endorses it. An unsympathetic contemporary reader might well have construed Greene’s heroines as ‘stubborn’ in their determination to stand up for their individual identity. Similarly their verbal assertiveness could seem ‘malapeart’ [‘malapert’ ‘Presumptuous, impudent, saucy’]¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ John Calvin, *The sermons of M. John Calvin, upon the Epistle of S. Paul too the Ephesians. Translated out of French into English by Arthur Golding*, 1577. Cambridge University copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 448, fol. 279i.

¹⁷² Ibid. fol. 279ii.

¹⁷³ The 1559 *Act of Uniformity and Administration of the Sacrament* (commonly known as the Recusancy laws) insisted on compulsory attendance at church on penalty of a fine or imprisonment.

¹⁷⁴ Kate Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman*, p. 17.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. fol. 259i.

¹⁷⁶ OED definition. The earliest citation given is in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, 111 87. There are numerous examples of the word from the sixteenth century.

to a man unused to a woman giving as good as she got. On many occasions in Greene's tales the shock of having been given a flea in his ear by a female interlocutor leads the man to exit in confusion the verbal arena in which he has humiliatingly come off second best.

Those seeking religious instruction, both adults and children, would rely heavily on a catechism, for example Thomas Becon's *A New Catechism set forth Dialogue-wise in Familiar Talk Between the Father and the Son* 'first published in its present shape in 1560'.¹⁷⁷ Becon's teaching is the orthodox one derived from St. Paul as is evident from such remarks as: 'The fourth point of an honest and godly matron is patiently and quietly to bear the incommunities of her husband.' This command applies even if the husband displays 'fury'¹⁷⁸ or 'be never so simple, homely, plain, and of slender wit or policy.'¹⁷⁹

Edmund Tilney's *A brief and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Marriage, Called the Flower of Friendship* (1568) is both a conduct manual and a contribution to the on-going debate regarding women because it is cast as a series of conversations which allow differing opinions about and by women to be expounded. There are echoes of this work in Greene's pamphlets in his presentation of female characters in general but particularly in *Morando Parts 1 and 2* (1587). This work, like Tilney's, depicts a number of upper class men and women in an unspecified location engaged in witty debate. The model is Italian, specifically Boccaccio and Castiglione, as Tilney mentions in his text.¹⁸⁰ It is impossible to say whether Greene was aware of Tilney's

¹⁷⁷ The Rev. John Ayre, in his biographical introduction to his edition of *The Catechism of Thomas Becon* for the Parker Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844), p. xiv. Ayre also comments on 'the evident popularity of his [Becon's] works', *ibid.* p. viii.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Becon, *Catechism*, p. 340.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 340.

¹⁸⁰ 'Don Pedro nothing at all lyking of such devises, wherein the Ladies should be left out, said he remembered how Boccace and Countye Baltizar with others recounted many proper devises for exercise, both pleasant and profitable, which, quoth he, were used in the courts of Italie.' Edmund Tilney, *A Brief and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Marriage, Called the Flower of friendship*,

pamphlet because there are no actual borrowings from it. The parallels are important to note, however, because they show that the two authors were not writing in isolation and that a sympathetic attitude to women, consistent in Greene and intermittent in Tilney, may have been gaining currency.

In Tilney's text, Don Pedro is determined not to 'dispraise' women and his version of the orthodoxy is much less rigid than many. He insists that a husband should always behave well and 'deserve' his wife's love. This generosity of outlook also leads him to suggest that a husband should 'bee sufferable in the ymportunities of his wyfe' and even go so far as 'in trifling matters consenting unto hir.'¹⁸¹ Lord Gualter, in contrast, is convinced that women 'bee shrews all' and that, given the opportunity, a woman 'will tread upon thy head,' two charges often made by misogynistic pamphleteers.¹⁸² Lady Isabella passionately asserts, not in response to Lord Gualter but to a restating of the orthodoxy by another woman, Lady Julia, that, 'Women have soules as wel as men, may they not have wit as well as men...what reason is it then, that they should be bound, whome nature hath made free?''¹⁸³ The last words in the debate are spoken by Lady Julia who has been asked to describe the duties of a married woman. In reply she offers the conventional requirement that a wife should be 'in all things obedient' and accept her husband's chiding in silence. She does, however, suggest that submissive silence need only be maintained in public. A wife should get her husband into bed as quickly as possible and there, by 'kissing' and 'imbrasing' him, she can pour out any hurt feelings it would be indiscreet to reveal in front of others. Lady Julia speaks last and she is a woman but the pamphlet does not leave one with the impression that hers is Tilney's final viewpoint. In Lady Isabella's stance one

1568, Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 24076.3, p. 3.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 37.

¹⁸² Ibid. p. 38.

¹⁸³ Ibid. p. 56.

sees that of Greene's heroines generally. In Don Pedro's tale of the wife who shames her adulterous husband we see the constancy of Queen Barmenissa in the first tale of *Penelopes web* (1587) and in Lady Julia's recommendation of strategic pillow talk we see Philomela's revelation of her pregnancy to her irrational husband Count Phillippo in *Philomela* (published in 1592 but almost certainly written earlier).

Tilney mentions Boccaccio as a writer who influenced his work, but more significant, perhaps, as an influence on Tilney, Greene and English society in general was *Il Cortegiano*, by Baldesar Castiglione. The book was popular and, according to George Bull, 'to Elizabethan literature it channelled Renaissance philosophy and conceits.'¹⁸⁴ We know that the work was familiar to Greene because Mamillia makes a direct reference to it when she says, 'and in our countreye here, one of my kinsmen sets out the lively Image of a Courtier.'¹⁸⁵ Greene's English contemporaries would have found within its pages clear suggestions that women were to be treated with respect and admired for their accomplishments.

Il Cortegiano's four chapters recount discussions which take place over successive nights in March 1507 in the ducal palace of Urbino. Present are high-ranking lords and ladies in almost equal numbers with the Duchess herself, Elisabetta Gonzaga, and her companion Emilia Pia acting as referees. The men present always defer to the Duchess and Emilia Pia when asked to speak or to be silent, but neither of these two women, nor any of the other women present, ever actively participates in the arguments, even the one on the third night which is devoted to an analysis of the ideal court lady. They are obliged to sit and listen as men dissect and evaluate the

¹⁸⁴ Baldesar Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*, transl. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1967, repr. 1987), Intro. p. 13.

¹⁸⁵ Robert Greene, *Mamillia, A Mirrour or looking-glasse for the ladies of England* [Part 1], probably written in 1580 but not apparently published until 1583, the year of the earliest surviving edition. Bodleian Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12269. The pages are numbered both by signature and folio. As the latter method is more straightforward, this is the one I have followed. fol. 12i.

female character, some dismissively and others full of praise. An obvious contrast is in *Mamillia Part 2* in which Madam Gambara, the Marquesse of Saldana and the equivalent of Castiglione's Duchess, is invited to debate with Pharicles on whether men or women are more constant, the topic at the heart of Greene's first published work. In an impressive display of debating skill, which Castiglione completely denies to his Duchess and Emilia Pia, the Marquesse routs the arguments put forward, admittedly half-heartedly, by Pharicles. I discuss this debate in Chapter Four which is devoted to *Mamillia*.

Greene may have appreciated a like-mindedness in Castiglione with regard to their attitude to women, but he goes much further than the Italian author when he endows his heroines with strong opinions they are not afraid to voice. The Duchess and Emilia Pia occasionally, and briefly, protest when particularly disparaging comments are made against their sex, but there is no actual engagement on their part with the presumption of the male speakers as they define both the essential nature of women and what it is socially acceptable for them to do. The Duchess's longest, yet still brief, interjection is on the unchallenging subject of how courtiers should dress. When she urges all the women present to rush at the misogynist Gaspare as if to beat him, this entirely playful and unthreatening gesture neatly encapsulates the fact that Castiglione is offering nothing radical or unsettling in his presentation of the relationship between men and women.

Notwithstanding the feebleness of the Duchess's protest, it has to be admitted that Castiglione does prefigure some of what Greene has to say. In Book 3 of *Il Cortegiano*, Castiglione sets up two opposing points of view, that of the misogynists who trot out age-old belittling comments about women, and that of the Magnifico Giuliano De' Medici who is their champion. The former argues that, logically, women

must be innately inferior to men because they constitute ‘Mattier’ whereas men are the purer ‘Fourme’¹⁸⁶, a distinction which explains why women lack dignity, reason, virtue and chastity and are in need of ‘a bridle put upon them with shame and feare of infamy’.¹⁸⁷ These were the charges regularly laid against women. The Magnifico refutes all of this and insists instead that women not only possess ‘letters, and staidnesse [continence], and nobleness of courage, and temperance’,¹⁸⁸ but that they are also capable of governing cities and leading armies. Furthermore, they have ‘pleaded, and both accused and defended beefore Judges most eloquentlye.’¹⁸⁹ In Greene’s work we encounter heroines who are lettered, more constant than their male counterparts and who can, in the case of Mamillia and Philomela, defend eloquently before judges. A major difference in perspective between the two authors is that Greene’s female characters drive the action and dominate the world of his narratives; Castiglione significantly only tells us about women who are active and assertive elsewhere. The witty, elegant ladies present in Urbino are all mere spectators, graceful adornments of its court who are mostly to be admired for their ‘soft mildnesse’,¹⁹⁰ a dis-empowering phrase on the part of the Magnifico. It is of a piece with his relegation of them to the role of ones who are to be allowed sufficient ‘knowledge to praise and make of Gentilmen more and lesse accordinge to their desertes.’¹⁹¹

In Thomas Bentley’s *The Monument of Matrones* (1582), the degree of submission expected from a provoked wife is shown in the prayer provided for the woman married to a ‘froward and bitter husband’. Not only is she expected to suffer

¹⁸⁶ Baldesar Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*, trans. Sir Thomas Hoby 1561. Facsimile edition, Intro. by Walter Raleigh (Edinburgh: T. and A Constable, 1900, repr. by Classic Reprints) Bk 3, p. 226.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. Bk. 2, p. 199.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. Bk. 3, p. 222.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. Bk. 3, p. 225.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. Bk. 3, p. 220.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. Bk. 3, p. 221.

in silence, but she is also recommended to voice her subjection in a three-page prayer which thanks God for her situation and accepts that any fault is her own: 'if it be thy good pleasure with frowardnes, bitternes, and unkindnesse, yea the hatred and disdaine of my husband, thus to correct me for my fault, I most hartilie thank thee for it.'¹⁹²

Despite its title, William Perkins' *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue according to God's Word* (1593) makes only the briefest of references to women, the work being concerned with the many situations in which men could be called upon to speak. According to Perkins, there were hardly any occasions when a woman's voice was permitted:

A companie of men (as some say) is like to the Alphabet, in which are vowels, halfe vowels, and mutes: vowels are olde men, learned, wise, expert: halfe vowels, are young men and women, who are then only to speake when they are asked; mutes, are the same parties, who being not occasioned, are in silence to heare their betters.¹⁹³

Servants and children were only ever mutes. Young men were obviously able to progress to being complete 'vowels' with the right to express opinions. In Perkins' view, women were congenitally 'halfe vowels' who existed in a state of muteness until a man paid attention to them and demanded a, presumably brief, response. Robert Greene's heroines are never such ciphers.

Suzanne W. Hull categorizes the early Tudor period as 'relatively progressive' with regard to its attitude to 'women's education and potential capacity to learn.'¹⁹⁴ She cites the educational writings of prominent scholars such as Erasmus, Vives, Thomas More and Richard Mulcaster. This list marks the transition from a Catholic England to one which had still not been greatly influenced by Puritan thought. For all of these writers, the education of women was seen in a Christian, moral and utilitarian

¹⁹² Thomas Bentley, *The Fift Lampe of Virginitie in The Monument of Matrones*, 1582, Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 1892, pp. 73-6.

¹⁹³ William Perkins, *A Direction for the Government of the tongue according to God's Word*, 1593, University of Edinburgh copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 19689, pp. 64-5.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 58.

context and was not regarded as an encouragement to free-range intellectual speculation by women who read. The attitude of these men was more permissive than that of writers on education later in the century as a more Puritan attitude began to take hold. As Hull observes, 'The Puritan English writers who gave guidance and instructions to women from both pulpit and press in the late Tudor and Stuart period had different emphases.'¹⁹⁵

Although Juan Luis Vives may be thought of as 'relatively progressive' it is important to note that at the heart of his comments on education was a strict adherence to the orthodox triplet of chastity, silence and obedience. He was chosen by Katherine of Aragon to tutor her daughter Mary Tudor and his *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* was enormously influential. It was first printed in Latin in 1523 and translated into English in about 1529, going into many editions and being translated into many European languages. The work encouraged the education of women only in so far as it enabled them to read religious and devotional works thereby keeping their attention from other vain pursuits. Vives' focus is on reading rather than writing and he expressly says, 'I recommend that she be not concerned with rhetoric'.¹⁹⁶ He clearly saw writing as a skill with dangerous potential, a route to unacceptably free self-expression on the part of women. Such fears as these are realized in the confident rhetorical assertions of Robert Greene's heroines.

An example of one of the later less liberal writers on women's education is Thomas Salter, the tone of whose admonitions to women in his *Mirrhor of Modestie* of 1579 could not be less like that of Greene in his 1584 pamphlet of the same name. Suzanne W. Hull accurately characterizes Salter's tract as, 'Almost viciously strict'¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 32.

¹⁹⁶ Juan Luis Vives, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae*, 1783 edition, 1:4. p. 83.

¹⁹⁷ Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*, p. 201.

in its insistence that young women should never be allowed access to ‘bookes, ballades, Songs, Sonettes, and Ditties of daliance’, but should read only ‘the examples and lives of godly and virtuous Ladies, whose worthy fame, and bright renowme, yet liveth and still will live for ever’.¹⁹⁸

Classical literature in his opinion was full of ‘wicked adulteries and abhominable fornications’ and ‘the evell use of learnyng’ was to be avoided at all costs. Women should confine their activities to practical, domestic duties and their only reading should be of a religious and improving nature. No woman should be ‘a babbler or greate talker.’¹⁹⁹ If English women were subjected to such a Puritanical regime then the reading of romances and any fiction which presented unorthodox female characters would be out of the question.

Suzanne W. Hull points out that booksellers and authors ‘were not often willing to seek female without also seeking male readers.’²⁰⁰ Some of Robert Greene’s works are addressed to both men and women which leads us to speculate how those two readerships were likely to respond to the same material. The absence of a specifically female dedication does not mean that a pamphlet was not penned with possible female readers in mind and the popularity of Greene’s work would suggest that many women as well as men must have read and enjoyed them. Hull tells us that, ‘The numbers of printed introductions and salutations addressed to women after 1573 are strong indications in themselves of a growing female literature,’²⁰¹ but there is a danger in taking dedications and addresses at face value and assuming that they provide an accurate indication of the contents of the book. To take Robert Greene as

¹⁹⁸ Thomas Salter, *A Mirrhor mete for all mothers, matrons, and maidens, intituled the mirrhor of modestie*, 1579, British Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 21634, sigs. Bii2 – Biii2.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. sig. D2.

²⁰⁰ Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent and Obedient*, p. 12.

²⁰¹ Ibid. p. 9.

an example, his introductory materials are rhetorical performances which are quite likely to offer contradictory reading experiences to entirely different readerships and they are often no clear indicator of the nature of the material which follows. Greene made his living by writing and made all sorts of promises to encourage would-be purchasers of his pamphlets. As an indication of the pitfalls attendant on judging a book simply by what the author says it contains, I would cite Hull's own comments on Greene's *Penelopes web*. She calls the work 'a romantic tale' which is 'based on Homer's faithful Penelope'.²⁰² The Penelope of *Penelopes web* is very much Greene's Penelope and not Homer's creation, as I demonstrate in Chapter Five, and the pamphlet consists not of a single 'tale' but a series of three framed narratives which explore and question the triplet of female virtues and do not simply endorse them as Hull suggests, taking her cue from Greene's apparent endorsement of them on his title page rather than from the text itself.

Modern literary historians have reached different conclusions regarding the extent to which the published debate about women bore any actual relation to contemporary social structures and beliefs. Jean E. Howard is convinced that the 'flourishing of print publication', to which Robert Greene's own contribution was considerable, 'allowed the debate on women to develop exponentially and be widely disseminated.' She identifies a 'Renaissance proto-feminism' which 'voiced the contradictions of the existing gender system.'²⁰³ Howard makes no direct mention of Robert Greene because she is speaking in general terms, but I would argue that he, nevertheless made a significant contribution to the voicing of such contradictions in a fictive way. Suzanne Hull is not specifically referring to Greene when she claims that,

²⁰² Ibid. pp. 173-4.

²⁰³ Jean E. Howard, 'Was There a Renaissance Feminism?', in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, p. 646.

‘women heard no other side of the story except through farce or fiction,’ but her comment fits Greene very neatly nonetheless.²⁰⁴ He provided intelligent, and possibly frustrated, women with role-models, although they were ones of his own invention.

Faith Gildenhuis, in the introduction to her edition of *The Bachelor's Banquet* (1599 or 1603), a series of fifteen short narratives in which wives display the different personality traits which enable them to make their husband's life a misery, sees the debate arising from attempts to define the position of women in the face of ‘paradoxical and contradictory’ ‘political, economic and social changes.’ The rise of the nuclear family, she suggests, resulted in women becoming increasingly defined as individuals, whereas ‘the weakening of communal ties increased the authority of the male head of the household.’²⁰⁵

Pamphlet exchanges dealing with women's personalities, their rights and the behaviour expected of them broke out as regularly, and often as virulently, as the plague from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards. At the heart of the attacks was the argument that women were innately, and often disgracefully, incapable of being chaste, silent or obedient. The reason for such reprehensible behaviour, it was claimed, was that women were weak-willed, unreasonable and vicious which caused them all too often to make their husbands' lives intolerable with their shrewishness, their lust for control and their love of finery. Those who published rebuttals were constrained by the teachings of the Bible to accept that, whatever their virtues, women were born inferior to men.

In the 1540s, 1550s and 1560s there was a flurry of pamphleteering on this topic, beginning with an anonymous attack in *The Schoolhouse of Women* (1541)

²⁰⁴ Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient*, p. 140.

²⁰⁵ Anon, *The Bachelor's Banquet*, ed. Faith Gildenhuis, The Barnabe Rich Society (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse Editions, 1993), Introduction, p. 15.

which was refuted by Edward Gosynhill's shorter *Mulierum Paeon* of 1542(?). The attack is longer than the defence and was reprinted more often, but the two pamphlets mention each other and may have both been written by Gosynhill, as an exercise in polemic and one which precludes our knowing on which side of the argument he actually placed himself. The phenomenon of a single author writing on both sides of the argument occurred several times as also in Tilney's *A Brief and Pleasant discourse* and C. Pyrrye's *The praise and dispraise of women* (1569).

The Schoolhouse rehearses the standard criticisms of women, that they are incapable of being chaste, silent or obedient and their power of reasoning is 'not worth a torde ['turd']'.²⁰⁶ The depravity of women is represented in a series of lively vignettes of unacceptable behaviour. The dialogue can be sharp and amusing, as in this complaint by a sexually-frustrated wife:

Every night he riseth to piss,
And when he cometh, again unwarm,
Doth turn his arse in to my barm.['bosom, lap' OED]²⁰⁷

Mulierum Paeon contains none of the racy dialogue of *The Schoolhouse* and is dull in comparison, with its *exempla* of excellent women and an emphasis on how sorely they are often put upon by wicked men. The register of this work justifies Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus' comment that defences of women tended to display a 'certain dispassionate detachment of tone'.²⁰⁸ Women's champions could only argue that, 'woman was as good, if not better than man, but they had to accept 'man's rule over woman as part of the God-given order of the world.'²⁰⁹ Robert Greene's contribution is in the sympathetic depiction of female characters. As

²⁰⁶ Anon. or possibly Edward Gosynhill, *Heer beginneth The Schole house of women* 1541? repr. 1572, Bodleian Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12107 sig. Aii2, l.8.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. sig. Aiv2, ll. 18-20.

²⁰⁸ Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind*, p. 22.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 27.

his pamphlets are fictional rather than theological, he can, to a considerable extent, side-step the rigidity of biblical orthodoxy concerning women.

We cannot know how many of the aforementioned ‘controversy’ texts were still in circulation when Greene was of an age to take an interest in them, nor how many of them he read. Only twelve years separate Tilney’s *A brief and pleasant discourse* and the probable writing (but not the publication) of Greene’s first pamphlet, *Mamillia Part 1*, in 1580. Greene’s angry outbursts in this pamphlet against the detractors of women would suggest a close familiarity with the literature of the debate. He declares:

we are by conscience constrained to condemne those unseemly *Satyres* and vaine invectives, wherein with taunting tearmes and cutting quippes, diverse injurious person most unjustlie accuse Gentle women of unconstancy, they themselves being such coloured Camelions.²¹⁰

Greene’s own writing may have contributed to the renewed outbreak of pamphleteering on the subject in 1589 when his friend Thomas Nashe published his *Anatomie of Absurditie* in which he reveals that he is beside himself at the way authors, Greene presumably amongst them, ‘blot many sheets of paper in the blazing of womens slender praise’.²¹¹ Nashe devotes over a third of his pamphlet to the splenetic repetition of the age-old list of faults in women, perhaps because he genuinely felt that writers were demeaning themselves with women’s sugared praises or because he enjoyed satisfying a contemporary taste for contentious polemic. He is wide of the mark, however, if he is indeed accusing Greene of absurdly maintaining that women

²¹⁰ Robert Greene, *Mamillia [Part 2], The second part of the triumph of Pallas*, 1583?, British Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12269.5 p.6. The earliest dated copy of this work is that in the Henry E. Huntington Library and is from 1593, EEBO STC 92nd ed.) / 12270. I have used the British Library copy which lacks a title page and therefore a date of publication, but EEBO tentatively dates it to 1583, the year in which it is assumed that Greene wrote the work. It is clearly a different edition from that of 1593 because the pages have consecutive Arabic numbering as opposed to numbering based on signatures which is the case with the Henry E. Huntington Library copy. For ease of locating quotations in the text, I have preferred the copy with Arabic numbering.

²¹¹ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 1 p. 12.

are better than they actually are. This is not Greene's point. He is simply paying intelligent women respect and giving them a voice. This speaking out could seem to a misogynist to be an attempt on the part of such women to take control, a state of affairs guaranteed to fill their detractors with horror. Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1590-1) was produced very soon after *The Anatomie of Absurditie* which perhaps suggests that Shakespeare was exploiting a topic of considerable current interest.

All of the pamphleteers who contributed to both sides of the debate concerning women before and during Robert Greene's lifetime were men with the exception of 'Jane Anger' whose *Protection for Women* was written in 1588 and published in 1589.

Jane Anger's pamphlet is important for what it tells us about the social context in which she and Greene were writing. It provides an insight into the extent to which women might have read such pamphlets, and probably discussed them afterwards, and to the level of education some women achieved. All of my comments are predicated on the assumption that 'Jane Anger' was the pseudonym of a woman and not a sympathetic man. Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara McManus argue convincingly for her female identity,²¹² but Pamela Joseph Benson is not so convinced of a female authorship. She considers the pamphlet 'a sort of dramatic monologue spoken in the person of an angry woman', which was most likely written by the author of the lost *Complaint of a late Surfeiting Lover* the text which, Anger says, prompted her to put pen to paper so indignantly.²¹³ Benson is suggesting that Anger's pamphlet is a further example of a single author writing both the attack and the defence of women. If this is the case, the defence is far more impassioned and trenchant than was usual.

²¹² Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind*, pp. 20-24.

²¹³ Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman* (University Park Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), p. 224.

Anger addresses her work specifically to ‘the gentlewomen of England’ as a consciousness-raising exercise, a call to arms, ‘blows for blows’, but she will not spurn the support of ‘any gentle Reader whatsoever’, a comment which presupposes that there are men out there who are reasonable enough to validate her arguments.²¹⁴ Robert Greene must be seen as a one such ‘gentle’ reader, and writer. Anger wrote her pamphlet as an angry response to yet another of ‘the innumerable number of books to that purpose [attacking women]’. This observation reminds us of the vitality of the controversy and underlines Greene’s significance in taking the side of women in it. She states that she is unlike other women in speaking out, but she cannot have been alone in having ‘willinglie read over’ the offending pamphlet.²¹⁵ Her remark suggests a wider female readership equally eager to learn what was being written about them and to engage with such criticisms, or defences. Such a readership would have relished Greene’s feisty heroines.

The over-arching fault which Anger lays against men is their smug and deceitful use of rhetoric: ‘They run so into Rhetorick’.²¹⁶ Men use it, she claims, to entrap women and to disguise the many faults of their own in the belief that women are intellectually too feeble to understand how they are being misled. Women, Anger insists, are in fact not only intellectually equal to men, but their superiors in this and all other qualities. She asks her readers to ‘give me leave like a scoller to prove our wisdome more excellent then theirs, though I never knew what sophistry ment.’²¹⁷ This confession is falsely modest as her assured and sophisticated language throughout the pamphlet makes clear. She provides a model, in herself, of Greene’s linguistically

²¹⁴ Jane Anger, *Jane Anger her protection for women. To defend them against the scandalous reports of a late surfeiting lover, and all other like venerians that complaine so to bee overcloyed with womens kindnesse*, 1589, Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 644 sig. B2i.

²¹⁵ Ibid. sig. B1ii.

²¹⁶ Ibid. sig. B1i.

²¹⁷ Ibid. sig. C2i.

competent heroines and makes his creation of them credible. Her skills in this regard suggest the existence of a sufficiently large readership of educated women able to appreciate and enjoy the way that Greene's heroines appropriate male rhetoric and put it to their own use.

As Kate Aughterson says, 'Anger's conscious and self-conscious strategy is to use men's accounts and language and to invert it, through appropriation to a new meaning.'²¹⁸ Such an observation may also be applied to Robert Greene in his creation of female characters who appropriate the rhetorical and dialectical paradigms at the heart of male education and employ them to assert their own identity and independence. Greene un-genders these linguistic paradigms thereby making men and women equal players in the many verbal exchanges he sets up. Anger warns against 'man's wit', his use of language which is 'a laberinth', a verbal trap.²¹⁹ Greene's heroines, from Mamillia onwards, are fully aware of the potential of language to entrap and deceive and they are generally more adept than their male interlocutors in the deployment of 'wit'.

If, as Aughterson claims, 'Anger's voice enables women readers ... to utilize her discursive strategies in order to resist dominant formulations of identity and behaviour,' then Greene's heroines may be considered to have taken this lesson to heart.²²⁰ Anger's work appeared when Greene had only three more years to live and when all the works discussed in the body of this thesis had already been written, so there is no direct connection from Anger to Greene, but a reverse influence is possible as Greene's work was widely read.

²¹⁸ Kate Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman*, p. 5.

²¹⁹ Jane Anger, *Jane Anger her protection*, sig. C4ii.

²²⁰ Kate Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman*, p. 5

Anger's concluding advice to her female readers is that they should treat men as patronized simpletons. Listen to men, she says, as if to children: 'afford them noddies which make themselves noddies'.²²¹ Although she has warned that, 'At the end of men's fair promises there is a Laberinth',²²² she is actually convinced that, 'That we are more witty, which comes by nature, it cannot better be proved then that by our answers men are often droven to Nonplus.'²²³ How many times do we see in Greene's narratives that a verbal exchange between a man and a woman displays the woman's sharper wit and leaves the man nonplussed?

Pamela Joseph Benson does not see Anger's pamphlet as a call to arms, concluding instead that Anger 'teaches self-defense not self-esteem or independent action.'²²⁴ These last two actions are exactly what Robert Greene does endorse and whereas Benson believes that, 'Anger has accepted the notion that silence is a sign of female purity and speech is a violation of that purity,' nothing could be further from the truth in Greene's accounts of the interaction between men and women.²²⁵

I have discussed at some length Jane Anger's pugnacious contribution to the controversy because it is such a rarity, but there is a further example of a woman appearing in print at this time, Margaret Tyler, who in 1578 translated and wrote an introduction to a Spanish work by Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra entitled *The Mirrour of princely deeds and knighthood*. What is noteworthy in Tyler's undertaking is that we have a woman presenting men with a mirror of heroic behaviour, albeit in translation, but she couples this with a justification of her appearance in print. She is well aware of the presumption of a woman offering a personal opinion on a topic

²²¹ Jane Anger, *Jane Anger her protection*, sig. C4i-ii.

²²² Ibid. sig. C4ii.

²²³ Ibid. sig. C2i.

²²⁴ Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman*, p. 224.

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 227.

appertaining to men, but she assures her readers (a sexless ‘gentle Reader’ rather than specifically men or women) that this is not what she is currently about: ‘neither durst I trust mine owne judgment sufficiently, if matter of controversie were handled.’²²⁶ She does, however, question the view that women ‘may not at all discourse in learning’ simply because ‘men laie in their claime to be sole possessioners of knowledge.’²²⁷ There is a demand for equality of respect when she declares that, ‘my persuasion hath bene thus, that it is all one for a woman to pen a storie as for a man to addresse his storie to a woman.’ This, she insists, should be seen not as ‘my boldnesse and rashnesse’, but as her right, a sentiment which would have been echoed by Robert Greene’s heroines.²²⁸

Misogynistic men had fairly easy access to print and the number of times their negative and limiting view of women was published suggests that it was widely shared. Robert Greene, from the outset of his literary career, offered a much more sympathetic view, one publicly shared by Jane Anger and Margaret Tyler and perhaps privately held by others whose opinions are now lost to us.

Thomas Salter holds up ‘A mirror mete’ in which his readers are reminded of the rigidly orthodox behaviour expected of women. His message is aimed at both women and men, the former being told how to behave and the latter being told which behaviour to demand from female members of their household. The title page of *Mamillia Part I* also describes Greene’s pamphlet as a mirror, ‘A Mirrour or looking-glasse for the Ladies of England’, wording which suggests that Greene’s purpose is a morally corrective one identical to that of Salter. In fact, the mirror in Greene’s hand becomes a subversive tool because Mamillia’s assertion of herself could not be further

²²⁶ Margaret Tyler, *The Mirrour of princely deeds and knighthood*, 1578, 2nd ed. 1580. Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 18860, sig. Aiii2.

²²⁷ Ibid. sig. Aiii1.

²²⁸ Ibid. sig. Aiii2.

from the submissive demeanour demanded by Salter, but we have no way of knowing how this resonated with Greene's female readers other than the considerable sales his pamphlets achieved.

If Robert Greene hoped that women would read his fiction as eagerly as men, then he certainly made no concessions to them in his use of rhetorical and dialectical constructions. When he invested his female characters with considerable rhetorical and dialectical skills, he may have trusted that there would be a sufficient number of female readers able to appreciate the nature of the verbal dexterity of Mamillia and Philomela amongst many other of his heroines. The sophistication of Jane Anger's pamphlet suggests that this may have been the case. It may actually be that Greene had no idea how to write for women because he had no way of establishing an appropriate register for them. In that case female readers got what they were given, which is to say the sophisticated English of an educated man which Greene un-genders because both male and female characters speak it as their natural tongue. A close reading of any of the texts I discuss at length in this study would thus lead one to question the applicability to Greene of Suzanne W. Hull's observation that, 'In many cases they [writers and publishers] apparently did not feel that women needed or could comprehend more than the simplest subjects and the easiest instructions.'²²⁹ She also concludes that, 'Many more women, however, were learning to read sufficiently well in the English language to meet their religious, practical and recreational needs.'²³⁰

It is clear from all the works cited above that in the late sixteenth century there was a considerable tension between those who wished to maintain at all costs the hegemony of the conventional triplet which prescribed the behaviour of women and

²²⁹ Suzanne W. Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient*, p. 28.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 5.

those forces which were encouraging a counter-movement towards the production of challenging reading matter which would appeal to women and which might give them unsettling ideas. Robert Greene placed himself at the heart of this cultural tension, perhaps because he believed in greater freedom in behaviour and expression for women, or perhaps he was simply a controversialist by nature.

In *Mamillia part 1*, written at the outset of his career, Greene seems to position himself very clearly on the side of women. He is aware of the literature attacking them and has nothing but scorn for the ‘blasphemous blabs’ who hypocritically condemn women and whom he takes to task numerous times throughout both parts of *Mamillia*. His particular focus is on the false charge of inconstancy, the lack of chastity. Such attacks, Greene says, are unfounded because they are applied to all women when only a handful are at fault: ‘if they spie one sillie dame to halt or tread her shoe awrie, her fault is as much as though all did offend.’²³¹ Greene is not ashamed of his stance, defying his ‘Gentlemen Readers’ to ‘thinke of me what you please.’²³² He presumably showed the same defiant attitude to any criticisms made of him by his friend Thomas Nashe.

The Influence on Robert Greene of *Euphues*, *The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and his England*

Almost every commentator on Greene has remarked on his debt to *Euphues* as if this were one title and not two: *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* (1579) and *Euphues and his England* (1580). The first appeared in the year in which Greene was awarded his B.A. from Cambridge. Close inspection of Lyly’s texts shows that Greene was likely to

²³¹ *Mamillia Part 2* p. 11.

²³² *Ibid.* p. 17.

have been influenced by them in different ways. Lyly's first book suggested the style in which Greene wrote his first pamphlets, and the second may have provided models for the elegant verbal sparring between men and women which makes up so much of the narrative in the works explored in this study.

I reserve for the next chapter my discussion of the stylistic similarities between Robert Greene's early romances and John Lyly's *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*. What I focus on here is the fact that, despite their linguistic closeness, Lyly's work and Greene's early pamphlets reveal a huge difference in the way that their respective authors present female characters. The purely narrative section of *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, the story of how two friends, Euphues an Athenian and Philautus a Neapolitan, quarrel over the wealthy and beautiful Lucilla, constitutes only one third of the whole work. The rest is given over to material of an increasingly moralistic and often misogynistic nature. Both Lyly and Greene highlight the way that 'wit', in the sense of intellect and the sophisticated use of language, may be misapplied by young men who are still too immature to know better. Euphues, squandering his intellectual strengths, is overcome with desire for Lucilla who is promised to his friend Philautus. He uses his verbal wit to woo Lucilla and to taunt Philautus when he is successful. In *Mamillia*, the cad Pharicles shamelessly employs his rhetorical skills in an attempt to seduce the virtuous Mamillia and her equally virtuous cousin Publia. The presentation of the act of wooing and its reception reveal a great deal about the attitudes the two authors have to women. Lucilla belies the association of her name with light by demonstrating that she is inconstant (to both Philautus and Euphues as it turns out) and assertive and disobedient (to her father Ferardo), thereby disregarding the triplet of female virtues. What she says in defence of her actions is, ironically, very similar to what we hear from Greene's heroines. Whereas they are to be commended for their

spirited assertions of self, Lucilla's comparable words become evidence of her unacceptable defiance. She is judged by Euphues, and, we presume, by Lyly also, to be depraved in her demonstration of 'lyght behaviour', 'unconstant minde', 'beastly disposition' and 'follye'.²³³ Taken out of context and inserted into one of Greene's narratives, Lucilla's demand to make her own choice of lover whatever the consequences would appear spirited and, probably, persuasive. For Lyly, a retort such as Lucilla makes her father 'either content your selfe with my choice, or lette mee stande to the maine chaunce,'²³⁴ can only be an indication that Lucilla is on the way to ruin. She falls in love with Curio, a curious choice because he has the double disadvantage of being ugly and poor. What further proof does a reader need of the innate shallowness and wickedness of women, 'the infection of the Serpent'?²³⁵ Punningly, Euphues laments that 'I had thought that woemen had bene as we men, that is true, faithfull, zealous, constant, but I perceive they be rather woe unto men, by their falsehood, gelousie, inconstancie.'²³⁶ The combination of 'woemen' and 'woe' at this point may be as fortuitous as it is striking because the two spellings, 'woman' and 'woemen' come and go throughout this work and *Euphues and his England*, perhaps reflecting the orthographic vagaries of different typesetters. Euphues' judgement is as sanctimonious as it is hypocritical, but there is no indication that Lyly intends us to consider it as such. Euphues himself is guilty of betraying his best friend Philautus who was originally intended as Lucilla's husband, but once Lucilla makes her choice of Curio, the two friends are reconciled and united in their opinion of female inconstancy.

²³³ John Lyly, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, p. 98

²³⁴ Ibid. p. 104.

²³⁵ Ibid. p. 99.

²³⁶ Ibid. p. 99

Although to modern readers, Euphues is likely to appear misogynistic and mealy-mouthed in his application of a double-standard with regard to the behaviour of men and women, this is no more than we would expect in the context of a society which often saw women as socially and intellectually inferior. Lyly is suggesting that male friendships are the noblest kind, but there is no need for us to assume, as Madelon Gohlke does, that, ‘buried as it is under an avalanche of rhetoric’ is ‘the power of the homosexual bond over the heterosexual one.’²³⁷ She concludes that Euphues ‘evades a painful awareness of the implications of his own behaviour’ and that ‘his final action is one of flight, the physical equivalent of a mental recoil.’²³⁸

I prefer to see Euphues’ behaviour as according with the ungenerous attitudes concerning women which appeared so often in print. Lyly consistently endorses these attitudes in *Euphues*, whereas Greene, equally consistently, draws our attention to the feet of clay of male characters who claim innate nobility, by virtue of being men, and who fall far short of this. If Greene’s male characters behave as Euphues does, the author makes no bones of his opinion that men are inconstant and that, unlike Lyly, his sympathies are with his female protagonist. In a martyred tone, as if he is the injured innocent, Euphues bids ‘women all farewell’ and even writes, at some length, ‘A Cooling Carde for Philautus and all fond lovers’ which is full of dire warnings about the dangers of love: ‘let every one loath his Ladye, and bee ashamed to be hir servaunt.’ In the concluding lines of this misogynistic outpouring, Euphues excludes ‘honest matrones’ from condemnation, thereby suggesting that all young women are likely to be flighty and in need of supervision.²³⁹

²³⁷ Madelon Gohlke, ‘Reading “Euphues”’, *Criticism*, 19:2 (1977: Spring) 103-117 (p. 113).

²³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 114.

²³⁹ John Lyly, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, pp. 106-119.

Greene's conclusions about women in all the pamphlets I discuss are markedly different from those voiced in *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*. There are, however, two points in *Mamillia* where Greene, fleetingly and seemingly out of character, echoes the comments of Euphues. Arthur F Kinney uses these instances to conclude that, 'As Derek B. Alwes argues, this author who pretended to write only for women in fact invites men into his audience through his misogyny.' Such an observation, by both Kinney and Alwes ('in an unpublished essay shared with me [Kinney] in draft') is a misrepresentation of Greene's perspective on women.²⁴⁰ It also highlights the danger of selective quotation as the 'misogynistic' material in question amounts in total to a single page in the whole of both parts of *Mamillia*. At the beginning of *Mamillia Part I*, the heroine enjoys a close but platonic relationship with a young gentleman called Florion who 'had been deceived by the lightnesse of one Luminia.' This experience with his own version of Lucilla has led him, like Euphues, to make 'a vowe in the waye of marriage to abandon the company of women for ever.' Kinney's focus is extremely selective because, immediately after Florion makes this vow, Greene tells us that the young man is unwilling to 'inferre a general conclusion of a particular proposition ... to say all were Criples because he found one halting.' Although Euphues, as a hasty postscript, excuses 'honest matrones', Florion has gone even so far as to engage a young woman, Mamillia, in 'this sacred bond of friendship'.²⁴¹ This is not evidence of Greene's attempting to attract male readers with misogynistic comments. If such readers bought *Mamillia* for the sake of the comments amounting to a single page, they would have been sorely disappointed. Even less is there a thread

²⁴⁰ Arthur F. Kenney, 'Marketing Fiction' in *Critical Approaches to English Prose Fiction 1520-1640*, ed. by Donald Beecher, The Barnabe Riche Series (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1998), p. 55.

²⁴¹ *Mamillia Part I*, fol. 2i.

in Greene's works, as Kinney suggests, of his 'honouring the faithful woman but at the same time blaming her for the misfortunes of men.'²⁴²

The second piece of evidence Kinney quotes is Greene's out-of-character jibe that 'there is no such hinderance to a man as a wife.'²⁴³ What Kinney significantly fails to point out is that, off-setting the remark he has quoted, are the numerous occasions when Greene roundly berates men who attack women in print. Kinney's generalization that, 'His [Greene's] tales are nearly always tales of male domination,' should be re-phrased as 'attempted male domination' because in pamphlet after pamphlet Greene shows the would-be male dominator departing disconsolately and his female interlocutor in command of the stage.

I can offer no satisfactory explanation for Greene's criticism of wives, but it could simply be a moment of spleen resulting from his own marital problems. Several references to his marriage acknowledge that the separation from his wife was entirely of his making, but that does not preclude the occasional exasperated outburst as, perhaps, here. In *The repentance of Robert Greene* (1592), he, if the work is genuine, writes, 'I married a Gentlemans daughter of good account with whom I lived for a while: but forasmuch as she would perswade me from my wilfull wickednes, after I had a child by her, I cast her off.'²⁴⁴

Although the romantic narratives which constitute a significant part of John Lyly's *Euphues and his England* quite possibly influenced the choice of content in Greene's early romances, Lyly reveals a confusing ambivalence to this material. He would appear to have enjoyed depicting the way that relationships between male and female characters develop by way of sprightly banter, but then he pulls back and offers

²⁴² Arthur F. Kinney, 'Marketing Fiction', p. 56.

²⁴³ *Mamillia Part I*, fol. 13ii.

²⁴⁴ Robert Greene, *The repentance of Robert Greene*, Bodleian Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12306, sig. C3i.

a much less sympathetic perspective. In this, he is the opposite of Greene who either works to produce a mutually satisfying outcome for the relationships he has set up, or who ensures that the virtuous female protagonist has the last word.

The two major male-female relationships in *Euphues and his England*, those of Fidus and Issida and Philautus and Camilla, are presented at some length, particularly the latter. Lyly's two female protagonists are witty, knowing, articulate and self-assured, all the qualities we see in Greene's heroines. If the anti-romantic presence of Euphues is removed from the end of the story of Philautus and Camilla, and Philautus is not obliged to set his sights lower and marry Mistris Frauncis instead, we are left with a narrative very similar to those in Greene's early pamphlets. Greene, apart from the two occasions cited by Kinney, intrudes into his tales only as a voice defending women against slanders and pointing out the venality of men. When Lyly intrudes, it is sourly to remind us that, no matter how successful a love affair is initially, 'crotchets' will follow.²⁴⁵

Lyly's authorial persona closely resembles that of Euphues and the two old and 'wise' men Cassander and Fidus who appear during the course of the books in order to make pronouncements about virtue and the value of a life devoid of 'fancy'. At times, Euphues' kill-joy manner verges on the absurd, but it is impossible to tell whether he is satirized because sententious material appears throughout the work. In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the melancholy Jaques is taken to task for seeing the worst in everything and he tellingly refuses to participate in the celebration of marriage which ends the play. Shakespeare guides us to the conclusion that Jaques is jaundiced rather than truthful, but Lyly offers his readers no such help. The text pulls us in

²⁴⁵ John Lyly, *Euphues and his England*, p. 277.

contradictory ways and G.K. Hunter makes a fair point when he calls it a 'gallimaufry'.²⁴⁶

Euphues teases Philautus for his interest in that 'vile dog love'²⁴⁷ and he sleeps through Fidus' account of his youthful courtship of Issida. Fidus' conclusion after Idissa rejects his love, but agrees to be his close friend and then dies, is, 'You see what love is begon with grieve, continued with sorrowe, ended with death.'²⁴⁸ Lyly's claim in his prefatory address to 'The Ladies and Gentlewomen of England' that '*Euphues* had rather lye shut in a Ladyes casket than open in a Schollers Studie'²⁴⁹ sits ill with the tedious moralizing we hear so often from Euphues' mouth. One senses two dissimilar sets of readers, the first of whom being those who came to be eager readers of the romances of Robert Greene. These are women and sympathetic men who would be entertained by hearing Camilla's witty response to the declaration of love which Philautus has sent her concealed in a pomegranate. She tells him that, 'it had a faire coat, but a rotten kernel, which so much offended my weak stomacke, that the very sight caused me to loath it, and the sent [scent] to throw it into the fire.'²⁵⁰ Greene's self-assured heroines could have delivered such a put-down. The second readership is the one for whom the moral and unctuous patriotic declarations are made. Lyly, in these sections of the work, presents himself to those in authority as a reputable citizen worthy of an official appointment. In his romances Robert Greene may have addressed gentleman and lady readers but his notorious lifestyle made the fawning posturing of which Lyly was guilty out of the question and he did not copy it until late in his career when he decided that repentance for past sins was a money-spinner.

²⁴⁶ G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 66.

²⁴⁷ John Lyly, *Euphues and his England*, p. 266.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 304.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 220.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 361.

Greene's relationship with his readers, male or female is difficult for us to gauge. Lyly makes it abundantly clear from the titles of *Euphues'* moralising letters where the strait-laced heart of the work lies, and his readers would have had no difficulty in appreciating the author's sympathies. Greene is, in the words of Carmine di Biase, much more 'oblique'.²⁵¹ Kinney's argument is that Greene, as an astute professional writer, used attacks on women to gain male readers for pamphlets aimed ostensibly at women. As I have shown, such attacks are clear in Lyly and almost non-existent in Greene. Even if Greene were aiming his works at women, most of them are prefaced with an address to 'the Gentleman Reader' who must have been surprised quite often by the disparity between what the address seemed to promise and what the pamphlet actually delivered.

The Prevalence of the Triplet of Chastity, Silence and Obedience in Three Contemporary Works

Thomas Lodge: Rosalynde, Euphues golden legacy (1590)

The triplet of female virtues was the background noise of late sixteenth century English Literature, although not necessarily without challenge. Its mention at the outset of *Rosalynde, Euphues golden legacy* does not mean that the author, or the subsequent narrative, endorses these qualities. The triplet appears as a misogynistic diatribe in the dying words of Sir John of Bordeaux to his three sons:

Women are wantons [...] and yet, my sons, if she have all these qualities, to be chaste, obedient, and silent, yet for that she is a woman, shalt thou find in her sufficient vanities to countervail her virtues.²⁵²

Rosalynde provided Shakespeare with the basic plot of *As You like It* and the character of its witty, capable heroine Rosalind who in neither of the two texts is either

²⁵¹ Carmine Di Biase, 'The Decline of Euphuism', in *Critical Approaches to English Prose Fiction 1520-1640*, ed. by Donald Beecher, Publications of the Barnabe Rich Society (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse Editions, 1998), p. 90.

²⁵² Ibid. p. 5.

slavishly silent or obedient. Lodge was a close friend of Greene and they perhaps shared an ironic cast of mind.

William Shakespeare: *The Taming of the Shrew*

Contravention of the divine injunctions to chastity, silence and obedience led to the creation of the two female ogresses who so horrified misogynists – the whore and the shrew. The latter at least had comic possibilities which Shakespeare exploited in his *The Taming of the Shrew*. The author of *The Schoolhouse of women* summed up the shrew as having:

...tung at large, voice loud and shrill,
Of words wondrous, passing store
Stomacke stout, with froward wil,
And namely when ye touch the sore
With one bare word, or little more,
They flush and flame, as hote as fire,
And swel as a tode for farvent ire.²⁵³

She was thus too full of herself, determined to be the one whose voice was heard above all others and furious at even the slightest criticism.

The transgression of the shrew is, at heart, a verbal one which may be accompanied by acts of physical violence. Greene's presentation in his prose works of articulate female characters who demand the right to express themselves should be set against this conventional portrait of the shrew. Male writers who attacked vociferous women did so because they saw the speaking out as an attempt by women to be in control, a horrifying situation which defied the laws of God and Nature. Greene suggests in his depiction of his heroines that they have a right to be heard and that they should not be regarded as shrews.

Shakespeare's Katharine displays all the characteristics of the traditional shrew. She is in a constant state of fury at the world and is prone to lash out physically.

²⁵³ Edward Gosynhill? *Heer beginneth the Schole house of women* (1541?) repr. 1572, Bodleian Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12107, fol. Aii1.

Shakespeare hints that at the heart of Katharine's anger is resentment that, as a woman, her life is constrained, but this never becomes a fully-developed rationale for her outbursts.

The comic focus of *The Taming of the Shrew* is on the breaking of Katharine's spirit by relentless psychological pressure. In her long final speech she appears meekly to accept the traditional wifely role of complete obedience to her husband:

...when she's froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending rebel,
And graceless traitor to her loving lord? ²⁵⁴

This speech denoting total submission on Katharine's part has received considerable attention from scholars and interpretations of it vary wildly. It has been seen as a farce which should not be taken seriously and as both a disappointing capitulation to conventional attitudes and an ironic response to them. It is certainly possible to read Petruchio's 'Why there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate.' as the patronizing affection one might offer to a tamed animal with the bonus that he is in full possession of her body as well as her spirit.²⁵⁵ Katharine has come to love Big Brother in the person of Petruchio whereas Greene's heroines would either have sent him packing or made him agree to a relationship on their terms.

The response of a contemporary audience to Katharine's final speech would, one imagines, have been satisfaction that the established order had been reaffirmed. Modern feminists would cry shame but they are likely to applaud Greene's heroines who stand firm and who prevail. *The Taming of the Shrew* was written during Greene's lifetime and he may well have seen it performed. He would not have seen Shakespeare's later re-balancing of the lively exchanges between Katharine and Petruchio and their transformation into the lively banter of Beatrice and Benedick in

²⁵⁴ Ibid. V I ll.158-161.

²⁵⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, V ii l.181.

Much Ado About Nothing (1598) in which the woman has the verbal upper hand and the man learns to abandon his questionable masculine values and to acknowledge the generosity of a more feminine perspective. Robert Greene had perhaps reached this viewpoint in advance of Shakespeare.

Sir Philip Sidney: *The Old Arcadia* (1580)

The influence of *The Old Arcadia* on Greene is most evident in works such as *Pandosto* (1588) and *Menaphon* (1589) in which Greene imitates Sidney's use of the pastoral setting for his narrative. My focus on *The Old Arcadia* in this study, however, is on the evidence within the text for Sidney's familiarity with the language of the controversy concerning women. Even the most eminent writer of prose fiction of the age could not escape the influence of the triplet of chastity, silence and obedience.

A reader's expectation from the outset is that *The Old Arcadia* will be highly favourable to women. Sidney, as a courtier, had seen at close quarters a powerful female monarch and the work is dedicated to his sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke: 'Now it is done only for you, only to you.'²⁵⁶ There is no introductory epistle courting the favour of 'gentlemen readers', a usual feature of contemporary printed fiction which was financially reliant on male purchasers, and the only audience mentioned throughout the text is 'fair ladies' whose taste is to be respected and whose approval sought.

Katherine Duncan-Jones argues that, 'In Sidney's work, misogyny is never allowed to stand uncorrected.'²⁵⁷ In offering this judgement, she is looking only at the misogynistic attitudes displayed by male characters to female ones. She has omitted the embedded misogyny shown in Sidney's creation of female characters other than

²⁵⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 3rd ed., 1999), Introductory epistle, p. 3.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 2.

his heroines Pamela and Philoclea, the major examples being the Duchess Gynecia and the peasant mother and daughter Miso and Mopsa. These three women exemplify the lack of silence, chastity and obedience which informed the negative portraits of women conjured up by their detractors. Sidney devotes many pages to the description of the behaviour of these characters which suggests that there are, in his opinion, always likely to be too many women who can become shrewish, venal and uncontrollable, as is the case with Miso and Mopsa, and also married women who are wildly and embarrassingly infatuated with a handsome man as Gynecia is for Pyrocles the young Prince of Macedonia.

Despite Sidney's condemnation, at the beginning of *The Old Arcadia*, of men who are 'sharp-witted only in evil speaking [of women]', he allows his male characters to make pejorative remarks about women which, despite Duncan-Jones' assertions, remain unchallenged because they are accepted as universal truths.²⁵⁸ When Duke Basilius announces to his advisor Philanax that he plans to retire to the country, part of Philanax's response consists of disparaging comments on the uncontrollability of women. They are, he says, 'the most untamed that way of any' and should only be allowed 'well-ruled liberty' which is to say freedom within bounds drawn by men.²⁵⁹ When Pyrocles tells his cousin Musidorus of his plan to disguise himself as an Amazon, Musidorus warns him that in taking on a female persona he will also need to exhibit 'whatever peevish imperfections are in that sex.'²⁶⁰ In women's defence, Pyrocles declares that they often show the 'virtuous patience', in the face of male oppression, that we earlier saw suggested by the writers of pamphlets defending them.²⁶¹ Pyrocles also declares that women 'possess the same parts of the mind for

²⁵⁸ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, p. 4.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 7.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 8.

²⁶¹ Ibid. p. 19.

the exercise of virtue as we are,' praise which is undercut at various points by Sidney himself as narrator. He describes the wrangling between Miso and her shepherd husband Dametas as 'uncivil wars and all with women';²⁶² and declares that women are in constant need of praise, 'commendation whereof womenkind is so lecherous'.²⁶³ In these observations Sidney is repeating what was so often written in the published denigrations of women, that they were irrational and desirous of an influence and control their irrationality did not merit. It is true that Pamela and Philoclea are paragons, as no doubt Sidney felt was also the case with his sister Mary, but we must set against these rarities the many other female characters he presents in *The Old Arcadia* who exemplify all the female weaknesses trotted out in the misogynistic publications I have mentioned above.

As in Greene's pamphlets, Sidney's virtuous heroines are juxtaposed with their imperfect suitors to the disadvantage of the latter. Pyrocles and Musidorus are, nominally, the heroes of the work but they fall short of their lovers in many ways, just as Pharicles falls short of Mamillia or Phillipio fails Philomela. They are scheming, accomplished liars and, despite their intermittent noble behaviour, Pyrocles is a seducer and Musidorus almost a rapist. Their loss of caste in pretending, in Pyrocles' case, to be an Amazon and, in Musidorus's, to be a shepherd reduces their capacity to act in a noble, manly way. Pamela and Philoclea, in contrast, behave in an exemplary fashion throughout but they differ in important ways from Greene's heroines. Like the latter they are intelligent, well-read and skilled manipulators of language. Their letters written from prison in an attempt to save the lives of the men they love are sophisticated pieces of oratory but they are penned in vain as the guards to whom they

²⁶² Ibid.p. 30.

²⁶³ Ibid.p. 78.

are entrusted hand the letters over to the implacable Philanax. He reacts by ‘utterly suppressing’ them.²⁶⁴ The fact that Pamela and Philoclea are incarcerated when they write their letters and that they rely on the agency of men to deliver them is symbolic of the limitations Sidney places on even his noblest female characters. The constraints which Sidney imposes before he allows a happy ending are ones that ensure silence, obedience and, if not chastity itself, a severe punishment for Philoclea for her violation of it. The sisters are not allowed to speak when Euarchus is deciding their fate and their letters are intercepted. In this way they are silenced. Their temporary imprisonment imposes obedience and Philoclea is later condemned to be confined to a nunnery for the rest of her life. Mamillia and Philomela are in a similar situation to Pamela and Philoclea in that they wish, and have the verbal skills, to express themselves publicly in order to save the lives of the men they love. Greene’s heroines are completely successful in this aim. Unlike Pamela and Philoclea, they are free agents who have control of their movements and of the location in which they speak. Mamillia even defies the trustees of her father’s will by travelling from Padua to Sicily in order to say the words that will free Pharicles. In each case, Greene’s heroine is free to enter a public arena in a strange place and to speak what is on her mind. She has the destiny of a man in her hands which is not the case with Pamela and Philoclea. Duncan-Jones may believe that ‘the fortitude and intelligence of women under pressure were clearly a theme he [Sidney] found interesting’, but he still subscribes to a conventional image of women as essentially powerless in the face of a male hegemony.²⁶⁵ Regarding chastity, a virtue which Sidney emphasizes throughout the work, Philoclea surrenders hers to Pyrocles and Musidorus is only prevented from

²⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 344.

²⁶⁵ Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 184.

forcing himself on Pamela by the timely arrival of a group of rioters. No man ever manages to achieve this much with Greene's heroines.

C.S. Lewis, writing of Pamela and Philoclea, tells us that 'English Literature had seen no women to compare with them since Chaucer's Criseyde; and apart from Shakespeare was to wait centuries for their equals.'²⁶⁶ The omission of Robert Greene's heroines from this assessment is unwarranted as they are quite as vivacious, determined and linguistically accomplished as Sidney's heroines. Furthermore, they are mistresses of their own fate and have the last word in their dealings with men whereas Pamela and Philoclea are eventually saved not by their own language or actions but by a *deus ex machina* in the form of their father Basilius who, having drunk Gynecia's love potion and apparently died, returns to consciousness and is able to marry his daughters to their lovers and to be entirely reconciled to his wife. Duncan-Jones's conclusion is that 'the *Arcadia* [...] revealed him [Sidney] to be unusually perceptive and sympathetic in his literary presentation of women'.²⁶⁷ I would argue that Sidney is more compromised by the conventional language of the controversy concerning women than she suggests and that her words could be applied with far greater justification to Robert Greene. When she writes that 'It would be going too far to suggest that *The Old Arcadia* offered a deliberate challenge to the concepts of a patriarchal society,' she is much nearer the mark than she intends,²⁶⁸ but it was Robert Greene, and not Sir Philip Sidney, who offered such a challenge.

²⁶⁶ C.S. Lewis, *Sixteenth Century Literature, Excluding Drama* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1954, repr.1968), p. 338.

²⁶⁷ Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 182.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 185-6

University Debates on the Nature of Women

It is very difficult to say whether the position of women was a live issue at Cambridge when Greene was an undergraduate.²⁶⁹ We have almost no evidence regarding the subject matter of the propositions debated in the disputations which were used in the Faculty of Arts to ascertain whether undergraduates and graduates could proceed to the B.A. and M.A. degrees respectively. I found, in the Cambridge University Library, a small manuscript document entitled *Quaestiones Scolasticae in Disputationibus 1579-84* which promised wonderful revelations because it purported to contain the subjects for disputation and names of disputants, opponents and praelectors, all faculties.²⁷⁰ The reality was that it was a set of scrappy notes taken intermittently over a period of years in Secretary hands which went from the very poor to the barely recognizable as handwriting and it provided none of the information for which I was looking. John Seton's *Dialectica*, the standard Cambridge University textbook on logic, does, however, contain two propositions relating to women amongst very many on other topics. Whether they were discussed or informally debated by undergraduates like Greene, who can say, but their content is highly conventional: 'It is possible for all women to curb their tongues.' ('Possibile est omnem mulierem linguam refraenare.')²⁷¹ and, presented as an example of a false proposition, 'If a wife is beautiful, she is chaste.' ('Si uxor sit formosa, est honesta.')²⁷². The first contains the idea of silence and obedience and the second is concerned with chastity.

²⁶⁹ At Oxford, two propositions regarding women are recorded in the *Quaestiones Philosophicae* debated by candidates for the M.A.: 'Should women be taught their letters?' ('An foeminae sint literis instruendae?') (1581); 'Are women's wits sharper than men's?' ('An foeminarum ingenia sint acutiora quam virorum?') (1590). Andrew Clark ed., *Register of the University of Oxford*, 2 vols (Oxford Historical Society: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1887) Vol 11, pp. 70 & 172.

²⁷⁰ Cambridge University Library archive collection, UA Misc. Collect. 10.

²⁷¹ John Seton's *Dialectica* was first published in 1563 and then re-issued in 1572 with annotations by Peter Carter. This was the edition used at Cambridge University. *Dialectica Ioannis Setoni Cantabrigiensis*, Trinity College, Dublin copy, 1580, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 22253.3, II sig. L1ii.

²⁷² Ibid. II sig. N1ii

Conclusion

I would go further than Kate Aughterson when she states that, ‘women did not experience the same self-fashioning as did men.’²⁷³ Always with the proviso that Greene is a *man*, he nevertheless creates many female characters who have the intellect and determination to un-gender the linguistic tools they have learned from men in order to fashion their own sense of self. They possess the ability to create a gender-neutral space in which they are able to pitch this newly-asserted self against the attempts of male characters to reinforce their conventional hegemony. The ‘mirrour’ or ‘glasse’ held up to women by champions of the orthodoxy in order to remind them of how they *ought* to behave becomes in Greene’s hands a subversive tool. He may be saying ‘Look at what you *could* be rather than what you *should* be.’ In late sixteenth-century England women were rarely able to champion themselves in print; until they fully appropriated the world of print, they had to rely on a handful of sympathetic writers like Greene who were able to present the world from that opposite perspective.

²⁷³ Kate Aughterson, *Renaissance Woman*, p. 7.

CHAPTER THREE

The Importance of Rhetoric in the Elizabethan Period

According to Marion Trousdale, rhetoric ‘dominated Renaissance culture,’²⁷⁴ but ‘it was a social, ethical and intellectual ideal, and not just a successful trick.’²⁷⁵ In the medieval *Trivium* of grammar, logic and rhetoric, logic had dominated education, but, for fifteenth and sixteenth-century humanists, rhetoric now took pride of place. As Mary Thomas Crane has noted, ‘In its reaction against medieval scholasticism, Italian humanism had shifted its focus from logic (with its goal of epistemological certainty) to rhetoric (with more modest goals of plausibility and persuasion).’²⁷⁶ Rhetoric provided a man with stylistic models for writing in Latin and the vernacular, but it was also seen as a civilizing discipline.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how pervasive the study of rhetoric was in the education system of sixteenth-century England. It was the core of what was taught in grammar schools throughout the country and at both universities. I look at the major textbooks used in the teaching of rhetoric: the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratorica*, various works by Erasmus, but particularly his *Copia*, and an English-language work, Thomas Wilson’s *Arte of Rhetorique*, and I point out that central to all of them is the oration. I explain that it was the major persuasive instrument with which civilized men of Greene’s time were armed for their, it was hoped, successful participation in worldly affairs. My contention throughout this study is that modern commentators have tended to dismiss rhetoric too readily, although a secure understanding of it is essential for a full

²⁷⁴ Marion Trousdale, ‘Rhetoric’, in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway, 2nd edn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2003), p. 623.

²⁷⁵ Gavin Alexander, *Sidney’s ‘The Defence of Poesy’*, Introduction, p. xxxiv.

²⁷⁶ Mary Thomas Crane, ‘Early Tudor Humanism’, in *A Companion to English Renaissance*, p. 20.

appreciation of many Early Modern English texts. Rhetoric, I aim to show, is not as arcane or fustian as C.S. Lewis, amongst others, would have us believe. The oration, whether in its four, six or seven part versions, is a straightforward and focused tool which proves in Robert Greene's hands to be highly flexible and capable of subtle deployment in a variety of narrative contexts.

Of the three kinds of rhetoric recognized in Classical times, it was the forensic (as opposed to the epideictic, which was employed for praise and blame and generally used in the study of literary texts, and the deliberative which had its place in political and civil debate) which prevailed in the Renaissance. Trousdale writes that, 'the rhetoric the Renaissance studied and that shaped common concerns was forensic in training and forensic in representation.'²⁷⁷ By its very nature, forensic rhetoric was persuasive and, to be able to frame a persuasive oration was the highest accomplishment and the mark of a truly educated and civilized man. Trousdale summarizes it thus: 'in the Renaissance persuasive speech was recognized as a civic responsibility and the ultimate accomplishment of any individual life.'²⁷⁸

Peter Mack cites the wording of the drafts of William Cecil's arguments on such weighty matters as the possibility of a meeting with Mary Queen of Scots or the proposed Alençon marriage as evidence of the political utility of 'rhetorical principles to frame questions and to refine arguments'.²⁷⁹ Similarly, Brian Vickers has pointed out that Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy* (c.1580; printed 1585) is constructed according to the accepted template for an oration (which I shall explore later in this chapter).²⁸⁰ Gavin Alexander in his more recent notes to Sidney's work divides it

²⁷⁷ Marion Trousdale, 'Rhetoric', in *A Companion to English Renaissance*, p. 624.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 623.

²⁷⁹ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric, Theory and Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 6.

²⁸⁰ Brian. Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).p. 32.

diagrammatically into the seven constituent parts of an oration (plus a digression) as set out by Thomas Wilson in his *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553).²⁸¹

Erasmus announces in the introduction to his *De Copia* (1512) that the use of the rhetorical skill of *copia*, or amplification, elevates a man's style to the highest level: 'there is nothing more admirable or more splendid than a speech with a rich *copia* of thought.'²⁸² He claims to write with the authority of 'a very learned and likewise very diligent man, Quintilian', and to be guided in his opinions regarding the worth and importance of rhetoric by 'Cicero, that father of all eloquence.'²⁸³

Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* is a vernacular work which may be taken to exemplify the view of rhetoric generally held in England at the time it was written and for at least half a century afterwards. According to G.H. Mair, this book was 'a landmark in the history of the English Renaissance',²⁸⁴ and Mack similarly considers the work significant and influential, reminding us that it was printed eight times between 1553 and 1585 and of its debt to *Rhetorica ad Herennium Book IV* and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria Books VIII and IX*, texts which appear in many sixteenth century grammar school curricula and also that of Cambridge University.²⁸⁵ Trousdale writes that, 'To judge by its publishing history it was Wilson's text that was the most popular of the texts in English.'²⁸⁶ The years during which Wilson's book

²⁸¹ Gavin Alexander, *The Defence of Poesy*, pp. 317-8. Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553, but extensively revised by the author in 1560), The 1585 edition, collated with those of 1560 and 1567, edited by G.H. Mair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).

²⁸² Desiderius Erasmus, *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia* (1512) trans. Donald B. King & H. David Rix (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007), p. II. All my English quotations are taken from the King and Rix translation. The text they use is a conflation of a seventeenth century copy with the first edition of Schurer, dated 1513, and with Erasmus' three revisions published in 1514, 1526 and 1540.

²⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 12.

²⁸⁴ Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, Introduction, p. vi.

²⁸⁵ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, p. 76. He states that, together with William Fulwood's *Enemie of Idleness* (1568) and Angel Day's *The English Secretary* (1586) 'these are the only English-language manuals which can have exercised much influence in transmitting doctrine.'

²⁸⁶ Marion Trousdale, in 'Rhetoric', in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature*, p. 626.

was re-printed, it should be noted, are exactly those when Greene was being educated. Like Erasmus, Wilson praises the stylistic and civic importance of rhetoric, seeing it as essential to diplomacy and the preservation of peace. He writes:

if the worthinesse of Eloquence maie move us, what worthier thing can there bee, then with a word to winne cities and whole countries? If profite maie perswade, what greater gaine can we have, then without bloudshed achive to a conquest.²⁸⁷

Even Thomas Nashe could applaud ‘the majesty of Rethorick’, declaring that ‘Amongst all the ornaments of Artes, Rethorick is to be had in highest reputation, without the which all the rest are naked, and she onely garnished’.²⁸⁸ He also deplored the use of rhetorical devices in a mechanical, artificial or extravagant way, urging his fellow English writers to ‘let our speeche accorde with our life’.²⁸⁹

Sir Francis Bacon and Sir Philip Sidney offered their own warnings that rhetorical display which followed too closely the model of Ciceronian Latin could come to be seen as an end in itself and that it might be pursued at the expense of content. Bacon, although speaking of an earlier, ‘late times’, generation (Greene’s perhaps), laments that:

men began to hunt more after words than matter; more after the choiceness of the phrase ...than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention or depth of judgement.²⁹⁰

Sidney writes in a similar tone of regret about ‘Eloquence apparelled, or rather disguised, in a courteous-like painted affectation’²⁹¹ and he despairs at the overwrought, baroque creation it too easily became:

Now for similitudes, in certain printed discourses I think all herbarists, all stories of beasts, fowls and fishes, are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible.²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, Dedicatory Epistle, p. 2

²⁸⁸ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, I p. 45.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁹⁰ Sir Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), ed. by G. W. Kitchen (London: Dent, 1861), p. 24.

²⁹¹ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 49.

²⁹² *Ibid.* p. 50.

This is presumably a dismissive reference to the kind of elaborate and abstruse similes Lyly drew in *Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit*, but it is also worth noting that comments of this kind were often made in relation to ‘printed’ material as if the act of printing, by its very nature, encouraged a cheapening of the quality of written English. Sidney seems to be suggesting that an indiscriminate appeal to a wide audience via the medium of print inevitably leads to meretricious display. He likens such display to that of Indians who ‘cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is served to table’.²⁹³

The Importance of the Teaching of Rhetoric in English Grammar Schools

Rhetoric was at the heart of the English grammar school curriculum from the first decades of the sixteenth century onwards. Alexander argues that, ‘the newly devised school curricula [of the sixteenth century] put the study of rhetoric and of literature at their centre.’²⁹⁴ Somehow, by close study and imitation of particular Classical texts, it was hoped that schoolboys, and the men they later became, would aspire to be the rational, orderly, articulate citizens of the kind Cicero was universally held to be.

H.W. Saunders suggests that the grammar schools in which the study of rhetoric figured so prominently were ‘the recruiting grounds for an extended Protestant ministry wherein the strength to resist a return tide to the old order of things was built up.’²⁹⁵ In other words, persuasive rhetoric would be used as a significant weapon in the fight to maintain a particular form of Christianity. Mack believes the specifically Protestant sub-text of mid-century English grammar education would have been ‘unexpected ... for early humanists of the first half of the sixteenth century,

²⁹³ Ibid. p. 49.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. Introduction, p. xx.

²⁹⁵ H.W.Saunders, *A History*, p. 137.

Colet, Wolsey, More' who 'could not have anticipated that the promotion of humanist education would become linked with the rise of Protestantism.'²⁹⁶

Even in 1570 Roger Ascham had fretted that the universities were turning out too many young men who were well-educated but who did not fit neatly into the usual careers followed by university men (Medicine, Law and the Church). His fear was that education, and, in particular, access to a range of sophisticated and highly persuasive forms of language, was a dangerous commodity in the wrong hands. He was concerned that entrants to the universities were insufficiently vetted in order to prevent their making inappropriate use of the education they received there. Too many graduates were 'quicke wittes', concerned 'only with themselves' and 'unlikely to serve the common wealth.'²⁹⁷

Any consideration of Elizabethan education and the extremely important part rhetoric played in it should begin with T.W. Baldwin's exhaustive *Shakespeare's Small Latine and Less Greeke*. Baldwin's avowed purpose is to explore 'the creation of Shakespeare',²⁹⁸ in other words to explain Shakespeare's indebtedness to the works on rhetoric he is likely to have studied if, as we presume, he attended Stratford Grammar School. Baldwin's conclusions are as valid for Greene and all the other grammar school educated writers as they are for Shakespeare. He examines the surviving curricula for the English grammar schools during the period when Shakespeare and Greene were schoolboys and demonstrates how uniform they were, with the same texts being taught in more or less the same order. As the curriculum followed at Stratford Grammar School does not survive, Baldwin is obliged to work in reverse. His concern is to 'relate [Shakespeare's] texts to the grammar school

²⁹⁶ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, p. 8.

²⁹⁷ Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, (1570), University of Illinois copy, 1579, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 835.5.

²⁹⁸ T.W.Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine*.1, p. vii.

tradition and the possibility that Shakespeare knew them.’²⁹⁹ Finding evidence throughout Shakespeare’s oeuvre, he establishes that the playwright was introduced to the standard rhetorical theory, examples and exercises.

Citation of a few examples of the many Baldwin provides will demonstrate how successful he was in his search. Writing of the investigation conducted by the Prince at the end of *Romeo and Juliet*,³⁰⁰ Baldwin states that, ‘It seems clear, therefore, that Shakespeare’s ultimate source for his legal machinery in *Romeo and Juliet* is conjectural judicial causes as discussed in the second book of the *Ad Herennium*.’³⁰¹ In respect of variation as a part of *copia*, Baldwin notes Holofernes in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*³⁰² finding ‘a magnificent string of varied epithets for Dull’s ignorance’³⁰³ and Fluellen in *Henry V*³⁰⁴ producing as many synonyms as possible for the concept of ‘great’. As a third example, Shakespeare employing one of the most important rhetorical paradigms, the oration, Baldwin asserts that he ‘displays a knowledge of the disputative oration such as he should have acquired in grammar school.’³⁰⁵ Following a close analysis of Polonius’ rambling disquisition on Hamlet’s possible madness,³⁰⁶ Baldwin is certain that, ‘Polonius alone is a sufficient guarantee that Shakespeare had the conventional rhetorical tricks at complete command.’³⁰⁷ His exegesis is very detailed and he leaves us with an image of Shakespeare who is adroit, knowing and often playful in his employment of the rhetorical devices he had had drummed into

²⁹⁹ Ibid., I, p. 50.

³⁰⁰ *Romeo and Juliet* in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* Ed. By W.J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), V iii ll. 216-310.

³⁰¹ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare’s Small Latine*, II, p. 84.

³⁰² *Love’s Labour’s Lost* in *The Complete Works*, IV ii ll. 17-19.

³⁰³ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare’s Small Latine*, II, p. 189.

³⁰⁴ *Henry V*, in *The Complete Works*, IV vii ll. 16-19.

³⁰⁵ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare’s Small Latine*, II, p. 377.

³⁰⁶ *Hamlet* in *The Complete Works*, II ii ll. 96-151.

³⁰⁷ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare’s Small Latine*, II, p. 377.

him and which he was confident many members of his audience would instantly recognize.

And if Shakespeare, why not Robert Greene and all the other grammar school boys who took care to learn their lessons? Baldwin's findings point to the thoroughness of the rhetorical training of Elizabethan grammar school pupils and the sheer extent of their knowledge of rhetoric and first-rate Classical literature. They give the lie to the assumption that Shakespeare and other young dramatists who had not been to university can be referred to as 'the new, uneducated professional playwrights (Shakespeare, Munday, Kyd, and others)'³⁰⁸ who, in contrast to the erudite 'University Wits', were simply uttering their 'native wood-notes wild'.³⁰⁹

From his examination of the surviving curricula for English grammar schools, Baldwin has established a general pattern of the teaching of rhetoric in the final three years, the 'Upper' school. Boys wrote epistles in the first year of the upper school, 'matters' or themes in the second and 'questions' or disputative orations in the third.³¹⁰ Baldwin further suggests that particular textbooks would be studied in particular years. Thus the *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*,³¹¹ as 'the basic elementary text on rhetoric',³¹² was the primer used in the first year of the upper school. With this rhetorical foundation, a boy could then move onto Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*³¹³ as Aphthonius 'was the

³⁰⁸ Robert Greene, *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* ed. by D. Allen Carroll (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1994), p. 141.

³⁰⁹ John Milton, *L'Allegro*, l. 134.

³¹⁰ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's Small Latine*, p. 72.

³¹¹ *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, ed. and transl. by Harry Caplan, Loeb Library (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1954) Caplan's very thorough introduction sets the work in its context of Greek and Latin rhetoric and presents convincing arguments for its probable date of composition and the unlikelihood of our ever knowing the identity of its true author. He argues that it, 'has literary importance because it is our only complete representative of the system it teaches' and of 'its excellence as a practical treatise of the kind doubtless used by Roman orators.' Introduction p. xxxiv.

³¹² T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's Small Latine*, I, p. 72.

³¹³ Aphthonius of Antioch, fl. 2nd half of 4th cent.A.D.? www.rhetcomp.gsu.edu/...Aphthonius%20Progymnasmata.htm.

ultimate authority on themes, because he summed up all the minor prose forms, those, together with the oration, giving the various types'.³¹⁴ In tandem with the *Progymnasmata*, a boy would now have sufficient knowledge of rhetoric to be able to make good use of Erasmus's *De Copia*, 'the standard general text on varying up to Shakespere's day'.³¹⁵ In his final year at school, a boy would employ all of the rhetorical skills at his command, which meant the mastery of forms and the knowledge of how to vary and amplify his language. In his composition of orations, he would often take quotations from the wide range he had copied into his commonplace book. By his final year at the grammar school, a boy would be able to appreciate Classical authors and he knew enough to be ready to refer to 'the advanced rhetoric' of Quintilian,³¹⁶ 'the final authority'.³¹⁷

Baldwin also suggests the importance of Johann Susenbrotus' *Epitome Troporum ac Schematum et Grammaticorum & Rhetorum*.³¹⁸ This work, first published in 1540, acknowledges its debt to Cicero, Erasmus and Quintilian amongst other authorities and lists 132 rhetorical figures divided into tropes and schemes. Susenbrotus offers an explanation of each figure together with examples, often a substantial list of them. Very occasionally in the English edition of 1562 there is a gloss in English on one of the examples for a particular rhetorical figure. The work lacks the discursive quality of *De Copia* and is set out in a way that made it very easy for a schoolboy to use.

³¹⁴ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's Small Latine*, I, p. 69.

³¹⁵ Ibid. I, p. 179.

³¹⁶ Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (c.35-c.95 A.D.) Appointed a professor of Latin Rhetoric by the Emperor Vespasian and the author of the 12 volumes of the *Institutio Oratoria*.

³¹⁷ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's Small Latine*, I, p. 72.

³¹⁸ Johann Susenbrotus, German humanist 1484/5-1543, *Epitome Troporum ac Schematum et Grammaticorum & Rhetorum, ad Autores tum Prophanos tum Sacros Intelligendos non Minus Utilis q(uam) necessaria* publ. by Gerard Dewes, London 1562. repr. in ProQuest EEBO edition.

The *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* had enjoyed great prestige because of its attribution to Cicero ever since its re-emergence at the end of the Fourth century A.D. but no-one now believes it was written by him.³¹⁹ Harry Caplan reminds us that the work exerted a beneficent influence for hundreds of years. It easily falls into a series of lists and categories which an Elizabethan schoolboy would have found very useful. Direct and brief, the first chapter made an invaluable *aide-memoire* for any pupil who wished to be reminded of how to construct his oration or letter. It is easy to see how, although sundry volumes of Cicero, for example, might be read for their style and their use as a source of apt phrases to be stored in a boy's commonplace book, it would still be very convenient for the boy to have at his elbow Volume 1 of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Erasmus' *De Copia* and Susenbrotus' *Epitome* when he wished to jog his memory regarding the niceties of structure or the name and use of a particular rhetorical figure.

A comparison between an extract of what the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* has to say and the words Thomas Wilson uses in his *The Arte of Rhetorique* to make the same point will demonstrate just how important the Latin work was in moulding rhetorical thinking in sixteenth-century England. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* was studied in Latin and Caplan's translation is probably the first complete one in English, but what Wilson is doing is to provide a virtual translation for all who could not or would not refer to the Latin original. It demonstrates, one imagines, how rhetoric was perceived at the time Wilson was writing and that Robert Greene was at school. Wilson's translation of the Latin may reflect the generally-used English nomenclature of his time.

³¹⁹ Frances A. Yates has written an account of the Renaissance reception of the *Ad Herennium* in her *Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

The first piece of schematization involves considering the process of creating an oration, the most important rhetorical construction, from its inception to its oral delivery:

The speaker, then, should possess the faculties of Invention (*Inventio*), Arrangement (*Dispositio*), Style (*Elocutio*), Memory (*Memoria*), and Delivery (*Pronuntiatio*). Invention is the devising of matter, true or plausible, that would make the case convincing. Arrangement is the ordering and distribution of the matter, making clear the place to which each thing is to be assigned. Style is the adaptation of suitable words and sentences to the matter devised. Memory is the firm retention in the mind of the matter, words, and arrangement. Delivery is the graceful regulation of voice, countenance, and gesture.³²⁰

In Wilson's words this becomes:

- i. Invention of matter
- ii. Disposition of the same
- iii. Elocution
- iv. Memorie
- v. Utterance³²¹

The two significant parts of this process as far as the present study is concerned are 'Arrangement' and 'Style', or 'Disposition' and 'Elocution' as they are to do with the actual structure of the piece and the words with which this structure is clothed. These two considerations are fundamental to my analysis of the use of rhetoric in Greene's early pamphlets the narratives of which consist of a connected series of orations which are divided into six constituent parts following the model provided by the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Wilson suggests seven divisions and Mack four, but Greene never strays from the paradigm of six. He does, however, sometimes adapt this basic model by not making the *conclusio* the end of the oration. Instead, it becomes the *divisio*, or question, of a second oration which runs on seamlessly from the first. I discuss this modification in the next chapter when I look at *Mamillia Part I*, Greene's first published work.

³²⁰ *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 1. p. 7.

³²¹ Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, p. 6.

The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* explains that:

Invention is used for the six parts of a discourse (*Oratio*): the Introduction (*Exordium*), Statement of Facts (*Narratio*), Division (*Divisio*), Proof (*Confirmatio*), Refutation (*Confutatio*), and Conclusion (*Conclusio*). The Introduction is the beginning of the discourse, and by it the hearer's mind is prepared for attention. The Narration or Statement of Facts sets forth the events that have occurred or might have occurred. By means of the Division we make clear what matters are agreed upon and what are contested, and announce what points we intend to take up. Proof is the presentation of our arguments, together with their corroboration. Refutation is the destruction of our adversaries' arguments. The conclusion is the end of the discourse, formed in accordance with the principles of the art.³²²

In sub-dividing the *divisio*, Wilson is following Quintilian rather than the the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, but the content is otherwise identical:

There are seven partes in every Oration.

- i. The Enterance or beginning.
- ii. The Narration.
- iii. The Proposition.
- iv. The Devision or severall parting of things.
- v. The confirmation.
- vi. The confutation.
- vii. The Conclusion.

The Entraunce or beginning is the former part of the Oration, whereby the will of the standers by, or of the Judge is sought for, and required to heare the matter.

The Narration is a plaine and manifest pointing of the matter, and an evident setting forth of all things that belong unto the same, with a breefe rehearsall grounded upon some reason. The proposition is a pithie sentence comprehended in small roome, the somme of the whole matter.

The Devision is an opening of things, wherein we agree and rest upon, and wherein we sticke and

stande in travers, shewing what we have to say in our owne behalfe.

The Confirmation is a declaration of our owne reasons, with assured and constant proofes.

The Confutation is a dissolving, or wpying away of all such reasons as make against us.

The Conclusion is a clerkly gathering of the matter spoken before and a lapping up of it altogether.³²³

The 'Elocution' of an oration was the part which required most skill. The shape or template might be there, but a speaker or writer needed to show that he was more adept than a mere transcriber of forms and phrases which had often been used before. In their relentless exercises in rhetorical composition, pupils would have noted, copied

³²² *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 1, pp. 9-11.

³²³ Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, p. 7.

and learnt a huge list of words and phrases they might later put to effective use in their own compositions. This employment of rhetorical figures is called ‘Amplification’ by Wilson and ‘*copia*’ by Erasmus whose *De Copia* provides a compendium of ways in which an oration, or any other piece of writing, might be embellished. Mack has called this book ‘one of the most often printed of humanists texts’.³²⁴ It is named in twelve of the grammar school syllabi Baldwin investigated and was clearly a very important schoolroom text.

In the index to the King and Rix translation of *De Copia*, there are 85 rhetorical figures with English or Latin names and 25 with Greek names, although some appear in both lists, being written in both alphabets. Erasmus’ lists are exhausting although not exhaustive, but Mack believes that, ‘it is likely that the terminology of rhetorical analysis was taught and reinforced more through commentary on set texts than by the direct study of rhetoric manuals’.³²⁵

In *De Copia*, Erasmus, in order to facilitate pupils’ understanding of how the rhetorical figures might be used, provides a large number of examples. He devotes many pages to suggestions concerning the varied uses of *exempla* and *sententiae* which he sees as forming the backbone of most orations. Greene certainly makes considerable use of them. Following the model of John Lyly in *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, Greene also makes frequent use of *contentio* (antithesis), a figure to which Erasmus devotes very few words. *De Copia* was a popular textbook in schools and in the universities too, as Elizabeth Leedham-Green has shown in her discovery of 41 single volume copies of it in her survey of 173 lists of books owned by members of Cambridge University who died in residence before 1600.³²⁶ *De Copia* was also often

³²⁴ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, p. 31.

³²⁵ Ibid. p. 39.

³²⁶ Elizabeth Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). She also found that university members owned 27 copies of Aphthonius,

referred to as an authority by writers composing rhetorical handbooks of their own. On account of the widespread popularity of Erasmus' text and the high regard in which it was held, I have used its terminology as the basis for my exegesis of the rhetoric in Greene's *Mamillia* in the next chapter. I have also included as Appendix 2 a table listing the most important rhetorical figures named by Erasmus in *De Copia* plus others described by Thomas Wilson and Susenbrotus.

In his *A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric*, Lee Sonnino supplements Erasmus's list of rhetorical figures with many, many more, reinforcing just how schematic and detailed the whole system was and also that labels were often interchangeable.³²⁷ Different teachers no doubt had their own favoured terminology which they handed on to their pupils who would have been well aware of a multiplicity of stylistic tricks and the quotations from Classical authors in which they were displayed.

Quintilian, Abraham Fraunce³²⁸ and Wilson, explore the minutiae of the usage of and distinction between rhetorical figures and tropes which would have been, one imagines, beyond the competence, and certainly the interest, of even the most mature Elizabethan schoolboys. What was important for boys like Robert Greene was the ability to put the figures and tropes to skilful use in order to embellish their written compositions. As Quintilian himself succinctly says 'it makes no difference by which name either is called, so long as its stylistic value is apparent.'³²⁹ Let the debate end there. I shall follow the example of Erasmus and simply refer to 'figures'.

27 copies of the *Ad Herennium* and 42 copies of Quintilian. As tutors and pupils shared rooms and, presumably books, each of these copies was probably by read a number of people.

³²⁷ Lee A. Sonnino, *A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

³²⁸ Abraham Fraunce, *The Arcadian Rhetorike*, 1588 ed. by Ethel Seaton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Luttrell Society, 1950).

³²⁹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, transl. by H.E. Butler, Loeb Library (London: William Heinemann, 1921, repr. 1986), 111, 1X p. 352.

The standard textbook on letter writing was Erasmus's *De Conscribendis Epistolis*, a very influential book which Baldwin tells us appears in a substantial number of the surviving grammar school curricula. He cites its use at Eton and in those numerous schools which copied the 'Eton system'.³³⁰ He also finds 'several suspicious echoes' of it in the works of Shakespeare.³³¹ Elizabeth Leedham-Green also found 26 'mentions of *De Conscribendis* in her Cambridge University survey. The work was first published in 1522 and became, according to J.K. Sowards, 'one of Erasmus's most widely used books.' It is most likely that the teaching of letter-writing at Norwich Grammar School, where it is assumed that Robert Greene was a pupil, was heavily influenced by it.³³²

Whereas the composition of an oration involved the strict use of a six-part template, Erasmus eschews such rigidity in the writing of letters. He almost shouts on one page, 'I am not teaching rhetoric'.³³³ He offers guidance rather than prescription, citing Quintilian as his authority for this: 'Quintilian, however, considers the best style to be that which is the most suited to the topic, the place, the occasion, and consequently that it is foolish to bind utterance to fixed laws'.³³⁴ The writer of a letter is thus permitted considerable freedom although Erasmus expects a particular kind of decorum to be observed, an educated informality, as it were. The wording of a letter 'should resemble a conversation between friends',³³⁵ and 'We must take pains to be

³³⁰ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's Small Latine*, II, p. 269.

³³¹ *Ibid.* II, p. 272.

³³² In *The repentance of Robert Greene* (1592), (Bodleian Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12306, fol. 5i, he mentions 'The Cittie of Norwitch, where I was bred and borne'. To proceed to Cambridge University, Greene would have needed to attend a decent school and in Norwich this could only have been the King Edward VI Grammar School. Pupil records for the period during which Greene would have been in attendance do not survive, but we do have the Norwich Corporation Assembly book of Proceedings, 1553 – 1583, (ref: NCR Case 16d/3 f. 129r – 31v) which sets out the Grammar School curriculum for those years. See Appendix 1.

³³³ T.W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's Small Latine*, p. 94.

³³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 19.

³³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 20.

clear, yes, but clear to the educated.’³³⁶ Much of what is contained in a successful letter, Erasmus argues, should demonstrate the skilful use of the *copia* that is so important in orations. There should be ‘attractive commonplaces’ and ‘a great variety of examples and similes.’³³⁷ Erasmus offers a dozen pages of advice on the topping and tailing of a letter, the salutation and the farewell, but he refuses to divide a letter into discrete sections as with an oration: ‘It is a superstitious practice to restrict the freedom of a letter by fixed divisions and to hold it in the kind of bondage that Quintilian does not recommend even for orations.’³³⁸ ‘The order of material in a letter should be suggested by the occasion, the place, the persons or the subjects, with the writer briefly indicating each change of subject by frequent short transitions.’³³⁹

The letters written by Robert Greene’s characters are generally of the persuasive kinds listed by Erasmus: ‘conciliation, reconciliation, encouragement, discouragement, persuasion, dissuasion, consolation, petition, recommendation, admonition, and the amatory letter.’³⁴⁰ One letter may fall into several of these categories.

Erasmus stresses the compositional flexibility of a letter from its very outset, writing that, ‘the freedom of a letter is such that one can take anything at all as one’s starting-point as long as it is of such a nature as to prepare the recipient for what you have in mind.’³⁴¹ He takes the six parts of an oration and asks, ‘in heaven’s name, how are these relevant to a letter?’³⁴² The ‘copia’ or amplification of language required for an oration, is, however, to be employed when writing a letter. Erasmus continues that,

³³⁶ Ibid. p. 17.

³³⁷ Ibid. p. 35.

³³⁸ Ibid. p. 65.

³³⁹ Ibid. p. 65.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 71.

³⁴¹ Ibid. p. 75.

³⁴² Ibid. p. 76.

‘we should have a stock of similes taken from springs, rivers, seas, mountains, precious stones, trees, plants and flowers, and be ready to produce them whenever they are needed.’³⁴³ *Exempla* drawn from the human world are similarly vital: ‘we will have to assemble a goodly supply and a great variety of examples derived from human experience.’³⁴⁴ And, thirdly, ‘we must learn by heart or practise beforehand a number of examples concerning each virtue and vice and each important topic.’³⁴⁵ The idea of complete epistolary freedom is, therefore, an illusory one, as the language used is expected to be drawn from the bank of common educated parlance and the quirky or the idiosyncratic is not admitted.

Although the letters Robert Greene composes in his early pamphlets fall into the Erasmian categories listed above, Greene defies Erasmus’ stipulation by constructing all of his shorter letters as six-part orations. In doing so, he proves groundless Erasmus’s fear that such an action would be too restrictive for the individual nature of any given letter. In the next chapter I demonstrate how Greene subtly differentiates these letters based on such a fixed template. The coda to *Mamillia Part 2, The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries*, consists of a pair of long letters written by Mamillia to the lady Modesta and intended to advise her on how best to deal with potential lovers. The second of these is mostly taken up with the story of Sylvia and her three suitors, but the first accords with Erasmus’s instructions for the composition of a long letter. Instead of the *confirmatio* and *confutatio* of the standard oration, the letter ranges over the main topic in a variety of ways, including a brief engagement with the language of dialectic. I discuss the content and structure of this letter at length in the next chapter. Although Peter Mack distinguishes this letter as conforming to the

³⁴³ Ibid. p. 86.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 87.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 87.

oration paradigm, it is too loosely structured and discursive to be said to fit neatly into this structure.³⁴⁶ Strangely, Mack does not recognize, or at least comment on, the way that all of the other short letters in Greene's work follow neatly and clearly the form of the six-part oration.

By the end of his years at an English grammar school, a boy would have had a thorough knowledge of rhetoric drummed into him. Vickers is clear on this point: 'Given the crushing degree of memorization one can assume that anyone who had attended grammar school in Renaissance England (or Europe) would know a good proportion of the 132 figures and tropes in Susenbrotus.'³⁴⁷ He even claims that: 'by the triple process [theory, imitation and practice],³⁴⁸ endlessly repeated, the average Renaissance schoolboy knew as much about the rhetorical figures as his Hellenistic or Roman counterpart.'³⁴⁹ Mack is less confident of this, arguing that, 'the skills acquired at grammar school do not constitute the full course in classical rhetoric which has sometimes been assumed by scholars', although he does acknowledge the thoroughness of the training: 'it seems probable that pupils in the higher forms of Elizabethan grammar schools had a good knowledge of the tropes and figures.'³⁵⁰

Knowledge is not the same as talent, but, certainly, Robert Greene used his rhetorical training to write a series of linguistically sophisticated works and he may, justifiably, be placed amongst those 'ablest writers...In their hands the formulas of the textbooks, sterile when not wedded to vital subject matter, become productive of memorable literature.'³⁵¹

³⁴⁶ Peter Mack, 'Rhetoric in Use', p. 127.

³⁴⁷ Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric*, p. 257.

³⁴⁸ *Praeceptio, Imitatio and Exercitatio*

³⁴⁹ Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric*, p. 261.

³⁵⁰ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, p. 46.

³⁵¹ Francis R Johnson, 'Two Renaissance Textbooks of Rhetoric: Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* and Rainolde's *A booke called the Foundation of Rhetorick*', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Aug., 1943), 427-444 (pp. 427-8).

C.S.Lewis has not a good word to say for the ‘fantastic artificiality’ of the rhetoric taught in schools and practised by English writers in the sixteenth century. He considers the focus on rhetoric an ‘error’ of judgement continued from the Middle Ages. When talking of the beauties which earlier periods saw in the rhetorical content of poetry, he declares that these ‘were those which we either dislike or simply do not notice.’³⁵² His own dislike of rhetoric is clear but he must also stand accused of not noticing, or not being willing to discover, what lies beyond the rhetorical constructions and figures; he is too ready to take decoration for content, or for the lack of content, a fault which has vitiated much criticism of the work of Robert Greene. When writing about John Lyly, whom he blames for Greene’s rhetorical excesses, Lewis states that ‘For Lyly, as for Pettie, the story is a trellis’ and that ‘Lyly’s [trellis] is a monstrosity.’³⁵³ The idea of a ‘trellis’ is a useful one when examining Greene’s work because he makes constant use of the trellis provided by the structure of the oration, but what he hangs on his trellis is more purposeful and varied than Lewis allows, particularly in relation to the presentation of female characters, a major aspect of Greene’s work which Lewis ignores.

The Elizabethans loved to enumerate and categorize their rhetorical figures, compiling vast lists of terms derived from Latin and Greek. At first glance this can seem a sterile exercise and Lewis is surprisingly guilty of scoffing at the terminology simply because it looks alien to a modern reader. He says, ‘We must picture them growing up from boyhood in a world of “pretty epanorthosis” [‘rephrasing in order to emphasize’], *isocolon* [‘The balancing of clauses which have the same length’] and *similiter cadentia*.’³⁵⁴ To someone who has never encountered these terms, the

³⁵² C.S.Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century excluding Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954, repr. 1968), p. 61.

³⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 314.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 61.

temptation to laugh at their alienness may be great, but once they are defined in English one can see that they are respectable literary devices still very much in use today.

The point of my dwelling on C.S.Lewis's response to rhetoric is to reiterate a major point of this study that much of what Robert Greene wrote has been dismissed after a cursory glance with the damning comment that it is merely 'rhetorical'. Closer, informed, reading will reveal that rhetoric was not a dead language inexplicably chosen by pedants who should have known better, but a valid way of presenting experiences that are still worthy of our attention. The exercise simply requires understanding and effort.

Rhetoric in the Curriculum at Norwich Grammar School

We are fortunate that the 1566 Ordinances for Norwich Grammar School survive, which means that we know both the texts and the methods of instruction stipulated at the time Robert Greene was probably a pupil there. The Ordinances include some important stipulations which would have had an impact upon pupils like Robert Greene. The Headmaster, who will teach the top three forms, must be 'lerned in good and cleane Latyn Literature, and also in greeke.'³⁵⁵ The Submaster, who had responsibility for the lowest three forms, must be 'well learned in the Latyn tounge able to make a Verse exactly An Epistle in pure and cleane Latyn and to declayme of A simple Theame.'³⁵⁶

What is significant here is the emphasis placed upon the writing of letters and the composition of orations, two accomplishments in which Greene was to become highly adept and which figure so prominently in his early works. In addition, the fact

³⁵⁵ H.W. Saunders, *A History*, p. 138.

³⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 139.

that the city authorities in Norwich were keen that the two schoolmasters they employed should be scholars who would choose the best literary texts for study meant that the pupils were presented with literary models of high quality throughout their school careers. It was left to the High Master ‘to appoint what Authors shall be redd in every ffourm’, but despite this degree of flexibility allowed to him, it is unlikely that he departed very much from what was prescribed in the Ordinances.³⁵⁷

We see in the section of the Ordinances entitled ‘the daily Exercise of the Schollers’, the standard compositional emphasis noted by Baldwin. There is the requirement of ‘Schollers’: to be able to amplify their writing by the use of rhetorical figures (‘to Varye one sentens diversely’); to be accomplished letter writers (‘to Endight and Epistle Eloquently’), and to compose orations on set themes (‘lernedly to declayme of a Theame simple’.) The learned nature of their orations refers to the inclusion of quotations from their commonplace books, references to history, mythology and literature and the use of *sententiae*. ‘Schollers’ were also expected to be ‘competent’ in Greek. Declamatory skills were further required for the ‘twoo comedies at the least’ which the boys performed ‘betwixt Hallowmas & Christmas’ and for the ‘pitthye and short oracon’ which selected boys were obliges to deliver ‘The daie that Mr Mayor newelect Rapayreth unto Christes Churche’.³⁵⁸ It is no wonder, after such a grounding in letter writing and the composition of orations that Robert Greene relied on these rhetorical paradigms when he first began to write pamphlets.

The set texts used at Norwich are those Baldwin noted in grammar schools across England: *Tullium ad Herennium*, *Quintilianum*, *Erasmus de copia verborum et rerum*, plus Cicero’s *Orationes* and *Epistolas*. There is no letter-writing textbook as

³⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 142.

³⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 151.

such, but it is likely that lessons on epistolary composition owed a good deal to the teacher's reading of Erasmus' *De Conscribendis Epistolis* as well as to exegesis of examples by Cicero.

The Teaching of Rhetoric at Cambridge University

The Cambridge University Statutes stipulated that the first year of study was to be devoted to rhetoric, thereby ensuring that a young man's knowledge of the subject gained at school was consolidated and expanded.³⁵⁹ The set texts were Quintilian, Hermogenes or any other book of Cicero's orations, but at least they were to be explained in English.³⁶⁰ Peter Mack has noted the 'continuity of grammar school and university teaching,' and there was certainly an overlap in the textbooks used as is shown in the inventory lists compiled by Elizabeth Leedham Green which I quoted above.³⁶¹

Conclusion

Robert Greene's study of rhetoric and epistolary composition at school and of rhetoric and dialectic at Cambridge University influenced his prose works 'enormously. He could not have written in the style he did if he had not been thoroughly immersed in the rhetorical training which formed a substantial part of the English grammar school and university curriculum in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Latin orations and letters he would have analyzed and imitated so regularly at school and Cambridge provided him with templates which he put to frequent use in his early pamphlets. This training also provided his male readers who

³⁵⁹ 'Primus annus rhetoricam docebit: secundus et tertius dialecticam. Quartus adjungat philosophiam', *Documents Relating to the university and Colleges of Cambridge* (London, 1852), I, p. 459.

³⁶⁰ 'Praelector rhetorices Quintilianum, Hermogenem aut aliquem alium librum oratoriarum Ciceronis. Quos omnes libros vulgari lingua pro captu et intelligentia auditorium explicabitur interpretabiturque.' Ibid. I, p. 457.

³⁶¹ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, p. 54.

had been educated in the same system with an apparatus which would enable them to appreciate what he had written. As Mack says, ‘From their training in the analysis of classical texts, pupils learned how to read and how they in turn might expect to be read.’³⁶² His conclusion, notwithstanding the Cambridge University year-long course in rhetoric, is that, ‘The grammar school created the Elizabethan audience.’³⁶³

The knowledge of how to read Greene, of his indebtedness to the practices of rhetoric, has largely been lost or at least shied away from, but, in order to appreciate him fully, a modern reader needs to share the mind-set of an Elizabethan grammar school alumnus, if not that of Cambridge University graduate.

What could be more natural that when Greene, while probably still at university, wrote his first story for publication he should fall back on the stylistic rules he had been practising for years. Grammar school and university educated readers would immediately have recognized his use of rhetorical paradigms and their embellishing *copia*. As Gavin Alexander writes, ‘the rhetorical figures employed in plays, poems, and stories must be thought of...as intended to be recognised and analysed, enjoyed as evidence of impressive technique’.³⁶⁴

In *Mamillia*, Greene is dependent on orations for the structure of his narrative, but he also makes some use of the dialectical skills he studied at Cambridge. *The Myrrour of Modestie* (1584) and *Morando* (1586) are constructed almost entirely according to the rules of dialectic, or logic, which Greene learnt in order to participate in university disputations. Dialectic, which was not taught to undergraduates until their second year at Cambridge, is probably even less accessible to a modern readership than rhetoric. Limitations of space in this study preclude my making other than

³⁶² Ibid. p. 2.

³⁶³ Ibid. p. 47.

³⁶⁴ Gavin Alexander, *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy'*, p. xxxviii.

occasional brief references to its influence on Greene's writing. An apparent failure to recognize the dialectical basis of *The Myrrour of Modestie*, for example, has led modern critics generally to dismiss it out of hand as a work of negligible value or interest, almost an embarrassment in the oeuvre. A failure to engage with the rhetorical basis of Greene's early pamphlets has sometimes led to dismissive comments which are almost as sweeping.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAMILLIA

It was understandable when, in his early twenties, Robert Greene began to write his first pamphlets, the two parts of the romance *Mamillia*, that he should build his narrative using the literary techniques he knew best, the rhetoric and dialectic he had studied at grammar school and Cambridge. Although the two parts of the story were published separately, they and their coda, *The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries*, are part of the same narrative. Each offers its own perspective on Greene's linking theme: the 'constancie' of women and the deceitfulness and inconstancy of men.

Although the bulk of this chapter is devoted to the detailed exegesis of a selection of orations from *Mamillia*, I conclude it with a brief reference to the use of the oration in Sir Philip Sidney's *The Old Arcadia*, and Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*. My point is to demonstrate that the hitherto unrecognized centrality of the oration in Robert Greene's pamphlets is not the result of eccentricity or whim on his part. His utilization of it to provide much of the narrative drive of his stories is distinctive, but it was considered a legitimate and useful device by other writers of standing. Lodge uses marginal pointers to draw attention to the ten orations in *Rosalynde*, but Sidney's orations in *The Old Arcadia* occur naturally and seamlessly at moments when characters are agitated or intent on speaking persuasively. His use of the device thus exactly mirrors Greene's.

Mamillia was entered in the Stationers' Register on 3rd October 1580 as licensed to Thomas Woodcock, but its first recorded publication was not until 1583, also by Woodcock. As with *Part 1, Part 2: Mamillia, The seconde part of the triumphe of Pallas*, must have been written long before the publication of the earliest known edition, that of 1593, the year after Greene's death.

The purpose of this study is to suggest a way of reading and better understanding Greene's prose works in the light of his grounding in rhetoric. Without an appreciation of the way that rhetorical paradigms shape and colour Greene's prose, particularly in his early pamphlets, it is all too easy, from a twenty-first century perspective, to dismiss him as purveyor of an out-moded style. The importance of rhetoric in both parts of *Mamillia* and *The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries* with regard to structure and language can hardly be over-estimated. Greene shows a striking awareness of the potential of rhetorical paradigms and of the power and strategic qualities of language. In other words, the oration provides him with all he needs to construct the framework of a complete and satisfying narrative and Greene's subject turns out to be as much language itself as it is love and the constancy of women, in these early romances.

Structurally, in *Mamillia*, Greene makes constant use of the oration paradigm to present the declarations, apostrophes and letters on which he builds his story. A large number of rhetorical figures is used to add *copia* and flesh out each oration. Greene does not simply produce a series of schematized exercises of the kind he had undoubtedly practised countless times in the classroom, writing by numbers, as it were. His characters are powerfully aware that, every time they speak, they are performing and that it is vital for them to weigh the significance and the risk of every word they utter. Greene is, therefore, not merely employing rhetoric, he is exploring and evaluating it. And he goes even further because his central character, Mamillia, is not a man but a woman who happens to possess the most impressive rhetorical skills of any figure in the two main volumes of the story. *The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries* consists almost entirely of letters of advice written by the wise Mamillia to the younger and less experienced Ladie Modesta. This notion of language as performance, as

strategic tool, and even as an important factor in the presenting of oneself as a social commodity, is very important within both parts of *Mamillia*. Discourse thus becomes not simply an exchange of words but a wary process of negotiation.

Although C.S.Lewis dismisses *Mamillia* in a couple of sentences, only able to find it ‘tolerable’ if he compares it with Brian Melbancke’s ‘absurd book’ *Philotimus* published in 1583, the same year as the second part of *Mamillia* appears to have been written and was possibly published, I shall demonstrate that the work has three significant points of interest.³⁶⁵ Firstly there is the identification of the rhetoric that defines the work as a product of its age. The Euphuism for which Greene has often been condemned is a florid offshoot of that rhetoric. When we move from the historical to the personal, to a consideration of the use to which Greene is putting his rhetorical structures and figures, we see that he is doing something extraordinary. He is empowering his central character Mamillia with modes of speech which enable her to gain the upper hand in her dealings with men. In addition, there is a verbal patterning very specific to *Mamillia* which owes nothing to rhetoric but which reflects the emphasis Greene places on his characters’ awareness of the power of language. They weigh their words as if verbal exchanges are financial transactions which run the risk of considerable loss, in this case not loss of money but of face or power, if they are not constantly alert to what they are saying and what is said to and about them.

Before progressing to a detailed exegesis of extracts from *Mamillia*, it is important to address Greene’s stylistic debt to John Lyly as this has been the source of much criticism of Greene’s pamphlets in an unsatisfactory, generalized way.

³⁶⁵ C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 420.

The Stylistic Influence of John Lyly's Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit on Robert Greene

Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit took Elizabethan England by storm when it was published in 1578. For a dozen years its elaborate style was much imitated until the inevitable reaction set in and imitation gave way to ridicule, particularly of the unusual similes relating to the natural world which are an arresting feature.

If Sir Philip Sidney is referring, as it is supposed, to *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* in his *Defence of Poesy* (written about 1580 but not published until 1595), then his scornful reaction to its florid language was immediate. He writes

Now for similitudes, in certain printed discourses I think all herbarists, all stories, of beasts, fowls and fishes, are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible.³⁶⁶

It should be noted, however, that, as G.K Hunter has pointed out

Lyly did not invent Euphuism, he merely brought to focus tendencies and tricks in style which were everywhere around him and which had been a fairly regular feature of rhetorical prose since the days of Georgias of Leontini (5th century BC).³⁶⁷

As I mentioned in Chapter One, Thomas Nashe tells us that, when at Cambridge, he regarded the euphuistic style as '*ipse ille*', very much the current 'thing', but that he grew out of it.³⁶⁸ Generally the first remark made about Greene's early romances is that they are euphuistic which may mean that he shared Nashe's enthusiasm at the beginning of his career, although Carmine di Biase regards the decision on Greene's part to write in this particular style as being purely commercially driven. Di Biase contends that Greene actually felt uncomfortable, and quite possibly resentful, at using the euphuistic style and that by the time he penned *Gwydonius* (1584) his use of it was so extreme as to be parodic. Di Biase believes that the market's demand for euphuistic prose of the kind Greene was prepared to supply for payment

³⁶⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy*, p. 50.

³⁶⁷ G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 260.

³⁶⁸ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, I, p. 319.

arose because a newly-literate middle-class wished to ape their betters by selecting reading material they thought belonged to a higher class. Di Biase writes, ‘This powerful desire to prove themselves [the newly-literate] worthy of the cultural property, in this case the “fine speech” of the aristocracy, turned them into a force that writers such as Greene must have found oppressive.’³⁶⁹ I do not challenge the claim that Greene felt it appropriate to write in this particular register because it was in vogue and was likely to sell pamphlets, but this is more than an aesthetic question. We should focus less on the packaging and more on what is contained within it. My emphasis throughout this study is on Greene’s interest in female discourse which does not depend on whether Euphuism was his greatest literary delight or simply a commercial choice. Greene’s Euphuism is a vehicle only, not an end in itself.

Any discussion of Greene’s relationship with the particular branch of rhetoric which came to be called Euphuism must begin with an account of what precisely it is. As with any other aspect of rhetoric which Greene utilizes, Euphuism has a set of distinct technical features and he is skilled in their use. Simply because Greene is following a series of rhetorical or euphuistic templates does not mean, however, that this precludes him from expressing a markedly individual take on the social mores of his world, the empowerment of his female characters. It is a harsh and inaccurate judgement on the part of G.K. Hunter when he claims that Euphuism was ‘worked to death by Greene’, as if his pamphlets are nothing more than tedious stylistic exercises.³⁷⁰

The characteristic features of Euphuism are its syntax, its sound and the way that material is amplified. I have tabulated them, and their subdivisions below,

³⁶⁹ Carmine Di Biase ‘The Decline of Euphuism’, p. 102.

³⁷⁰ G.K.Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 257.

following Hunter's definitions which, in some instances, I have extended. All my examples are taken from *Gwydonius*, the work in which Greene's Euphuism is at its most extreme. It will be noted that Greene, like Lyly, often combines all three elements of the style in one sentence. Examples of *parison* and *paramoion* are often placed in antithesis to each other. I have given the page numbers in Di Biase's edition of *Gwydonius*.

THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF EUPHUISM

SYNTAX
<i>Isocolon</i> Definition – 'The balancing of clauses which have the same length.'
Examples – 'But there is nothing, Gwydonius, so precious which in some respect is not perilous, nor nothing so pleasant which may not be painful.' (87) 'now have I bought that by hapless experience which, if I had been wise, I might have got by happy counsel.' (91)
<i>Parison</i> Definition - 'The use of what is observedly the same structure in different clauses [when used connectedly].'
Examples - 'The finest gold hath his dross, the purest wine his lees, the bravest rose his prickles.' (87) 'to love, howsoever it be, is to lose, and fancy, how chary soever it be, is to have an ill chance.' (99)
<i>Paramoion</i> Definition – 'The balancing of clauses which have the same sound patterns.'
Examples – 'Doth love lead them? Do the destinies drive them?' (160) 'Now he called to mind his merciless cruelty in correcting his faults, and his modeless rigour in rebuking his folly.' (161)
SOUND
<i>Alliteration</i> Examples - 'what fiery flames of fancy do fry within me.' (133) 'seeing before his eyes the terror of torments and the hellish horror of death, was driven forward so with dread of danger.' (181) Most of the other examples in this table are alliterated.
<i>Quasi Rhymes</i> Definition – 'jingling or rhyming the beginning or ending of clauses.'
Examples - 'how wretchedly did he reward her loyalty? How tyrannously did he repay her love with treachery' (169) '...hath deprived me of liberty ... to redeem me from captivity.' (107)
<i>Anaphora</i> Definition - Repetition of particular words or phrases at the beginning of successive phrases.
Examples - 'our stayless mood by your staid minds, our young years by your hoary hairs, our flourishing youth by your withered age.' (86) 'What desire, what lust, what hope, what trust, what care, what despair, what fear, what fury.'

(133)
<i>Epistrophe</i>
Definition – The repetition of words at the end of phrases, clauses or sentences.
Examples – ‘if virtue draweth one way, vice draweth another way.’ (87)
AMPLIFICATION
<i>Extended Similes Drawn from Nature</i>
Examples-‘Like the violets in America, which in summer yield an odoriferous smell and in winter a most pestilent savor, so these parasites in prosperity profess most but perform least.’ (91)
‘The pike fatally prosecuteth the fish mugra as his mortal foe, and yet seeing him snared on the fisher’s hook he speedily shreddeth the line in sunder to deliver him. The snake most deadly detesteth the field mouse, and yet she heapeth up in her hole store of provision to prevent her enemy’s penury. And shall then, madam, your cruelty so far exceed these senseless creatures?’(147)
<i>Proverbs and Exempla</i>
Proverbs Examples - ‘the man which hath many children shall never live without some mirth nor die without some sorrow.’ (83)
‘that he which is careless in youth will be less careful in age, that where in prime of years vice reigneth, there in ripe age vanity remaineth.’(84)
Exempla Examples – ‘Insomuch that the fame Ulysses won was not by the ten years he lay at Troy but by the time he spent in travel.’ (87)
‘Plato, Gwydonius, being demanded why he would never condescend to the request of his most dearest friends, without great entreaty and long suit answered, the things lightly granted (though never so costly) are smally accounted of.’ (153)
This is one of the attributions to Plato which Applegate considers both spurious and ‘inane’ and which he uses as evidence that Greene was not a serious artist. ³⁷¹
<i>Rhetorical Questions</i>
Examples- ‘Ah, Valericus, hast thou forgot the saying of Propertius, that to love, howsoever it be, is to lose, and to fancy, how chary soever thy choise be is to have an ill chance.’(99)
‘O gods, where are now become those lofty looks I used to Valericus? Where is the disdainful dealings, the coy countenance, the curious congies, the causeless cruelty, yea the hard heart, which so rigorously rejected the love of him, which so entirely liked me?’ (133)

I shall focus on two of the features of Euphuism, the methods of amplification and the syntax, and deal with them separately in order to achieve a better understanding of Greene’s engagement with this extraordinary style.

Lyly’s amplification of his text by way of similes which point out unusual parallels between human activity and the natural world has probably aroused the greatest derision over the centuries but he could claim precedents and authority for

³⁷¹ James Earl Applegate, *Classical Allusions in the Prose Works of Robert Greene*, Unpublished dissertation (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1954), p. 272.

this stylistic vagary. Thomas Wilson writes in his *Arte of Rhetorique* published sixteen years before *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* that

Oftentimes brute Beastes, and Things that have no life, minister great matter in this behalf. Therefore, those that delite to prove thinges by Similitudes, must learne to knowe the nature of divers beastes, of metalles, of stones, and al such as have any virtue in them, and be applied to men's life.³⁷²

Wilson's encouragement of the use of such similes suggests that he felt there was a genuine correspondence between the natural and human worlds. Wilson was probably influenced by the *Parabolae sive Similia* of Erasmus (1528) from which Lyly, according to Hunter, drew many of his examples. Erasmus was, of course, a major authority on the *copia* with which rhetorical structures were to be embellished and Lyly would have felt entirely comfortable in following such a celebrated scholar who, in Hunter's translation of his words, insisted that these similes were 'exquisite jewels from the hidden treasury of the Muses, from the inmost secrets of Nature and from the central shrines of the arts.'³⁷³

Hunter validates Lyly's adoption of this method of amplification through the use of similes by arguing that it is philosophical and not simply decorative. He believes that it provides 'an arras of richly worked instances reflecting back the centrality of the human mind in its power to perceive and create relationships and correspondences.' The use of such similes to 'turn Nature into a pattern,' he has noticed, 'is especially obvious in those that Lyly seems to have invented for himself.'³⁷⁴ These similes are therefore evidence of the author's perspective on the world. Lyly's, conviction, according to Hunter, is that the strict code of behaviour

³⁷² Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, pp. 188-9.

³⁷³ Desiderius Erasmus, *Parabolae sive similia d. Erasmi Roterodami*, 1528, pp. A2i-ii, 'exquisitas aliquot gemmas ex abstrusis musarum... Ab intimis naturae arcanis, è peritissimis disciplinarum adytis sunt eruenda: ab eloquentum poetarum eruditis fabulis':

³⁷⁴ G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 277.

preached in *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* follows a moral pattern which is reflected in the patterns any thinking man could draw simply by looking at Nature around him. Hunter's explanation of the rationale behind Lyly's choice of similes does not, however, prevent him from categorizing Euphuism as a whole as 'a perversely elaborate style, and historically a faddish aberration.'³⁷⁵ He is simply pointing out the method in its madness.

Hunter considers Lyly's world-view to be a Mediaeval one which is why the morality and language of *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* so easily conform to a series of patterns. If Lyly is Medieval, then Greene is an iconoclast, a flouter of patterns, particularly the one which confined female behaviour within a triplet of virtues. Hunter's failure to engage with the freer-thinking nature of Greene's romances has led him to judge them purely in terms of Lyly's aesthetic. He claims that their style derives 'from the the grossest imitation of Lyly' because he does not look beyond it.³⁷⁶ His conclusion that, 'It is not of course for its content that *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* was chiefly remembered', is very telling because, in the interpretation I offer, the very opposite is true for Robert Greene.³⁷⁷ The content of Greene's early romances, with their depiction of strong female characters standing up for themselves, is both original and powerful.

Hunter also fails to acknowledge how fundamental the oration is to the structure of Greene's narratives and to the way in which he often sets male and female characters in opposition to each other. Instead, Hunter regards the oration as mere decoration, a facet of Greene's euphuistic style. The following remark demonstrates

³⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 160.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 273.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 260.

his viewpoint clearly. I have underlined certain words to show how wide of the mark I believe Hunter is.

Even in Greene's first Romance, *Mamillia*, the innumerable letters, speeches etc., which fill out the action are felt as impediments, for the narrative is sufficiently complex to require an attention to which these digressions are irrelevant.³⁷⁸

Carmine di Biase is also concerned with Greene's use of unusual similes. He is convinced that Greene harboured an active dislike of Euphuism and only employed it because it seemed to be necessary if he were to make his living from writing. According to this assessment, Greene progressed from an acceptance of Euphuism as his *lingua franca* to an exasperation evidenced by the parodic euphuistic extremes of *Gwydonius* which Di Biase has called, 'the most lavish, the most unrestrained displays of rhetoric that English fiction would ever see.'³⁷⁹ This was followed, according to Di Biase, in *Greenes vision* with a debate on the merits of a plain versus a highly decorated style. Di Biase writes that, 'If we listen carefully for Greene's voice, we can hear him articulating his reasons for abandoning euphuism and adopting the plainer style of the cony-catching pamphlets.'³⁸⁰ In Chapter One I made clear that I do not share Di Biase's interpretation of *Greenes vision*. Throughout his career, Greene demonstrates an interest in language which transcends the pragmatic question of which register would most appeal to his prospective audience. He spotlights the way that discourse is strategic and a euphuistic style, and rhetoric in general, prove as good as any other linguistic medium for the jockeying in which his male and female characters engage. I agree with Di Biase that we should 'listen carefully' for Greene's voice, but what we hear is not the same.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 272.

³⁷⁹ Robert Greene, *Gwydonius*, intro. p. 11.

³⁸⁰ Carmine Di Biase, 'The Decline of Euphuism', p. 91.

I sense no dislike of Euphuism in *Mamillia*, *Arbasto* (which recycles a good deal of *Mamillia*), *Alcida*, *Penelopes web* or *Philomela*, no matter how obliquely I read them, ‘oblique’ being Di Biase’s word for the nature of the not-immediately-obvious satire he perceives Greene directing against Euphuism.³⁸¹ *Gwydonius*, it has to be admitted, does stand out as a euphuistic *tour de force* which is why I have selected all my examples in the table from that work. As I have already argued, Greene’s adoption of Euphuism was as a means to an end; it provided him with a ready-made register when he was starting out as a writer. It did not offend the decorum of matching style to character, one of the major topics debated in the *Vision*, because each of the significant characters in the pamphlets I discuss is at least a member of the gentry so it might be expected that they will be presented in, and will converse in, educated language. What is unexpected, and it is a point not generally made, is that Greene’s male and female characters have equal access to this erudite style and the women are often more adept in the way they manipulate it.

James Earl Applegate has looked at the Classical learning in Greene’s oeuvre as a whole and he agrees with Di Biase that it is frequently, and wilfully, inaccurate. He characterizes the ‘lengthy passages which pile allusion upon allusion’ as ‘excess baggage’ and ‘exhibitionism’.³⁸² The thoroughness of Applegate’s research is evident from a remark such as ‘of ninety-four classical personages in Greene’s allusions whose names begin with A, only twenty-three are in every instance accurately identified and appropriately used according to Renaissance knowledge of classical tradition.’³⁸³ There can be no doubt that scholarly accuracy was not at the forefront of Greene’s mind, but should we pedantically dismiss a writer simply because

³⁸¹ Ibid. p. 101.

³⁸² James Earl Applegate, ‘The Classical Learning of Robert Greene’, in *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 28:2 (1966) 354-368 (p. 355).

³⁸³ Ibid. p. 367.

He confuses Iphis with the goddess Isis, who figures in the story of Iphis told by Ovid; and whereas Ovid gives Icelon *or* Phobetor as one of three sons of Somnus, along with Morpheus and Phantasos, Greene names Morpheus, Icolon [sic], *and* Phobetor as three gods of sleep.³⁸⁴

Applegate sees Greene's inaccurate use of classical allusion as a mere 'titillation'; 'they cannot be intended either to inform or to edify.'³⁸⁵ This is evidence, Applegate believes, of Greene's 'insincerity' and lack 'of any purpose'.³⁸⁶ Surprisingly, Applegate calls Lyly's allusions 'patently stylistic',³⁸⁷ whereas he is convinced of 'the moral subjects that were the substance of his [Greene's] romances and treatises.'³⁸⁸ The charge of insincerity on Greene's part arises because Applegate regards his moral stance as so much clap-trap since no genuine moral vision, in Applegate's reading of the texts, is achieved. In his determination to be "moreso" than Lyly, Applegate concludes, Greene shows 'a considerable disregard both of accuracy and any purpose to playing the game at all.'³⁸⁹ My purpose in this study is to refute sweeping dismissals like Applegate's which are based only on one aspect of Greene's work and not the most significant one. Greene's classical allusions are fitted into rhetorical templates with great skill to achieve a coherent and consistent perspective on the relationships between men and women. This perspective can be more accurately described, I think, as social rather than 'moral', although any analysis of behaviour is inevitably moral too. Readers would have been challenged by the unconventional nature of Greene's handling of the discourse between his male and female characters and this would not be the case if he were intending simply to keep them happy by

³⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 358.

³⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 368.

³⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 367.

³⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 357.

³⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 364.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 368.

giving them fancy words which made them believe they were cleverer than they actually were.

The second major aspect of Euphuism to which attention has been drawn is its syntax, the relentless balancing of clauses with a similar structure. When alliteration is added, the effect can be maddeningly sing-song, what G.K. Hunter has called ‘the *tic-tac metronomique* of Lyly’.³⁹⁰ C.S. Lewis regards the syntax as no less decorative than the similes, both of them providing a plethora of rhetorical flowers which overwhelm the ‘trellis’ of the narrative to which they are attached, thereby creating a ‘monstrosity’.³⁹¹ Jonas A. Barish challenges such an evaluation because it suggests that there is a clear distinction between style and thought. He argues, for example, that Morris William Croll, who ‘defined Euphuism primarily as an ornamental verbal pattern’,³⁹² was incorrect in suggesting that a syntactic device such as *parison*, which matches equivalent parts of speech in parallel clauses, should be thought of as ornamental. Barish argues that syntax depends on logical structure which in turn is a product of thought – ‘To describe it as “ornamental” is to suggest that thought itself is ornamental.’ He examines in some detail Lyly’s use of three kinds of antithesis, refuting Croll’s contention that ‘antithesis is purely a “scheme”, that is, a figure of the arrangement of words for an effect of sound.’³⁹³ For Barish, ‘syntactic formulae’ are ‘the determinants of meaning’ and we should, therefore, find significance as well as colour in Lyly’s use of them.³⁹⁴ We must ask whether the perspective Greene presents in his fictive material matches Lyly’s when he imitates the latter’s sentence structure.

³⁹⁰ G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 272.

³⁹¹ C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 314.

³⁹² Jonas A. Barish, ‘The Prose Style of John Lyly’ in *English Literary History*, 23:1 (March 1956), 14-35 (p. 14). c.f. Morris William Croll and Harry Clemons, editors, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit and Euphues and his England* (London, 1916), pp. xv-xvii.

³⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 15.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 16.

Anithesis, or *contentio*, as an aspect of *parison*, is probably the syntactical effect which most quickly draws attention to itself in the prose of Lyly and Greene. Barish has argued, when exploring Lyly's second kind of antithesis, the 'either x or y', 'whether a or b' kind, that it 'tends to reflect an awareness of ambiguity of interpretation, of potential doubleness of cause or effect.'³⁹⁵ He suggests that

One would scarcely need to go further for the moral of *Euphues* than the style, which offers for our inspection the world as antithesis. Contraries, potential or realized, lurk everywhere in nature and in human nature. Right action consists in the power to perceive them and to choose the worthier alternative.³⁹⁶

If the style of *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* is indeed the key to understanding its moral purpose, then Greene's use of the same style reveals a markedly different purpose. He uses Lyly's stylistic formulae for his own ends. The 'worthier alternative' which presents itself to Lyly's characters is always a rigidly Christian one, whereas in the world of Greene's fiction there is a wider range of possibilities. Barish writes that Greene's early romances show him 'improvising on Lyly's master principle of contrarieties.'³⁹⁷ This assessment sees Greene's improvisation as simply providing more of the same, the invention of new pairs of opposites which will fit neatly into the mould of their Lylian models. Greene's antitheses are technically in the Lylian manner, but they do not derive from the Mediaeval world-view suggested by G.K. Hunter in which Man is presented with absolute moral alternatives. Lyly's 'master principle of contrarieties' is based on a rigid set of moral sureties that Greene does not share. He is not interested in the unquestioning presentation of the desirability of conventional virtue; indeed he frequently questions the value, and fairness, of silence and obedience. His concern is more often with the psychological dilemmas of his protagonists who are torn between contradictory personal choices which are emotional

³⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 19.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 25.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 24.

rather than straightforwardly moral. Greene's frequent use of *apostrophes* in which such questions as *Whom should I love? Whom can I trust?* are agonized over, makes the process of internal debate a genuine exercise in ambiguity and more problematic than Barish intends in his use of the word. In this way, dramatic interest and credibility are added to narratives which proceed largely by way of a formal rhetorical paradigm, the oration. The choices with which Greene presents his characters have arisen in a world which lacks neat parameters of right and wrong. Possibilities are uncertain, grey, rather than black and white as in the increasingly sententious exhortations which Euphues himself utters. Even a brazen courtesan like Clarynda in *Mamillia Part 2* is allowed the space to explore and justify her selection from the set of choices open to her, even though they exist in a world very distant from reality.

As evidence of the differences he perceives between the prose written by Lyly and Greene, G.K. Hunter cites two passages which deal with a similar situation, the attempt by a character to discover the reason for his friend's sadness. The passages are well chosen and reveal a good deal about the way that the two authors handle the euphuistic style. My conclusions are quite different from Hunter's, however. In the extract from Greene's *Mamillia Part 2*, Ferragus speaks to Pharicles and in the extract from *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, Philautus speaks to Euphues.

I am sorie, friend Pharicles, to finde you in this dumpe, so am I the more greeved because I cannot conjecture the cause: and although it be the dutie of a friend to be copartner of his friendes sorrow, yet I dare not wish my selfe a partaker of your sadnesse, because I suppose you are offering incense at the aultar of such a Saint, at whose shryne you will not so much as once vouchsafe that I should but sing *placebo*. If this be the care that combers your minde, good Pharicles, find some other time for your amorous passions: But if it be any sinister mishap which hath driven you into this dumpe, either want of wealth, losse of friends or other frowne of Fortune, only reveale, Pharicles wherein I may pleasure thee, and I will supplie thy want with my weale, and cure thy care with such comfortable counsell as my simple wit can afoord.

*Mamillia Part 2*³⁹⁸

³⁹⁸ *Mamillia Part 2*, pp. 42-3.

Friend and fellow, as I am not ignorant of thy present weakness, so I am not privy of the cause; and although I suspect many things, yet can I assure myself of no one thing. Therefore, my good Euphues, for these doubts and dumps of mine, either remove the cause or reveal it. Thou hast hitherto found me a cheerful companion in thy mirth, and now shalt thou find me as careful with thee in thy moan. If altogether thou may'st not be cured, yet may'st thou be comforted. If there be anything that either by my friends may be procured, or by my life attained, that may either heal thee in part or help thee in all, I protest to thee by the name of a friend that it shall rather be gotten with the loss of my body than lost by getting a kingdom.

*Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*³⁹⁹

Hunter draws attention to significant differences between the prose styles of Lyly and Greene, but the comparison, as far as he is concerned, is always in Lyly's favour. Greene's 'natural idiom', in Hunter's opinion, 'is the long invertebrate sentence, and though he [Greene] may fall into short-breathed *paramoions* as tricks of style these do not reflect his natural way of looking at experience.'⁴⁰⁰ In other words, for purposes of decoration, Greene continually departs from his main point, thereby retarding the forward thrust of the sentence. I would argue that what Hunter deems the weakness of Greene's prose style is in fact its strength.

Hunter contends that Greene's use of antitheses is a 'mannerism' and that his sentences develop without depending on them. 'The mind wanders in this sentence from topic to topic', according to Hunter and the suggestion is that any sense of real structure is an illusion and that Greene tacks on to his sentences whatever jumps into his head as he is writing.⁴⁰¹ According to Hunter's analysis, the mention of a possible romantic relationship on Pharicles' part is simply an example of a detail 'turning up'. This is also held to be the case with the possible misfortunes which may have befallen Pharicles and caused his current melancholy. These are 'a side issue, an elaborate hypothesis which the situation does not require.'⁴⁰² I have quoted Hunter's criticisms

³⁹⁹ *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, p. 65.

⁴⁰⁰ G.K.Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 273.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 275.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.* p. 276.

at some length because I believe it is necessary to refute in detail this misrepresentation of Greene's craftsmanship. I see it as an attractive quality of his prose in this extract, and not an undermining fault, that 'Greene does not use his piled-up figures to augment our understanding of the argument, but in augmentation of the emotional penumbra within which this argument is placed.' The 'emotional penumbra' is precisely what is likely to engage a reader, then or now. Lyly is following a single thread, whereas Greene's words are written in the context of a complicated back story with which the details of the extract interact. This makes our reading of the extract a complex one because we are in possession of knowledge that Ferrago does not possess, that not only is Pharicles in flight from his dishonourable behaviour to Mamillia and Publia, but he has just received a declaration of love from the infamous courtesan Clarynda. He is torn between his continuing love for Mamillia, although he now believes that he has lost her for ever, and the temptation to accept what is actually available, the love of a rich and beautiful harlot. Ferragus' speculations about the possible existence of a lady in Pharicles' past create a frisson for the reader who wonders how Pharicles will react to such a direct hit when his mind and conscience are troubled by thoughts about three women and not simply one. The situation is dynamic and capable of a variety of outcomes. The reader's perspective is widened by the regular introduction of new material which is not, despite what Hunter argues, an agglutinative irrelevance. We are aware of unsettling possibilities and our conjectures engage us emotionally with the material.

Hunter's praise of Lyly's 'line of scholastic logic' and his suggestion that the 'neatness with which he dovetails these different interests is a neatness beyond the power and probably outside the interests of Greene', seems to me to invert the truth. Lyly's opening sentences read like a simplification of Greene's. They are bare bones

which cry out to have flesh added to them in the way that Greene manages to do. Hunter admires Lyly's prose because 'there is no suggestion of the mind wandering through different topics', but to praise 'scholastic logic' in which one point inevitably and straightforwardly follows on from another, is to ignore all the incidental pleasures we enjoy when reading literature. It is to prefer the summary over the story, the undemanding and banal narrative over the complex and challenging one. Hunter praises Lyly for his technical control: 'Interest is focused on the verbs and their subjects...not on the relatives which serve, in Greene, to take us from one topic to another ... This keeps his [Philautus'] speech, as it were, pointing always in one direction.'⁴⁰³ This direction is, of course, towards an unforgivingly strict morality which offers no incidental delights by way of unexpected relative clauses, and no stepping away from the syntactic or righteous path. Greene is surely to be admired, not condemned, for the way in which he moves beyond the 'vertebrae' of his sentences to flesh out other possibilities. His work never approaches the serendipitous brilliance of Shakespeare, but how much richer it seems than Lyly's sermonizing.

Walter N. King is concerned with 'how to read the rhetorical set-piece in any Elizabethan prose work'⁴⁰⁴ and, although his focus is on Lyly, his observations are directly applicable to Greene. He argues that, 'Lyly is adapting the rhetorical set-piece to narrative purposes, reducing it from a thing-in-itself to a functional part of a larger whole,' and asks 'if, then, this be the case with other Elizabethan prose writers – with Gascoigne, with Pettie, with Greene, with Lodge, to name but a few?'⁴⁰⁵ The answer to this question, in Greene's case, is a resounding *Yes* as the story-telling in his early romances is achieved mostly through a connected set of orations.

⁴⁰³ G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 275.

⁴⁰⁴ Walter N. King, 'John Lyly and Elizabethan Rhetoric' in *Studies in Philology*, 52: 2 (Apr. 1955), 149 – 161 (p. 150).

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 161.

The orations spoken or written by Greene's characters are either attempts to persuade themselves or others of a particular point or they are more open-ended explorations. As Peter Mack has pointed out, 'Disputation requires different forms of organization from the oration,'⁴⁰⁶ but it is possible to incorporate the topics of Aristotelian logic in a rhetorical oration. Disputations and orations both arrive at a conclusion but, whereas conclusions in the former are apparently irrefutable because they have been reached following a process of deduction, many of the 'proofs' cited in an oration are unreliable because they are emotionally, rather than logically, derived. The conclusion may therefore not stand up to close scrutiny.

In his analysis of an extract from *Euphues* in which Euphues responds to criticism of him by the wise old Eubulus, King demonstrates how Lyly has employed 'all the Ciceronian topics suitable to Euphues' argument: genus and species, similarity, difference implying definition, cause and effect, contradiction, circumstance, contraries and consequents.⁴⁰⁷ These he buttressed with arguments drawn from authority, consensus of opinion, and experience.'⁴⁰⁸ Many of these topics can be discovered in the extract from *Mamillia* quoted by Hunter and which he accused of lacking direction. Not only has Greene made thoughtful use of the tools of logic, but this plea by Ferragus to Pharicles is also a six-part oration which proceeds to its structured conclusion. Add to this the narrative context which I discussed above and we have a complex piece of writing.

Hunter quotes the whole of Ferragus' speech to Pharicles whereas I have only cited a portion which ends part-way through the *confutatio*. In terms of an oration, we have the *exordium*, 'friend Pharicles', with the closeness of their relationship

⁴⁰⁶ Peter Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, p. 71.

⁴⁰⁷ Euphues, the *Anatomy of Wit*, pp. 40-45.

⁴⁰⁸ Walter N. King, *John Lyly*, p. 156.

intensified by the introductory 'I am sorie'. From the *narratio* we learn that Pharicles is 'in this dumpe', while the *divisio* consists of Ferragus' question why this should be so. Thus far, in terms of the Topics, Greene employs 'circumstances', in the information provided in the *narratio*, and 'species' in defining a friend as someone who feels it a 'duty' to be a 'copartner' of sorrow. There is 'contradiction' in the fact that, despite being a close friend, Ferragus does not actually wish to share Pharicles' sorrow, and 'difference implying definition' as he reveals himself to be a man who avoids sadness if he can. The *confirmatio* of the oration relates to Ferragus' belief that, if love is the cause of such sadness, then Pharicles should indulge it at some other time because only he himself is able to deal with it. The *confutatio*, as is often the case, begins at 'but' when Ferragus considers other possible reasons for his friend's melancholy, ones he can help him overcome. The Topics of 'cause and effect/consequents' are evident in 'if this be the care that combers your minde' and in the effects of the 'sinister mishap', as well as in the promise that if Pharicles reveals the cause of his distress, then Ferragus will do his best to help him. Euphuistic phrasing appears in the examples of *parison*, 'care that cumbers...passions' and 'either want...Fortune', both of which contain alliteration, but the pattern of the alliterated 'c' in the two short phrases 'cure thy care' and 'comfortable counsell' gives us a short example of *paramoion*. These euphuistic touches and the persistent alliteration only take hold as Ferragus builds up to his climactic declaration that he will do more for Pharicles than he can put into words. They add to the intensity and drive of the speech, belying Hunter's dismissive tone and also avoiding criticism of the kind King directs at Lyly regarding his 'mania for lingering over individual points. Each must be

illustrated and not with one illustration but with as many as occur to him.’⁴⁰⁹ Such a charge could, however, fairly be laid at *Gwydonius*’ door.

The extract from *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* has a similar *exordium, narratio* and *divisio*, and it may well be that Greene had it in mind when writing *Mamillia*. There is no clear *confirmatio* or *confutatio*, rather a long series of antitheses on which Philautus suggests a range of causes of Euphues’ sadness and his ability to cure them. Love only appears as a possibility towards the end of the speech, but there is no sense of a dramatic climax because most of the final sentences are proverbs which diminish the impact. On the evidence of this analysis, the passage from Greene appears a more carefully shaped and varied unit than Lyly managed. There are many orations in all of Greene’s early romances and they are numerous in *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* too, but the pervasiveness of this rhetorical paradigm in English literary productions of the late sixteenth century has still to be fully recognized. Perceptions have hardly changed in the fifty years since Hunter wrote, as if speaking of a rarity which had escaped general notice, that, ‘Professor Ringler has pointed out that the speech of Euphues at the house of Lucilla (1. 201-3) is in the form of a classical oration, and that the reply of Euphues to Eubulus earlier in the book can likewise be drawn into its formal components.’⁴¹⁰

Robert Greene’s Use of Rhetorical Structural Paradigms and Figures in Mamillia

Belying Roland Barthes’ dismissal of rhetoric as merely ‘a manual of recipes’ which was ‘exhausted and died in the “rhetoric” class,’⁴¹¹ and C.S. Lewis’ assertion that ‘Rhetoric is the greatest barrier between us and our ancestors,’⁴¹² it was for Greene a

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 161.

⁴¹⁰ G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 45.

⁴¹¹ Roland Barthes, *The Semiotic Challenge*, transl: Richard Howard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 13-14.

⁴¹² C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 61.

tool, not an end in itself, as close reading of *Mamillia* demonstrates. Modern critics might show a passing awareness of the rhetoric in Greene's early works, but, with the notable exception of Peter Mack, they have not explored it. A brief survey of their comments will reveal just how much this aspect of Greene's art cries out for rehabilitation. In my subsequent close exegesis of sections of *Mamillia*, I shall demonstrate the complexity of what they have tended to dismiss.

The common view among critics that Greene was a literary journeyman necessarily leads to the assumption that his early romances merely imitate what was currently fashionable. If rhetorical subtlety is not expected, it is unlikely to be spotted. Helen Hackett glances at the influence on Greene of 'the elaborate rhetoric of Lyly's *Euphues*' suggesting that the two men were writing in exactly the same way, but offering no explanation of this rhetoric or its elaboration.⁴¹³ One is given the impression, by such critical shorthand as Hackett's, that Greene's language is merely fancy or otiose, but the rhetorical paradigms on which *Mamillia* is based are never hinted at. Lori Newcomb similarly points out the 'scholarly nature' of Greene's writing and his 'Cambridge training' and then moves on.⁴¹⁴ It was, in fact, Greene's rhetorical training at school and university which underpinned, and even made possible, his early writing.

Steve Mentz asserts that '*Mamillia*, all readers concur, is a two-part romance explicitly modelled after Lyly's two *Euphues* volumes' but he offers no analysis of Greene's style.⁴¹⁵ *Mamillia* may owe a stylistic debt to Lyly but it differs hugely in purpose. Robert Maslen, in the same volume as Mentz, comments that 'Greene continued to ventriloquize the voices of clever women' throughout his career.'⁴¹⁶ I

⁴¹³ Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, p. 84.

⁴¹⁴ Lori Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance*, p. 41.

⁴¹⁵ Steve Mentz, 'Forming Greene' in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 125.

⁴¹⁶ Robert W. Maslen, 'Robert Greene and the Uses of Time' in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 170.

would go further than this and argue that the ‘clever’ woman Mamillia uses rhetoric to defend herself and that she herself is the ventriloquist who appropriates the rhetorical language of an educated man, her suitor Pharicles, and turns it back on him. When Maslem states that, ‘female fidelity needs to be as mobile as infidelity’, his reference to mobility could also be applied to the quick-witted, rhetorical kind.⁴¹⁷ Kurt Melnikoff admits that Mack ‘recognises ‘Greene’s and Lodge’s extensive and varied use of rhetoric and dialectic in their pamphlet material.’ He further claims that Mack’s ‘overarching purpose is to show how important the conventions of formal oratory were to the production and presumably the reception of sixteenth-century fiction.’⁴¹⁸ Unlike Mack, Melnikoff does not apply these comments to the analysis of the language of any part of *Mamillia*. C.S. Lewis expresses irritation that Greene ‘teases us by seeming to offer a story and then frustrating us with endless digressions, tirades, and letters’,⁴¹⁹ and Katharine Wilson goes no closer to the rhetorical heart of Greene’s texts than to comment on the model of Lyly’s ‘long speeches involving fabulous fauna and flora’.⁴²⁰ These ‘long speeches’ are the orations and letters which she does not identify as such and the fauna and flora are those cited in Greene’s many *exempla*. These *exempla* are the decoration of his rhetoric and to observe that ‘Greene cites fewer examples of weird nature in his works than Lyly’ is to trivialize him.⁴²¹ The fact that she talks of ‘monologues’ in which ‘Greene moves the debate inward’⁴²² again fails to connect with the way that these monologues follow the pattern of formal orations and that Mamillia herself is much more than the ‘bookish fool’ Wilson suggests she is.⁴²³

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. p. 183.

⁴¹⁸ Kurt Melnikoff, ‘Recent Studies in Robert Greene’ in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 207.

⁴¹⁹ C.S.Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 420.

⁴²⁰ Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship*, p. 75

⁴²¹ Ibid. p. 77.

⁴²² Ibid, pp. 77-8.

⁴²³ Ibid. p. 84.

In the adjective ‘bookish’ is subsumed Mamillia’s highly adept use of rhetoric which makes her more than a match for the philandering Pharicles.

Appendix 3 is an analysis in tabular form of *Mamillia Part 1* in order to demonstrate how the work proceeds as a series of orations, whether as declarations, apostrophes or letters. This table should be used together with Appendix 2, the list of rhetorical figures. In Appendix 3 I have made clear both where each of the six sections of the oration begins and of the flexible way in which Greene makes use of the paradigm. In its barest terms, the table shows that the same can be said of *Mamillia* as Madelon Gohlke says of *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, that it consists of ‘a series of lengthy set speeches accompanying a few critical plot junctures.’⁴²⁴

Before I move on to the close reading of particular examples of the use of rhetorical structures in *Mamillia*, they need to be set in the context of the whole work. The comments of Peter Mack and Jeff Dolven on Elizabethan prose fiction are very apposite here. Mack’s reference to the ‘soliloquies in Lyly’s *Euphues*’⁴²⁵ exactly describes the nature of the dialogue in *Mamillia*. Characters speak to each other and to themselves almost always in soliloquies of varying lengths. It is these soliloquies, these highly self-conscious and highly-wrought rhetorical performances, that are the distinguishing feature and, indeed, the achievement of *Mamillia*. Jeff Dolven could just as easily have been talking of Greene as Lyly when he writes that:

In the *Anatomy* Lyly barely reports events. Characters enter and leave rooms or go from house to house, but it is rarely more than a line or two before they start talking to one another or to themselves. Fictional space serves Lyly only to co-ordinate dialogue, and the book moves with conspicuous, schematic haste through its love plot.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ Madelon Gohlke, ‘Reading *Euphues*’ in *Criticism*, 19:2 (Spring 1977): pp. 103-117 (p. 103).

⁴²⁵ Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p. 26.

⁴²⁶ Jeff Dolven, *Scenes of Instruction in Renaissance Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 81.

Dolven goes on to ask, ‘How then does the *Anatomy* ever fill the 66 pages between Euphues’ arrival in Naples and his return to Athens? The answer is talk, and in particular, argument and inward deliberation.’⁴²⁷ This is exactly the case in *Mamillia*. Short bridging passages of narrative or description are used to connect, often very long, orations and letters which might all be described as ‘soliloquies’. C.S. Lewis has labelled such works ‘this static and declamatory school of fiction.’⁴²⁸ Richard McCabe has noted the ‘meagre’ narrative in *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* which causes him to categorize the work as ‘an anatomy or analysis of a problem central to humanist thought, the relationship between eloquence and truth.’⁴²⁹ A similar observation might be made about *Mamillia*. The narrative consists mostly of verbal interactions in which characters employ their rhetorical skills to deceive, to conceal the truth of what they are thinking and feeling, and either get the better of their interlocutors or, at least, not be put at a disadvantage by them. Madelon Gohlke has accurately captured this in her comments on *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* when she writes that, ‘It is assumed by everyone in *Euphues* ... that people do not say what they mean, that one must listen for the hidden message in the apparent one. Language given this assumption, is designed to be obstructive.’⁴³⁰

Greene’s ‘soliloquies’ may also be thought of as arias, theatrical, self-aware moments in which characters posture towards each other or dramatically, and in private, exclaim about their fate, situation or feelings. These ‘arias’ are linked by ‘recitative’, short passages of scene-setting or dialogue of a purely functional kind. The ‘arias’ should not be dismissed as long-winded and somehow extraneous because

⁴²⁷ Ibid. p. 82.

⁴²⁸ C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 421.

⁴²⁹ Richard McCabe, “Wit, Eloquence, and Wisdom in *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*.” *Studies in Philology* 81.3 (1984) 299-325 (p. 299).

⁴³⁰ Madelon Gohlke, ‘Reading Euphues’, p. 105.

they are, in fact, the very essence of the work. They are used artfully by Greene to reveal character and values and his insights concerning the nature of discourse. G.K. Hunter's comments on *Mamillia* are typical of those who do not acknowledge that the orations provide the narrative rather than being digressions from it. He says that, 'the innumerable letters, speeches, etc. which fill out the action are felt as impediments, for the narrative is sufficiently complex to require an attention to which these digressions are irrelevant.'⁴³¹

In the table of orations in Appendix 3, I show how Greene is very flexible in his use of the oration paradigm. The *exordium* is often followed by an introduction to the *narratio*, a kind of scene-setting in which the speaker offers lengthy generalizations on a topic before proceeding to the specific details of the *narratio* itself. Greene is similarly flexible in his use of the *confirmatio* and *confutatio*, the fourth and fifth sections of an oration. The basic paradigm is that the *confirmatio* should adduce arguments in support of the particular premise or point of view raised in the *divisio*. The purpose of the *confutatio* is to refute any counter arguments which might be raised. Greene is not always this straightforward. He may use these two sections of the oration to present different perspectives on a question or topic as opposed to offering a plain for or against. Helmut Bonheim has pointed out that this is an example of 'the binary structures to which Greene was addicted.' He has also noted that 'Such symmetries are a constant reminder that the author is a master of the planned narrative, and Greene was certainly that.'⁴³²

Another significant departure from the basic model is Greene's use of an interim *conclusio* in long orations. A character will arrive at a conclusion which, rather

⁴³¹ G.K. Hunter, *John Lyly*, p. 37.

⁴³² Helmut Bonheim, 'Robert Greene's *Gwydonius, the Carde of Fancie*', in *Anglia, Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie*, Band 96, (1978), pp. 45-64.

than being the final word, itself becomes a new question for debate, a second *divisio*. This in turn leads to a second *confirmatio* and *confutatio* and a new *conclusio*. The process may even be repeated with this second *conclusio*. I have not seen this modification of the basic paradigm described in any of the standard textbooks of rhetoric by Quintilian, the author of the *Ad Herenniam*, Erasmus or Thomas Wilson. My findings were confirmed by Professor Peter Mack, an acknowledged expert on Renaissance rhetoric. He wrote: ‘I don’t know of any writer on rhetoric who recommends using an interim conclusion but I can see that a writer might easily think that this would be valuable.’⁴³³

Just because this particular modification of the basic oration does not appear in textbooks does not mean that Greene was not taught to employ it at Cambridge, or even at his grammar school. The *Orationes* of Cicero, arguably the best examples of the rhetorician’s art, are listed among the set texts of both the Royal Grammar School, Norwich and of the Cambridge University course on rhetoric. It is highly probable that Greene was obliged to analyze them for their structure and *copia*. Such analysis would reveal that Cicero often makes use of an interim *conclusio*, and if the master Cicero did this, then the device was given huge authority. Cicero’s purpose in writing his orations was markedly different from that of Greene. Greene is dealing with fictive material and he is able to organize it more tightly than Cicero who lived in a time of huge political turmoil at the end of the Roman Republic when his life was in considerable danger. Greene depicts the emotional vacillations of his characters neatly and sharply, whereas Cicero, in the fourteen *Philippics* written against Mark Anthony for example, is obliged to hedge and shift, attacking and back-tracking because he is taking on an opponent who would like to kill him and who eventually managed to

⁴³³ Private correspondence, September 4th, 2019.

achieve this. My examination of the first half of the first *Philippic*, given in Appendix 5, shows how it, and others of Cicero's orations, could have provided Greene with the model, or the sanction, to modify the basic paradigm in the way that he regularly does.

Verbal Patterning in *Mamillia*

Greene's characters are all very aware of the power of language and conversations in his stories are frequently negotiations or strategic deployments of words. There is no place in his narratives for casual remarks, as the consequences of such thoughtlessness could be serious. Throughout, there are references to the 'Siren' power of language and of the ability of 'flatterers' and 'deceivers' to seduce and trick. Speeches are 'fraymed' rather than uttered spontaneously and the thought which goes into them is 'clarklie' ['carefully considered'] because speakers are all too aware of how easy it is to be caught by a verbal 'hooke' or be led into a 'trappe' or 'snare'. Such words abound in the text and a few examples, from the many, will suffice to show both the degree of mutual suspicion which exists between interlocutors and the consistency of the imagery Greene uses to present it.

When Mamillia's father Gonzaga sounds out Pharicles regarding his feelings for Mamillia. Pharicles is very aware of the game being played:

Pharicles found his fetch at the first word and therefore intending to be as wily as he was wise, gave false fire to his peece, thereby to blinde Gonzagas eyes, as warily as hee coulde looke and to winke, and yet not be spyed in this maner.⁴³⁴

Pharicles, on arriving in Saragossa, is careful to reveal nothing of himself to the ship's pilot who suspects he is unhappy in love:

Pharicles ...thought as closely to stand him the warde as he had clarkely given him the blow, and therfore trickt up his talke with this cunning sense.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ *Mamillia Part 1*, fol. 31ii.

⁴³⁵ *Mamillia Part 2*, p. 22.

The other significant vein of imagery which Greene uses throughout *Mamillia* may be described as commercial as it relates to the value placed on things and how the exchange of these items, language amongst them, is negotiated. This imagery is introduced in the epistle to 'The Gentlemen Readers' in *Part 1*. Greene writes: 'For there is no chaffer so charie, but some will cheape,' which he himself glosses as 'no ware so bad but some wil buy.'⁴³⁶ The words 'chaffer', 'charie' and 'cheape' recur again and again in the company of related words such as 'chapman' (a buyer and seller of goods), 'market', 'coyne', 'buying', 'selling', 'price', 'credite' and 'profite'.

With London in the process of becoming a great trading centre, commerce offered a ready set of metaphors for a variety of situations, discourse being one of them, probably because it involved an awareness of the need for strategy in the striking of bargains. 'Chaffer' throughout Greene's text varies in meaning depending on how a particular speaker decides to employ it. It signifies words as goods and also has the sense of a verbal transaction when Mamillia sends her first letter of advice to the Lady Modesta, 'friendly counsell, which so much the more is to be esteemed charie chafre',⁴³⁷ but it refers to a lifestyle when the courtesan Clarynda promises to abandon her immoral ways and 'make a change of my chaffre for better ware',⁴³⁸ her lifestyle, of course, being one in which she is paid for her favours.

The commodification of discourse as 'chaffer' reflects the way that characters trade speeches with each other, being careful not to give too much away or to agree to what might afterwards prove to be disadvantageous. Their words are like coins which are not to be wasted. The stated subject of *Mamillia* may well be the constancy of women, but it is equally language itself. Greene's presentation of it in commercial

⁴³⁶ *Mamillia Part 1*, Introductory Epistle.

⁴³⁷ *Mamillia Part 2*, p. 73.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 37.

terms informs us that the orations delivered within the narrative are not simply aesthetic exercises but a kind of verbal wealth to be used judiciously in important interpersonal exchanges.

Mamillia describes Pharicles' first overture towards her as a 'market' because his words have been offered to her as a payment for herself and she has rejected such a transaction.⁴³⁹ Receiving this 'frumpe' from her, Pharicles takes his leave in a flurry of mercantile terms:

As I have now begunne my market with buying my bondage, and selling my freedome, finding the ware I looked for, but the choice so charye, that no price will bee sette, hoping the champion will in time make a chaung of his chaffer for my coyne.⁴⁴⁰

Pharicles combines the image of language as currency, 'coyne', to be used in making a purchase, with a definition of chaffer as a physical object, Mamillia herself who refuses to be bought.

The significance of the verbal patterning mentioned above is that it makes clear Greene's insistence that language is powerful and dangerous. Mamillia herself is the character who most regularly voices reservations concerning what is said to her, usually when she is speaking to Pharicles. 'a dissembling minde hath more eloquence then a faythfull hart,' she tells him, warning us of the verbal subtleties to which deceivers have recourse,⁴⁴¹ and woe betide the woman who is taken in by them. As Mamillia says, 'a woman may knit a knot with her tongue, she cannot untie with all her teeth.'⁴⁴² Her wariness is shared by every other character in the work

⁴³⁹ *Mamillia Part I*, fol. 4i.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.* fol. 4i.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.* fol. 17i.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.* fol. 16ii.

Paratextual materials and authorial interpolations in *Mamillia*

The title page of *Mamillia Part 1* gives no indication of the extent to which Greene champions women in this work and condemns men as venal and dishonourable. Perhaps he did not wish, in his very first entry into print, to frighten off male readers, the most likely buyers of the pamphlet. The sub-title, 'A Mirrour or looking-glasse for the Ladies of Englande', suggests that readers will encounter a female character whose virtue could serve as a model to all Englishwomen, but it contains no hint of the powerful personalities we see in Mamillia herself and in Sylvia in *The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries*. The summary which follows the sub-title suggests that Gentlemen who give the appearance of being in love may be 'inveigled' by lust, the word 'inveigled' reducing the culpability on their part by suggesting that the lust to which they are prey is externally imposed, by Fortune or women we guess, rather than intrinsic to them

The title page of *Mamillia Part 1* may appear to be indulgent, forgiving even, towards regrettable male behaviour; the ensuing narrative is certainly not. In the final sentence of *Mamillia Part 2* Greene admits that, 'whether Pharicles proved as inconstant a husband as a faithlesse lover, I knowe not,' a statement which suggests an underlying lack of confidence on the author's part in the constancy of men.⁴⁴³

Greene's introductory epistle to 'The Gentlemen Readers' in *Mamillia Part 1* gives nothing at all away regarding the content of the work so these Gentlemen may well have been surprised when he regularly bursts into the narrative to pass comment on the action and its significance, addressing his remarks directly to them. They must have felt uncomfortable at being, by implication, included in the generality of men Greene castigates for a range of unworthy qualities, inconstancy and deceit being the

⁴⁴³ *Mamillia Part 2*, p. 69.

most significant. Greene does not seem able to contain himself when he launches into these attacks on men *per se* and in particular on those who verbally attack women. He delivers his spirited outbursts and then feels obliged to apologise for his ‘digression’⁴⁴⁴ and for ‘going beyonde my commission’.⁴⁴⁵

Most of the authorial interpolations in *Part I* follow something the unworthy Pharicles has said or done and they are highly critical of him and men like him, but there are two occasions when Greene slanders women himself. Perhaps because this is his first published work and he has yet to establish a relationship with a regular readership, he feels obliged to throw in the occasional insult which may appeal to the more conventional male reader. He says, ‘if men would never marry, they should never be married,’⁴⁴⁶ and ‘it is very hard to anger a woman with praising her, and especially if she thinks as much of her selfe as others speake.’⁴⁴⁷ Such criticisms of women’s shrewishness, their desire to dominate and their vanity were common currency and they are contradicted by everything else Greene writes in the rest of *Mamillia*. Indeed, on the page following the first observation quoted above, Greene asks for his readers’ indulgence ‘if I may enter into a womans thought, without offence.’⁴⁴⁸ This empathetic relationship with his female creations was to characterize the rest of Greene’s literary career. He takes to task ‘The Gentlemen of our time’ because they are fickle and insincere: ‘They like without love, and fancy, without affection, that their choice must needs change, because it is without reason.’⁴⁴⁹ He is particularly scathing about those who add their published voice to the attacks on women, those who ‘must fill up the

⁴⁴⁴ *Mamillia Part I*, fol. 30i.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.* fol. 13ii.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.* fol. 13ii.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.* fol. 16i.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.* fol. 14i.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.* fol. 20i.

page with slaundering of women, who scarsly know what a woman is.’⁴⁵⁰ One senses that Greene feels *he* does know what a woman is and that is why he is her enthusiastic champion. He is even worried that he is too harsh in his criticism of his own sex ‘because it is an evill dogge barks at his fellow.’⁴⁵¹

Renowned writers of the past come in for acerbic reproof from Greene. There is Euripides who ‘in his tragedies doth greatly exclaim against that sexe’ and who, Greene says, uses an argument often employed by contemporary detractors of women. Euripides ‘inferred a general by a particular which is absurd,’ and Greene scornfully asks whether all women are ‘to be naught, because some one is a shrewe?’

Greene’s harshest words are saved for the Italian poet ‘Mantuan’, Baptista Mantuanus, whose virulent attack on women in his *Fourth Eclogue* includes such lines (in George Turbervile’s translation of 1567) as:

Vile, greedy, catching, quarrelling aye
and strouting full of hate:
Of light beliefe, and bent to lies,
impatient of hir state.⁴⁵²

Greene is having none of this. He wishes that he ‘were able by wit or arte to be their [women’s] defender,’ because then he ‘would correct *Mantuans Egloge* intituled *Alphus*: or els if the Authour were alive, I woulde not doubt to perswade him in recompence of his error, to frame a new one.’⁴⁵³ If Greene has the resolution to demand the rewriting of such slanders against women in a widely-read work such as Mantuan’s *Eclogues*, it comes as no surprise that, during the course of his career, he

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. fol. 30i.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. fol. 29i.

⁴⁵² ‘Mantuan’, (Baptista Spagnolo 1448-1516), Carmelite scholar and prolific Latin poet whose *Eclogues* were widely read in schools although they do not appear in the syllabus of Norwich Grammar School. George Turbervile translation ed. by Douglas Bush (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1937) p. 35.

⁴⁵³ *Mamillia Part I*, fol. 30i.

created a whole series of confident, articulate women whose moral probity the male characters would do well to emulate.

The paratextual materials at the beginning of *Mamillia Part 2* are far more revealing about the content of the work than is the case with *Part 1*. The core of the book is specified in the sub-title as a presentation of the ‘constancie of Gentlewomen’ which is ‘canonised’ and defended against ‘unjust blasphemies’, presumably emanating from men, here characterized as ‘diverse iniurious persons’. Once more, the male world is presented as a source of qualities deemed unattractive and possibly base and Greene is the one who will set himself against it as the women’s champion. He insists that women’s ‘ficklenesse’ is only ‘supposed’ which means, perhaps, that the fickleness of men is a thing of fact. At the end of the address to the Gentlemen Readers, in which he disingenuously suggests that Mamillia lacks ‘the Pumistone of learning to polish her words with superficialloquence’, Greene presents a poem by ‘Richard Stapleton Gentleman’ addressed to the ‘Curteous and Courtly Ladies of England’. In this commendatory verse, Robert Greene steps aside and allows Richard Stapleton, to present the author to the Ladies of England as ‘your Champion’. The poem is so much a statement of intent on Greene’s part that it might well have been composed under his instruction. What Greene wants to say and how he intends to say it are spelt out. The readers will find that the book is couched in a ‘sugred happie style’ which is used to praise the ‘loyall faith’ of women in contrast to the ‘disgrace’ that characterizes the behaviour of men. Greene is the un-named ‘he’ who ‘champion like’ will defend ‘your faith, your troath, your loyaltie’ ‘against your foes’. There can be no doubt that Greene has chosen a very singular point of view in this book and the poem is his way of making this totally clear before we continue with the story. Stapleton, continuing the metaphor of the champion, tells us that Greene ‘cals out’, that is refutes,

the attacks on women perpetrated by the great Classical writers Euripides, Virgil, Juvenal and Martial. Not only does he confront them, he ‘mazeth Martiall quight’, a considerable claim. We are offered no reason for Greene’s adopting this particular perspective. It is simply stated as being the case and something for which women should be grateful.

Greene’s authorial interpolations are less frequent in *Mamillia Part 2* and occur near the beginning of the work. He continues to rail against the inconstancy of men, ‘for inconstancie men are farre more worthie to be condemned than women to be accused,’ and he deplores the hypocrisy of men who ‘with taunting tearmes and cutting quippes ... accuse women of wavering when as they themselves are such weathercocks as everie wind can turn their tippets.’⁴⁵⁴ He freely admits that his exasperation at such behaviour on the part of men means that he finds it impossible to keep silent and he does not care what his Gentlemen Readers think of his speaking out: ‘Where gentlemen (thinke of me what you please) I am constrained by conscience (considering the constancie of Publia) blame those blasphemous blabs which are never in their vaine except they be breathing out some injurious speeches against the constancie of women.’⁴⁵⁵ He also addresses one of his asides to ‘gentlewomen’ suggesting that he is aware of, or hopes to acquire, a female readership, one that might be delighted with the point of view he is putting forward so enthusiastically.

The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries has a female dedicatee, ‘Mary rogers, wife to M. Hugh Rogers of Everton’, which is appropriate for a work which consists entirely of letters exchanged between two women, Mamillia and ‘the yong and vertuous Virgin the Ladie Modesta’.

⁴⁵⁴ *Mamillia Part 2*, p .6.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 17.

An Analysis of Selected Orations in Mamilla Part 1

The orations taught in Elizabethan grammar schools were persuasive in nature, which is to say that they were addressed to someone who might well respond in kind. I shall therefore begin by analyzing a pair of conversational orations, the initial exchanges between Mamillia and Pharicles when he declares his love for her. I shall also explore two apostrophes, one in which Mamillia reveals how she feels at that pivotal moment when she is first made aware of Pharicles' feelings for her, and the second in which Pharicles finds himself torn between Mamillia and Publia. Greene's characters artfully frame their words before speaking and this is as true of the virtuous Mamillia as it is of the caddish Pharicles because she needs to be on her guard. It is advisable to be very 'charye' at all times when engaged in discourse in this story. Although only one character, Clarynda the courtesan in *Part 2*, is as unscrupulous as Pharicles, such a focus on self-preservation is true of almost all the characters in the narrative.

It is obvious as soon as we are introduced to Pharicles that language is going to be highly significant. Greene makes clear that there is something questionable about this young gentleman whom 'both nature and experience had taught the old proverbe, as perfect as his Pater noster, he that cannot dissemble, cannot lyve.'⁴⁵⁶ He is a villain, a 'mutable machavilian',⁴⁵⁷ who has a great deal of 'faigned eloquence' at his command and who plans to use 'teares at command, sighes, sobs, prayers, protestations, vowes, pilgrimages, and a thousand false othes to bind every

⁴⁵⁶ *Mamillia Part. I*, fol. 3i.

⁴⁵⁷ *Mamillia Part 2*, p. 40.

promise.⁴⁵⁸ So, we gather that the story will show us a woman under threat from a practised and determined schemer.

Pharicles comes upon Mamillia in the garden and obviously feels that no woman can withstand the onslaught of so many rhetorical tricks as he has at his command. I first identify the rhetorical figures Pharicles employs and then move on to a discussion of what Greene might really be doing as opposed to simply giving us the benefit of his mastery of the tricks of rhetoric. Pharicles to Mamillia:

Mistresse Mamillia, although my rashness merit blame, in presuming so farre to trouble your studye, yet the cause of my boldness deserveth pardon, sith it cometh of good will and affection: For where the offence proceedeth of love, there the pardon ensueth of course: But if you thinke the faulte so great, as remission cannot so easilye be graunted, I am here willing, that the heart which committed the cryme shall suffer the punishment due, and yeelde to be your slave for ever, to kneele at your Shryne as a true servant in parte of amendes.⁴⁵⁹

Exordium (He addresses her and tries to ingratiate himself with her.)

Mistresse *Mamillia*, although my rashnes merit blame

Narratio (The situation is that he has accosted her.)

in presuming so farre to trouble your studye

Divisio (The question at issue is how Mamillia is likely to react. He feels that he deserves to be pardoned.)

yet the cause of my boldnes deserueth pardon

Confirmatio (He deserves pardon because he is motivated by love.)

sith it cometh of good will and affection: For where the offence proceedeth of loue, there the pardon ensueth of course

Confutatio (If the counter argument is that he has been unmannerly, then he offers recompense.)

But if you thinke the faulte so great, as remission cannot so easilye be graunted, I am heere willing, that the heart which committed the cryme shall suffer the punishment due

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 3i.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 3ii.

Conclusio (He abjectly submits to her.)

and yeelde to be your slave for ever, to kneele at your Shryne as a true seruant in parte of amendes

Pharicles' speech begins as one would expect with an *epithet* and an *apostrophe*, 'Mistresse Mamillia'. Of course, in his *exordium*, he has to name her as this is a very personal appeal, but it would not do, since he is uncertain of her response, to use her name alone as that would be far too familiar. She is 'Mistresse', a term of respect which suggests that he will be careful not to overstep the mark of good breeding. He does not use stronger or more daring epithets such as 'beautiful' as, to do so, would be to show his hand too early and run the risk of disaster following hard upon his precipitateness. 'Mistresse' is formal and yet not too distant and leaves him scope to come nearer to her by degrees in the rest of what he has to say. He is about to ask for something, her love, which will mean everything to him, and so he must be very circumspect. At any moment he could take a false step from which there will be no rescue. At some point he will have to declare himself, but for the moment let him simply prepare the ground.

The opening two words are followed by an example of what Wilson calls the *entraunce* and a particular form of this which he entitles the *insinuation*, the preparing of the ground on which the speaker and the person addressed will meet. Although Wilson's definition of *insinuation* is intended as a general one, it is particularly apposite when one considers Pharicles' character and what he is trying to do. Wilson defines it thus: 'a close creeping in, to win favour with much circumstance.'⁴⁶⁰ The 'circumstance', which I take to mean supporting matter appropriate to the situation, is

⁴⁶⁰ Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, p. 99.

here quite abject as Pharicles apologizes for his ‘rashnes’ which, he acknowledges, deserves ‘blame’ but he must hope that, having gained respect for beginning with such a clear *mea culpa*, he will then be able to wriggle out of it. His firm assumption of blame begins to look much less certain and much more like an example of *fictio* (a proposition of the ‘what if...’ kind) when we notice the word ‘yet’ a little way ahead. ‘It may look like rudness, but...,’ is what he is saying.

The *narratio*, the story so far, is that Pharicles has burst in upon Mamillia uninvited. He is very careful to characterize Mamillia’s reading as ‘studye’ and not some trivial, and possibly girlish, pastime. He wants her to know that he has a high regard for everything she chooses to do, but it will come as a great shock to him to learn that she has a mind equal to any amount of study on his part because she proves more than a match when it comes to the wielding of rhetorical skills. He admits his fault, ‘presuming’, and the distress, ‘trouble’, this may have caused Mamillia, in both choices of word offering an example of *auxesis*, a stronger word than might be deemed necessary.

The *divisio*, the problem to be resolved, is whether such an intrusion ‘deserveth pardon’. He is very careful to suggest that her goodwill towards him is a thing to be expected (on account of his ‘goodwill’ to her) before he comes to the whole point of his accosting her, that he wishes her to love him. This declaration must wait until he can be sure that he has sufficiently insinuated himself into her good books. He tries to achieve this in the *confirmatio* by the stages of an *incrementum*, moving from the unthreatening ‘good will’ to the risky ‘affection’ and ending with the very dangerous word ‘love’ which brings his feelings for her completely into the open. Now is the point at which Mamillia could reject him out of hand for such presumption, but he attempts to forestall this by calling to his aid a very faulty *syllogismus* which would

have us believe that love pardons all (and therefore Pharicles himself) but which has a logically unsound and unproven second line. Line one of the syllogism states that he has behaved rashly and deserves blame.⁴⁶¹ The second line asserts that the reason for his behaviour is his goodwill towards Mamillia. He therefore deserves pardon, hence the triumphant assertion of the third line, an *acclamatio*, because love forgives every fault. The trouble is that he and the reader know that his actions are motivated by desire rather than goodwill and so the apparent logic of the syllogism cannot stand. Greene has here strayed into the language of dialectic, the university-taught discipline that made great use of the syllogism and required participants to question the logic of all words and definitions used in the course of debate. The question *But whose love?* needs to be asked. Just because a man loves a woman, it does not follow that she should forgive every one of his peccadillos if she does not love him in return. This *acclamatio* is also a *sententia* which is presented as if it is a truism that the whole world accepts, ‘of course’, meaning both ‘as a logical consequence’ and ‘naturally’. This *sententia* accords with Erasmus’ rule that it must be related in content to the general theme of the writing.

The word ‘love’ now hangs in the air between Pharicles and Mamillia. How will she react once his intentions have become clear? He has cunningly attempted to provide her with an answer to his declaration, that ‘pardon ensueth of course’, but events may prove entirely otherwise. Pharicles cannot rely on an easy ‘pardon’ and so he employs the *confutatio* to disarm any reservations she has about his sincerity by submitting totally to her. His martyred tone we already expected from the earlier mention by Greene that Pharicles was willing to use ‘sighes, sobs, prayers’ and his

⁴⁶¹ Thomas Wilson calls the first line of a syllogism the ‘Major’ Proposition or ‘Proposition at Large’, the second line the ‘Minor’ Proposition, with the third being the *Conclusio*. *The Rule of reason, contayning the Arte of Logike*, (1551), Henry E. Huntington Library copy of 1584? edition still with 1567 on title page, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 25814.

prostration before Mamillia is an extravagant rhetorical posture. Physically and verbally he is at her feet. Pharicles says: 'I am heere willing, that the heart which committed the crime, shall suffer the punishment due.' Picturing the heart as the guilty party may be seen as a *synecdoche*, the part given for the whole, when it is the complete man who has committed the error and not simply a single organ, or it could be read as *prosopopographeia*, the heart personifying the man. The declaration of Pharicles' feelings builds throughout the oration by means of *incrementum* leading to the *epiphonema*, a dramatic flourish in which Pharicles pictures himself as Mamillia's 'slave for ever', kneeling before the 'Shryne' of the woman whom he now describes as a goddess. To call his transgression of daring to love her a crime, and to transform her into a deity, is the *hyperbole* or *superlatio* one sees many times in Mediaeval courtly romances in which the lover addresses his mistress in the language of Marian veneration and petition, admitting his sins and asking for grace in the remitting of them. Pharicles has moved from a rational assumption of 'pardon' to grovelling before his adored one. He rounds off his declaration of love with a final *epithet*. He is not simply Mamillia's; he is her 'true servant', the adjective being a particularly ironic one when we consider what we know about his character. He is saying that Mamillia needs no more proof of his sincerity, surely, than his own assertion of it and he rests his case, confident of success.

As Greene has already let us into the secret of Pharicles' real nature we know that he speaks as a potential ravisher rather than a true lover and we fear for Mamillia's resolution and safety. We might expect the affronted maiden to declare her lack of interest in him in straightforward terms which reflect her sex, status and inclinations. In fact, it turns out to be a battle of rhetoric in which Mamillia more than holds her own. She takes the words he has used and sends them back with interest.

Exordium Maister Pharicles,

Narratio (The situation at present - neither has gained from his arrival.)

although your sodaine arrival did not greatly hinder my study, I thinke it did not greatly profit your selfe: so that your absence might have more pleased you, and better contented me.

Divisio (The question at issue is the nature of his motive.)

And where you say the offence proceedeth of good will and affection,

Confirmatio (She gives no credence to his claim of sudden, overwhelming feelings for her.)

I am not so madde to thinke, that the hearb *Sisibrium* wil sprout and sprig to a great branch in a momente: that the colde yron will burne at the sight of the fire: but hee that will iuggle must playe his feates vnder the boorde, or els his halting will be spied.

Confutatio (He offers his service as recompense for his intrusion, but she will have absolutely none of it)

And where in recompense of your fault, you proffer your seruice, I will haue no Gentlemen my seruaunts, unlesse for their Livery I should giue them a chaungeable suite:

Conclusio (She gives him his marching orders)

and therefore if your market be ended, and your deuotion done, you haue as good leaue to goe, as to come.

Pharicles perceiving the frumpe, as one that was maister of his occupation, serued her againe of the same sauce.⁴⁶²

Mamillia is certainly ‘somewhat abashed’ by this unexpected avowal of love, but she is neither intimidated nor won over by it. In fact, she is able to respond to Pharicles’ rhetorical display with a determined rhetoric of her own that matches his linguistic trickery with a similar range of rhetorical figures also arranged in the form of an oration. Her language is ‘in the same coyne’ which alerts us to the fact that, although a woman, Mamillia has at her command rhetorical resources at least equal to those of this spotted and inconstant man. When Greene tells us that Mamillia ‘payde

⁴⁶² *Mamillia Part. I*, fol.4i.

him his debte', we are to understand that she proves more than a match for Pharicles, which is a cause of great surprise to him. Her reply is about half as long again as Pharicles' first overture which says something both about Mamillia's command of rhetoric and about her determination to see off this most unwelcome suitor. She is, however, always courteous and never strays beyond the bounds of decorum, but the import of what she says is quite clear: she will have none of it.

Mamillia's *entraunce* is similar to that of Pharicles. Her *exordium* contains the *apostrophe*, 'Maister' and so matches his salutation of 'Mistresse', but he can have no idea of what he is about to receive. She dispenses with an *insinuation*, because there is absolutely no need for her to seek to gain his goodwill, and moves straight into the *narratio*, the assessment of the situation as it now stands. The gist is that he has not hindered her reading by his declaration but nor has he gained anything for himself and she wishes him gone. Adroitly, she takes his words and returns them with interest. She balances 'hinder' and 'profit' in an *antitheton* or *contentio* (an antithesis) that makes it clear he has wasted his time, employing a similarity in the cadences of her phrasing, *similiter cadens*, which, reinforced by the sibilance of 'sodaine', 'study' and 'selfe' and the fact that the third of these words is an emphatic monosyllable, drives home her point that she does in fact resent his presence. As if to show Pharicles that he is utterly mistaken if he confidently assumes that he possesses the rhetorical resources to overcome the resistance of a mere woman, Mamillia then provides a second set of *contentiones* which make her point even more powerfully. His absence would have been better for both of them, she says, ending this part of her response with another powerful monosyllable, the very significant 'me'. It reminds him and us, the readers, that Mamillia has a very strong sense of her own worth and independence and that she

is not prepared to submit to anyone's bidding simply because a man like Pharicles believes it to be his right.

Having stated that, above all things, she will only tolerate what contents her, and that she, and only she, will establish the parameters of her world, Mamillia now turns, in the brief *divisio* of her reply, to what she considers the major point at issue, Pharicles' sincerity. She begins with the device of *adjudicatio* (quoting what someone has said and then commenting on it) taking what he has said, 'where you say', and moving immediately into the *confirmatio* where a pair of *exempla* show her scoffing at the very idea of such a dramatic sea-change as he has claimed. The thrust of Mamillia's two *exempla* is that Pharicles' avowed love is too sudden and surprising to be believed. She would need to be 'madde' to take him at his word, a dramatic and mocking *epithet* which shows the futility of his suit and her highly negative opinion of him. She embellishes her *exempla* with *contentio*, the contrast between 'sprigg' and 'branch', images drawn from the natural world in the way suggested by the various handbooks on rhetoric, and the *epithets*, 'great' and 'colde', increasing the notion of the utterly ridiculous nature of what he has claimed. By means of *incrementum*, she has moved from the image of a twig on the instant becoming a branch to the absurd notion of iron spontaneously combusting. Please do not insult me with your ridiculous suggestion that I have had such an effect on you, she is saying to him, the phrase 'colde yron' also reminding him of the state of her feelings with regard to *him*: she feels nothing at all and is determined to keep it that way. She is both cold and very firm indeed. The *exempla* are followed by a single, trenchant *sententia* which does not explicitly name Pharicles a rogue but which makes it quite clear that this is what she considers him to be. Her image is of a trickster, and not a particularly skilful one. If you are trying to take me in, she is saying, you will need to be a lot better at the tricks

you play. This is not a challenge, of course, merely a statement that she has seen what he is up to. Pharicles cannot fail to be mortified by the fullness of her *notatio* (a description of a character type) that is contained within the *sententia*. The man ‘that will juggle’ [seek to deceive or trick], Pharicles himself, has clumsily kept his hands above rather than ‘under the boorde’, perhaps through over-confidence that any woman will be an easy conquest for him. His dishonest behaviour, his ‘halting’, his hiding of the lady under the cups as it were, has been all too apparent. A major theme of *Mamillia* is language and the uses to which it may be put. Quite clearly, Greene presents it here as juggling, a dishonest and dangerous activity which Mamillia has both seen through and thwarted. She is now ready for her *conclusio* which takes the form of a lengthy *epiphonema*, a dramatic rhetorical flourish which gives Pharicles his marching orders in a very witty way. He had offered her his service and she declares that, if a gentleman were indeed in her service, she would insist on changing his ‘suite’, his clothing or his demand, a play on words, or *ambiguitas* (a double meaning - cited by Cicero and Quintilian but not Erasmus), which makes it clear that she does not wish Pharicles to declare his love for her ever again.

Pharicles thought her a mere woman who could be tricked with words and she has used words more skilfully than he did and swatted him away. The world of men is, significantly, characterized by Mamillia as a ‘market’. Their words are to do with buying and selling, with vulgar commerce, with trickery and contrivance (‘if your market be ended’) and she, adopting a higher standpoint, is having none of it and will not buy from him. Pharicles regroup. He is aware that he has resoundingly lost round one. Greene puts this succinctly as Pharicles ‘perceiving the frumpe’, the put-down.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶³ The OED cites Wilson’s *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553) as the earliest use of ‘frump’ n. with the meaning of ‘a mocking speech or action; a flout, jeer’. ‘Flout’ best suits the meaning here.

Pharicles is, however, ‘maister of his occupation’, the occupation of words, and he accosts Mamillia for a second time. These exchanges leave both Mamillia and Pharicles in a very unsettled state which leads to a lengthy outpouring of their feelings later when each is alone. Their words are, however, addressed to themselves and not to someone in their confidence; words are too risky for that. These outbursts are structured as orations and, once again, show both speakers adept at the use of many kinds of amplification or *copia*.

This first exchange between Pharicles and Mamillia shows the versatility of the oration in Greene’s hands. The characters of the two speakers are revealed far more than might be assumed if one were to be guided by those critics who see only digressive wordiness. I call it an exchange rather than a conversation because the use of the oration paradigm in speech inevitably leads to characters squaring up to each other and declaring their thoughts at length. The failure to find the quick conversational back-and-forth expected in a modern novel is a major reason why critics tend to deny Greene’s pamphlets a place in the evolution of that particular literary form. His pamphlets are also held to contain little of genuine psychological interest. In their defence I would say that they are nevertheless subtle prose fictions, albeit of a specialized kind, and they deserve subtlety in their reading rather than an impatient dismissal.

The arrangement of declaration and response reflects Greene’s habit of pairing his material, the ‘binary’ patterning observed by Bonheim. Thus, letters tend to be written in pairs and, if one character delivers an apostrophe to him or herself, this is often paralleled by a matching apostrophe on the part of a second character who is in some way involved with the first. Within orations, the *confirmatio* and *confutatio* are frequently not arguments for and against a topic, but a pair of alternatives, or simply

two perspectives. Mack regards this kind of ‘divided soliloquy’ as no more than a showy rhetorical trick, ‘an opportunity for the display of this skill’.⁴⁶⁴ I would argue that the material presented in this ‘binary’ form is always germane to the issue exercising the character who is speaking and is not an example of rhetorical flamboyance foisted onto the narrative.

Although I cannot accept Samuel Lee Wolff’s comment that Greene is guilty of an ‘over-indulgence’ in the use of the soliloquy, I agree with him that the soliloquy in Greene’s hands ‘is not merely a Euphuistic mannerism; it indicates a genuine movement towards analysis of character, and consideration of the springs of action.’⁴⁶⁵ Such analysis arises in part from the way that Greene lets his characters examine a pair, or more, of possible outcomes to the problems with which they are wrestling. Peter Mack, as I have said, is disparaging of the way that Greene divides his soliloquies and it is apposite at this point to see what else he has to say about *Mamillia* because he is one of the few critics to write about it in detail and to comment on Greene’s employment of rhetoric.

Peter Mack passes over what Mamillia herself has to say in *Part 1* and *Part 2*, focusing instead on Pharicles, the major male character and an untrustworthy rogue for most of *Part 1*. If Greene names the pamphlet after Mamillia, then surely she and her language have a greater claim to our interest? Mack takes Pharicles’ rhetoric as representative of rhetoric in general and, because he invites us to be amused at the florid nature of Pharicles’ words, he seems to be suggesting that we should be amused by, and dismissive of, Greene’s use of rhetoric *per se*. As his major piece of evidence, Mack cites Pharicles’ apostrophe spoken when he is wondering whether he should,

⁴⁶⁴ Peter Mack, *Rhetoric in Use*, p. 127.

⁴⁶⁵ Samuel Lee Wolff, ‘Robert Greene and the Italian Renaissance’. *Englische Studien* 37 (1906-7), 321-374 (p. 358).

after all, abandon Mamillia and love Publia. He writes: 'For the modern reader, however, the effect of this passage is humorous.... But as we laugh we also enjoy and admire the contrivance.' Mack partly undermines his own argument when he recognizes Pharicles' 'dishonesty', but he does not take this observation to its logical conclusion which is that the untrustworthiness of the man will infect the words he chooses.⁴⁶⁶ Pharicles' compromised rhetoric cannot therefore be used in an extrapolatory way to produce a critique of rhetoric itself.

The orations which Mamillia delivers could not be more different in kind from those spoken by Pharicles. It is a remarkable fact that a woman possesses such impressive rhetorical skills. Whereas Pharicles' words are slippery and circumlocutory because he is an inveterate deceiver trying to ingratiate himself with Mamillia, she is the more trenchant one in their exchanges. Her apostrophes are, admittedly, very long, but they are the product of the deep-felt confusion experienced by a personality with a firm emotional base. Pharicles is a shallow man thrashing about verbally and repetitively because his affections are so lightweight and changeable. His language reflects this and in the apostrophe which Mack quotes, discusses and uses in evidence against the whole system of rhetoric, figures are piled one on top of the other. Greene surely intends his readers to notice this and to smile because Pharicles is a confidence trickster who will relentlessly spout words, even to himself, in the hope that meaning and purpose will emerge if he uses enough rhetorical figures. The point is that Greene knows what he is doing in allowing this man to damn himself by his own utterance. Greene is not, as Mack suggests, thoughtlessly repeating clichés with an inevitably absurd end result.

⁴⁶⁶ Peter Mack, *Rhetoric in Use*, p. 121.

If such a speech as Pharicles' apostrophe did indeed stand alone as a champion for the whole of rhetoric, then it would be easy to understand why modern readers might have no taste for it. But context is all. This speech should not be taken at face value. A reader needs to understand that Greene is using an extravagantly coloured piece of rhetoric spoken in a particular situation in order to reveal Pharicles' nature. The man is under scrutiny, not rhetoric itself. With regard to the structure of this apostrophe, although Mack suggests that the first of Mamillia's two letters to Modesta in *The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries* adapts the shape of the formal oration, a judgement I questioned in the previous chapter, he then goes on to say, 'It is only fair to add that most of the other short texts [speeches, apostrophes and letters] do not fit easily into these expected patterns.'⁴⁶⁷ This is demonstrably not true, as I have shown in my analysis of the conversation between Pharicles and Mamillia and in my table of all the orations in *Mamillia Part 1* (Appendix 3). It is certainly not true of this particular apostrophe. The part of it I quote runs from the *exordium* to the *confirmatio* and I have labelled it as such. Mack does not mention these divisions.

Exordium: Oh Pharicles, Pharicles, (a melodramatic, self-pitying repetition of his name)

Narratio: what a doubtfull combate dost thou feele in thy minde between fancy and faith, love and loyaltie, beautie and bountie? (He is torn between a pledged faith to one woman and lust for another.)

Divisio: Shal the flickering assault of fancy overthrow the castle of constancy, shall the lightnesse of love violate the league of loyaltie? shal the shadow of bewtie wipe out the substance of bounty? Shall hope bee of more force then assurance? Wilt thou vow thee constant to one and proove thyself not stedfast to any? (He needs to make a difficult decision, but which one?)

Confirmatio: The Turtle chuseth , but never changeth; the Swan lyketh , but never loatheth; the Lyon after he hath entred league with his make, doth never covert a new choice: these have but only sense, and I am sure thou hast reason and sense and art more unruly... (This is only the first part of the *Confirmatio* in which he cites *exempla* taken from the Natural world as proof that he should remain constant to Mamillia. As the extract ends, he is moving from the animal world of instinct to the human world of choice governed by reason.)⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁷ Peter Mack, *Rhetoric in Use*, p. 127.

⁴⁶⁸ *Mamillia Part 1*, fols. 24ii-25i.

Mack identifies the rhetorical figures of ‘antithesis, *tricola* [a series of three parallel words, phrases or clauses], alliteration, *polysyndeton* [the use of several conjunctions in close succession] and rhetorical question’ in the first sentence but is perhaps too ready to mock Greene to notice the way, for example, that Pharicles’ arguments in the *confirmatio* are carefully constructed and move from a consideration of the instinctive to the reasoned.⁴⁶⁹ The bombardment of sound provided by the plethora of alliteration can possibly deaden a reader to anything beyond the rat-a-tat of repeated consonants.

As Mack points out, this apostrophe, the one spoken by Mamillia which I discuss later in this chapter, and many of the apostrophes throughout Greene’s oeuvre, are examples of what he calls ‘the divided soliloquy’, a moment when characters debate with themselves and try to work out how best to proceed. The *conclusiones* of such apostrophes are often indecisive because the speaker cannot come to a definite decision and is obliged to wait for more events to play out.

I cannot agree with Mack that the ‘short texts [the speeches, apostrophes and letters] teach in that they gather together and pass on images, quotations and fables which the reader can reuse via his or her commonplace book.’⁴⁷⁰ What Greene’s early fictions ‘teach’ is the capacity of women to be more than chaste, silent and obedient ciphers and to use language as sophisticatedly as men. When Mack mentions ‘her’ commonplace book he seems to be suggesting that female readers would have been alert to the rhetoric Greene employs which makes it even more surprising that he says nothing about the remarkable verbal skills Mamillia possesses. Mack’s comment undermines Greene’s achievement by suggesting that his use of rhetoric is no more

⁴⁶⁹ Peter Mack, *Rhetoric in Use*, p. 121.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 127.

than a sterile, self-perpetuating exercise in which one writer raids his own commonplace book for examples of rhetorical *copia* which he then publishes in the expectation that his readers will, in turn, copy them into their own commonplace books so that the whole pointless process may continue.

In his judgement of Pharicles, Mack suggests that, 'Greene's narrator sees him as the model lover of his time, resourceful and deceitful, but also the victim of his desires.'⁴⁷¹ This is a hugely questionable interpretation and there is much in it with which to take issue. What does Mack mean by 'model'? Greene actually, and disparagingly, calls Pharicles 'a perfect patterne of lovers in these our days,'⁴⁷² and adds that such lovers count 'him a foole that cannot flatter; and a dolte that dare not dissemble, as Pharicles, an Archcaptaine of their crue will proove.'⁴⁷³ Pharicles is certainly *typical* of Greene's male characters who are often venal and unworthy of the women they court but Greene's tone is one of bitter regret that such is the level to which contemporary men have sunk. He is no way indulgent to such a 'crue', a word which contains nothing but contempt. Greene's clear statements at the beginning of the narrative regarding Pharicles' despicable nature and his subsequent creation of many other similar caddish men, the judges in *The Mirrour of Modestie*, Arbasto and Phillipio in *Philomela*, make such an opinion untenable. These men are foils to noble women and Greene does not invite us to judge them indulgently as examples of frail humanity. Pharicles is not a 'victim'; he is a rogue. His resourcefulness is not admirable; it is the low cunning of a bounder as his behaviour consistently shows. He is redeemed, or at least saved from death, in the end because a virtuous woman chooses to overlook his many faults.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid. p. 122.

⁴⁷² *Mamillia Part I*, fol. 26i.

⁴⁷³ Ibid. pp. 26i-ii.

Mack denies *Mamillia* the interest which modern readers look for in fiction: ‘the plot seems to be relatively unimportant to author and readers. The same could be said of character.’ It cannot be claimed that Greene’s characterization in *Mamillia* is rounded or detailed, but, equally, it should be recognized that he does more than present us with figures who are simply ‘typical of their sex and age.’⁴⁷⁴ Greene pits a smooth-tongued lothario against a determined young woman and encourages us to relish their verbal sparring. Their discourse is admittedly highly formalized and conforms to particular rhetorical paradigms, but it is coloured by the personalities of Mamillia and Pharicles and differentiated accordingly. Mack seems not to recognize the contradiction when he writes that ‘Pharicles employs figures which ought to produce an emotional response, but so densely and repetitively that the result is humour. But the humour produces an apt judgement on Pharicles’s changeability.’⁴⁷⁵ In this observation Mack has both grasped the point and not realized that he has done so. Pharicles is changeable and ungrounded. He gives himself away by the way he flounders in his rhetoric, piling up figures in an attempt to give substance to inherently shallow emotions. We are amused because we understand that the relentless snatching at one rhetorical figure after another reveals his emotional vacuum. It is simply not true to say that ‘the display of rhetorical skill overwhelms any idea of emotional probability.’⁴⁷⁶ Such a comment presupposes that such apostrophes, and his orations too, arise from genuine or sustained emotions. There is no point in looking for real anguish in a man who is no more than a flibbertigibbet and then feeling that a point has been made because such emotion cannot be found. Pharicles’ florid rhetoric reveals his lack of deep emotion and is used as a substitute for it. That is Greene’s

⁴⁷⁴ Peter Mack, *Rhetoric in Use*, p. 127

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 126.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 126

point. Pharicles' language cannot be used to prove that rhetoric is inherently incapable of suggesting deep emotion and if Mack had examined Mamillia's language he would have had far better material for an investigation of 'emotional probability' in Greene's use of rhetoric.

Early in *Mamillia Part 1* Greene give us the opportunity to know Mamillia better when she delivers a long apostrophe in private after Pharicles has declared his love for her. I examine part of this oration in detail, while summarizing the rest, to demonstrate how Greene's apostrophes are not slapdash, page-filling digressions but carefully constructed pieces of writing with a clear internal narrative. Although there is, admittedly, repetition, that does not mean that this, or any of the other apostrophes, strikes a single note. It is used by Greene to present a convincing exploration of a character's emotional state at this particular point in the story. It is often said that in such stylized works as Greene produced we should not look for character in the way that we expect to find it in a modern novel. Perhaps my analysis of this oration will make such nay-sayers reconsider their assessment.

Mamillia's disbelief at the emotional state in which she finds herself is evident from the sigh with which she begins the *exordium*, 'Ah, Mamillia.' In the first lines of the *narratio* her transformation is stressed in three rhetorical questions which all follow the pattern of 'what' plus epithet plus noun. Greene is here employing *isocolon*, *parison* and *anaphora*. The following sentences, which are also questions, are much longer as Mamillia moves from the generic 'change' to the specifics of her situation. Her first thought is for her reputation, the fear that 'a mirror of modestie' might be considered 'a patterne of lightnes'. These two phrases provide examples of *isocolon*, *parison*, alliteration and *contentio*, the antithesis so characteristic of the style of Lyly and of Greene in his early works. So much of the content of this apostrophe is

constructed from examples of *isocolon*, *parison* and *paramoion* that I shall not point out further examples of them.

There now follows a quartet of similes, three drawn from Nature, in which we see Mamillia's incredulity at the extent of the change which has overtaken her. Her choice of epithets, 'worse', 'bitter' and 'horrible', makes clear her horror at what she might have become. The *incrementum* of the *narratio* is deftly handled as Greene finally reveals what is at the heart of this change. The 'horrible' (a much stronger word then than now) quality of Mamillia's new situation turns out to be the possibility that she has been tempted by 'lust'. We have a second quartet of questions all on this subject, an *accumulatio* of images of virginity lost. In the final question, Mamillia quotes a 'Proverbe', a *sententia*, 'a young Saint an old Divell,' the harsh initial consonant of the last word almost spat out as she contemplates her new self. Greene's gradual feeding of information to his readers now reaches its final detail, an *epiphonema*, the name of the man who has reduced Mamillia to this state. She has managed thus far not to say his name, but now it bursts out; it is Pharicles and the question of whether she should give in to her feelings for him becomes the *divisio* of the oration: 'What? Shall the beauty ...becomes Prisoners?' Every sentence thus far in the apostrophe has been an example of *dubito* and none more so than the first word of the *divisio*, 'What?'

Mamillia asks herself two vital questions: has she been seduced by Pharicles' 'beauty' and will he think less of her if she lets him know she has given in so easily? Each question is, in fact, a pair, the two sentences of each pair matching each other for length, grammatical structure and imagery. In the first pair, Pharicles is seen as casting a spell. He has the power to 'enchant', with his beauty, and 'bewitch' with his 'fild speech'. In the second pair we are presented with the image of virginity as a

fortification, 'castle' and 'bulwarke', which has fallen 'at the first shot' or 'the first parle', the two successful weapons again reflecting Pharicles' handsomeness and skill with words.

As Mamillia asks herself two questions in the *divisio*, so the *confirmatio* contains two responses. She answers in the affirmative but her points are negative. 'Yes yes', she says, a double yes for two pressing worries: his remarkable beauty enables him to deceive me and his polished words suggest deceit. The remainder of the *confirmatio* provides examples of the various ways in which the devices of *copia* can be used to embellish an argument. First, Mamillia moves the focus away from the faults she suspects in Pharicles to a consideration of what he is likely to think of her, as in 'if he see thee won with a worde, he will thinke thee lost with a wynde.' She cites three *exempla* when she imagines the impression she might create with Pharicles if she accepts his declaration of love too readily. Two of the *exempla* are drawn from the natural world: the 'hawke' and the 'Niesse' [a young hawk] who will prove difficult to control in the long run if they are perfectly obedient at first. These *exempla* are implied similes but they have none of the strangeness of some of the similes drawn from the natural world for which Lyly and Greene are often criticized. The third *exemplum* strikes much nearer home as Mamillia fears to be thought the unreliable 'woman that will love at the first looke.'

She now turns to what she fears most, that Pharicles' beauty hides a false heart. As he so often does, Greene proceeds to the main point by way of an *incrementum* of suggestive images. We are presented with three *exempla* relating to splendid objects whose outside belies the lack of worth within: 'the finest scabberd', 'the goodliest chest' and 'the bell with the best sound.' She employs the *exemplum* of 'the fading apples of Tantalus' drawn from Classical myth before stating explicitly that she might

have been misled by Pharicles' beauty and words. In four alliterated *sententiae* she makes clear that she is in no doubt that she needs to be on her guard. The sense of revulsion at the notion of being deceived is shown in the imagery of the third *sententia* in which Pharicles, as the 'paynted Sepulchre', proves to be no more than 'rotten bones'.⁴⁷⁷

Having worked herself into a state in which she appears to be convinced that the worst has happened, Mamillia suddenly checks herself with a 'Why?' and there follows a very brief *confutatio* in which she manages to persuade herself that Pharicles need not be false after all. Gems and cloth are chosen for their appearance, so why should she not do the same with Pharicles? The *exempla* of the gems and the cloth again reveal that Greene is happy to draw his imagery from the everyday. An interim *conclusio* is expressed in three admonitions to herself, 'condemn not', 'accuse not' and 'search not' without good reason. This interim *conclusio* becomes the *divisio* of a new oration in which she explores the doubts she has concerning her would-be lover.

Mamillia's emotions are in such a state of turmoil that, after she has worked her way through the arguments and counter-arguments of the second oration, persuading herself, against her better judgement, that Pharicles' words can be trusted, she launches into a third oration in which doubt overcomes her again. Her third and final conclusion contains a flood of imperatives, 'Let no...', 'let not...', 'Cast not...', 'Wade not...', as she batters her contradictory emotions into submission. Her last words show that she has finally achieved a state of poise, indicated by a series of balanced antitheses. Pharicles should appear 'needful' rather than 'necessary' and for the moment she must 'like' rather than 'love'. Love can only come when he has proved to be 'loyall'. The alliteration and the brevity of these examples of *contentio* neatly

⁴⁷⁷ C.f. the 'whited sepulchre' of *Matthew* 23:27.

capture Mamillia's sense of a problem solved. With quiet firmness she can round off the oration by telling herself, 'untill then, remaine indifferent.'

The presentation in this apostrophe of Mamillia's self-deluding sophistry gives depth to her character and makes it more credible for a modern reader. It is a common human trait to want a thing which we know is bad for us and yet we manage to find ways of justifying our giving in to temptation. The oration, with its often contradictory *confirmatio* and *confutatio* enables Greene to explore the tension frequently experienced between the human head and heart. He appears to have a particular interest in the psychological exploration of his female characters. Later in this chapter I examine the apostrophe spoken by the courtesan Clarynda who is desperately trying to prove to herself that there is a possibility Pharicles will return her love even though her head tells her that he will never want a relationship with an infamous harlot.

The complexity and variation Greene shows in his use of the oration paradigm is evident throughout *Mamillia Part 1* and *Mamillia Part 2*. The latter and *The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries* offer differing perspectives on the question of female constancy and on women's experience of marriage and I shall deal with them separately.

Mamillia Part 2

The subtitle of *Mamillia Part 2*, 'the triumph of Pallas', suggests that we may expect Mamillia to figure prominently in the narrative. In fact, she appears only at the beginning and at the end, when she appears, goddess-like, to snatch Pharicles from the jaws of execution. For the most part she remains a background presence, her constancy, explicitly and implicitly, contrasted with Pharicles' weakness. He is the central character in this pamphlet, although we are always meant to judge him in

relation to Mamillia. Pharicles frequently reflects on his relationship with, and dishonourable behaviour towards, her and Greene's authorial interpolations both reinforce the link between the two characters and continue his observations on the unreliability of men in contrast to the constancy of women.

Having been guilty of unworthy behaviour towards two women, Mamillia and Publia, Pharicles is punished by falling victim to the lies of the vindictive courtesan Clarynda. During the course of *Part 2*, he is subject to a number of tests of his fidelity and his ability to trust, tests which arise from his personal history of deception. He negotiates these tests sufficiently well to deserve his eleventh-hour rescue by Mamillia, but Greene's equivocal final comment 'whether Pharicles proved as inconstant a husband as a fathless wooer, I knowe not', still leaves him short of Mamillia's unwavering constancy.⁴⁷⁸

Structurally, *Mamillia Part 2* resembles *Part 1* in that Greene makes frequent use of the oration in declarations, apostrophes and letters. As with *Part 1*, these orations provide the actual narrative and should not be seen as decorations of, or digressions from, it. They also offer psychological insights into the speakers and make clear the games of strategy being played by many of the characters in their discourse. They continue to 'frame' their speeches, and Greene regularly uses a vocabulary relating to entrapment to describe the speakers' intentions.

As he did in *Part 1*, Greene interrupts his narrative to sound-off in support of women and against their detractors, but the interruptions are confined to the early part of the story. Pharicles' own self-castigating thoughts take the place of the authorial fulminations in the rest of the pamphlet. Everything that is done or said in *Part 2*, contributes to Greene's insistence that women are, for the most part, constant, and that

⁴⁷⁸ *Mamillia Part 2*, p. 69.

men are the opposite. I earlier quoted Greene description of Pharicles as ‘such a mutable machavilian’ and he employs similar epithets on other occasions. He makes clear that Pharicles has sufficient self-awareness to know that he is ‘a deepe dissembler’ but, such is the inherent weakness of his character, that he is also inclined to blame ‘fickle and unsteadfast fortune’ when the responsibility for his situation is patently his own.⁴⁷⁹

It is appropriate that when Pharicles flees Padua he exiles himself in Saragossa in Sicily, which is notorious for the ‘shiftes’, the deceit, its inhabitants practise.⁴⁸⁰ Pharicles’ own untrustworthiness is suitably punished in that he now finds himself in a place where he is afraid that no-one is to be trusted. Sicily is ‘a place of no lesse suspition than resort’ and Pharicles expects everyone to be ‘flatterers’ and ‘Parasites’.⁴⁸¹ This is actually not the case, as he finds an excellent friend in Ferragus the son of the governor of Saragossa, but Pharicles cannot at first bring himself to trust the young man. It is a reflection of his own duplicitous nature that he sees in other people, Mamillia and Publia excluded, versions of himself, and Greene presents this as an apt punishment for his previous inconstancy. Thus, a man who could not be trusted is punished by his fear of being able to trust or confide in others. He dreads finding ‘a pad [‘fire’ i.e. ‘danger’] in the straw’, being betrayed by someone he trusted, and he is, at first, a lonely man who keeps his distance from everyone by disguising himself as a pilgrim who ‘was a foe to none, nor a friend to any.’⁴⁸² His faults of personality ensure that he punishes himself by being unable to share troubles and so ease them. An important example of this is his conversation with Ferrago, the son of the Governor of Saragossa, which I have already discussed. Pharicles claims, in an

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 40.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 23.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. p. 24.

⁴⁸² Ibid. p. 26.

elaborate piece of mendacity, that he desperately misses his home and friends although he finally confesses that Clarynda has declared her love for him. Ferragus may brush this aside, but Pharicles' initial lies will have repercussions because they later give credibility to Clarynda's accusations that Pharicles is a Paduan spy.

Pharicles has failed a test and he fails again when he is asked to speak publicly in a 'controversie' concerning whether men or women are more likely to remain constant. This is a subject too near to his own recent experience to be comfortable and he is a reluctant speaker. His remarks are conventionally misogynistic rather than being what he actually feels and what Greene endorses throughout *Mamillia*. This inability to confess what he has truly come to believe constitutes another failure, as punishment for which Greene subjects him to the fear of imminent execution.

Pharicles' formidable opponent in the debate is another of Greene's confident and articulate women, Madam Gambara, the Marquesse of Saldena. She declares that, although Pharicles has been asked to speak as one whose judgement is bound to be accepted, she will not be bound by it 'since you are a partie touched within the compasse of the commission'. He cannot, by definition, be impartial in this discussion because he is a man, so she 'will not tie my selfe so straightlie to your verdict ... unlesse you bring the soundest reason.'⁴⁸³ Here is a woman who is determined to think for herself and who will not accept the prevailing view that men are automatically in the right. She demands that Pharicles prove, by way of reasoned argument, that what he has to say is the correct opinion. It is an assertion of intellectual parity which challenges centuries of male hegemony. *Persuade me and do not try to compel me*, she is saying, a perspective to which Greene appears to be sympathetic throughout his

⁴⁸³ Ibid. p. 49.

oeuvre. The Marquesse is not an uppity shrew filled with presumption; she is Pharicles' equal in the debate and she is highly respected by all present.

The debate has been prompted by the anonymous publication of a set of verses which bitterly attack women's vanity. These verses have nothing to say about constancy and one speculates as to why Greene gives page room to such a lengthy attack. Perhaps he is enjoying a moment of devil's advocacy here as Pharicles does not respond to the content of the verses and the Marquesse goes on to win the debate. The verses are biting and written in a powerfully free style:

Up fro the wast like a man, new guise to be casde in a dublet.
Downe to the foote (perhaps like a maide) but hosde to the kneestead.
Some close breetcht to the crotch for cold, tush; peace; tis a shame Syr.
Heares by birth as blacke as Jet, what? art can amend them.⁴⁸⁴

There were contemporary printed attacks on women's extravagance of dress, but these verses proclaim an outrage at a degree of cross-dressing which is too audacious to describe. For all his championing of women, perhaps the young Greene drew a line when they strutted around apparelled as men. As he spent much of his adult life in the company of London low-life and apparently took as his his mistress the harlot sister of 'Cutting Ball' he may have derived prurient amusement from the image of women 'close breetcht to the crotch'.

The debate follows the model of a university disputation. Pharicles cannot admit that he does not believe the proposition he is asked to endorse. To do so might entail a public confession of his own past inconstancy and he cannot face the prospect of this. Thus he fails the test as a result of moral cowardice, although in his heart he concedes the argument. He is all too aware in 'his own conscience' of the 'inconstancie' of men and is reluctant 'for fashion sake' 'to condemne women for their

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 50.

ficklenesse' because of his knowledge of Mamillia and Publia, 'two presidents of perfect affection.'⁴⁸⁵ Pharicles repeats the standard arguments concerning the inconstancy of women. He runs through a number of negative generalizations about women made by Classical philosophers and poets and draws on arguments based on astrology and the belief in the four bodily humours. His conclusion is vague and utterly feeble as he claims that, 'it is not necessarie to inferre examples' of 'dissembling dames' because the inconstancy of women is too well known to be a point worth arguing about. Although Governor Farnese is convinced that Pharicles has 'aunswered you fully',⁴⁸⁶ Greene has patently not made him do this and the Marquesse utterly demolishes each of Pharicles' arguments in turn. Her performance is everything that Pharicles' was not. Her belittling metaphors are telling and she is able to turn on its head much of what he has claimed.

Greene could easily have condensed into half a page his account of how the courtesan Clarynda becomes infatuated with Pharicles, is rejected by him and then tries to destroy him in revenge. Contrary to our expectations, he chooses to present Clarynda's desperation seriously. His depiction of her frantic verbal manoeuvres almost makes us feel sorry for her, despite all we know of her ruthless and vicious past. This section of the story is clear evidence of Greene's interest in female psychology and of his adroit handling of the oration paradigm to explore character. Clarynda delivers an apostrophe and writes a letter. The apostrophe in which she tries to come to terms with the strength of her feelings for Pharicles (Appendix 4) is the longest in *Part 2*.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 50.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 51.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 30-33.

Clarynda's predicament is that she, a by-word for depravity, hopes to gain the love of an apparently virtuous, and certainly handsome and popular, young man. Her situation is surely hopeless, barring a miracle, but Greene is able to use the structure of the oration to demonstrate the human capacity for self-deception. In the face of all evidence to the contrary, Clarynda still tries to convince herself that a happy outcome is possible. The questions posed in the *divisio* presuppose a negative answer – surely she is not going to allow love to overwhelm her? The *confirmatio* provides good reasons for replying no, that she is not going to do this. Hasty actions can lead to bitter repentance, Pharicles may be in love with someone else and he may not be as perfect as he seems. She leaves until last the most powerful argument that, if his qualities are as excellent as they seem, he is bound to reject 'a professed curtizan, whose honestie and credite is so wracked in the waves of wantonnesse'.⁴⁸⁸ She would be a 'fond foole' to think otherwise. This is her rational self speaking, the one that delays confronting the most powerful argument of all until last and Greene neatly fits these thoughts into the *confirmatio*. The human capacity to be optimistic when there is 'not so much as one dramme of hope' is immediately shown in the *confutatio* when she again calls herself a 'fond foole',⁴⁸⁹ this time for not being guided by the example of the courtesan Lamia who 'so charmed and enchanted with her Syren subtleties the sense of King Demetrius'.⁴⁹⁰ Clarynda is able to reassure herself that her own 'Syren subtleties' are a match for any situation and that, as was the case with Lamia, her beauty will win Pharicles over. There is a moment of panic when she doubts herself, but she rallies and her *conclusio* is that she must 'retire not before thou hast the repulse'.⁴⁹¹ All is not lost until it is lost and so she decides to write to Pharicles. This will be the real test of

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 31-2.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 32.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 32.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid. p. 33.

her ‘Syren subtleties’, her skill with persuasive language, and Greene must have enjoyed himself constructing her persuasive arguments that are never likely to prevail.

Clarynda’s letter to Pharicles (Appendix 4) is another long oration in which Greene plays with a situation in which a character, fearful of an out-of-hand rejection, is indirect and circumlocutory for some time before posing the question of whether the object of her desire can love her in return. The moment of revelation is delayed and delayed because if she mismanages the moment there will be no hope of rescuing the situation. The *exordium* is long as Clarynda hardly dares address Pharicles, so fearful is she of getting even that wrong. She is courteous, pleading, hopeful that his nobility of mind will prevent him from misconstruing what is to follow in the body of the letter. She gives only the slightest hint of what has prompted her to write when she confesses to ‘the fatall feare of death that forced mee to yield to this extremitie’.⁴⁹² Her hope is that an appeal to Pharicles’ better nature will make him at least listen to what she has to say – when she eventually plucks up the courage to say it. Although this oration is a letter, it functions as a direct address, as if Pharicles were there before her and between each section of the oration one senses a pause, as if the writer/speaker is waiting for a reaction from the reader/interlocutor and for a cue that she should proceed. Clarynda is still not ready to ask the direct question and she leads up to it, as is common in Greene’s orations, with two detailed *exempla*, of Sappho and Phedra, which are germane to her main point. These two figures were compelled by love to break the rules concerning the requirement for a woman to be modest and silent. Here, again, we have the conventional female virtues which Clarynda acknowledges although her entire life has been spent in rejecting them. A silent woman is an obedient one and a modest woman will be chaste. Possibly Clarynda does not mention chastity

⁴⁹² Ibid. p. 34.

by name because the word would be too blatant a reminder of her own lifestyle. Now that the subject of love has been raised, Clarynda takes the daring step of confessing her own feelings. This constitutes the *narratio*: ‘the selfsame fire hath so inflamed my fancie.’⁴⁹³ The question of whether Pharicles will show her mercy or reject her, and cause her death, forms the *divisio*. At last she confronts the fact that her life has been one of a high-class prostitute. There is no denying the details of her life, but she presents them as euphemistically as she is able, although this is not much of an amelioration. She admits that, ‘I have been an inhabitour so long *Nell’ la strada cortizana* and professed my selfe a friend to Caesar’.⁴⁹⁴ Having reached the section of her letter most fraught with difficulty, Clarynda immediately sets about reducing the harmful consequences a reference to her lifestyle inevitably brings. She uses the *confirmatio* to stress once again the strength of her love, Pharicles’ responsibility for her continuing life and the fact that it is his own ‘surpassing beautie’ which has caused her to feel this way.⁴⁹⁵ It is a desperate piece of sophistry rather than a ‘Syren’ song to focus on Pharicles and suggest that he is both to blame for the present situation and that he has the power to resolve it. In the *confutatio* she counters the putative argument that ‘the woman which in prime of yeares is lascivious, will in ripe age be most lecherous.’⁴⁹⁶ At least in a letter she can choose which argument to dismiss and in this instance she is able to cite several *exempla* of women who turned lives of extraordinary depravity into ones of exemplary virtue. She ends the letter with a *conclusio* promising that, if Pharicles returns her love, she will become such a paragon it will cause the world ‘to marvell at my modestie’.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹³ Ibid. p. 35.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 35.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 36.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 37.

Although Pharicles is swayed for a moment by the thought that he can never recover Mamillia and that Clarynda has beauty and wealth to offer, he rejects her. Her response is to accuse him of being a Paduan spy and for this crime he is condemned to death. The scene is now set for the unworthy man who has been pushed to the brink of death by a malicious woman to be saved by the courage and determination of another. Our sense is that Pharicles is not good enough for Mamillia and Greene toys with his readers in the concluding sentences by suggesting that Pharicles may possibly prove as unreliable a husband as he was a lover.

News of Pharicles' situation reaches Mamillia in Padua. She is in a quandary because she knows that 'his unjust dealings had deserved revenge' and her father Gonzaga's dying oration to her has burdened her with obligations that preclude her helping Pharicles.⁴⁹⁸ She will be disinherited by the terms of Gonzaga's will if she helps him and she will be failing to act in accordance with the conventional expectation of young women that she 'preferre not thine own wit before the wisdom of thine Auncestors, nor leane to wilfulnesse.'⁴⁹⁹ In *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, Lucilla disobeys her father in an act of rebellion which leads to her ruin. Greene, in contrast, endorses Mamillia's defiance in setting love above 'the lawe of duetie'.⁵⁰⁰ She is confident that her 'owne wit'⁵⁰¹ is a sufficient moral guide for her actions, although she debates with herself in an apostrophe of 'contrarie passions' before she makes her decision to travel to Saragossa.⁵⁰² In this oration, the *confirmatio* which enumerates the reasons why she should obey her father is considerably shorter than the *confutatio* in which she argues why she should not. The *conclusio* is similarly long

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 64.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 63.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 62.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. p. 63.

⁵⁰² Ibid. p. 64.

as she reaffirms her constancy, the key value in the whole tale, in the face of a long list of possible unpleasant consequences. Her decision made, Mamillia ‘flong [flung] out of her chamber’, thereby revealing the strength of her determination.⁵⁰³

I have stressed throughout this study that Greene’s main interest resides in what characters feel and say rather than in what they do. This is the reason why his narrative consists of orations rather than conventional story-telling. What follows Mamillia’s apostrophe is an excellent example as, in a short paragraph, we learn that she obtains a ship, disguises herself, sails to Saragossa and, as soon as she arrives, somehow manages to obtain the correspondence which has passed between between Pharicles and Clarynda. She has barely arrived in time for it is the day before Pharicles’ execution.

Pharicles is standing in the ‘common hall’ of Saragossa to hear his death sentence confirmed when Mamilia arrives and, on this very public stage, delivers the oration which saves him. She may present herself as a ‘selie [‘silly’ i.e. ‘simple’ or ‘innocent’] virgin’, but she is entirely confident in addressing this body of powerful men.⁵⁰⁴ Unlike Portia and Rosalind, she does not hide in a man’s clothing, nor does she cleverly unpick the wording of a document, but she skilfully manages the drama of the occasion. She moves directly from a straightforward *confirmatio*, which explains that Pharicles has no reason to spy on Saragossa, to the extraordinary dénouement of the *conclusio* when she reveals Clarynda’s incriminating letter.

The pamphlet ends with another snatch of condensed narrative. Mamillia and Pharicles are sumptuously entertained in Saragossa for a week before returning to Padua where her constancy is universally admired. The executors of her father’s will

⁵⁰³ Ibid. p. 66.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 67.

ignore the fact that she has disobeyed his dying injunction and she is allowed to inherit his estate after all.

The Anatomie of Lovers flatteries

This coda to the main narrative of *Mamillia* adds nothing to our knowledge of the relationship between Mamillia and Pharicles, but it provides Greene with an opportunity to reinforce his admiring view of the intelligence and articulacy of women and of their right to act independently of husbands and fathers. The text consists of an exchange of letters between a presumably older Mamillia and the young Lady Modesta to whom she gives advice regarding her relationship with men. This advice is contained in two very long letters, the second of which is mostly taken up with an exemplary tale whose heroine Sylvia provides a further example of Greene's self-confident and verbally competent young women.

Mamillia's first letter is too discursive to be considered an example of the oration paradigm which Mack suggests it is. It is better seen as adhering to Erasmus's looser directions concerning the epistolary form. A letter, as Erasmus describes it, is likely to have an *exordium*, a *narratio* and a *divisio* because it is important to greet the recipient, to set out the circumstances in which the letter is written, and to state the subject. After this, there is no clear *confirmatio* or *confutatio*, rather a free-ranging treatment of the subject which ends, like the standard oration, with a *conclusio* beginning 'Thus Madame, you have heard my counsel...' ⁵⁰⁵

Mamillia frequently echoes what Greene has added in his own voice at various points throughout both parts of *Mamillia*. She begins by taking to task a whole raft of Classical poets who have advised men how to deal with women to their own

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 81.

advantage. Particular anger is reserved for Ovid and his '*de arte Amandi*'⁵⁰⁶ with its 'most monstrous Method to all men, wherby they may learne to allure simple women to the fulfilling of their lust.' She bitterly resents poets' 'blasphemous descriptions of womens infirmities'. Greene has said all this before, but he is taking advantage of a female character to present his thoughts in perhaps a more convincing way. Mamillia declares that she will be the first to offer a 'contrariwise' set of 'prescript rules' by which women might learn to defend themselves against men and the 'glozing gunshot of their protested perjuries, which seemeth repugnant to nature.'⁵⁰⁷ Her words are forthright and more assertive than any she has spoken hitherto in either of the pamphlets that bear her name.

The letter begins to wander at this point which it would not do if Greene had set himself to follow the oration paradigm. Mamillia finds it necessary to 'define what love is' which she proceeds to do as if she were defining her terms in the course of a university disputation.⁵⁰⁸

Having warned Modesta about the dangers men pose, Mamillia next offers advice on how to avoid them. What follows is actually an attack on love rather than men. Love may be attractive, but, in surrendering to it, women stand to lose their freedom. Mamillia asks, 'who having the choise in her own hand to live out her own lust, will willingly yield herselfe subject to be directed at another man's pleasure?'⁵⁰⁹ By 'lust', she means that women should live their lives according to their own desires and values. Her words suggest that there exists the possibility for women to sustain

⁵⁰⁶ The *Ars Amatoria* of Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BCE -17 BCE) published 1 CE? These three books of witty observations on the art of seduction never lost their popularity from the day they were written. *Ovid, the Art of Love and Other Poems*, transl. by J. H. Mozley, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1929).

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 74.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 75.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 79.

themselves independently, not an easy task in Greene's England. Marriage, with or without love, was for many women an economic necessity, but Mamillia, or Greene, is envisaging a society where women would be sufficiently financially independent to make their own life choices according to nothing other than their own inclinations.

Mamillia's main focus is on the independence of women and she offers a 'remedie' for those who have strayed into the 'perillous Laberinth', that is to say those who think they are in love but who are unmarried and still have time to preserve their freedom.⁵¹⁰ Mamillia states, as an incontrovertible truth, that most men are not to be trusted. In order to 'recover her former libertie'⁵¹¹ and put an end to any feelings of love she might harbour, a woman is advised to see a potential lover's qualities in their worst possible light : 'if he be liberal thinke him prodigall, if eloquent a babler,' and so on.⁵¹² This is a sure way to 'drive all his perfections out of thy minde, and muse upon his infirmities'. The woman will thus be able to 'leade a quiet life of libertie'.⁵¹³ This seems a very modern outlook and it is the more unexpected that it comes from a male author. It is, however, no more than a logical conclusion of Greene's consistent presentation of his female characters. As it turns out, we soon learn that Modesta has already given her heart and Mamillia's tone regarding love is considerably softer in her next letter.

Mamillia's second letter is a response to Modesta's request for advice because, acting against the counsel of friends, she has given her heart to a man who has no money. When making her choice, she 'satisfied my selfe.'⁵¹⁴ This is a significant phrase in the context of *Mamillia* as a whole and of Greene's consistent presentation

⁵¹⁰ Ibid. p. 80

⁵¹¹ Ibid. p. 80

⁵¹² Ibid. p. 81.

⁵¹³ Ibid. p. 81

⁵¹⁴ Ibid. p. 82.

of his female characters. Mamillia's own journey to Saragossa was to satisfy herself and against her dying father's wishes. The story she relates to Modesta in this letter concerns Sylvia, the beautiful daughter of a gentleman living in Toledo, who not only does what she wants but is wholeheartedly encouraged in this by her father.

Sylvia's father Valasco has decided in the matter of marriage never to 'constraine her [Sylvia] to consent to his commaundement.'⁵¹⁵ The suggestion throughout the story Mamillia tells is that women should be able to make major life choices for themselves because they are sufficiently mature to do so and because it is only fair. Valasco's lack of parental control over his daughter is presented as the proper way to act and not as an eccentricity or the dereliction of a father's duty. In the hands of a writer adhering to conventional morality, Sylvia would surely have gone to the bad and the lesson to be learned would have been that daughters should do as they are told because parents always know best. Greene sets himself firmly against two conventions, that parents direct their children's lives and that love, in itself, counts for less in the choice of a spouse than practicalities or status.

Most of the story is taken up with the exchanges between Sylvia and her three suitors. Their pleading and her responses are in the form of orations of varying lengths. Greene also makes use of the disputation in Petronius' (the English suitor's) declaration to Sylvia and in her reply to Jacques, the representative of her French suitor Monsieur de Vaste. Sylvia is in complete control all the time, 'thus glorying in her freedom.'⁵¹⁶ Both she and her father believe that love should be the basis of marriage, but Sylvia's remarks go further than this. When, while rejecting her elderly suitor, the Italian signor Gradasso, she talks of 'the withered strawe as soone set on fire and easily

⁵¹⁵ Ibid. p. 85.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid. p. 85.

quenched, the olde and drie wood easily inflamed and quickly put out,' her imagery has a clear sexual undertone with its mockery of an old man's inability to sustain an erection.⁵¹⁷ She makes no bones of the fact that she requires a husband who can satisfy her sexually. If we remember that this is the language of a tale told by the unassailably virtuous Mamillia, we can appreciate the extent to which Greene is willing to admit sexual, though maritally chaste, freedom to his female characters. They do not exist, in his view, simply as objects to be used by men; they have the right to show revulsion, and to say no, if an unattractive sexual coupling is offered to them: 'the trees in the mount Vernese detest to be clasped of the old Ivie.'⁵¹⁸ If 'mount Vernese' is a euphemism for the 'Mount of Venus' and the repellent ivy is an old man's pubic hair, then Sylvia's language is seen to be even more graphic.

Sylvia wittily dismisses her second suitor Monsieur de Vaste who is handsome but utterly foolish, witness the fact that he has learnt no Spanish and can only communicate with her through his proxy Jacques. Jacques argues, somewhat desperately, that his master's foolishness is actually a benefit because, being foolish, he will concede to Sylvia the 'soveraigntie'. Sylvia concedes that this is truly what women desire, but she cleverly turns the argument on its head by saying that a fool is often 'obstinate' and so de Vaste, as a husband, might still try to 'rule the rost'. The *conclusio* to her oration of rejection is a neatly turned quip that ends de Vaste's hopes once and for all: 'I conclude that your maister being somewhat foolish, and I myself none of the wisest, it were no good match: for two fooles in one bed are too many.'⁵¹⁹

We are left with Sylvia's third suitor, Petronius the Englishman 'of great wit, but of verie small wealth'.⁵²⁰ It is worth looking closely at the oration in which Sylvia

⁵¹⁷ Ibid. p. 99.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. p. 99.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. p. 101.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. p. 85.

gives him the answer to his suit because it demonstrates a female character using this paradigm in a particularly artful way. For most of the oration, Sylvia appears to be rejecting Petronius, but she is playing a game with him, and us. In the *exordium*, he is, formally, ‘maister Petronius’, a cool salutation which must prepare him to expect the worst. The *narratio* turns this suspicion into apparent certainty as Sylvia declares that she wants ‘no longer to feed you with hope.’ We assume that, like the other two suitors, he is to be given his marching orders as Sylvia’s father made it clear that she was free to reject all three suitors if she so chose. The *divisio* turns on the nature of the ‘Addio’ she is about to give him. In the *confirmatio* she confirms that the attraction of his wisdom is outweighed by his penury because ‘wisdom heateth not so sore as povertie cooleth.’⁵²¹ Each part of the oration thus far has been like a body blow of increasing force. What can there be left to say? The poor man must be hoping that she will simply stop at this point and let him slink away. The *confutatio* of an oration, however, often begins with a ‘but’ and this is no exception. Sylvia will not marry an impecunious man, goodbye to him, but she will marry a wealthy one, so all she has to do is ‘supply thy wants with my wealth’. Having done this, and used his name without the accompaniment of the formal ‘maister’, she is able in her *conclusio* to offer him her ‘plighted troth’.⁵²²

Mamillia trusts that her story will convince Modesta that she has made the right choice in following her heart rather than, God forbid, the choice of friends. Such a conclusion, love conquering all, probably appealed to Greene’s female readership, but one wonders how the gentleman readers responded to such a firm call for women not

⁵²¹ Ibid. p. 101.

⁵²² Ibid. p.102.

only to think and act for themselves, but also for them to judge their husband's sexual prowess.

Mamillia established a pattern which Greene was to follow throughout his career. He made regular use of the oration to advance his narratives and to explore the emotions of his characters even as late as the repentance pamphlets of 1590 onwards, although the frequency of its use was reduced in the later works. His female protagonists continued to be as verbally skilled and as much their own woman as *Mamillia*, as my analysis of a number of his other pamphlets in the following chapters will make clear.

*The use of the Oration in **The Old Arcadia** and **Rosalynde***

Much of Sir Philip Sidney's *The Old Arcadia* consists of long passages of description of place, plot and character and of the back-and-forth of conversation, but, at pivotal moments in the narrative, he makes use of six-part orations in the same way that Robert Greene does. They are used as instruments of persuasion or as apostrophes in which a characters examines his/her situation and tries to work out the best way to proceed. For Greene and Sidney, the nodal potential of the oration was a huge recommendation for its use. Orations are scattered throughout *The Old Arcadia*, a few examples being: Philanax's attempt to dissuade Duke Basilius from retiring to the country (Book 1, pp.6-8); Gynecia's distraught apostrophes regarding her infatuation with Pyrocles (Book 2, pp. 80-1), (Book 4, pp.242-3); Pyrocles, disguised as the Amazon Cleophila, persuading a rebellious mob to disperse (Book 2, pp.113-5); Philoclea's bemoaning of her fate (Book 3, pp.184-5); the two letters written by Pamela and Philoclea pleading for the lives of Musidorus and Pyrocles (Book 5, pp.342-4). Sidney's adherence to the structural rules of the six-part oration is shown by his comments, as narrator, on Philanax's speech against Musidorus in Book 5.

Philanax is ‘so overcome with rage that he forgot in this oration his precise method of oratory.’⁵²³ In other words, the six parts of the oration collapse into a ramshackle jumble of inarticulate vituperation as the following analysis will demonstrate. The rules of rhetoric were so ingrained in the educated Elizabethan reader that he would spot at once the disintegration of the structure of the oration under the force of Philanax’s rage and appreciate this particular way of demonstrating how sense and articulacy can be undermined when emotional control is lost.

The oration begins with an *exordium* which is courteous and controlled, ‘most noble protector,’ as he addresses Eaurchus who has been invited to give judgement on events in Arcadia. The *Narratio* conjectures what would happen to Arcadia if such ‘manner of man’ as Pyrocles were permitted to engage in a trial by combat and possibly gain the hand of Philoclea. Philanax seems to be setting up an oration which will prove the truth of his own accusations against Pyrocles and Musidorus (the apparent murder of Duke Basilius) and conclude with a justified demand for their execution. His fury against the two young men is so unbridled, however, that he is thrown off course and now changes the focus of his oration with a brand new *Exordium* to ‘my masters’ (Pyrocles and Musidorus) which shifts again to concern only Musidorus. Musidorus had initially claimed to be Dorus but has now stated that his name is actually Palladius. The oration starts again with an *exordium* addressed to ‘Dorus’ and the new *narratio* is a recapitulation of the crimes he has committed: ‘Are you not he, sir, whose shephook was prepared to be our sceptre?’ *The divisio* is the question of the guilt of Pyrocles and Musidorus: ‘The other pleads ignorance, and you, I doubt not, will allege absence.’ The next two parts of the oration are in the wrong order, with a *confutatio* preceding the *confirmatio*. Philanax begins to challenge their

⁵²³ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, p. 345.

mitigating pleas of ignorance and absence, but after a single sentence he loses focus again and his hatred of Pyrocles and Musidorus diverts him into a personal attack on them and their wicked natures in which he scoffs at their claim to be princes. With each succeeding sentence he departs further from the main point of his *confutatio*, a refutation of their claims of ignorance and absence, and he tarts to imagine how they went about stealing the jewels they have offered as proof of their princely status. Then he recollects himself and states that he will return to the original thread of his argument: ‘we are to consider the matter and not the men’. The nature of the ‘matter’ has by now changed from a refutation of their claims of ignorance and absence to a focus on the enormity of the murder of Duke Basilius. Philanax expects them to deny their hand in this, but the notion of denial moves him even further from the initial point of his *confutatio* to declare triumphantly that ‘Dorus’ cannot deny ‘stealing away’ with Princess Pamela. He next moves into what might be intended to be a *confirmatio* but which consists mostly of abuse rather than evidence and which relates to the supposed abduction of Pamela. This causes him ‘to omit my chief matter of the duke’s death.’ The rules of the oration, and logic itself, did not allow such a disconnect between the question and the proofs offered. The speech ends not with a summary of proofs but what is, in effect, a third *narratio*, the abduction of a princess, followed by a lengthy declaration of how ‘odious in nature’ he finds it and a demand for the appropriate ‘punishment of traitors.’⁵²⁴

Musidorus fastens onto the oratorical confusion of Philanax’s speech, calling him ‘such a drivell’, but it should be remembered that Philanax is motivated by loyalty to Basilius and his family, not by personal ambition or unjustified rancour. Sidney expects his readers to understand how Philanax’s righteous anger has undermined the

⁵²⁴ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia* pp. 345-6.

coherence of his arguments and probably to be amused by the way that the oration flies apart. This is not meant to undermine our sense of his integrity.

Rosalynde

Most of the narrative of *Rosalynde* consists of description, accounts of action and conversational exchanges which are never particularly long. There are also numerous poems and 'Eclogues'. On ten occasions in the first two thirds of the book, when characters' emotions have become very intense, Lodge elevates the register and makes use of the standard six-part oration. Each of these orations is given a brief description in the margin as, for example, 'Alinda's oration to her father',⁵²⁵ and 'Rosalynde passionate alone'.⁵²⁶ Seven of the orations are apostrophes which occur when powerful feelings need to be given lengthy, but private, expression. The remaining three orations are declarations addressed to one or more listeners. Lodge's orations are of the same structure and used for the same purposes as those which appear in Greene's work.

Conclusion

My detailed exegesis of passages from *Mamillia* shows the range of effects achievable by the use of a literary device which is governed by strict rules. One cannot claim that characterization in *Mamillia*, or any other of Greene's narratives, is as nuanced as that to be found in the novels that began to appear from the next century onwards, but I have shown that it is a good deal more subtle and varied than critics dismissive of rhetoric *per se* have given Greene credit for. He is, as I have made clear, not slavishly or repetitively creating rule-bound structures to which he can attach sundry clichéd

⁵²⁵ Thomas Lodge, *Rosalynde*, p. 29.

⁵²⁶ Ibid. p. 74.

pickings from his commonplace book. Rather, he achieves a perhaps surprisingly wide range of effects and his creation of self-confident, witty heroines such as Mamillia and Sylvia is both remarkable and a source of pleasure to the reader. And it is not only virtuous heroines whose feelings and motives are explored. Greene also finds psychological interest in the frantic ruminations of a *lothario* (Pharicles) and a desperate courtesan (Clarynda). His manipulation of what might seem on first acquaintance to be a too-rigid literary form actually permits a sensitive exploration of the thoughts and feelings of two hugely-flawed characters.

My reference to the use of the oration in *The Old Arcadia* and *Rosalynde* has made two points. Firstly, it is not an exaggeration to say that the device was a commonplace in late sixteenth-century English Literature, but we must also remember that, if writers used it, they expected their readership to appreciate the fact. My own close reading of the texts is no more, and probably somewhat less, than might be expected in the engagement of an educated reader with such writing. Rhetoric was such a staple of English education that Greene's 'Gentleman readers' would have needed no prompting to see how he rang so many changes with the oration paradigm. If we are to judge from the popularity of Greene's pamphlets, far less-educated readers were equally satisfied with simply the twists and turns of his romance story-lines.

CHAPTER 5

What's In a Name? (1)

Penelopes web

Apart from the two parts of *Mamillia*, Greene published three other pamphlets with a woman's name as the title: *Penelopes web* (1587), *Alcida* (1588) and *Philomela, the Lady Fitzwaters Nightingale* (1592). Robert Maslen groups *The Myrrour of Modestie* (1584, Greene's re-telling of the story of Susanna and the Elders from the *Apocrypha*) with these works, seeing Susanna herself as the 'myrrour'. He observes that, 'Greene made women the titular protagonists of his romances more often than any other English author,'⁵²⁷ a significant claim in the context of the present study.

Greene places women at the centre of his narratives as moral touchstones and as employers of sophisticated and powerful language. This is particularly true of the above-mentioned works with their eponymous heroines. In 1592, the same year as he published *Philomela, the Lady Fitzwater's Nightingale*, the tale of a duke's daughter, Greene also brought out *A Disputation Between a hee conny-catcher, and a shee conny-catcher*, a further example of his inclusion of a female character's name in his pamphlet's title, but in this instance a woman from the criminal class who possesses none of the cardinal virtues looked for in women – chastity, silence and obedience, but who does display the confident and sophisticated mastery of language of her more virtuous sisters.

Titular heroines appear throughout Greene's career, transcending the generic and stylistic phases of his literary output into which Steve Mentz divides them: Lylian Romance (1580-86)– *Mamillia Parts 1 & 2* and *The Myrrour of Modestie*; Novella

⁵²⁷ Robert Maslen, *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 170.

Collections (1585-90) – *Penelopes web* and *Alcida*; Greek Romances (1584-90) – *Philomela*; Cony-catching (1591-92) – *A Disputation*.⁵²⁸ The other phases into which Mentz divides Greene's prose works would be unlikely to contain such titles, being autobiographical or examples of 'Satire/Invective'.

The pamphlets under discussion in this chapter and the next foreground female experience in two contrasting ways. *Penelopes web* and *Alcida* contain a series of framed tales told *by* the titular heroine, whereas *Philomela* is a tale *about*, and in praise of, a particular woman. The framed tales all have female protagonists and their narratives explore and comment on a range of situations in which women find themselves. The triplet of desirable qualities required in women is integral to both the framed tales and *Philomela*. The chastity of the heroines is never in question and at no point does Greene suggest that promiscuity in a woman can be condoned. Arguments that this might be the case are presented by the would-be seducer Calamus in the second of Penelope's tales but the faithful wife Cratyna scornfully rebuts them.

In his presentation of the desirability of women's obedience and silence, Greene is at times in these tales unconventional to the point of being controversial (as in Penelope's second tale and all three tales in *Alcida*). Obedience is generally strategic, an active, rather than a passive, attitude and the female characters Greene creates are never averse to breaking the rule that they should respect their place and not speak out in public.

Penelope's three tales are on one level homilies which endorse and reward the three major female virtues and have usually been read by critics as such. *Alcida*'s three tales are mirror-images of those Penelope relates as they describe the severe punishments, in the shape of metamorphoses, which are meted out to three sisters who

⁵²⁸ Steve Mentz, *Writing Robert Greene*, pp. 124-5.

are proud, and therefore disobedient, promiscuous and incapable of keeping a secret. Again, critics have tended to take this set of tales at face value and not to notice the extent to which Greene subverts the lessons apparently being taught.

Philomela's indomitable chastity triumphs over her husband Phillippo's crazed jealousy, over the dangers of banishment and, ultimately, over any desire for revenge she might harbour against Phillippo. She is able to get the better of men through sheer force of character, in contrast to Penelope whose power over men is expressed indirectly through her manipulation of narratives in which they figure. Alcida, a woman and the ostensible narrator of her tales, may appear to accept a world where her sex is justifiably punished for transgressions against men, but Greene, a man and the real narrator, presents a subversive counter-narrative. He encourages us to look at events from the female protagonists' point of view and question the words of disapproval applied to them because these are the product of a male-centred society.

The Critical Reception of Penelopes web

Critics have made little of the extent to which Greene, in the three pamphlets discussed in this chapter and the next, underlines female values, experience and language. Robert Jordan refers only briefly to the framing of the three tales of *Penelopes web* within the discourse of a kind of female academy. He says nothing regarding the material contained within Penelope's tales and is content simply to observe that 'the attendants argue and reason like scholars and philosophers' as if it were a commonplace in the literature of the time for female characters to be so linguistically empowered.⁵²⁹ Jordan reduces the women to agents of a male-centred purpose, denying them an intrinsic significance and interest.

⁵²⁹ Robert Jordan, *Robert Greene*, p. 82.

René Pruvost offers little in the way of interpretation regarding *Penelopes web*. For him, the tales are no more than *exempla* regarding the three cardinal female virtues, an opinion epitomized by his comment on Penelope's tale of Barmenissa: 'So much submissiveness at last receives its reward.'⁵³⁰ There is much more in this story than simply submission and reward as Charles Crupi partly acknowledges when he states that, 'Greene again takes on the role of women's champion'. He also considers the individual tales merely 'straightforward examples' with 'an abstract and formulaic quality.' a judgement I cannot accept.⁵³¹ For him, the focus of the work is 'the motif of male reformation important throughout Greene's work', thereby suggesting that powerful female characters should be taken as instruments rather than protagonists and that Greene is, at heart, only concerned with male experience.⁵³² What Crupi does not include in his commentary is an exploration of the exclusively female society and discourse enjoyed by Penelope and her women. Katharine Wilson, in contrast, focuses on the way that Greene, in this work, 'retreats from the canonical narrative,' and, 'marks out a storytelling space in the interstices of official history'. Within this space 'the untold story' unfolds in which, together with the companion pamphlet *Euphues his Censure*, the women of Greece and Troy are 'briefly eloquent'.⁵³³ I would argue that this eloquence is remarkable and powerful and certainly not to be under-valued as 'brief'.

Wilson emphasizes that the events of *Penelopes web* occur at a point in the interregnum of twenty years between Odysseus' departure for Troy and his return home to Ithaca. Penelope, Wilson insists, exists only in relation to her husband, as Penelope herself acknowledges when she tells her maids that a woman's life must be

⁵³⁰ 'Et tant de soumission reçoit enfin sa récompense.' René Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, p. 236.

⁵³¹ Charles Crupi, *Robert Greene*, p. 78.

⁵³² Ibid. pp. 79-80.

⁵³³ Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship*, p. 93.

‘directed after her husband’s compasse’.⁵³⁴ In Odysseus’ absence, Penelope ‘is forced to adopt a temporarily autonomous existence.’⁵³⁵ As a manifestation of this autonomy, according to Wilson, Penelope tells three tales which are a kind of wish-fulfilment in that they all ‘feature surrogate wives escaping from the the tyrannical demands made upon them.’⁵³⁶ This fantasy of liberation cannot last as ‘the epic male narrative breaks into the private female space shared by Penelope and her maids.’⁵³⁷ First, her son Telemachus, now a grown man, asserts his powerful maleness and imposes himself on her conversation. Then, beyond the end of the work, we know that Odysseus himself will take command in his own palace once again. Penelope’s narratives in which female characters are powerfully vocal are seen to be illusory. Penelope herself acknowledges this, Wilson argues, as the third tale, in which a wife remains silent as a way of gaining a kingdom for her husband ‘acts as a prediction of Penelope’s own loss of eloquence’ and shows her clear awareness of ‘the realities of her position.’⁵³⁸

An interpretation of *Penelopes web* need not be as fatalistic as Wilson suggests. Odysseus may well return to Ithaca and be the only voice to which people pay attention, but Greene has reminded us of other possibilities and these remain in the reader’s mind despite the return of an overpowering male presence. Surely Greene is suggesting that what was possible once may happen again and he leaves us with a Penelope who has the potential to find her own voice on some later occasion. Her slipping of the male yoke may well have been temporary, as Wilson suggests, but who is to say that her silence at the end of the work may not be temporary too? Greene promised his male readers that he would let them eavesdrop on a female world they

⁵³⁴ Robert Greene, *Penelopes web*, (1587), Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12293 sig. C1i.

⁵³⁵ Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship*. p.96.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 96.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 97.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 97.

hardly knew. The experience of reading the pamphlet will inevitably have made such readers aware of a world just waiting to assert itself, a world that is sophisticated, clever and articulate and on the lookout for any opportunity to make itself known. Far from Greene slamming a door on such realities, I believe that he presents his female characters as standing impatiently behind such a door and ready to throw it open.

Robert Maslen points out that *Penelopes web* ‘occupies one of the lacunae of *The Odyssey*’, being an example of Greene’s narratives ‘interposing themselves between canonical texts’.⁵³⁹ Although, during his examination of *Menaphon*, Maslen observes that ‘these women are always defeating the men in contests of eloquence, wit and resilience’, he does not explore the specifically female nature of the world to which *Penelopes web* grants us admission. His concern is more to present Greene as offering his readers a challenge to the canonical texts which, according to Maslen, Greene saw as ‘inadequate to prepare young men for the bewildering range of experience they will encounter when they leave the safety of the schoolroom.’⁵⁴⁰ As Crupi does, he shifts the emphasis in the work from women to men, no matter how central to the work the female characters might appear to be.

Probable Sources

An examination of the sources on which Greene may have drawn when he wrote *Penelopes web* reveals the high degree of originality in his approach. We have to start with Homer’s *Odyssey*. At the very end of his pamphlet Greene promises a ‘Paraphrase, which shortly shalbe set out upon Homers Odissea’.⁵⁴¹ This suggests that Greene had a considerable knowledge of this work and it must be taken as the major source for *Penelopes web*. There is no evidence that Greene’s paraphrase was ever

⁵³⁹ Robert Maslen, in *Writing Robert Greene*, p. 159.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid. p.171.

⁵⁴¹ *Penelopes web*, sig. H2ii.

published or even written. He could have studied Greek at Cambridge or even at the Norwich Grammar School where Greek was on the curriculum and Homer was included in its list of texts set for study. We have no way of knowing how fluent Greene was in Greek, but he did not need to study Homer in the original language in any case as Latin translations were available. The first English translation of *The Odyssey* was published in 1615 by George Chapman, a translation of *The Iliad* by Arthur Hall having appeared in 1581.

Numerous texts of Homer in separate Greek, Latin and bilingual editions are noted by Elizabeth Leedham-Green in her *Books in Cambridge Inventories*. The 1578 inventory of the bookseller Denys contains two bilingual editions of Homer described as *opera Homeri grecolatine Crispini*, naming the translator as the French-born but Geneva-based translator and publisher Jean Crespin. The first edition of his Latin translation of *The Iliad* appeared in 1558 with his Latin version of *The Odyssey* appearing in 1567. Crespin had links with England as he also published an English language version of the Geneva Bible in 1569 so perhaps his Latin translations of Homer were the ones in general use.

Whichever edition of Homer Greene used, and in whichever language, just as he did with his version of the story of Susanna, he has inserted a tale of his own invention into the already existing narrative. In *The Odyssey*, although Penelope is regularly described as *περιφρονι* [‘very careful’ or ‘very thoughtful’], she is not free to employ this astuteness as she chooses, being a woman constrained by the social conventions of the society in which the action of the poem is set. Her major decisions are made for her, whether by Odysseus, by her son Telemachus packing her off to the safety of the women’s quarters, or, more importantly, by the goddess Athena. It is Athena’s prompting that gives Penelope the courage to issue the suitors with the

challenge of bending Odysseus's great bow and shooting an arrow through the axerings. She even admits that her most celebrated action, the weaving and unpicking of a shroud for her father-in-law Laertes, was a divinely inspired stratagem: 'a god gave me the inspiration.'⁵⁴² The arena in which most of the action of this part of *The Odyssey* takes place is the great hall of Odysseus' palace on Ithaca, a male-dominated space. The women's quarters are off-stage, a state of affairs which Greene reverses in *Penelopes web*.

Greene probably knew Ovid's *Heroides*, but the Penelope we encounter there is a woman made desolate by her husband's prolonged absence. Her whole existence is taken up with being the wife of Ulysses: 'I shall ever be Penelope the wife of Ulysses,'⁵⁴³ and she is quite unlike Greene's heroine.⁵⁴⁴ Neither John Gower nor Geoffrey Chaucer, whose works were well-known to Greene, presents Penelope as anything other than 'trewe' and 'pleintif', faithful and lamenting.⁵⁴⁵ She is certainly not for Gower the busy presence we see in Greene's recension. We might have expected her to have provided one of Chaucer's *Legends of the Good Women*, but she only appears in the *Prologue* to that work as the epitome of 'wyfhood'.⁵⁴⁶

From this survey of works to which Greene may have referred, it is very clear that the Penelope of *Penelopes web* is his own creation. In delineating her, Greene

⁵⁴² Homer, *The Odyssey*, transl. E.V.Rieu, revised D.C.H Rieu (London: Penguin Books, 1991), Bk. 19, p. 290, l. 138.

⁵⁴³ 'Penelope coniunx semper Ulixis ero.' in Ovid, *Heroides I*, transl. Grant Showerman, revised G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), l. 84.

⁵⁴⁴ In 1596 Peter Colse published *Penelopes Complaint: or A Mirrour for wanton Minions*, Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 5582, a long poem which, as the *Heroides* do, emphasizes Penelope's steadfast fidelity to Ulysses despite his desertion of her for twenty years and her fears that he may have taken a foreign mistress in the meantime.

⁵⁴⁵ John Gower, *The Confessio Amantis Book Four* in *The Complete Works* 2 vols. Ed. G C Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 1, p. 305, ll. 153-4,

⁵⁴⁶ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Legend of the good Women* in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* Ed. F.N. Robinson, 2nd edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 488, l. 207.

reveals a consistency in presenting his female protagonists as intelligent, articulate and more powerful than their circumstances might suggest.

The Work

Penelopes web is the most complex of Greene's pamphlets with eponymous heroines because the material which frames the tales is so substantial in comparison with the brief exchanges between Alcida, the story-teller in *Alcida*, and her un-named guest. *Philomela* is a single tale. In *Penelopes web* we learn about Penelope's own life, her relationship with her maids and, from her tales, about other men's wives and the difficult situations in which they find themselves. The three tales she tells do, however, relate to her own circumstances. The construction of the pamphlet is that a discussion of each desirable female quality, obedience, silence and chastity, is followed by Penelope's narration of a tale which exemplifies it. The discussions before and between the tales constitute a fourth tale in their own right with Penelope and her maids as protagonists, and I shall discuss them as a unit.

The title of the work and its dedication and two introductory epistles point to the several ways in which the text may be read. The title is doubly suggestive. A woman, Penelope, the ever-faithful wife of Ulysses, is expected to figure prominently, but what does Greene intend us to make of her 'web'? It may not simply be a length of cloth, more precisely a shroud for her still-living father-in-law Laertes, or an interweaving of tales. We think also of a web of lies or deceit which, spider-like, might be used to entrap victims. In such a case, to whom will the lies be told and who will be the victims? It is a reasonable assumption that they will be men. From the mere two words of the title, therefore, we have the possibility of a set of tales of female strategy and power which may be at odds with the reader's pre-conceptions about Penelope as

a desperate woman fending off suitors until such time as her husband returns to rescue her. As is so often the case with Greene, the paratextual materials in a pamphlet are addressed to a range of people and may offer conflicting promises. The dedication and the introductory epistles add more possibilities to this mix.

The two dedicatees of *Penelopes web* are Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and Anne, Countess of Warwick, whose virtues, Greene claims, make them paragons of equal standing with the ‘Princesse of Ithaca’.⁵⁴⁷ Our expectation is thus of a narrative which describes noble female behaviour in elevated language commensurate with the status of the two countesses and Penelope herself. The work turns out to be both a tale *about* Penelope as her character is revealed in her exchanges with her women, and a triptych of tales told *by* her, but we wonder what the aristocratic English ladies made of the behaviour of the heroine of Penelope’s second tale. In her determination to remain faithful to her husband Lestio, Cratyna becomes a collier’s mate in both senses of the word. By night she sleeps with her husband and by day, pretending to be a young man, she hauls his coal for him. It does not flatter a countess to have an author suggest that she shares a common sisterhood with a woman who denies her female nature to engage in activities of such a menial kind. There is no hint of the earthiness to come in the salutations of the dedication and our initial belief that Greene has written a tale illustrating the actions of women of the highest social status

⁵⁴⁷ The two women were sisters and had Puritan sympathies which makes the dedication by Greene somewhat surprising. Both women were dedicates of Edmund Spenser’s *Four Hymnes* (1596). Anne Countess of Warwick (1548/9-1604) was the eldest daughter of Francis Russell, second Earl of Bedford. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, she ‘served [Elizabeth the First] as an extraordinary gentlewoman of the privy chamber’ and, on account of her ‘intimacy with Elizabeth her influence was believed to be extensive and much solicited.’ ‘Best known is her help to various puritan divines, but she was also involved in university and ecclesiastical appointments, wardships, pensions, lawsuits, minor military postings, and land transactions.’ ODNB/69744. Margaret, Countess of Cumberland was the youngest child of Francis Russell, second Earl of Bedford. According to the ODNB, she was ‘extremely well-read, patronized the translation of foreign authors, and attracted dedications, especially from puritan writers.’ ODNB/5655.

is reinforced by the author's assertion that 'Penelope her selfe was more chaste then eloquent.'⁵⁴⁸ Mamillia, Susanna and Philomela are all triumphant because eloquent, but it would appear that in this particular work Greene's heroine, although resolute, is going to suffer in dignified silence. Greene proceeds to confound any such expectation.

The dedication to *Penelopes web* might suggest a specifically female readership for the work although the question of the number and social status of female readers of such pamphlets as Greene's has given rise to much discussion. Women must have read fiction even if they were not the initial purchasers of it. Men were always the likeliest purchasers and readers and in the first of the introductory epistles, his customary one to 'The Gentlemen Readers', Greene offers a quite different reading experience from the one promised to the two countesses. Anxious not to frighten away those who were possibly his usual custom, Greene claims that he changed his mind about making 'no appeale to your favourable opinions' and he now promises his male readers an experience which, one imagines, women might find offensive. If male readers are unlikely to be engaged by the idea of listening to 'women's prattle', Greene says, what about something more titillating? Prattle is turned into intimate discourse and he promises the opportunity to eavesdrop on women in their most private moments. If the gentlemen readers had ever wondered what it is that women discuss when no men are around, Greene is about to satisfy their curiosity: 'Mars wil sometime bee prying into Venus papers, and gentlemen desirous to heare the parlie of ladies'. In the reveal-all tone which is such a feature of the later cony-catching pamphlets, Greene

⁵⁴⁸ *Penelopes web*, sig. A3i.

offers his male readers the chance to pry and to hear things women would much rather they did not hear.⁵⁴⁹

We have to ask ourselves at this point whether Greene or his original readership minded, or even noticed, the conflicting promises made to different readers before he actually tells his tales. We have been offered high-mindedness followed by prurience and then, in the second epistle, the one to ‘The Courteous and Courtly Ladies of England’, we are told how moral the work is. Greene’s avowed purpose is now to ‘present but the viewe of those vertues that naturally are, or incidently ought to bee as well in virgins that sacrifice to Vesta, as in wives that make secrete vowes to Lucyna.’⁵⁵⁰ The eavesdropping is transformed into ‘discovering the vertues of your sex.’⁵⁵¹

Penelopes web inhabits a female space from which men are physically excluded. Men do have a narrative presence, however, because they are introduced by way of Penelope’s three tales within a tale, but their power to affect women is limited because the female narrator of their actions is able to control them. She can ensure that, ultimately, these fictive men behave in accordance with the rules of justice and morality she lays down for them. The *real* action of the work takes place during the course of three consecutive nights in Penelope’s private apartments. Isolated in time and space from the world where troublesome suitors make powerful claims upon her, she and her women are able to act and speak without constraint. By taking us into Penelope’s private and hitherto unrecorded world, Greene prises apart the accepted male-dominated narrative and inserts lengthy female discourse in the same way as he gave Susanna the eloquent voice which the Bible had denied her.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid. sig. A3ii.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. sig. A4i-ii.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid. sig. A4i.

Penelope's conversations with her women before and between the tales constitute a tale in their own right because the five women are able to converse without the possibility of male restraint or censure. This is not to say that the gentlemen readers are initially offered the intimate, possibly titillating, *entrée* into a purely female world which Greene appeared to promise them. The conversation between Penelope, her old nurse and three maids, Eubola, Vygenia and Ismena, which precedes the first tale is like that which, as Jordan suggests, might take place in a female academy, if such an institution existed.⁵⁵² The suggestion that Greene is presenting a female academy is in itself significant because here are women not prattling, as Greene often characterizes their talk even in this pamphlet, but speaking with the range of references that educated men could command. Four of the women are servants, probably slaves, so it would be remarkable if they had access to sufficient education to sustain such discourse. Much of the time their words might as well be uttered by men because they offer generalities about love pertaining to both sexes or, in Penelope's final speeches, observations on female conduct from a male perspective. Occasionally the conversation is personal as when Penelope twits her women for falling asleep and when Eubola and Vygenia are incredulous that she has managed to remain faithful to Ulysses despite his long absence.

In much of the women's conversation on the first night, Greene offers no more than a page-filler of conventional material perhaps to give the pamphlet an impression of substance. All the same, he clearly feels comfortable in having women expound their ideas in a register which might be thought of as accessible only to educated men.

Ulysses and Penelope exist in a mythical Heroic Age pre-dating the Classical period. Greene would have known this but it does not prevent his giving these women

⁵⁵² Greene initially states that Penelope has two maids and then introduces three.

access to the same Classical and post-Classical references an educated Elizabethan man would have collected in his commonplace book of *exempla* and *sententiae*. The anachronisms in *Penelopes web* are as ludicrous as Greene's geography but they need simply to be accepted as a convention that all of Greene's educated speakers, men or women, converse in the same register whichever historical period they inhabit.⁵⁵³ Thus Penelope and her women refer to characters in other myths (Medea and Dido and Aeneas *inter alia*), to figures from Classical history, sculpture and literature (Alexander, Themistocles, Phidias, Aristotle and Plato *inter alia*) and the Renaissance poet Ariosto. The nurse even quotes the Christian saying 'his Penny gets no Paternoster'.⁵⁵⁴

There is an opaqueness of purpose in these early conversations which is even more evident in *Alcida* where Greene's avowedly critical presentation of Alcida's three daughters is undermined by his artistic inclination to make them very sympathetic. Much of the conversation between Penelope and her women on the first night simply repeats the male view that submissiveness is a highly desirable quality in women and yet it is punctuated by assertions which contradict this. At the very beginning of the pamphlet we are told that Penelope is 'mistresse of his [Ulysses'] thoughts' and that the sense of his 'duetie' to return to her as soon as possible outweighs even his 'office of a prince' to reassert his rule in Ithaca.⁵⁵⁵ Such details stress the significance of Penelope as much more than a submissive consort. She is an intelligent woman capable of employing 'pollicie' to keep her many suitors at bay by

⁵⁵³ Greene is responsible for the notorious geographical absurdity of the seacoast of Bohemia which Shakespeare took over without correction when he drew on Greene's *Pandosto* as source material for *The Winter's Tale*. In *Alcida*, Greene's male narrator is ship-wrecked off the coast of North Africa and ends up off Taprobane (Sumatra).

⁵⁵⁴ *Penelopes web*, sig. B3ii.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.* sig. B1i.

weaving the shroud by day and unpicking it by night.⁵⁵⁶ The presence of these suitors inevitably makes love the main topic of conversation and the women become philosophical rather than personal. Ismena is the youngest and, by her own admission, lacks experience in love but that does not prevent her pointing out its ‘Amphibologicall Equivocation’ and its ‘laberinth of perplexed conceipts’, thereby displaying a vocabulary and knowledge which she can only have gained from sophisticated reading, as she suggests in the comparison she draws with a physician who gains much of his knowledge from books. When she repeats what she has ‘heard’ in Anacreon, Menander and Ovid, we assume that she has read these authors too.⁵⁵⁷ It is not credible that a servant girl could converse thus, but the point to be stressed is that Greene is once again endowing a female character with language as learned as any educated man might offer. Even less credibly, when the sleepy and mumbling old nurse enters the discussion, she defines and subdivides her contribution regarding the three kinds of marriage (‘The first of love, the second of labour, the third of grieve’) as if she were engaged in a university dialectical exercise, actually introducing the marriage of labour as ‘the second species of this *Genus*’, a phrase which Greene would have heard countless times as an undergraduate.⁵⁵⁸

The women are thus not engaged in a free-flowing conversation with the topic jumping back and forth between the participants. It is not chatter, but a series of standard disquisitions on love and marriage with Penelope interrupting both Ismena and the nurse to ask for clarification before she launches into her own reassertion of the oft-quoted three ideal qualities in a woman: chastity, silence and obedience. It is

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid. sig. B1ii.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid. sig. B2ii.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid. sig. B4i. Any Cambridge graduate of Greene’s time would have recognized these terms from the sections on Definitions (*De Definitione*) and Division (*De Divisione*) in John Seaton’s *Dialectica*, their university textbook on Aristotelian logic (dialectic). John Seton, *Dialectica*, I, sig. A2i-B3ii.

at this point that Greene begins to question the conventions regarding female behaviour in a way that is distinctly his own and which we saw in *Mamillia*. Platitudes on the desirability of women being completely submissive are expanded to include active verbs such as ‘refourme’ and ‘reclayme’ which present women as empowered and much more in control of their own immediate situation than might be expected. Obedience and silence, we discover, are regarded by Penelope as strategic tools to be employed when it will be to a woman’s best advantage. She does not see women as irremediably powerless, believing that there is no ‘husband so bad which the honest government of his wife may not in time refourme’.⁵⁵⁹ Admittedly it is a waiting game that women have to play and extraordinary patience may be required, but, if she acts at the appropriate moment, an intelligent woman will be able to transform a situation from passive to active, being eventually able to govern and reform her male oppressor.

Before she embarks on her first tale, Penelope slips back into convention, the language of the conduct manuals, offering a number of severe admonitions to wives who think of disobeying their husbands. A ‘wise’ woman should ‘obey and submit, not to rule or command’, her ‘husbands manners’ should be ‘the lawes of her life’⁵⁶⁰ and she should not presume even to have her own personality, ‘no proper passion or affection, unlesse framed after the special disposition of her husband.’⁵⁶¹ The assertion of ‘proper passion’ is exactly what happens in the first tale in *Alcida*, as I shall later show. Full compliance with these modes of conduct would turn any wife into a cipher, a silent, faceless domestic drudge, but it is noteworthy that these remarks are introduced and concluded with observations which suggest that a truly ‘wise’ woman knows how ‘to make a conquest of her husband by obedience,’⁵⁶² and that she can

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid. sig. B4ii.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid. sig. C1i.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. sig. C1i-ii.

⁵⁶² Ibid. sig. C1i.

‘appease him with patience and when he is quiet then seeke to perswade him with reasons.’⁵⁶³ Patience is thus strategic rather than abject; it is a question of a woman biding her time before acting rather than expecting her suffering to last for ever. The passive state of obedience is transformed into that most controlling of actions, ‘conquest’. Penelope’s concluding observation suggests that women possess the faculty of reason in far greater quantity than men who are given to ‘chollericke humour and forward disposition’.⁵⁶⁴

The tale which follows, that of Barmenissa wife of the Sultan of Egypt, will, Penelope declares, show how, by a careful show of ‘submission’ and ‘dutigall obedience’, the heroine of the story ‘reclaymed’ her rightful position ‘by her owne government’. We note the antithesis of nouns denoting passivity provided by the introduction of the strongly active verb ‘reclaymed’. A woman with a clear sense of her ‘proper’ self and what is rightly hers shows the determination to take her destiny into her own hands. Greene goes even further in the tale of Barmenissa than one might expect. She not only cocks a defiant snook at unkind Fortune but becomes a kind of existential heroine.

Before Greene recounts the second night’s discussion, he reminds us of Penelope’s public face, the one she presents to a world governed by men. Dressed in her ‘mourning attyre’ and ‘showing her selfe ... a good wife discontent’, she spends the day at her weaving, left alone by her suitors who pass the day in their vociferous, manly company in contrast to her demure silence.⁵⁶⁵

At night Penelope and her women become vocal and able to express themselves as they wish. Their discussion begins with prim remarks by the older

⁵⁶³ Ibid. sig. C1ii.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. sig. C1ii.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. sig. C2ii.

generation of women, Penelope and her ancient nurse. The latter marvels that the Romans erected temples to Flora and appointed 'certaine lascivious sports and pastimes' to celebrate this 'most vile and infamous Courtizane' and yet only grudgingly raised a statue to Lucrece, she of the 'invaluable chastitie'. Penelope explains that 'man' (and we suspect that she means 'men' rather than 'people') is 'so corrupt' that he is more likely to focus on 'vyce' and to ignore 'what is virtuously perfourmed'.⁵⁶⁶

In the first night's discourse, Penelope's maids had been incredulous of her fidelity to her husband in his absence, as if it were beyond the capacity of most women, and certainly themselves. Now, on the second night, they demonstrate that Venus is indeed at the heart of many homes as they engage in banter full of sexual innuendo and hint at each other's sexual activities. Penelope's praise of Eubola for endorsing virginity as if she 'deserved to be a Vestall herself' seems naïve in the light of Ismena's mockery of it. Ismena's suggestive language may be intended to titillate Greene's Gentlemen Readers who had been promised an opportunity to eavesdrop on the private conversations of women. Ismena says of Eubola, 'were she a Vestall (I had almost said a Virgin but God forbid I had made such a doubtfull supposition) she might misse in carrying water with *Amulia* in a Sive'. The maids' words are witty and playful, but their sexual innuendo leads to reproof from Penelope.

What are we to make of Greene's intentions at this point? Is he fulfilling a promise to one possible audience, the 'Gentlemen Readers', or indulging himself by depicting young women engaged in saucy talk? There may be some truth in both of these interpretations, but I prefer to see it as yet another example of Greene according his female characters a 'proper' voice as he saw it. With his own wild life, and he was

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. sig. C3i.

notorious for his association with London's criminal class, it should come as no surprise if he was prepared to allow his fictional women to mention their sexual activity. Penelope's maids may not be maidens, but they are not presented as harlots.⁵⁶⁷ Greene's honesty, if it may be called this, is respectful. It surfaces regularly in his work amidst much that is highly conventional and derivative. He directs our response to this sexual banter by telling us that Ismena's teasing of Eubola is taken 'pleasantly'⁵⁶⁸ by the victim who decides to reply in kind. Ismena has 'played with her [Eubola's] nose' and she is going to give her [Ismena] 'as great a bone to gnawe on', so she warns her fellow servant not to follow her devotion to Venus so far as 'to bring fourth *Romulus* and *Remus*'.⁵⁶⁹ At this point, Penelope silences Ismene and Eubola for having strayed 'so farre past the limits of modestie'.⁵⁷⁰ They blush at their outspokenness, at the way they have perhaps abused the freedom ensuant on there being no men present to listen and censure.

Conventionality returns in Penelope's fierce endorsement of chastity which is restrictive, male-sounding and packed with Classical *exempla* and *sententiae*. It owes a great deal to the sixteenth-century conduct manuals written for woman in that Penelope urges women not simply to be faithful to their husbands but also to be modest in demeanour and appearance and never to tempt other men by anything which might be construed as an 'unchaste looke'.⁵⁷¹ Perhaps Greene was covering himself with such strait-laced pronouncements lest he should be accused of encouraging wild behaviour. The dedicatees of the pamphlet were Ladies of quality, after all. It is a

⁵⁶⁷ At the end of Book 22 of *The Odyssey*, Telemachus, Odysseus's son, arranges the hanging his father has decreed for the twelve hand-maidens who have been having sexual relations with Penelope's suitors. Greene in no way suggests that his three attendants are among these women

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. sig. C3ii.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. sig. C3ii.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. sig. C4i.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid. sig. E4ii.

register that he can never maintain for long, however, as a more sympathetic view of women's right to be heard in a voice of their own choosing bursts out of the conventional pronouncements at regular intervals, as I shall show in my analysis of *Alcida*.

The conduct manual borrowings on the desirability of silence in women which constitute the major part of the third night's discourse are contradicted regularly in Greene's work and in Penelope's first two tales. In her third tale, two wives speak out of turn and destroy their husbands' chances of a crown by their lack of self-control although, in Greene's fiction as a whole, women who speak out intelligently and effectively greatly outnumber those who do not. The arguments which Penelope puts forward suggest that women are innately incapable of sophisticated utterance. She gives the example of an Athenian woman who dared not only to voice her opinions at length in a banquet but also employed 'many eloquent phrases'.⁵⁷² The suggestion is that she was parroting what she did not understand because Phocion,⁵⁷³ when asked to comment on what the woman had just said, compared her to cypress trees that are impressively tall 'but beare no fruite worth any thing'.⁵⁷⁴ This patronizing view of women's talk not being worthy of attention because it is a meaningless babble is endorsed in this exemplum by Penelope at the same time as she and her ladies are articulate and eloquent. It is a view challenged by Greene throughout his oeuvre in his creation of female characters, but, unsettlingly, he can introduce these conventional arguments without comment and one wonders what to make of them.

The gift of silence, Penelope says, quoting Cherillus, is given to women by nature but eloquence can only be 'got by virtuous education', an experience, it is

⁵⁷² Ibid. sig. G3i.

⁵⁷³ An Athenian statesman who lived c.402 BCE – c.318 BCE.

⁵⁷⁴ *Penelopes web*, sig. G3i.

implied, which should never be extended to women.⁵⁷⁵ In all of Greene's works which I discuss in detail in this study, the female protagonists' words bear impressive 'fruit' and they speak as if they have received a thorough education in rhetoric, even the serving girls.

The internal contradictions in the three nightly discussions, within Penelope's own remarks in particular, are nothing in comparison with the contrast between the behaviour encouraged in the conduct manuals and that of Barmenissa in the first tale and Cratyna in the second.

The Tale of Barmenissa (Obedience)

The tale of Barmenissa, the ill-treated wife of Saladyne the Sultan of Egypt, exemplifies Wolff's comment that, 'Most of Greene's female characters suffer and are true', but I explore important aspects of Greene's treatment of his heroine which Wolff does not consider.⁵⁷⁶ Barmenissa's behaviour does not fit well with Wolff's other observation that, 'One of Greene's favorite thoughts ... is that Fortune can be "spited" by a silent and contented endurance of her flouts'.⁵⁷⁷ Barmenissa is neither silent nor contented in her defiance of Fortune; she is strategic and not abject.

The plot of the tale develops mainly through the eight orations the characters deliver, the connecting narratives tending to be brief, with a couple of exceptions. Barmenissa's separate orations, and those of the four other characters who deliver them, are clearly differentiated according to the situation in which the speaker finds him or herself at any given time. It would be very unfair to dismiss these, in Wolff's terms, as 'long harangues and arguments'⁵⁷⁸ over-laden with 'gaudy stylistic

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. sig. G3i.

⁵⁷⁶ Wolff, *Greek Romances*, p. 411.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 386.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 371.

ornament'.⁵⁷⁹ Greene's use of the oration paradigm is very subtle in this tale and his use of rhetorical figures is certainly not otiose. Much of the plot sees Barmenissa in a variety of predicaments which provide her with two conflicting choices of action. There is a tendency to dismiss this conflict as a rhetorical and structural cliché on Greene's part. Peter Mack has argued that the 'divided soliloquy' is no more than a 'display of rhetorical skill [which] overwhelms any idea of emotional probability.'⁵⁸⁰ Such comments do Greene an injustice. There is no reason aesthetically why a plot should not proceed in this way and Greene's care in constructing each oration means that a reader is likely to be drawn into its dilemma and to be interested in Barmenissa's final choice of action. As orations in Greene's work are often spoken at points in the narrative when an important decision is required, it goes without saying that the debate is integral to this rhetorical device which should not be seen as an afterthought or a flashy piece of decoration. By the end of the tale, Barmenissa's exercise of her virtue as *virtus* [valour] and her determination that that she will not be compelled by fortune to compromise her integrity, makes her truly heroic.

The first of the three orations I explore in this tale is a letter sent by the scheming concubine Olynda to Saladyne in order to discredit and destroy Barmenissa (Oration 1).⁵⁸¹ It is an example of the way that Greene assigns sophisticated rhetorical skills to sympathetic and unsympathetic female characters alike. This letter reads like an oration addressed in person to the recipient and it sets the narrative in motion. The other two orations are spoken by Barmenissa herself, her apostrophe (Oration 5)⁵⁸² on

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 375.

⁵⁸⁰ Peter Mack, *Rhetoric in Use*, pp. 126-7.

⁵⁸¹ *Penelopes web*, sig. C3i-ii.

⁵⁸² Ibid. sig. D1ii-D2i.

her plight and her agonizing over whether to betray the plot against Olynda (Oration 7)⁵⁸³. Orations 1, 5 and 7 are given in full in Appendix 6.

Barmenissas's husband Saladyne, Sultan of Egypt, suddenly turns violently against her, his character transformation caused by Fortune which makes men, according to Penelope, 'variable' and 'momentarie'.⁵⁸⁴ Wolff speaks at length of Greene's frequent use of Fortune as a causal trigger to set events in motion and he sees it as a clear borrowing from the Greek Romances and also as an indication of Greene's inability to create psychologically convincing characters. I would argue that Greene's interest lies in his characters' reaction to events once they are in train, in the arias, as it were, rather than the plot-laying recitative.

It will be useful at this point to give a brief outline of the structure of the tale to clarify how Greene places the eight orations at pivotal points in the narrative.

The Structure of Barmenissa's Tale

1. A brief introductory narrative explaining that Saladyne, Sultan of Egypt, has set aside his queen, Barmenissa, in favour of the concubine Olynda.
2. Olynda's letter (ORATION 1) to Saladyne, intended to destroy Barmenissa.
3. Narrative. Saladyne drops the letter which is found by Barmenissa. She sends Olynda the money requested in the letter, pretending that it is from Saladyne. He intercepts the letter and learns the truth. Olynda persuades him to banish Barmenissa.
4. Saladyne's ORATION 2 to his Parliament explaining his intentions.
5. Garinter, the son of Saladyne and Barmenissa, is the only one to speak in her defence (ORATION 3).
6. Barmenissa commands Garinter to obey his father as she is doing (ORATION 4).
7. Brief narrative. Barmenissa is expelled from the palace and obliged to earn her living. Olynda's new power makes her tyrannical and she is soon hated. Time passes. One day Barmenissa approaches the palace hoping to learn whether Garinter is obeying his father.
8. On the way to the palace, Barmenissa breaks down and delivers a long apostrophe on her present state and how she can best cope with it. (ORATION 5) She concludes the apostrophe with a song of consolation.
9. Very brief narrative. Egistus and a number of Egyptian lords arrive to discuss how to deal with Olynda. Barmenissa eavesdrops.
10. Egistus' (ORATION 6) to the Egyptian lords.
11. Very brief narrative. The lords agree to support Egistus.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. sig. D3i-ii.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid. sig. C2ii.

12. Barmenissa's apostrophe (ORATION 7). She has to decide whether to keep silent and allow Egistus to overthrow her rival or to remain loyal and obedient to Saladyne and warn him of the plot. She decides on the latter course.
13. The only extended dialogue in the tale. Saladyne and Olynda happen to be walking by this self-same spot. Olynda is patronizing and triumphant towards Barmenissa who retains her dignity and is in no way humbled before Olynda or Fortune. Barmenissa reveals the plot.
14. Narrative with condensed reported speech rather than dialogue. Egistus and the plotters are imprisoned but Olynda insists that Barmenissa is also implicated. Saladyne is beginning to have doubts about Olynda but he agrees to her request that he allow the lawful Queen of Egypt (by which she means herself) three requests. It turns out that he is giving her the rope to hang herself.
15. Barmenissa sends Olynda a poem warning her against ambition, envy, revenge and self-love. Olynda dismisses it.
16. Brief narrative. Olynda asks for her three requests to be granted: the execution of the plotters; the disinheriting of Garinter; the banishment of Barmenissa.
17. Saladyne's judgement (ORATION 8). The lawful Queen of Egypt is Barmenissa who will be re-instated and Olynda, 'a very mirror of vicious affections' is banished.
18. Very brief narrative. Saladyne's commands are carried out.

Oration 1 (Olynda's Letter)

Olynda, fearing that Saladyne will prove as 'momentarie' to her as he has to such an excellent woman as Barmenissa, feels that she has to make her position absolutely secure. Greene has tailored this oration to Olynda's situation, personality and fears and it is an injustice to regard it as no more than a rhetorical exercise simply because it contains many rhetorical figures.

Olynda has taken a considerable risk in wording the letter as she does, but she is desperate and feels that the risk is worthwhile. At the heart of the letter, she querulously upbraids Saladyne and asks him to murder his Queen of twenty years. It would hardly be politic to come straight to these points, so she makes use of a long *exordium*, playing hesitantly with generalizations before taking him mildly to task. These initial remarks give no indication of the bloody suggestion to come. They are a preamble of three connected observations arranged in a kind of syllogism: **if** thoughts have external manifestations and **if** the face reveals our innermost feelings, **then** Saladyne is so changeable he may be compared to the pine tree whose leaves change

daily. She has employed *sententiae*, *contentio* and *epiphonema* here, but she needs to build to a much more dangerous *epiphonema* which she does in the second half of the *exordium*. Employing three further *sententiae* concerning the ‘brittle’ nature of kings (criticism that could easily back-fire), she now feels it is time to move from generalizations to her own ‘experience’ which forms the *narratio* of the oration. Saladyne is giving her less affection and money, accusations very revealing of the fact that she is a gold-digger who knows her position is precarious. She reinforces her complaint by the self-pitying use of *lamentatio* - ‘I account that day happie when Saladyne but glances at Olynda.’⁵⁸⁵ The cause of her ‘mishap’, a word intended to present her as a victim, she claims is Barmenissa, an accusation which gives rise to the *divisio* of the oration, the question of how Barmenissa can be prevented from causing difficulties in the future. The language now becomes demotic and abusive; gone are the measured rhetorical constructions. This is one woman’s hatred for a rival who stands in her way. The sentences are short and give a sense of being spat out. Barmenissa is accused of being deceitful and, worst of all, wrinkled! Olynda piles up (*incrementum*) the negative epithets describing Barmenissa’s appearance, incorporating *notation* (description of an object which focuses on its distinctive features) and *abominatio* (criticism) because there is no denying that she is much younger than the Queen.

All this time, in her head, Olynda can hear a very powerful counter-argument against her malice – Barmenissa has never displayed any of the unpleasantness of which she is being accused. Olynda admits this by her concessionary ‘if not with her tongue’ and she has to fall back on the unconvincing argument that Barmenissa’s

⁵⁸⁵ The spelling of her name is inconsistent throughout the tale. Grosart comments that, ‘Greene’s proper names are variantly and oddly spelt.’ Robert Greene, *Complete Works*, V n. p. 306.

apparent ‘vertues’ which make people sympathetic to her are no more than ‘paynted shewe’, a phrase exactly applicable to herself. Olynda fears Barmenissa’s ‘vertues’, both as good qualities but also as her indomitability. To avoid any public show of sympathy for Barmenissa she therefore urges her murder ‘without delay’, once again assuring Saladyne that, as Sultan, he need give no excuse for his action. The letter ends with two sentences which show Olynda’s weak position and also her greed. If Saladyne does not act as she has suggested, then he will no longer be her ‘friend’, an empty threat, and could he send her some money too. She concludes by suggesting that the sum is very little to pay for such weighty advice, a comment we are meant to see as ludicrous.

The pettiness, malice and desperation of Olynda are clear throughout her letter and it defies Wolff’s assertion that Greene could only describe ‘types’ and that the rhetorical devices amounted to no more than ‘tinsel’.⁵⁸⁶ Greene enables us fully to appreciate Olynda’s particular character and situation just as he does when he writes Barmenissa’s two orations which I shall discuss next.

Oration 5 (Barmenissa’s Apostrophe)

Barmenissa endeavours to come to terms with the misfortune which ‘the Destinies’ have caused to happen to her. Her fall from grace has been dramatic and painful and it is understandably very difficult for her to process the experience. She is determined that she will not be downcast because that would make Fortune’s triumph complete; instead, she will outface Fortune in an act of existential heroism. Nothing that life can impose on her has the power to make her less than her true self. She refuses to define herself as the rest of the world might do as victim or former queen, remaining what she is and always was ‘as well a Princesse in povertie as in prosperitie.’ It is a victory

⁵⁸⁶ Samuel Lee Wolff, *Greek Romances*, p. 407.

of the soul over the physical dimension. John Webster made the same point in 1613 in his heroine's defiant cry of, 'I am Duchess of Malfi still.'⁵⁸⁷

The *divisio*, *confirmatio* and *confutatio* of this oration also combine to form part of a dialectical debate, further evidence of how educated and articulate Greene's heroines often sound. The *divisio* could easily be the proposition of a university disputation: 'No man is happie before his end.' It is easiest to explain in tabular form this amalgam of the paradigms of the oration and the dialectical disputation. They converge in the *conclusio* which is, as I have suggested, an existential declaration of freedom and heroic intent. In a disputation the proposer and oppose speak alternately, but in the present example we have to imagine a number of the contributions to the debate. These imagined contributions I have put in italics.

ORATION

Divisio – the question: Is unhappiness a fact of life?

Confirmatio – Yes, because suffering is a necessity.

DISPUTATION

The proposition: 'No man is happie before his end.'

*We imagine that the **opposer** has asked the proposer to define 'happie'.*

The **proposer's** definition: 'True felicitie consisteth in a contented life and a quiet death.'

The **opposer** questions this, arguing that no living person can ever be truly happy – 'to assigne happinesse...before the battell bee fought.'

The **proposer** counters that suffering is a necessity, citing Dionisius who argues that, paradoxically, the happiest man 'from his youth hath learned to be unhappie' and, following on from that, according to Demetrius there is 'none more unhappie than he which never tasted of adversitie.'

The suffering man is thus deemed to be happy.

*The **opposer** finds it difficult to accept this and asks for an explanation.*

⁵⁸⁷ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, Ed. John Russell Brown, *The Revels Plays* (Methuen: London 1964), IV ii l. 142.

The **proposer** explains that Fortune considers those who have not suffered are worthy of contempt 'as objects'.

Confutatio – There is nothing evil about what is necessary.

The **opposer** asks for clarification: is there nothing unacceptable about suffering being a necessity in this way?

The proposer – no, because 'nothing is evil that is necessary'.

Conclusio – Be heroic. Defy Fortune.

We must therefore 'greave not' but defy Fortune and show that we are 'Lords over Fame and Fortune'.

Barmenissa's *conclusio* may offer her a philosophical way forward, but she still has to accept it emotionally. The sight of her former palace reduces her to 'melancholie'. She barely has time to collect herself before she learns of the plot against Olynda and is thrown into a frenzy of indecision which she reveals in Oration 7.

Oration 7 (Barmenissa's Apostrophe)

The *exordium* and *narratio* reveal Barmenissa's understandable initial delight that her suffering may soon be over. She employs a long string of *sententiae* repeating the idea that time ensures that the innocent eventually prevail and the ambitious fall. Then in the *divisio* she questions this exultation, asking 'doth content hang in revenge' as if what she is feeling demeans her. The arguments raised in the *confirmatio* and the *confutatio* confirm her doubts that she must not act like a 'fond woman' and that she will not have a 'quiet mind' if she allows the plot against Olynda to proceed. To be vengeful and treacherous does not sit well with the image she has of her true self. Honour is central to her being. It is a quality she has thoroughly internalized rather than seeing it as an externally imposed point of moral reference. She is faced with the

choice of being true to herself or accepting the considerable comforts of a world which will know she behaved dishonourably in order to destroy her despicable rival.

The oration's *confirmatio* concentrates on what would be gained and lost by her revealing the plot – honour on her part and shame on Olynda's. The *confutatio* focuses on the reasons why treachery against the monarch is never permissible, perhaps an attempt by Greene to make the civil authorities aware that he is a patriotic Englishman. Barmenissa arrives at her *conclusio* 'in a dumpe' because in following the demands of honour she has necessarily to show ingratitude to men who support her.⁵⁸⁸ There is no time to ruminate further, however, because Saladyne and Olynda pass by and test her resolution by their treatment of her, a dramatic piece of plotting on Greene's part. Olynda's smirking, patronizing offer of help reinforces their extreme change of station; nonetheless Barmenissa reaffirms her defiance of Fortune. Although she reminds Saladyne that she is the daughter of 'the great Chan of Tartaria', she is unwilling to conceal the plot which might restore her to her former glory. She rejects Olynda's offer of help as an absolutely 'last refuge', preferring to rely on her own resources to sustain her.⁵⁸⁹

Barmenissa's revelation of the planned treachery against Olynda should not be seen as an act of conventional blind obedience to her husband as if she has been brainwashed into wifely submissiveness. Greene makes it her personal choice, an assertion of her essential self rather than compliance with tradition. Barmenissa has not simply internalized a given morality; she has decided that that morality is her own ethos.

⁵⁸⁸ *Penelopes web*, sig. D3ii.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.* sig. D4i.

Barmenissa has also shown herself to be one of Greene's typically active heroines. She may defy the circumstances which have been thrust upon her but that does not mean that she has to adopt a stoical, passive attitude; when the opportunity arises she acts decisively. Discovering by chance the contents of Olynda's letter to Saladyne, she sends the concubine the money requested pretending it has come from the Sultan himself. Deceiving Olynda in this way is a victory for Barmenissa, initially as private knowledge and then in the form of Olynda's embarrassment when the truth is revealed. She can be fierce as when she commands her son not to defy his father, both because filial defiance is inappropriate and because Garinter may put himself at risk by a hot-headed outburst in defence of his mother. She sees clearly that Olynda's ambition and arrogance could be her downfall and so she sends her a warning in the form of a poem. Olynda ignores the warning, falls from grace and is banished. The story ends with Barmenissa restored to her position as the rightful Queen of Egypt.

The Tale of Cratyna (Chastity)

Penelope's second tale concerns the lecherous pursuit by Calamus, a young nobleman, of Cratyna, the wife of a farmer named Lestio. The theme of the tale is chastity and, as expected, Cratyna repulses all of Calamus's advances, but Greene's treatment of the narrative is not what we might anticipate. He eroticizes the presentation of Cratyna when she disguises herself as a young man, perhaps to titillate himself or his Gentlemen Readers, and he gives her two different voices, an assertive, challenging one, particularly when she has taken on a male persona, and a more conventionally female one when her disguise is penetrated.

There are many examples in traditional English folksong of young women who disguise themselves as soldiers or cabin boys in order to follow their sweethearts who

have been press-ganged into the army or navy.⁵⁹⁰ The true identity of the pretty soldier or cabin boy is usually realized when an officer catches sight of her breasts and the story generally ends happily. English folk songs can rarely be traced back beyond the late seventeenth century and we can only conjecture that Greene had heard ballads containing this particular motif. Shakespeare utilizes the device of the pert young woman disguising herself as a fetching youth most notably in the characters of Rosalind/Ganymede in *As You Like It* (1599-1600)⁵⁹¹ and Viola/Cesario in *Twelfth Night* (1600-1601) and he makes play with the sexual ambiguity and confusion attendant on this cross-dressing, but neither of these parallels has the earthy sexual frisson Greene gives to Cratyna's disguise.

Before she feels the need to resort to disguise, Cratyna reveals that she is adept at managing strategic silence and that she has impressive control of the oration. When Calamus, her lord, visits her farm in an attempt to exercise his *droit de seigneur*, she being his 'Tenant', she shows that she understands when to say little, 'made few answers', in the hope that he will realize that he is wasting his time. When, instead, he offers an arrogant oration demanding her love with promises of 'preferment' if she accedes and threats of revenge if she does not, Cratyna is verbally more than equal to the situation.⁵⁹² As yet another example of Greene's virtuous and articulate heroines, 'she refutes Calamus' oration point by point and image by image in an oration of her own. The full text of Calamus' oration and the one Cratyna delivers in reply is given in Appendix 7. A student of rhetoric would appreciate her technical skill in turning Calamus' own words against him, and even to a layman it is clear that a determined

⁵⁹⁰ Such songs as: *The Female Drummer*, *The Female Highwayman*, *The Female Sailor Bold*, *Farewell My Dearest Dear* and *William Taylor*.

⁵⁹¹ Based on *Rosalynde* (1590), a prose romance by Greene's friend Thomas Lodge. *Rosalynde*, ed. by W. W. Greg, The Shakespeare Library (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907).

⁵⁹² *Penelopes Web*, sig. F3i.

young woman is flouting a predatory rogue. We admire her as earlier we admired Mamillia. We should also admire Robert Greene for writing a pair of orations which reflect the characters of the interlocutors and whose rhetoric is so cleverly and amusingly intertwined. Such binary pairing of the words of a man confident he will get his way and a cleverer woman who shows him that he will not is a feature of *Mamillia* and Greene uses it again in *Alcida* in the exchanges between Fiordespine and Telegonus.

In his *exordium* Calamus belittlingly refers to Cratyna as a mere ‘Tenant’ on whom he is not prepared to waste words or time. The point is captured in the metaphor of ‘a long harvest’, the time he refuses to waste, in order to gain ‘a small crop’.⁵⁹³ By this he could mean a woman of much lower status or that the outcome of his demand is not in doubt. Cratyna throws his metaphor back at him. She assures him that his crop, his chance of success, is very small indeed, ‘so bad corne’, and that no matter how hard he tries, ‘how warely so ever you gleane it’, he will get nothing from her, ‘scarce prove worth the reaping’.⁵⁹⁴ She neatly twists his observation that ‘the shortest preamble is best’ and that there is no need for ‘frivolous prattle’⁵⁹⁵ by agreeing with the observation and then employing it to mean that any preamble is frivolous if it is intended to lead to ‘such follies’, such inappropriate and reprehensible behaviour as he is demonstrating.⁵⁹⁶

Having insulted her with his introductory remarks, Calamus goes on, absurdly, to say that this is a declaration of love. In his *narratio* he slips into the conventional flattering register of the lovesick male suitor ignoring the fact that his earlier words have completely invalidated such a pose. ‘The sight of thy beautie’ has ‘fettered him’

⁵⁹³ Ibid. sig. f3i.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid. sig. f3ii.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid. sig. f3i.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. sig. f3ii.

and he has also heard a good report of ‘thyne honestie’, hardly the most enthusiastic way of describing her good qualities. All this leads to the *divisio* in which we hear him ‘crave a salve for those passions that no other can appease.’ The actual question is whether she can deny him. The *confirmatio*, the argument that she *can* reject him is, naturally, brief because he has no intention of dwelling on it. It names and dismisses two compelling reasons why she should not love him, ‘love and lawe’, reasons which are actually unassailable.⁵⁹⁷ The *confutatio* is much longer because he realizes there are obstacles in his way, but what he offers is a rag-bag of threats and insulting remarks about female promiscuity.

Cratyna easily dismantles such an inept declaration of love which is the oration of a smug would-be seducer. She notes wryly that his assessment of her virtue is based only on a ‘suppose’; presumably he had to rely on the opinion of others. However, if he only supposes that she is virtuous, then he could not be more wrong because ‘report’, hearsay, is often inaccurate or malicious, ‘hath a blister on her tongue’ and he should be aware that she is very virtuous indeed.⁵⁹⁸ As for his being attracted by the sight of her, she says mockingly that there must be something wrong with his eyes and with his mind too if he is prepared to allow desire to overcome honour. Cratyna’s oration is half as long again as that of Calamus because she both flouts his points and then adds moral observations of her own.

In her *narratio* Cratyna reinforces her dismissal of Calamus’ advances with three *sententiae* on the theme of evanescence. The first two are short and general (ripe to rotten and hot to cold) but the climactic one (another *epiphonema*) relates specifically to ‘the fancies of men’ and to him in particular. In her *confirmatio*, she

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. sig. f3i.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid. sig. f3ii.

makes it clear that she is ‘tyed’ to her husband until death by ‘love and lawe’, by her own emotions and by a promise made in the sight of the gods.⁵⁹⁹ Nothing could be clearer, but she still takes Calamus’ increasingly disgraceful arguments in his *confutatio* and routs them one by one. I have presented these in parallel tabular form to show how thoroughly Cratyna defeats this man with her clever words.

Calamus’ Confutatio

1. Women are naturally promiscuous
-she should be so too.
Witness the two eyes of Venus and the
Two arrows of Cupid.
2. It does not matter what you do as long as
you keep it secret.
‘If not chastely yet charely’
3. He promises her ‘plentie’ and also to
preserve her good name, her ‘fame’.
(By now he is clearly losing patience with
this cajoling tone.)

Calamus’ Conclusio

‘I will not stand longer upon this point.’
Her options are adultery with ‘preferment’
or to make him ‘a hatefull enemy’.

Cratyna’s Confutatio

1. Venus ‘may love and looke how she list’,
but she is no better than a ‘wanton’.
Virtuous women like herself are not obliged
to follow such ‘presidents’.
2. The gods see all and they will ensure that
justice is done to all who offend in this way.
3. She scorns his offer of ‘preferment’,
preferring her good name to ‘gold’.

Cratyna’s Conclusio

His threats are ‘smal perswasions’.
Death rather than dishonour.
Her rejection is as immutable as an ‘oracle’.

That Calamus has lost this battle of words is shown by his ‘marvellous choller’ and his flinging out of doors.⁶⁰⁰ Once again Greene has presented a female character with the verbal upper hand and her male interlocutor is acutely aware that he has come off second best. Calamus decides ‘that the Cittie which would not yield at the parlie, might be conquered by an assault’.⁶⁰¹ In other words he plans to fall back on that inarticulate male weapon brute force. He turns Cratyna and Lestio out of their home and when this does not bring him what he wants he decides to kidnap Cratyna and have Lestio murdered. She is abducted but Lestio manages to escape and finds work as a miner. Cratyna is initially too overcome with grief to do anything except weep,

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid. sig. f3ii.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. sig. f3ii.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. sig. f3ii-F4i.

but quite soon she shows the resolution which Greene customarily attributes to his heroines: 'from prayers she went to pollicie'. She manages to convince Calamus with 'good speech' that she will submit to him given time and he allows her the freedom to wander where she will.⁶⁰² Taking advantage of this freedom, Cratyna escapes to the mine where her husband is working. It is at this point that Greene introduces into his story a tone which surely could never appeal to the great Ladies to whom the pamphlet is dedicated.

Cratyna disguises herself as a young man, but one able to work down a mine: 'chaunging her apparell into the attire of a man, and her head bravely shorne, she became a handsome stripling.' She finds employment in the mine, being tasked to assist Lestio and 'to drive his Cart'.⁶⁰³ Portia disguises herself as a lawyer, Ganymede is a gentleman farmer and Cesario serves a Duke. Thomas Lodge's Ganymede passes himself off as *Aliena's* servant but never participates in undignified work nor does he engage in the sexually-suggestive exchanges we see in Greene. None of these female characters disguised as young men is tasked with dragging a coal cart, but Greene never suggests that such hard labour is beyond Cratyna or that the men she works with comment on any physical weakness on her part. In contrast, Ganymede faints at the sight of a bloody handkerchief and Viola can barely manage a sword. Lestio is the only person who knows his wife's secret. Her disguise empowers her and gives her the confidence to speak to Calamus as man-to-man when he, disguised as a serving man, turns up and asks the miner's lad if he/she knows her own whereabouts. Cratyna has the advantage of Calamus as she sees through his disguise and she is able to be offhand with him as his assumed status is barely higher than her own. I have said that

⁶⁰² Ibid. sig. f4ii.

⁶⁰³ Ibid. sig. f4ii.

Greene eroticizes Cratyna but this is not done in a conventional way. She is not ‘feminine’ and alluring, quite the opposite, but her appearance may have provided the Gentlemen Readers with reading material they considered saucy. Here we have a beautiful young woman whose hair is now cropped, whose face is dirty and who is dressed in leathers. She gives Calamus so much cheek, being ‘bolder’ in this male attire, that he loses his temper, ‘thinking to have well bumbasted the boy’.⁶⁰⁴ Greene’s choice of word for the punishment to be meted out is significant. Her ‘bum’ is to be ‘basted’, thrashed, a detail which might well have left the Countesses of Cumberland and Warwick aghast and the author and his Gentlemen Readers titillated at the thought of a spanking being administered. Cratyna flees to safety amongst the miners who send Calamus packing.

On his way home, Calamus comes upon Lestio sleeping in a clearing. He decides to wait until Lestio wakes up in order to question him and so hides in a bush. In the meantime Cratyna arrives ‘whistling with her cart’ which shows how comfortable she feels in her male rôle.⁶⁰⁵ She tells Lestio what has happened thereby revealing the secret of her disguise to Calamus. He now feels remorse for his actions and rides to the court of King Menon, grandfather of Ulysses to whom he reveals all. Menon is intrigued and commands that the master collier, Lestio and the ‘boy’ be brought before him. What happens next is another piece of unusual story-telling by Greene with the innuendo relating to sexual ambiguity being passed back and forth between speakers. The key passage is given in Appendix 8.

Calamus and Menon know the truth about Cratyna but do not let on. Cratyna and Lestio therefore persist in their deception. She tells Menon that she is the servant

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. sig. G1i.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. sig. G1ii.

of the master collier but only ‘under’ Lestio, her overseer, a remark that may have for her both a working day and a sexual meaning. If she relishes the *double entendre*, believing the joke private, then it recoils on her because the king knows the truth. Menon suggests that she ‘serves’ her overseer Lestio by night, another knowing *double entendre* referring to ordinary domestic duties performed by a boy who is a boy and sexual duties performed by a boy who is actually the overseer’s wife. Greene is showing us here a woman able confidently to hold her own in such swirling innuendo as long as she believes that she is speaking in the persona of a man and is party to a secret which the king does not share. This secret knowledge gives her power over the king, in her mind, and in response to his question she tells him that she has only one master because, with regard to her overseer Lestio, ‘we make small account of any service that is done in the night’. Her remark has three levels of meaning. At face value she is a miner’s lad saying that the overseer requires him to perform so few domestic duties at night they are hardly worth considering and the payment for them, ‘account’, is therefore negligible.⁶⁰⁶ It could also be a lad hinting that sexual favours are freely given to the miner at night as their working relationship becomes a physical and emotional one. For a wife speaking about her husband, which is the truth of the situation, the sexual ‘services’ are naturally given freely.

Confident that only she and Lestio understand what she is really saying, Cratyna is no doubt feeling quite smug, but not as smug as Menon who is actually controlling the conversation. He asks Lestio to clarify whether or not the ‘boy’ is actually his servant as Cratyna has suggested that this is not actually the case. Lestio plays the same game as his wife. The boy is not his ‘man’ he says, clarifying for the king that the boy is not his servant, but acknowledging to Cratyna and himself that she

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid. G1ii.

cannot be his man because she is his wife. He and the boy simply share a bed at night. Such sharing was not at all uncommon in Elizabethan times, but rather than leaving it as a statement of what was often a necessity for people of their class, Lestio gives the bed-sharing another dimension by calling it ‘service’ and one he requires, ‘crave’. He may want them to believe that the boy is useful in keeping him warm at night, but the clear sexual suggestion in his words is not lost on Menon and Calamus who smile. The smiles tell Cratyna that her subterfuge may have been penetrated and she ‘began to blush’.⁶⁰⁷ Her mask of masculinity is visibly slipping. Menon sees and understands the blush but decides to continue his game by seeing what the reaction of Lestio and Cratyna will be when he declares an outcome which he has no intention of bringing to pass: Lestio may return to the mine but the boy will remain in the palace as the king’s page. Lestio is rendered almost senseless at the thought of being separated from his wife and so it is up to Cratyna to take command and try to restore the situation. Totally abandoning the male persona, she becomes a woman again and employs conventional female weaponry of tears and pleading. This is not inarticulate wailing, however, and she reveals her past dealings with Calamus in order to encourage the king to judge them sympathetically.

Both Menon and Calamus are hugely impressed with Cratyna’s fidelity to her husband. The king gives the couple new clothing and Calamus not only abandons all thought of possessing Cratyna, he offers them lands and possessions and they spend the rest of their lives happily sharing his palace with him. There is no suggestion that this is a *ménage à trois*.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. sig. Gl ii.

The Tale of the Silent Wife

At the beginning of Penelope's third tale, Ariamenes, the Prince of Delphos, aware that death is approaching, decides to name one of his three sons as his successor. His choice will fall 'on that sonne whose wife was found to bee most vertuous'. The tale punishes two women who cannot hold their tongues and who thereby cost their husbands the crown of Delphos. It also acknowledges the 'plausible perswasions' that a wife can use to influence her husband in a detrimental way.⁶⁰⁸ The moral of the tale is not as straightforward as this summary would make it seem. Greene's tone is ironic rather than severe and silence is ultimately defined not as remaining mute but as weighing one's words and only speaking when it is to the purpose.

The exchange between Ariamenes and his eldest son, who is naturally afforded the opportunity to speak before his brothers in praise of his wife, comprises two orations. The son's oration is given an ironic twist which shows Greene's facility in handling this form to create subtle effects. In the *confirmatio* of his oration the son is full of praise for his wife's beauty and parentage and he draws attention to her chastity and obedience, two of the three cardinal female virtues. Tellingly he never mentions the virtue of silence which is at the heart of this third tale. He is, however, denied the opportunity to add a *confutatio* to the oration in which he would dismiss any negative points which might be made against his wife. Just as he is 'readie to goe forward' with his *confutatio*, his wife, dazzled by the 'sugred object the sight of a Crowne' 'burst foorth'.⁶⁰⁹ Her unmannerly interruption at once reveals that she lacks the power of silence, the quality her husband has failed to mention and about which Greene's readers would have expected to hear as it was the well-known third element of the

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid. sig. G4i.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. sig. H1i.

triplet of female virtues. The wife herself provides the *confutatio* of the oration which she has prevented her husband from completing. She acts as a living demonstration of the negative arguments which would be raised in a *confutatio* and removes any possibility of their being refuted. This dovetailing of the speeches of the husband and wife into a single oration is cleverly managed by Greene.

The conversation between father and son is now drowned out by the wrangling between the wives of Ariamenes' first and second sons. The second son never manages to interpose a single word as the sisters-in-law compete vociferously. It is clear to the readers that the more these women say the less likely their husbands are to be chosen as the king's heir. In these altercations Greene is able to indulge his penchant for creating feisty female characters. The response of the wife of the youngest son as her sisters-in-law 'brabled' is to blush and stay silent. When asked by the King why she has remained silent and not added her own voice to the competition for a crown, her response is 'short and sweete'. She states that anyone desiring a crown is asking for a life full of care. She has nothing further to add to that observation which means that she is not mute, simply 'briefe and pithie' when she speaks.⁶¹⁰

Greene has been able to enjoy himself by portraying the lively squabble between two female rivals who are as skilful in their use of belittling language as they are ambitious. Each is a 'pretie Oratresse' and although their intemperate words cost their husbands a crown, Greene's aim is not to write a sermon which condemns women to muteness.⁶¹¹ Having too much to say recoils badly on these women but they never suffer the opprobrium experienced by the loose-tongued Marpesia in the third of Alcida's tales. They are acknowledged by the King to be obedient and chaste; he

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. sig. H2i.

⁶¹¹ Ibid. sig. H1ii.

happens to set greater store by the youngest wife's strength which is to think about what she has to say before she says it. She duly wins the title of heir apparent for her husband.

The pamphlet ends in a rush with the sudden arrival of Odysseus, but the last conversation set down in direct speech is that between the old nurse and Ismena, 'a quick wench with her tongue'. Our last memory of the work, therefore, is of an irrepressible young woman who declares that only the shock of such 'proffer as a Crowne', will make her 'forget my prattle'. Until such time, she will never stay silent and Greene leaves us asking: Why should she? After all, even if she lacks the female virtue of silence she is none the worse for that – 'for all the cracke, my peney may be good silver', an endorsement by Greene of her 'merrie quips' rather than the lengthy borrowings from the inhibiting conduct manuals which Penelope has trotted out.⁶¹²

Conclusion

I have shown that at the heart of this work, as in so many of Greene's pamphlets, is the tension between contemporary conventional expectations of women and the unconventionality of Greene's presentation of his female characters. In *Mamillia*, Greene, as author, wades in on the side of maligned and belittled women, but here he allows the two attitudes to exist side by side without comment. Thus, Penelope, in the conversations with her maids, appears to espouse the qualities of silence and obedience which her respective tales then go on to interrogate. Neither she, nor Greene, ever questions the necessity for female chastity. Greene's treatment of the virtue of silence is particularly interesting, as my exploration of the first and third tales makes clear. Barmenissa and the wife of the youngest son deal with the possibility of silence according to their own personal codes and not because it is a state imposed upon them

⁶¹² Ibid. sig. H2ii.

by a male hegemony. Barmenissa could, vengefully, remain silent and thereby permit a rebellion against her cruel husband to go forward. Instead, her moral sense impels her to do otherwise and she reveals the plot, speaking out to her own detriment. The wife of the the youngest son keeps her peace because there is nothing she wishes to say at this juncture. Her silence is a free choice, self-imposed, and when she needs to express herself in the future, we are sure that she will do so.

Greene's unconventionality in his presentation of his female characters is extraordinary in Penelope's tale of Cratyna. A reader of Greene's pamphlets will quickly become accustomed to women who are articulate and self-confident, but Cratyna goes much further when she disguises herself as a miner's 'boy' and almost receives a bum-basting in the process. We should not under-estimate how far Greene goes in this tale in flouting convention when he allows his heroine to abase herself and yet not be irremediably tainted by such an action. Indeed, in a gesture symbolic of the author's own admiration for such spirited women, Cratyna and Lestio are invited to spend the rest of their days at the court of King Menon.

Chapter 6

What's in a Name? (2)

Alcida Greenes metamorphosis and Philomela the Lady Fitzwaters nightingale

Alcida

Alcida is both typical of Greene's presentation of his female characters and yet problematic in that readers are presented with contradictory pointers as to the nature of the author's own stance with regard to his fictive material. At the heart of the three tales recounting the fates of Alcida's daughters is something which might be considered Greene's literary trademark, a portrait of a clever, verbally-accomplished young woman. We recognize, admire and smile at the self-possession of the sisters as they encounter and respond to a male-dominated world. If this were the only material which Greene provides for his readers, then their response would be straightforward. What is unsettling, however, is that this collection of tales is recounted by a mother, Alcida, who is at pains to point out that her daughters transgressed the rules of obedience, chastity and silence and were deservedly metamorphosed as a punishment for their mis-deeds.

Modern readers are bound to be jolted by the transition from Alcida's moral lamentations to the long and detailed accounts of the sisters' behaviour for most of their lives until they fell into error. It is surely difficult, as a reader, to avoid finding oneself warming to these spirited girls and then being jolted for a second time as they are universally castigated for rejecting an unwelcome lover (Fiordespine), for inexplicably descending into wild promiscuity (Eriphila), and for blabbing about a husband's crime of murder (Marpesia). There is a sense that these fallings-away are

arbitrarily tacked-on to each biography and that Greene is actually writing two separate narratives, the moral lesson announced by Alcida at the beginning of the pamphlet and repeated at the end of each tale, and a subversive counter-narrative arising from Greene's own sympathetic inclination towards a trio of clever, vivacious girls. Their actions in rejecting a tiresome lover and in revealing the details of a murder hardly constitute 'crimes', in any case. There is thus a clear dichotomy in this work which is likely to unsettle modern readers, but it is impossible to tell whether Greene's contemporary readership happily accepted the work's moral framework and thereby discounted as irrelevant the attractiveness of the sisters' behaviour in the majority of the pamphlet.

The earliest surviving edition of *Alcida* dates from 1617. It was entered on the *Stationers' Register* on December 9th, 1588 and, as *Metemorphosis*, is one of the fifteen works by Greene mentioned in *Greenes Funeralls* of 1594.⁶¹³ It is difficult to draw conclusions from this mention about the estimation in which *Alcida* was held as the selection by 'R B. Gent.' excludes *Pandosto*, Greene's most enduring work, but includes *The Royal Exchange*, *The Spanish Masquerado* and the piece *upon the death of Sir Christopher Hatton*, his least significant works.

Just as *Penelopes web* extols the female virtues of obedience, chastity and silence, so *Alcida* purports to be a demonstration of the fitting punishments meted out to women who reject these same qualities. Fiordespine is punished for pride, Eriphila for lack of chastity and Marpesia for being a blabber-mouth. René Pruvost takes at face value Greene's claim in the work's dedication to Sir Charles Blount that he is

⁶¹³ RB Gent. *Greenes Funeralls*, 1594, Bodleian Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 1487.

about to provide ‘the Anatomy of womens affections’, in other words an analysis of women’s behaviour which finds them considerably at fault.⁶¹⁴

In *Alcida*, as Pruvost sees it, Greene provides ‘a newer sort of content’,⁶¹⁵ with regard to women. This is quite unlike the earlier works in which Greene presented himself as ‘the determined champion of the feminine sex.’⁶¹⁶ In his epistle to the Gentlemen Readers, Greene reinforces this claim by suggesting that he is performing a valuable service for young men in publishing this work as it is ‘profitable for yong Gentlemen, to know and foresee as well their [women’s] faults as their favours.’⁶¹⁷ Pruvost believes that Greene was true to his word and that this critical attitude infuses the whole work thereby rendering it quite unlike Greene’s preceding pamphlets. So convinced is Pruvost that Greene was decidedly *not* the champion of the feminine sex in *Alcida* that he believes he can explain the writer’s change of heart. He puts it down to the influence of Thomas Nashe and a desire on Greene’s part not to be criticized for over-praising women in the way that Nashe castigates in his *Anatomie of Absurditie* which, Pruvost believes, Greene may have read prior to its publication in 1589.⁶¹⁸ Pruvost does not like to think of Greene’s being a misogynist and, because the three vices of *Alcida* contrast so neatly with the three virtues of *Penelopes web*, he consoles himself by concluding that Greene is doing no more than playing ‘a simple literary game’⁶¹⁹ intended to stimulate his readers’ interest.⁶²⁰ Helen Hackett states that this neat inversion of the virtues of *Penelopes web* into the vices of *Alcida* is clear proof that ‘Greene’s supposed championing of women’s cause was merely a transitory

⁶¹⁴ Robert Greene, *Alcida Greenes metamorphosis*, 1588?, earliest surviving edition 1617, British Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12216, sig. 3ii.

⁶¹⁵ ‘d’une teneur plus nouvelle’, René Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, p. 314.

⁶¹⁶ ‘champion décidé du sexe féminin’ *ibid.* p. 319.

⁶¹⁷ *Alcida*, sig. A2i.

⁶¹⁸ Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, pp. 320-322.

⁶¹⁹ ‘un simple jeu littéraire’, Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, p. 319.

⁶²⁰ ‘mieux fouetter leur intérêt’, *ibid.* p. 320.

rhetorical pose'.⁶²¹ On the one hand, therefore, we have Pruvost seeing the content of *Alcida* as a passing phase and Hackett convinced that *Alcida* is more likely to reflect the essential Greene and that those works sympathetic to female protagonists are the ones which should be designated 'temporary'. Neither of these viewpoints is borne out by a close exegesis of Greene's texts.

Alcida is a more complex work than Pruvost suggests in calling it a 'game' and I dispute Hackett's accusation that Greene's sympathetic portrayal of his female characters was either 'supposed' or the passing flourish of a poseur. Whatever Greene claimed regarding his intentions, when he actually set about writing *Alcida* he found himself instinctively presenting his female characters as sympathetically as he had always done. There is thus within the work a tension between Greene's avowed purpose and his execution of it.

To John Clark Jordan's assertion regarding *Alcida* that, 'to be puzzled about a seeming change of front is to take Greene too seriously', I would reply that the 'change of front' is, indeed, only 'seeming' and that Robert Greene does deserve to be taken seriously. Jordan does conclude that, '*Alcida* is not necessarily a misogynistic pamphlet. It is not against women in general. It is merely against certain faults in women's nature – simply a didactic narrative.'⁶²²

Charles Crupi considers *Alcida* 'intense and troubling'. He believes that '*Alcida*'s three narratives seem at times like ironic inversions of Greene's other works.'⁶²³ This would only be the case if the criticism of the behaviour of the three sisters were all that there is to *Alcida*. The irony resides in the tension between Greene's policy statement in the introductory materials and his inability to abide by it.

⁶²¹ Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction*, p. 97.

⁶²² John Clark Jordan, *Robert Greene*, n. 24, pp. 25-6.

⁶²³ Charles Crupi, *Robert Greene*, p. 81.

Writing of the haughty Fiordespine, Crupi argues that, 'her treatment of Telegonus lacks all courtly pretense' and her behaviour 'leaves her without function in the world'.⁶²⁴ The notions of 'courtly pretense' and 'function' are at the heart of my disagreement with Crupi's interpretation. Fiordespine is wooed in a series of courtly, rhetorical and conventional speeches to which she responds disdainfully because this is a game she absolutely refuses to play. Mamillia shows similar independence in rejecting Pharicles when he invites her to enter the game of courtly love with him. Like Fiordespine, she is determined to remain true to herself. The 'function' and the 'world' of which Crupi speaks are an imposed function in a male dominated world which Fiordespine rejects and which Robert Greene throughout his works appears to challenge. Perhaps the most telling line in the whole of *Alcida* is Fiordespine's conclusion to the letter of rejection she sends to Telegonus. He may refer to himself hopefully as 'yours, if he be,'⁶²⁵ but her retort is that she is unequivocally 'Her owne Fiordespine.'⁶²⁶ This is not so much arrogance as an assertion of independence and, for all that Greene punishes her by turning her into a block of marble for her recalcitrance, one cannot help sensing his sympathy for her *Why should I just because you want me to?* stance.

Although Katharine Wilson sees the figure of Alcida as 'an authorial surrogate who herself becomes the all-consuming source of narrative,'⁶²⁷ it is more a case of Greene inviting a surrogate to take over the narrative and then rescinding the invitation as his own attitudes regularly colour the text. I also do not think that 'the narrator and readers are left at the mercy of Alcida's interpretations.'⁶²⁸ What actually happens is

⁶²⁴ Ibid. p. 51.

⁶²⁵ *Alcida*, sig. D4i.

⁶²⁶ *Alcida*, sig. D4ii.

⁶²⁷ Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship*, p. 100.

⁶²⁸ Ibid. p. 101.

that while Alcida offers a conventional interpretation of events, which is to say women punished for offending men, Greene has put into her unwitting mouth a counter-narrative in which we see events from the sisters' perspective.

The work

The narrative voice in *Alcida* is a shifting, not to say untidy, one and the three tales which make up the pamphlet may be said to be doubly-framed. The work begins with the shipwreck of the anonymous first-person male narrator about whom we are told nothing, although we assume that he is a gentleman. The omission of every scrap of biographical information tells us that Greene is determined to keep the focus away from this male figure, who serves a purely structural function, and to concentrate on the female characters, Alcida and her three daughters.

This nameless man is given shelter by Alcida whose narration of the sad fates of her three daughters forms the bulk of the work. As Alcida tells her tales, her voice is only infrequently recognizable as that of the mother of the three young women. This should come as no surprise as the sub-title of *Alcida* is *Greene's Metamorphosis* and it is Robert Greene's own preoccupations which underpin the three stories and, in particular, the way in which they present the characters of the three sisters. Greene himself is the actual and omniscient author of these narratives who is able to reveal the details of conversations and extended apostrophes of introspection which take place when Alcida is elsewhere and could not possibly hear them. One should not look for our modern convention of narrative verisimilitude here.

The three framed tales of *Alcida* make up two interlaced and contradictory narratives. In the first, Greene claims that he is writing an account of female transgression justifiably punished; the second narrative is the one he appears to have been unable to stop himself writing. It subverts the first narrative, being a sympathetic

presentation of those same female characters who are metamorphosed for their wayward behaviour. Although critics have failed to acknowledge this second narrative, an awareness of it is essential for a full appreciation of Greene's intentions in this particular text which are consistent with his sympathetic presentation of female characters I discussed in the earlier chapters.

Not only does the reader need to be aware of contradictions created within the text by the clash of conflicting narratives, but there is also the fact that the text cannot be read as a stand-alone. It must be understood in the light of two of Greene's earlier pamphlets *Mamillia* and *Arbasto* from which he borrows speeches and situations in the composition of *Alcida*.⁶²⁹ René Pruvost has identified these borrowed passages which are generally confined to conventional expressions of, or straightforward observations about, love and which seem not to have engaged Greene very much in this work or he would not have been content to re-use them in this way.⁶³⁰ There is added piquancy that Telegonus is sometimes given lines from *Mamillia* which were written by Pharicles a scheming rogue, a fact which cannot help but cloud the avowed morality of the story which presents Telegonus as Fiordespine's hapless victim. The two parts of Fiordespine's name, the flower and the thorn, alert us to the likelihood that she will be a beauty with the capacity to wound. All of Fiordespine's remarks are original to *Alcida*, but her tone of voice inevitably reminds us of Doralicia in *Arbasto* who has every reason to hate and be insulting to a man, Arbasto, who professes love for her. What are we to make of the fact that, in *Arbasto*, a French princess who scornfully and understandably rejects the suit of a bloody foreign invader sounds very much like Fiordespine in *Alcida* who is turned to stone for being so disdainful to her

⁶²⁹ Robert Greene, *Arbasto, the antomie of fortune*, (1584), Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12217.

⁶³⁰ René Pruvost, *Robert Greene*, pp.313-4.

social inferior? It seems clear that Greene was willing to go to the trouble of producing new material in his presentation of Fiordespine's relationship with Telegonus because he enjoyed and felt most creatively involved in conjuring up such unconventional and strong-minded female characters. I shall demonstrate in my exegesis how unconventional Greene is in *Alcida* and how the pamphlet should never be read as a glib attack on female behaviour.

All three of Alcida's daughters are judged in relation to their use of language, repeating a focus we saw in Greene's earlier pamphlets. Fiordespine uses insulting and scornful words in response to Telegonus' declarations of love. Eriphila is praised at length for her wit, but Greene suddenly abandons his complimentary depiction of this verbal gift to demonstrate her unexpected lack of chastity. Marpesia is unable to keep her husband's dark secret and is turned into a rose tree for her gossiping. In each case, a young woman's relationship with language appears intrinsic to her transgression, but there is something unsettling in this and readers are left with some awkward questions. Why should Fiordespine feel obliged to respond passionately to Telegonus simply because he is suffering for love of her? He is, after all, below her in rank. In a similar situation, and with equal justification, in *Gwydonius* Castania, a Duke's daughter, rejects a gentleman, Valericus, who is socially far beneath her and whom she does not love. Why does Greene take such pains to make clear the impressiveness of Eriphila's wit only to jolt us with an account of her sudden descent into a kind of nymphomania? The secret which Marpesia is unable to keep is that her husband is a murderer. If she had not revealed this fact, he would never have been brought to justice, so why is she the one who is punished by undergoing a metamorphosis while he can go self-righteously to his execution?

Before she tells her visitor the story of her daughter Fiordespine, Alcida shows him the ‘marble pillar’ into which the young woman has been metamorphosed. On the ‘table’ in each hand of the statue are words which would certainly lead a reader to expect that the tale is going to be a straightforwardly moral one. The emblem inscribed on the right-hand table reminds us that ‘proud beauty’ is likely to be ‘a plague, a poyson, and a hell’,⁶³¹ an observation rising from the male-centric view of the world I discussed in Chapter Two when placing Greene in the context of his time. Developing the idea that female beauty is only to be considered from the perspective of the (male) beholder, the left-hand emblem concludes that, ‘Beauty breeds pride, pride hatcheth forth disdaine,/Disdaine gets hate, and hate calls for revenge.’⁶³² These are extreme words which suggest just how angry men become in the presence of women with a strong sense of self-worth. A beautiful woman who relishes and exploits her beauty is likely to experience a savage backlash of hate and revenge from men she has rebuffed. Few, if any, of Greene’s first readers are likely to have found anything surprising in this, but he might well have unsettled them with the way that the story develops. I suggested earlier that Greene was an *enfant terrible* who challenged orthodoxy and this may account for the pleasure one senses he felt in his depiction of women who have the temerity, and the language skills, to answer back. Rather than adopting the perspective of the beholder, he seems very comfortable aligning himself with the beheld.

When the tale of Fiordespine begins, the idea of its being a moral lesson is very much to the fore. Almost immediately we are told of her ‘selfe-love’ and that she was guilty of ‘following *Venus* every way in such vanities, and playing the right

⁶³¹ *Alcida*, sig. C1i.

⁶³² *Ibid.* sig. C1ii.

woman.’⁶³³ The last phrase is a telling one, encapsulating as it does a view that given the chance all women will behave in a particular way which is not to be tolerated. They are regarded as irretrievably weak and in need of male guidance, control and, probably, punishment. There is never any suggestion that it is permissible for a woman to glory in whatever she happens to be. The narrative voice changes briefly, and clumsily, from that of Alcida herself to one which imitates the fulminating tones of a sermon directed against the weakness of women. The narrator speaks of ‘their sexe’ and for a few lines we have a diatribe against the preference women have for ‘tricking of their faces, than the teaching of their soules’, comments which Greene could have heard in many a contemporary sermon. Alcida, ‘leaving off this digression’ about women in general, then applies it to her own daughter and relates that many suitors courted her and were all rejected out of hand. All save one abandoned their pursuit and returned home, having had enough of her ‘disdaine’ and her delight in making them ‘frantike in affection’.⁶³⁴ We remember the word ‘disdaine’ from the emblem Alcida showed her guest and so we expect that the tale will end in hatred and revenge. In a sense it does, but, as I shall demonstrate, Greene has a great deal more to say than that.

The one man who remains in pursuit of Fiordespine is Telegonus, the son of a Tapropane nobleman whom Cupid has afflicted with an unquenchable passion. The attention now turns to him, the victim of a love which is never returned. Telegonus’ sufferings are great and the reader is given the opportunity to develop sympathy for his plight before Fiordespine herself is allowed to speak. Greene has thus very much stacked the cards against this female protagonist by revealing her ultimate punishment and having her own mother speak against her before she has the opportunity directly

⁶³³ Ibid. sig. C2i.

⁶³⁴ Ibid. sig. C2i.

to establish herself in our awareness. Before we meet her we also know all about the suffering she delights in inflicting. Greene's task in making her in some way engaging, or at least her behaviour in some way understandable, would seem to be an extremely difficult one but his relish in the creation of strong and verbally-adept female characters renders him equal to this task. Telegonus is conventional in a way that Fiordespine is not. He is a typical courtly lover, solitary, moody and oscillating wildly between hope and despair.⁶³⁵ He expresses his feelings in the first long apostrophe and oration of the work. It is also the first example in the pamphlet of Greene's borrowing material he had used earlier in *Arbasto* (Egerio's words to King Arbasto), the borrowings being incorporated neatly into the *refutatio*.

Telegonus' *conclusio* is that that he should 'Hope then the best and be bold.'⁶³⁶ Some days later as he wanders disconsolately about, the epitome of a distressed lover, he comes upon Fiordespine and her sisters. Greene's description of his reaction to this meeting is taken from *Arbasto* at the point in that narrative when Arbasto himself, in conversation with Egerio, is walking in the countryside near Orleans and encounters Doralicia, Myrania and their nurse.⁶³⁷ At first too overwhelmed to speak, Telegonus recollects himself and is eventually able to address the three sisters flatteringly as 'goddesses',⁶³⁸ the identical word used by Arbasto. The absurdity of such language is borne out by the fact that the third woman in Doralicia's party is her nurse who is decidedly old, hence her name Madam *Vecchia*. Such sentiments are so conventional, one can understand why Greene did not think it worth his while penning a new version.

⁶³⁵ C.f. Arcite in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* who suffers greatly for the love of Emelye: 'His slep, his mete, His drynke, is hym birafted,/That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft;/His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde,/His hewe fallow and pale as ashen colde,/And solitarie he was and evere alone,/And waillynge al the nyght, makynge his mone;' Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Works* ed. F.N. Robinson, *The Knight's Tale*, ll. 1361-6.

⁶³⁶ *Alcida*, sig. C4i.

⁶³⁷ *Alcida*: 'for there he espied...to such faire and excellent saints.' sig. C4i; *Arbasto*: 'I easily perceived they were...to do you service.' pp. 18-19.

⁶³⁸ *Alcida*, sig. C4ii.

Telegonus's words are, after all, no more than the prompt for the more interesting matter of Fiordespine's response.

Fiordespine's reply to Telegonus is similar in tone, but not in actual content, to that which Doralicia delivers to Arbasto. Doralicia has even more reason for rejecting her suitor because this man has invaded her homeland and slaughtered thousands of her countrymen. Although a truce is in force at the moment, Arbasto nevertheless remains a foe 'to mine honor, mine honestie, my parents, and my countrie' whose words are no more than 'poysoned parle'.⁶³⁹ How could Doralicia answer other than she does and it must be from Arbasto's, rather than Greene's own, perspective that her words are described as 'crabbish'.⁶⁴⁰ A lack of self-awareness and a too-great eagerness to blame every vicissitude of his life on the agency of fortune, it should be noted, are consistent traits in Arbasto's character.⁶⁴¹ Arbasto is quite unable to control his emotions, whether it be love or a desire for revenge, in a way that is alien to the female characters Greene creates. They never descend into the melodramatic ranting of which Arbasto is regularly guilty. Despite being at Arbasto's mercy, Doralicia, like so many of Greene's heroines, is 'no thing dismaide' at being in the presence of a powerful man and her language is confident and brave.⁶⁴² In *Alcida* Fiordespine outranks Telegonus and so her outspokenness is an act of independence rather than courage.

Once we hear Fiordespine speak for the first time, we discover that *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* has metamorphosed into Beatrice, Shakespeare's witty 'Lady Disdain'.⁶⁴³ It is immediately apparent that Fiordespine inhabits a different world from

⁶³⁹ *Arbasto*, p. 22.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 19.

⁶⁴¹ The pamphlet's title may declare that it is an 'anatomie of fortune', but it is clear that Arbasto brings much of his misfortune on himself.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.* p. 19.

⁶⁴³ William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, I i l. 123.

that of Telegonus and her sisters. The latter ‘smile’ at Telegonus’ comparing them to goddesses as if they are happy to engage in a game of exaggerated and flattering courtly convention.⁶⁴⁴ Fiordespine is having none of this, however and she offers a sharp dismissal to Telegonus, utterly deflating his invitation that she should play this game of courtly manoeuvring. As we have already seen, Mamillia delivers such a ‘frumpe’ to Pharicles when he accosts her with similar language, confident that she will receive his suit favourably. Readers cannot fail to be entertained by the way that Fiordespine offers one of the devastating put-downs which Greene appears heartily to enjoy putting into the mouths of his female protagonists. Whether the man offers courtly flattery or elaborate words of persuasion, it is the woman who carries the day. Fiordespine turns witheringly on Telegonus and says:

If Sir *Telegonus*, for so I suppose is your name, your eyesight be so bad, perhaps with peering too long on your bookes, or your selfe so far beside your senses, as to take us for Nymphes: I would wish you to read lesse, or so to provide you a good Physition, else shall you not judge colours for me: and yet since I would you should know wee count our penny good silver, and thinke our faces, if not excellent, yet such as may boote compare.⁶⁴⁵

This short riposte encapsulates the way that Greene so often presents his female protagonists. Fiordespine swats away any attempt to enmesh her in discourse of a kind she does not like. To agree to play the courtly mistress would inhibit her by imposing the limitations of such a rôle in terms of both the language and behaviour expected of her. Furthermore, she makes it very clear that she and her sisters do not require the approval of a man to validate what they are. Fiordespine begins her riposte with a dismissal that undermines Telegonus’ very identity. She is not certain who he is and it is of little concern, in any case. She is, on the other hand, very secure in her own identity. One senses mockery in her use of the word ‘Sir’ as if Telegonus has a belief

⁶⁴⁴ *Alcida*, sig. C4ii.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.* sig. C4ii-D1i.

in his own significance that she cannot bring herself to share because they belong to different worlds. She ridicules the convention behind his referring to her as a goddess; she is merely a woman and totally comfortable in being so. If he believes that she is something else then his eyesight is at fault. Perhaps he has been reading too much, the suggestion being that the books he is likely to have read are the very ones which encouraged him to use such ridiculous language in praise of her. Even more dismissive is the suggestion that his faculties may have failed him totally and that is why he is seeing nymphs where there are none. With mocking concern, Fiordespine recommends that he read less or see a doctor in order to cure the weakness he obviously has with his eyesight. Then she changes tack and makes sure that Telegonus recognizes the fact that she and her sisters are fully aware of their worth, their 'silver', and they have absolutely no need of a man to point it out to them. She does not claim to be golden as that would smack too much of the exaggeration she has just ridiculed. Silver is valuable, but it is the metal of everyday financial exchange, a commodity that functions out in the world and Fiordespine's reference to it suggests that she sees herself as active in the world (as Mamillia and Philomela are) rather than retiring demurely from it. Her tone is not ironic here, but firm as if she is making a kind of policy statement on behalf of all women and not just her immediate family. Nor is she arrogant. She is stating confidently and straightforwardly that she and her sisters know the extent of their beauty and feel no need to be reticent or haughty about it. It is exactly this sense of self-worth that one sees so often in Greene's female protagonists and yet it has hardly been given its due in assessments of his work.

Telegonus is not cast down by Fiordespine's words; he is, in fact, encouraged by her sister Eriphila to act as an escort to the young ladies. While Fiordespine remains silent and aloof, Eriphila is 'pleasant' with him and engages in banter, 'prattle'.

Reinforcing what we learn of her in her own story, that she is ‘wise’, she speaks with great assurance to Telegonus on the subject of love.⁶⁴⁶ Much of what Eriphila says is taken directly from *Arbasto* from the dialectical exchange between Arbasto and Egerio concerning love. Eriphila echoes or repeats verbatim Egerio’s warnings about the pains and dangers of love.⁶⁴⁷ The words are poised and urbane and have already been spoken in the earlier tale, but the point is not Greene’s economy in not troubling to write new material. Rather, we should note that he is willing to use the same language interchangeably between men and women. Once again he accords a female character the same verbal and intellectual accomplishment as his male protagonists. Eriphila is a young princess and Egerio is an older man of the world, a soldier and experienced royal counsellor, but Greene sees nothing awkward in having them make the same observations on the dangerous attractiveness of women which can make a man lose his reason; Egerio is a man observing women objectively, and Eriphila is confessing the faults of her own sex, but both passages of observation sound authentic. Greene even has no qualms about Eriphila’s repeating Egerio’s *double-entendre* regarding the way that women can reduce manliness: ‘*Omphalo* handle the club, and *Hercules* the spindle’, a comparison which not only suggests a reversal of roles but that the woman now sports a substantial phallus whereas the man’s own member has visibly shrivelled.⁶⁴⁸

Although delighted to be invited into the company of these women, Telegonus is initially tongue-tied when he wishes to admit to Eriphila his love for her sister. All he can manage is a ‘peale of sighes’ followed by ‘silence’. The man may have no language at his command, but the two sisters have no hesitation in speaking; the verbal

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid. sig. D1i.

⁶⁴⁷ *Alcida*: ‘The paines that lovers take...endlesse danger,’ sig. D2i. *Arbasto*: ‘The paines that lovers take...endlesse danger.’ p. 18.

⁶⁴⁸ *Alcida*, sig. D1i; *Arbasto*, p. 25.

control of the situation is entirely theirs. Eriphila is courteous and refers to Telegonus as ‘neighbour’, a gesture of familiarity and warmth. She does not dismiss his love as the presumption of an inferior; rather, she tries to dissuade him from pursuing a hopeless suit. Fiordespine, in contrast, is ‘sharp, her Ivory browes full of shrewish wrinkles’.⁶⁴⁹ The latter part of Eriphila’s speech of persuasion echoes the words which come at the end of Egerio’s exchange with Arbasto. The subject of the men’s debate is whether love is the greatest plague with which the gods afflict men. Egerio is the proposer and Arbasto the challenger. It reaches the point where Arbasto claims that Egerio is simply stating a point of view, a *sententia*, rather than giving ‘reasons’ for it. The list of reasons Egerio then provides is used by Greene in Eriphila’s remarks to Telegonus. Egerio concludes with a syllogism based on analogies and Eriphila repeats it verbatim:

As none ever sawe the altars of Busiris without sorrow⁶⁵⁰

Nor banqueted with Phoebus without surfetting,

So as impossible it is to deal with Cupid, and not either to gaine speedie death, or endless danger⁶⁵¹

The debate suits the situation in both narratives. The point to stress, however, is not simply that Greene readily incorporates dialectical structures into his characters’ discourse, but, more importantly, that he makes no distinction between male and female characters when employing these paradigms.

When Telegonus finds the voice to counter what Eriphila is saying, his argument consists in repeating Arbasto’s comments on the hopelessness of resisting love.⁶⁵² It is full of rhetorical *exempla* which could have been taken from any educated

⁶⁴⁹ *Alcida*, sig. D1ii.

⁶⁵⁰ Busiris, a wicked Egyptian king, who was believed to sacrifice all visitors to his gods. He was killed by Hercules.

⁶⁵¹ *Alcida*, sig. D2i; *Arbasto*, p. 18.

⁶⁵² For example, *Alcida*: ‘him whom no mortal creature can control...since Cupid will bee obeyed.’ sig. C4ii; *Arbasto*: ‘hee whome no mortall creature can control...since Cupid will bee obeyed.’ pp.25-6.

man's commonplace book and which infuriate Fiordespine who is in a 'dudgen' at what she regards as Telegonus' rhetorical attitudinizing with herself as the object of his lovesickness. Her response relates to Telegonus' use of language and his lazy argument that he is helpless to control his feelings. Dismissively, she makes clear what she thinks of all his clichéd *exempla*, 'I may give him his answere with an & c [i.e. 'et cetera'],'⁶⁵³ thereby suggesting that she could go on and on finding more *exempla* of the tired kind he has produced. The exercise bores her, however, and she gives up on it, 'I will not conclude', preferring for the second time to give him his marching orders in a 'flat and peremptorie answere'. Telegonus is well and truly 'nipped on the pate',⁶⁵⁴ like Pharicles with his 'frumpe', and we might believe that at this juncture he would take Fiordespine's rejection as final, but he is unable to do so. He is so besotted with her that, Benedick-like, he even interprets her 'niggardly A dio with a nod' as 'a prodigall courtesie'.⁶⁵⁵

Telegonus returns home to ruminate on Fiordespine's personality and behaviour. His observations are entirely from the perspective of a man who has been denied what he most desires. He gives not a moment's thought to the fact that he has no intrinsic right to satisfaction and that his social inferiority makes it highly unlikely that a princess would love him. As far as he is concerned, Fiordespine is his 'mistresse' because he has decided that she will be so and if she rejects him then she is 'blemished with an interior disdaine'.⁶⁵⁶ Rather than risking another attempt 'to parle' with Fiordespine, Telegonus resorts to writing her a letter. He is clearly afraid to take on Fiordespine in a direct verbal exchange as he expects to be the loser. A letter is safer and perhaps ensures that she will be made aware of everything he feels. The letter is

⁶⁵³ *Alcida*, sig. D1ii

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.* sig. D2i.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.* sig. D2ii.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.* sig. D3i.

fulsome and abject, being packed with conventional images of the pain he is suffering. In words that echo the plight of the conventional courtly lover, he swears that if she does not show him ‘mercie’, he will be condemned to ‘misery’.⁶⁵⁷ The letter borrows extensively from one written by Pharicles in *Mamillia* Part. 1.⁶⁵⁸ The recipient of that letter is not Mamillia herself but her cousin Publia for whom Pharicles briefly rejects Mamillia before abandoning Publia in her turn. Pharicles is a master of courtly floridity, the persuasive turn of phrase prompted by an untrustworthy and inconstant heart. It is very difficult to know how to read Telegonus’ letter when half of it consists of words penned by a rogue. In places Greene rephrases the original so that it is not a verbatim piece of self-plagiarism. He is also careful to tailor the letter as a whole to fit Telegonus’ situation and the avowed moral of the story, the justified punishment of female disdain, but it is very hard for a modern reader, at least, to find Telegonus’ dramatic posturing sympathetic. There are so many instances in Greene’s work where his imaginative sympathy lies with a female character that one cannot help but feel that contemporary readers would also have felt very little on Telegonus’ behalf.

Telegonus’ trust in his rhetorical skills is misplaced as Fiordespine is so beside herself with rage when she reads the letter that she rips it to shreds. She is determined to make her feelings known to Telegonus in words of some sort, another reminder that when Greene presents his female characters he generally does so in terms of their discourse. Unlike Telegonus, she has no qualms about resorting to ‘hard speeches’, but he is not present and so all she can do is write a letter and ‘set down bitter taunts with her pen’. The man was glad to hide behind a letter, but the woman considers it

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid. sig. D3i.

⁶⁵⁸ *Alcida*: ‘I have felt in my heart...into drie earth and cinders.’ sig. D4i; *Mamillia Part 1*: ‘I have felt in my heart...into dry earth and cinders.’ fol. 27i; *Alcida*: ‘Then Fiordespine, sith your beauty hath given the wound...the excellence of your beautie.’ sigs. D4i-D4ii; *Mamillia Part 1*: ‘Then Publia, sith your beautie is my bale...the shew of your bewtie.’ fol. 27ii.

very much second best. Her words are conceived in ‘great choller’ and set down ‘satyrically’.⁶⁵⁹

Fiordespine’s reply, like Telegonus’ letter, begins with an *exemplum* relating to the classical gods. Telegonus referred to Venus and Cupid, but Fiordespine cites ‘*Vulcan* with his polt foote’ who ‘presumed to covet the queene of beauty’. In her evaluation, Telegonus is no better than a presumptuous cripple. As she begins, so she continues, writing a series of devastating put-downs, the entertainment value of which would, for Greene’s original readers, surely have outweighed any thoughts that her scornfulness is worthy of condemnation. Again, one cannot help but sense the author’s relish in penning such a piece of female invective. Briefly, Fiordespine recollects herself and offers Telegonus a few courtesies, ‘Lord Telegonus, no offence to your person’, but rage quickly takes over again and she makes clear exactly how she feels. She places him firmly amongst the ‘persons unworthy’ who ‘disgrace, by their impudent and worthlesse motions, the honours of excellent personages.’ Despite his pleas to the contrary, she emphasizes her ‘disdaine’. As he so often does, Greene now has his feisty female protagonist take the words used by a man and toss them back in his face. She mocks his florid, courtly language. If her beauty ‘hath made an impression in your heart’, then that suggests he is ‘a man of soft metall’. There must be something amiss with him if he is ‘fixed at the first looke’. Mockingly, she suggests that if his ‘gentle nature’ is ‘so full of fancie’, so predisposed to love, he could be sure of regular employment as ‘either *Venus* chamberlaine, or *Cupids* chaplaine’. Determined to put him firmly in his place, she responds to his comment that ‘many your betters have courted me and mist’ with the contemptuous observation that even if she were not interested in ‘stars’ or ‘fragrant flowers’ (her high status wooers), she

⁶⁵⁹ *Alcida*, sig. D4i.

would most certainly find nothing attractive in ‘stones’ or ‘weeds’ such as he. She is about to launch into another equally insulting dismissal, but finds that she simply cannot be bothered to waste words on him – ‘suppose the rest’. The letter ends with no concession to the formalities of politeness. As far as she is concerned, he is simply not worth her wasting her time on – ‘my hand was weary, my eyes sleepie, and my heart full of contempt, and with that I went to bed.’ Letter writing manuals suggested many courteous endings of which this is the diametrical opposite. It is gloriously rude and should surely dampen any lover’s ardour. She signs herself, ‘Her owne Fiordespine’ which, as I have suggested, is an indication of the independent spirit regularly shown by Greene’s heroines.⁶⁶⁰

It is difficult to believe that Greene intends us to take seriously the way that Telegonus nervously ‘kissed and rekissed’ the letter before opening it and discovering what a ‘corasive’ it contains. The ‘satyricall’ words render him ‘halfe lunaticke’⁶⁶¹ in much the same way that Romeo thrashes about on the floor of Friar Lawrence’s cell when he has been banished from Verona. Interpretations of Greene’s intentions are difficult in the absence of any contemporary commentaries on the work so we have to be guided by similar, clearer examples elsewhere in Greene’s writings, or draw on parallels with similar works by other authors. Thus one is reminded of Friar Lawrence’s reprimand to Romeo that ‘like a misbehav’d and sullen wench,/Thou pout’st upon thy fortune and thy love’, a comment that one feels could be applied to Telegonus at this moment.⁶⁶² He rails against all women, itemizing their faults, ‘mercilesse, cruell, unjust, deceitfull’.⁶⁶³ It is true that Fiordespine initially and briefly felt pleasure at Telegonus’ infatuation with her, but most of her energies have been

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid. sig. D4ii.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid. sig. E1i.

⁶⁶² William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, III iv ll. 142-3.

⁶⁶³ *Alcida*, sig. E1i.

spent on making clear that, in the words of Demetrius to Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'I do not nor I cannot love you.'⁶⁶⁴ What Telegonus is offering is a generalized and indiscriminate rant against all woman because of an unhappy experience with a single member of that sex. He is as hysterical and illogical as Arbasto often is when he consistently blames Fortune for the effects of his own impulsive personality.

Greene does not seem to be sympathetic to these male characters who present themselves as innocent victims; rather, one feels he sees them as misguided and often venal and foolish. There is certainly something very questionable in Telegonus' judgement when he decides to venture a second letter. It consists almost entirely of two long borrowings from Pharicles' second letter to Publia.⁶⁶⁵ We wonder what Greene intends us to make of the surely inappropriate imagery with which the two men describe the extent of their continued suffering. They cite the parallel of 'the festering fistula [which] hath by long continuance made the sound flesh rotten' and the need for 'medicine' to cure the 'disease'. The second half of Telegonus' letter is devoted to a 'martiall' conceit with its mention of the violent 'conquest' of 'the bulwarke of your brest'.⁶⁶⁶ Greene's concern throughout his oeuvre is with language, the study of which was the basis of all Elizabethan education. His readers could not fail to judge Pharicles and Telegonus by their mis-use of language, and, in particular, the mis-use of register in this second letter. How could they think that any woman would like to be told that she has caused a man to suffer from some putrid emotional sore or that he is filled with an inordinate desire to batter her feelings of reluctance so

⁶⁶⁴ William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II i l. 201.

⁶⁶⁵ *Alcida*: 'salves seldom helpe...my carefull disease.' sig. C1ii; *Mamillia Part 1*: 'salves seldom helpe...my careful disease.' fol. 35i; *Alcida*: 'For I was never of that minde...denial unto death.' sigs. C1ii-C2i; *Mamillia Part 1*: 'But as I was never of that minde...denial unto death.' fol. 35ii.

⁶⁶⁶ Robert Greene, *Alcida*, sig. E1i.

that they fall into accord with his own? This exchange of letters may be taken as, on Greene's part, a critique of male attitudes and rhetoric and the complacent assumption both of men's superiority and the inevitability that women will always accede to their wishes.

Fiordespine responds to the wording of the letter exactly as we might expect. Her reply is the shortest of the four letters, offering no greeting and getting straight to the point that she 'rent' both of his letters immediately she read them and that she feels nothing but 'disdaine' for his love. She mocks his dramatic depiction of his 'passions' and 'fiery' thoughts, saying that if he is telling the truth she laughs at the first and would gleefully pour oil on the fire of the second.⁶⁶⁷

The reader by this time surely feels that Telegonus should accept the hopelessness of his suit and move on. Instead, he plunges even further into despair and the narrative turns firmly against Fiordespine. In accordance with Alcida's moral stance at the beginning of the tale, Greene now presents Fiordespine as the merciless beauty deserving chastisement. He sets the world against her: her own family, Telegonus' father and gentlemen, everyone else aware of the situation, and even the gods. This does not mean that the author himself is necessarily of this mind. The depiction of Telegonus' great suffering and the ferocity of his words and feelings against Fiordespine do not of themselves make him a sympathetic figure even when he is clearly at death's door. He is so self-absorbed and manipulative in his emotional blackmail of Fiordespine that it is hard to believe that Greene's own sympathies lie with him. The author may be writing what the tale demands, but this is not necessarily what he believes to be fair. Telegonus' suffering is portrayed as hysterical rather than moving and his bitter railing has a scatter-gun quality which undermines it. He veers,

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. sig. E2i.

dare one say comically, between a comatose state like that of a ‘dead carcase’ and the fury of a man uttering curses as if possessed.⁶⁶⁸ In the last oration of his life, Telegonus presents himself once more as a hapless victim deserving of revenge. He makes no attempt to deal with his emotions, preferring to offer curses against a woman who has turned him down and who must therefore have been ‘nursed of the shee Wolves in Syria’.⁶⁶⁹

When Fiordespine is finally prevailed upon to visit Telegonus on his death bed, her smirk at the power she has over him proves her undoing and Mercury, a male deity, immediately turns her into a statue. One of Mercury’s attributes is that he is the god of communication and we cannot help but be reminded that so much of this tale and the two which follow deal with language and communication. Telegonus offered Fiordespine rhetorical and courtly words which she scorned to her cost. Her own speech, which readers might consider justified, was anathema to her male admirer and to the god who oversees all discourse. A woman cannot transgress certain linguistic norms with impunity, the tale suggests. So the story is now over and the moral drawn, but, in the light of all that Greene writes about women elsewhere, can we really be meant to take the side of a man who dies content because the woman who rejected him is turned into the marble of which her heart is made?

Whereas the first of Alcida’s stories consists of two interwoven and contradictory narratives, in the second tale, that of her next daughter Eriphila, the contradictory narratives are placed in sequence, a circumstance which provides a considerable shock to the reader. Eriphila’s name perhaps suggests that she is a lover of *Ερις* (strife) or *Ερως* or is one who causes the former by pursuing the latter. We

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid. sig. E2ii.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid. sig. E3i.

have already met Eriphila as a charming and verbally accomplished participant in the tale of her sister Fiordespine. In her own story, her wit, as both intellectual accomplishment and verbal brilliance, is described as reaching extraordinary heights. This tale, like the first, begins with elaborate iconography which points to the moral ostensibly presented in or, more accurately, tacked-on to the narrative.

Alcida shows the male narrator two cedars ‘on whose bark was curiously engraven certain Hieroglyphicall Embleames’. On the first is a carving of Mercury, the god of communication, ‘throwing feathers into the winde’, a symbol that words are significant and should be used judiciously and not randomly or unwisely. This message is repeated in the accompanying verses on the subject of wit, ‘the richest gift the wealthy heaven affords’. The verses succinctly list the abilities subsumed in the single word ‘wit’, all of which Eriphila possesses to a remarkable degree: ‘By wit we search divine aspect above’ – it is the highest intellectual faculty which leads us to an awareness of God; ‘By wit we learne what secrets science yields’ – it is the slightly lower intellectual faculty which drives our curiosity to know and understand the world around us; ‘By wit we speake’ – it is our capacity for language; ‘by wit the mind is rul’d’ – it is the faculty of reason which is able to counter base instinct. In his works, Greene may use the word ‘wit’ to signify any of these abilities, sometimes moving from one to another within a single sentence. The reader needs to be alert to this flexible usage. Eriphila, a woman, possesses all of wit’s qualities and is regarded as the intellectual wonder of Taprobane. The verses conclude with a warning against the mis-use of wit, or the failure of wit, *qua* reason, to control base instinct: ‘Ripe wits abus’d that build on bad desire’.⁶⁷⁰ If wit is that bundle of faculties which sets us above the animals, then desire is the animal within us which is in constant need of restraint.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. sig. E4i.

Greene's depiction of Eriphila as a universally-admired intellectual and verbal paragon sits very uneasily with her abrupt abandonment to sexual promiscuity, mere animal lust. These later actions are not so much a betrayal of the earlier talents as an inexplicable aberration in no way related to them. Eriphila is one thing and then suddenly she is the other and Greene presents no credible connection between them.

Alcida points out the iconography on the second cedar tree. The image of 'Cupid blowing bladders in the ayre' is a symbol of the sexual 'lightnesse, so bad and base a thing' of which Eriphila is eventually guilty.⁶⁷¹ She is brilliant and then she is promiscuous; the sybil becomes a strumpet. Just as the cedars are separate from each other, so are the two aspects of Eriphila's character quite discrete. Greene admires her for her hugely accomplished wit and then he denigrates her as a wanton. The reader has a sense here of being presented with two quite separate stories involving a character named Eriphila. The first demonstrates Greene's predilection for describing attractive and talented female characters and the second is an expression of the moral outrage imposed upon him by the way that the whole pamphlet is framed. As Alcida is pointing out the iconography of the cedar trees to the narrator, a 'Cameleon' bird appears.⁶⁷² Its constantly changing hues prefigure the dramatic change which eventually overtakes Eriphila

At the beginning of the tale of Eriphila we are told that she is 'a *Sibil*, being able to answere as darke an Enigma as the subtillest *Sphinx* was able to propound.'⁶⁷³ Her 'supernaturall kinde of wit' and her 'wisedome' cause Meribates, son of the Duke of Massilia, to fall hopelessly in love with her.⁶⁷⁴ She is extremely beautiful, but it is her mind which attracts him.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid. sig. E4i.

⁶⁷² Ibid. sig. E4ii.

⁶⁷³ Ibid. sig. E4ii.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid. sig. F1i.

As we might expect in a pamphlet by Robert Greene, Meribates expresses his feelings about Eriphila in a private apostrophe. Throughout it, his emphasis is on Eriphila's wit rather than her physical attractions. At numerous points during this oration, Greene re-uses material from *Mamillia Part 1* from the apostrophe in which Pharicles debates with himself whether to pursue Mamillia despite the fact that she has delivered him a sharp put-down.⁶⁷⁵ The material common to the two orations is of a neutral kind and deals only with the overwhelming power of love, the transience of beauty and the question of whether a man should submit to his desires. The personalities of the two men are kept distinct in the remainder of their respective apostrophes. Pharicles is the rogue who has previously used women for 'a sporte' whereas Meribates is entirely noble and respectful and focuses on Eriphila's wit which Pharicles never mentions.

Meribates' apostrophe is paralleled by that of Eriphila in which she reveals similar thoughts concerning him. Her words are substantially those which Mamillia speaks immediately after Pharicles has declared his love for her.⁶⁷⁶ Throughout both parts of *Mamillia*, the heroine is steadfast, articulate and completely virtuous. When Eriphila repeats Mamillia's words, she appears no different from her. In each case, the oration is that of a virgin asking whether it would be appropriate to accede to the advances of a man immediately he has made them (the *divisio*). In the *confirmatio* the virgin argues the case for refusing to love by listing the many reasons why a man may

⁶⁷⁵ *Alcida*: 'hast thou not quoted Phocas precept to be fruitfull...that cooleth desire.' sigs. F1ii-F2i; *Mamillia Part 1*: 'Nowe hast thou founde Phocas precept to bee fruitefull...to coole desire.' fol. 6i; *Alcida*: 'Eriphila is the marke...or else remaine transformed.' sig. F2i. *Mamillia Part 1*: 'Mamillia, yea Mamillia, Pharicles is the marke...or else remayne transformed.' fol. 6i; *Alcida*: 'Beautie is but a blossome...is placed in a beautifull bodie.' sigs. F2i-F2ii. *Mamillia Part 1*: 'beauty is but a blossome...is placed in a beautifull body.' fol. 6i. ; *Alcida*: 'and therefore whatsoever Philosophie, or learning wils...I will cast at all.' sig. F2ii. *Mamillia Part 1*: 'And therefore whatsoever learning willes...I wil cast at all.' fol. 7i.

⁶⁷⁶ *Alcida*: 'shal thy stayed life...not in the forme'. sig. F2ii-F3ii ; *Mamillia Part 1*: 'shal thy staided life...not in the forme', fols. 4i-5i; *Alcida*: 'The foxe wins the favour...remaine indifferent.' sigs. F3ii-F4i. *Mamillia Part 1*: 'The Foxe wins the favour...remaine indifferent.' fols. 5i-5ii.

not be what he appears and by reminding herself that the world has a low opinion of a woman who gives in too easily. She argues in the *confutatio* that she should suspend such negative judgement until she knows the man better which leads naturally into the *conclusio* where she decides that, until she ‘hast tried him loyall’ she must ‘remaine indifferent’.⁶⁷⁷ At this juncture in her story Eriphila sounds as exemplary a virgin as Mamillia so that when she eventually descends into wantonness we do not say ‘What a falling-off was there,’⁶⁷⁸ but, rather, ‘Are we talking about the same person?’

Meeting Eriphila and her younger sister Marpesia in the garden, Meribates offers her fulsome praise, his ‘courteous parle’ being met with ‘a courteous and witty answere’.⁶⁷⁹ Both Eriphila and Marpesia enthusiastically seize the opportunity to engage in a witty verbal game with Meribates and show themselves to be his equal in this. The banter is teasing and playful and it proceeds in the series of challenges and responses typical of dialectical debate.

In what may be regarded as the opening proposition of a disputation, Meribates compares Eriphila and Marpesia to the goddesses Pallas and Juno respectively. Eriphila twits him on using such an exaggerated comparison and concludes that he must be speaking in jest. He is thus challenged to prove, ‘maintaine’, that his words were spoken ‘in earnest’.⁶⁸⁰ He adroitly does this by claiming that he is not actually operating in the world of reason as her challenge suggests that he is. He is operating in the world of ‘love’ which has its own laws and logic and he is therefore able to ‘drawe mine arguments from fancie’. This enables him to declare that Eriphila is not only *like* Pallas, ‘but *Pallas* herself’. If he thinks that he has successfully carried the day with his proof, Marpesia now interposes with a challenge which puts him on his

⁶⁷⁷ *Alcida*, sig. F4i.

⁶⁷⁸ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I v l. 47.

⁶⁷⁹ *Alcida*, sig. F4ii.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.* sig. F4ii-G1i.

mettle once again. He may have justified his comparison between Eriphila and Pallas, but how can he substantiate the comparison he drew between herself and Juno? He has already admitted that this cannot be done within the world of reason, but, if his ‘arguments’⁶⁸¹ are taken from the world of love, that surely makes him ‘double-hearted’ and the lover of two women at the same time. The opposer in a university disputation was obliged to challenge the proposer on his definitions and to point out contradictions in his arguments. This is precisely what Marpesia is now doing. Using the technical terminology of dialectic, Meribates admits that he may be guilty of using an ‘enthymeme’, a term which he clearly expects the two women to understand. An enthymeme is a faulty syllogism consisting of two parts rather than three, a ‘common place’ or general proposition being followed directly by a conclusion without an intermediate specific statement which links the two.⁶⁸² Meribates is using the term loosely here to mean an example of apparently faulty logic and he is aware that if it is proved that he is guilty of such an error then he loses his argument and the disputation is over. He saves himself, however, by employing a major tool of logical disputation, the precise, or hair-splitting, definition. He suggests that love may be defined in two ways and so he is able to offer a different kind of love to each of the two sisters. Eriphila is his ‘Paramour’ whereas what he feels for Marpesia is no more than ‘friendly affection as her sister’.⁶⁸³

⁶⁸¹ Ibid. sig. G1i.

⁶⁸² John Seton explains that, ‘an Enthymeme is an imperfect syllogism connecting one or other of the Previous premises to a conclusion.’ ‘Enthymemus est imperfectus syllogismus alterum tantum praemissam conclusioni connectens.’ He cites as an example: ‘Temeritas est vitium, ergo temeritas est fugienda.’ A complete syllogism would have had as its second line ‘Omne vitium est fugiendum.’ ‘Foolhardiness is a vice, [All vices should be avoided], Therefore foolhardiness should be avoided.’ John Seton and Peter Carter, *Dialectica Joan Setoni Cantabrigiensis Annotationibus Petri Carteri*, 1572, 1631 ed. EEBO, Cambridge University copy, STC (2nd ed.) / 22257, sig. O3i.

⁶⁸³ *Alcida*, sig. G1i.

A university disputation continued until the proposer or opposer was deemed to have contradicted himself or until the arbitrator felt that the arguments had gone on for long enough. Eriphila is the arbitrator in this conversation and she now changes the subject from 'fancie' because she herself is 'vowed to Vesta', an ironic comment in the light of her subsequent behaviour. She invites Meribates to talk of a more straightforward topic, namely which flowers he would put in a nosegay. Meribates is able to turn this apparently innocent topic to his advantage. He would choose 'Penses' (pansies) because the name is derived from French (*pensées*) and 'signifies fancies'.⁶⁸⁴ He has thus neatly returned to the forbidden subject of fancy with which he now proceeds to play. Eriphila is too quick-witted to be caught out by Meribates' game with words. She teases him by suggesting that they are 'of one mind', but deflates any expectation this might give him by explaining what she means. She would choose the same flower as he did, but she calls it by its common name 'Hearts ease'. For him, the word 'Penses' may have represented fancy, but for her the alternative name represents a heart free from the 'follies of love'.⁶⁸⁵

This is not a serious argument, merely a flirtatious game. They are 'merrily descanting' and the woman is seen to be as adept as the man in flirtatious witty banter as she is in downright argument.⁶⁸⁶ In private, Eriphila admits how much she loves Meribates, particularly for his verbal gifts, 'his wise and witty arguments'.⁶⁸⁷ At this point she seems not at all the young woman who would fall blindly in love with a man simply for his physical attributes. She seems to have more depth than that. When they next meet, Meribates addresses Eriphila more boldly. He concedes that words are often not to be trusted, suggesting he is about to declare his love for her very briefly which,

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid. sig. G1i.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid. sig. G1ii.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid. sig. G1ii.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid. sig. G2i.

in a sense, he does, but Greene then has him launch into a two page highly-wrought description which had earlier been put into the mouth of the untrustworthy Pharicles when he wooed Mamillia for the second time. Apart from the fact that Meribates now proceeds to use many words having previously declared that verbosity was untrustworthy, the re-used speech sits comfortably in its new context. Greene has changed a few significant details to make words initially addressed to Mamillia appropriate to Eriphila. Pharicles' praise of Mamillia's 'beauty' and 'heavenly face' has become Meribates' admiration for Eriphila's 'wit' and 'wisdom', otherwise the text is only slightly modified and it has been trimmed.⁶⁸⁸

Eriphila proclaims her own love for Meribates insisting that only 'the losse of life' will end it.⁶⁸⁹ She is confident that her love will prove far stronger than his, although the narrative almost immediately proves otherwise. Her reply is made up of extracts from the much longer response Mamillia offers to Pharicles after his second declaration of love mentioned above. It is entirely in keeping with the character of both women that they state their reservations, find that they can overcome them and end by stating how much they are in love.⁶⁹⁰

We are now over two thirds of the way through the tale, but suddenly its tenor changes dramatically. No sooner have the young couple determined to tell Alcida about their feelings for each other than Eriphila has her fancy 'so set on fire' by a young gentleman called Lucidor whose name suggests that he is bound to dazzle her. These new feelings unsettle her and once she is alone she delivers Greene's customary apostrophe to help her decide what best to do (the *divisio*) in such a 'contrariety of

⁶⁸⁸ *Alcida*: 'Thy wit, Eriphila, hath bought my freedome...it shall be sufficient.' sig. G2ii-G3i; *Mamillia Part I*, 'Ah, Mamillia, thy beauty hath bought my freedom...it will be sufficient to release my sorrowe.' fols. 15i-15ii.

⁶⁸⁹ *Alcida*, sig. G3ii.

⁶⁹⁰ *Alcida*: 'It is hard taking the fowle...to be thine in dust and ashes.' sig. G3i-G3ii; *Mamillia Part I*, 'it is hard taking of fowle...to be there in dust and ashes.' fols. 16ii-17ii.

passions'.⁶⁹¹ In the *confirmatio* she confirms what her 'nurture' has taught her, that 'the inconstant determination of a lecher' is to be abhorred.⁶⁹² Following conventional morality, she cites many *exempla* of fidelity drawn from Classical history and it might appear that she has the power to control these new feelings. Often the transition from *confirmatio* to *confutatio* is marked in an oration by 'but' or 'yet'. In this instance the word is 'tush' as Eriphila contemptuously dismisses all that she has just said. Her terms of reference change too, as if Classical allusion was fine for arguments in the abstract, but only down-to-earth imagery will suffice for the emotions she is actually feeling. She talks of eggs and cats and mice and of wishing to change her choice on account of 'having made my market like a foole'.⁶⁹³ The change of register is significant as here and later in the tale Greene interrogates conventional rules of behaviour by couching them in elaborate *copia* and then contrasting them with less restricted behaviour which finds its voice in more demotic language.

Lucidor is very quickly superseded in Eriphila's affections by Perecius. Thereafter the number of men she is attracted to becomes a flood. 'so many faces, so many fancies,' the narrator tells us. Greene holds back from suggesting that Eriphila engaged in actual love affairs; it seems to be more a case of obvious looking and liking as if for her to go further would alter the tone of the story too much. Meribates is clearly distressed by this example of 'the inconstancie of women' and decides to confront Eriphila as she lies abed. He is concerned that, 'so witty a lady should prove so light'.⁶⁹⁴ Herein lies the uncomfortable dichotomy in the tale, that a young woman so celebrated for her wit and wisdom should undergo such a shameful metamorphosis

⁶⁹¹ *Alcida*, sig. G4i.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.* sig. G4i.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.* sig. G4ii.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.* sig. H1i.

of character before her ultimate transformation into a ‘cameleon bird’. This change is not adumbrated in the preceding narrative which makes it hardly credible.

Meribates gets no further than a courteous introductory admonition. The behaviour he endorses is conventional and restricted by clear rules. This is how things self-evidently should be, he is saying. What Eriphila offers in opposition is free-ranging and libertarian. Meribates is, however, given no chance ‘to have prosecuted his parle’ as Eriphila has no patience with his hurt words. The difference between the words spoken by the man and the woman in this exchange mirrors that between the *confirmatio* and the *confutatio* in Eriphila’s apostrophe. With a ‘tush’ she had changed from a believer in morality and custom to one who was determined to follow her own inclinations whatever the outcome. In a similar way, with a scoffing ‘And what of this’, she claims the right to behave as she sees fit.⁶⁹⁵

Alcida’s moralizing at the end of this tale suggests that Eriphila’s words should be taken as evidence of the brazenness of an irretrievably wanton character, but there is more to it than this. Greene ends the tale with the promised account of female error punished, but the words he gives Eriphila are likely to resonate with a modern readership sympathetically alert to demands for equality in terms of sexual behaviour. One may stand accused of reading with a twenty-first century eye which sees what was never intended in the late sixteenth century. There can be no question, however, this caveat notwithstanding, that in the pamphlets I have discussed Greene has created forceful, verbally brilliant female characters who are the moral centre of their respective narratives. Eriphila is simply a more assertive example of these women which surely means that Greene at least had a creative sympathy for her and that he may even have looked with an approving eye on the behavioural freedom she

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. sig. H1i.

demands. Even when ostensibly having Eriphila condemn her wantonness out of her own mouth, Greene seems not to be able to help providing her with cogent arguments for the right to act freely. She is much more assertive than Greene's other heroines I have discussed thus far, her own sister Fiordespine apart, perhaps. Her defiant retort, full of anger and bitterness, displays the supreme self-confidence we encounter in Nan the whore, the female cony-catcher in Greene's *A Disputation betweene a Hee Conny-catcher and a Shee Conny-catcher* (1592). For the prize of a supper, Nan debates with Laurence, a 'Foist' [a pick-pocket] 'whether a Whore or a Theefe is most preiudiciall.'⁶⁹⁶ Gleefully and shamelessly, each describes the harm his or her kind can cause the commonwealth and Nan carries the day. What is particularly significant is that their debate is entitled a 'disputation', although these participants could not be further removed from the university students who were the ones usually engaged in such verbal engagements. Nan claims, and is awarded, the victory not simply by virtue of her stacking up of examples of the harm she has caused, but because she is the more accomplished debater. She contemptuously tells Lawrence, 'thou art no Logician, thou canst not reason for thy selfe, nor hast no wittie arguments to draw me to an exigent, and therefore give mee leave at large to reason for this supper.'⁶⁹⁷

Eriphila's first point is that it is always unfairly assumed that if a woman looks admiringly at a man then she must be in love with him, with all that entails. Men on the other hand can look about them as much as they like without incurring such disapproval. Even if she admits to having 'favoured' Lucidor and Perecius, she is, she says, doing no more than men do. If it is generally accepted that 'Si natura hominum sit novitatis avida' ('If it is the nature of men to be eager for novelty'), it is only fair

⁶⁹⁶ Robert Greene, *A disputation betweene, a hee conny-catcher, and a shee conny-catcher*, 1592, Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12234 title page.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid. sig. C3i.

to give women leave to have more fancies than one. In language full of sexual innuendo she asserts that, 'Venus temple hath many entrances: Cupid hath more arrows than one in his quiver', a clear suggestion of promiscuity in contradiction of her earlier claim that looking at men is an innocent action. If men are allowed to ogle and flirt, why not women: 'women have many looks, and so they have many loves'. Eriphila also rejects the notion that a woman should devote her whole self to a single man. 'I thinke she will keepe a corner for a friend, and so will I,' she asserts, making clear that women have every right to hold back part of their affection so that it might be used in any other way that gives them pleasure.⁶⁹⁸ They will remain their own person at all costs. We remember that Fiordespine used similar language when she wrote to Telegonus insisting that she was always her own woman.

The conversation between Eriphila and Meribates ends with a rapid exchange of brief points and she is immediately able to answer with a quip every one that he puts forward. What Meribates represents is conventional, fixed morality which she undermines at every turn. He extols unity (a single love) as symbolized by the sun, a powerful simile meant to add weight to his argument; Eriphila responds with the stars. He tries again with the 'one quality' of the rainbow, but she is easily able to point out its 'many colours'. He believes the heart 'hath but one string';⁶⁹⁹ she replies that it has many thoughts which lead to many passions and therefore many loves. Her conclusion is that 'if you love me you must have rivals' and there the conversation ends 'in choller'.⁷⁰⁰ The comparisons Meribates chooses are unsuccessful ones, possibly a deliberate ploy on Greene's part in order to interrogate the set of values Meribates is desperately defending. He tries to stress the singleness of Nature but this only leads to

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid. sig. H1i.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid. sig. H1i.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid. sig. H2i.

Eriphila's confirmation of its multiplicity. As a student of dialectic, Greene would have encountered such a dismantling of an argument many times and once again he makes the female character the dismantler.

Meribates' response to the above conversation is to descant on the inconstancy of women in rhetorical language full of similes and examples of *contentio* (contrast). After the lively exchange we have just heard, this seems stiff and almost fusty. Again, could Greene be interrogating a set of moral principles by encapsulating them in platitudinous rhetorical *copia* which could have been taken from any number of commonplace books? Are Eriphila's unconventional views a reflection of Greene's own notoriously wild lifestyle which he could not prevent from intruding into his work? Whatever answer we might give to these questions, the last word in the tale is with the conventional moralists, the inhabitants of Taprobane and the sailors who convey Meribates' body home after he has died of misery as a result of Eriphila's treatment of him. Both sets of people demand vengeance on Eriphila and her own mother and brother do not defend her. When Venus turns Eriphila into a chameleon as a reflection of her inconstancy, satisfaction is felt by all. The tale has thus been resolved in terms of the morality it set out to point, but this is no more than a structural resolution. The moral questions the tale raises are far more complex than this glib punishment would suggest. Only a focus solely on the final pages of the tale could lead to the conclusion that it is an attack on women and unlike Greene's earlier work; a detailed reading of the presentation of Eriphila's character must lead to the opposite conclusion, that Greene was sympathetically viewing a woman's situation from her own perspective.

At the outset of the third tale, Alcida reminds her guest that her oldest two daughters were punished for their 'follies' suggesting that she believes their

metamorphoses were justified, a judgement which I have suggested is not borne out by Greene's presentation of most of the material. Alcida's third daughter, Marpesia, as 'beautiful' and 'wise' as her sisters, is determined to avoid their crimes of pride and inconstancy as, in this way, she 'might despise both the fates and fortune'.⁷⁰¹

For most of the tale, readers are presented with the sympathetic and tragic story of two lovers, Marpesia and Eurimachus, who are the playthings of interfering deities. In this, the tale echoes the vicissitudes of Theagenes and Chariclea the central characters of the *Aethiopica* and it should be seen more as a variant of that work's narrative arc than a moral tale about female weakness. This is not how critics have tended to judge it, however. Marpesia commendably does her utmost to avoid the faults her sisters fell in, but events occur over which she has no control and even her emotions are a kind of divinely inflicted madness. It is only at the end of Marpesia's history that Greene unsettlingly wrenches the narrative into an entirely different direction in order to conform with his avowed intention at the beginning of the whole pamphlet. The morality of the end of the tale is highly questionable to the point of illogicality. For the majority of the tale, Marpesia is an attractive character as adept in her use of language as her sisters and all of Greene's heroines I have discussed hitherto.

Despite Marpesia's striving to avoid the faults of her sisters by adhering to 'such a strict method of her life', Fate and Fortune intervene.⁷⁰² Thus it 'fortuned' that her brother the prince takes into his service Eurimachus the son of a gentleman and Venus compels Marpesia to fall desperately in love with him. Marpesia has hitherto offered no 'sacrifice' to Venus, warned by the fate of her sisters which came about as

⁷⁰¹ Ibid. sig. H3ii.

⁷⁰² Ibid. sig. H3ii.

a result of their relationships with men. Venus will not be slighted in this way and Marpesia is soon suffering from the ‘scalding heate’ of love for Eurimachus.⁷⁰³ She explores her feelings in the customary way for Greene’s characters, in an extended apostrophe in the form of an oration. She debates the appropriateness of loving her social inferior, making frequent use of *contentio* and referring to many *exempla*, as we have come to expect, and she concludes that she will make her feelings known to Eurimachus

Eurimachus does not fail to notice Marpesia’s signs of favour, ‘for whatever she did was in extremes’, a comment which suggests that her loss of princely decorum is not of her own free will. He wishes to respond in kind but holds back until Venus interferes again and prompts him to be less reticent. Naturally he ‘began to debate with himself’ in an extended apostrophe which parallels Marpesia’s own.⁷⁰⁴ The word ‘debate’ is significant because, although Eurimachus’ apostrophe contains the usual *exordium*, *narratio*, *divisio* and *conclusio* of an oration, the *confirmatio* and *confutatio* are not discrete units but combine dialectically to form a debate in which he takes both sides.

As Eurimachus fails to convince himself that he should respond to Marpesia’s advances, Venus feels obliged to intervene and she causes Morpheus to send the sleeping man such images of Marpesia that very soon he ‘fell into extreme passions’.⁷⁰⁵ Consumed with love, he sings about its bitter sweetness and is overheard by Marpesia at the contrivance of Cupid. Marpesia knows that the subject of the song is herself and she is able to use this knowledge to tease Eurimachus, thus showing herself to be another in the long line of Greene’s heroines who are verbally

⁷⁰³ Ibid. sig. H4i.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid. sig. I1i.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid. sig. I2ii.

accomplished and able to dominate their conversation with men. Her dominance of the conversation is established immediately as she ‘stepped to him’, an empowering gesture.⁷⁰⁶ Her initial remarks are a verbal confirmation of her spatial dominance. She compares him to Phidias’ picture of Paris who played a song of love in his pipe, weeping as he played. She claims that Eurimachus cannot be as passionate as Paris because he himself is not weeping and then jolts him by asking the name of his mistress. He, of course, dare not confess that he loves a princess, herself. He, the man, is silent with confusion which Marpesia relishes ‘smiling’. She reinforces her conversational dominance by addressing him as ‘man’, verbally slapping him on the shoulder and telling him to pull himself together and not be so ‘tong tied’. She is the opposite of this and she even offers to ‘prattle’ on his behalf to his mistress if he persists in remaining ‘mute’.⁷⁰⁷ He is experiencing the embarrassing verbal discomfiture we have seen in numerous other of Greene’s male characters who make the mistake of engaging a woman in a battle of words. This twitting of Eurimachus is playful rather than disdainful because she is in love with him and a reader is likely to find Marpesia engaging rather than overbearing and certainly not a candidate for punishment on account of anything she does or says at this point in the narrative.

Having been silent throughout this gentle mockery which has been a kind of temporary verbal emasculation, Eurimachus now recollects himself. This re-awakening of a degree of manly self-possession is given a clear sexual overtone by Greene who describes Eurimachus as ‘rising up’. The awkwardness of the situation and the difference in their status means that he has to choose his words very carefully. He can neither admit whom he loves nor refuse his Prince’s sister when she commands

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid. sig. I3i.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid. sig. I3ii.

him to name his mistress. Eurimachus takes refuge in his learning. He offers her a Latin quotation followed by its gloss which does not answer Marpesia's question but merely describes how one sense can overwhelm the others. These vague and fancy words will not do for Marpesia and she keeps him squirming. 'What of this Philosophical Enigma?'⁷⁰⁸ she asks insistently, swatting aside his obfuscating erudition. Eurimachus briefly states that he dare not give the answer that he would like (that he loves her) and he tries to change the subject by speaking at length of her sudden appearance which has bedazzled him as if she were a goddess. If he thinks that flattery will satisfy her, he is wrong. She is not diverted from her determination to make him say he loves her and she peremptorily brushes aside his prevarication. Throughout this exchange, the man is on the back foot as the woman batters him verbally, not by way of an orational riposte as we saw with Mamillia and Fiordespine, but with probing questions that will not be diverted from their subject. Eurimachus needs all his wits about him to parry Marpesia's unrelenting questioning. In the end he has to admit that she has the better of him. 'You straine me so hard, Madam,' he says and exhaustedly admits that he is in love but he does not reveal the lady's name because loving her is an act of 'presumption'. At this point he begins to weep. Marpesia's behaviour has, in effect, been like that of an adult who teases a child until he bursts into tears and then feels guilty for having abused her adult status. In her treatment of Eurimachus, Marpesia is nothing like Fiordespine with her unrelenting disdain for Telegonus. As soon as Eurimachus begins to weep, Marpesia cannot bear it, is 'not able to brooke' it, and she attempts to 'salve' the situation, to make the distressed child feel better.⁷⁰⁹ She no longer badgers him to reveal the identity of his

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid. sig. I3ii.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid. sig. I4i.

mistress; instead she urges him to 'dare' to pursue his love, even if his mistress is 'as high of degree as any in Taprobane', a clear hint that he is free to court herself.⁷¹⁰

When they next meet, Marpesia's encouragement has the effect of making Eurimachus courageous enough to declare himself to her. Ironically, the woman whose words have given the man a bold voice is now, 'for fashion sake', coy and shy and when she offers 'resistance', it is only 'very faintly' and she is soon won.⁷¹¹ At this point in the narrative we seem to have a tale of unhappy lovers who are obliged to keep their passion secret because she is a princess and he a mere gentleman's son. If the Prince, her brother, finds out he is bound to separate and perhaps severely punish them. We, the readers, are concerned about what might happen to them and we do not feel that Greene is presenting his female character any less sympathetically than before.

It is now that Marpesia makes a disastrous mistake and reveals a weakness we had not suspected. She is guilty of 'blabbing' her secret to Cleander a gentleman of the court with the result that it eventually reaches the Prince's ears.⁷¹² This careless use of language leads to the banishment of Eurimachus. The two lovers are wretchedly miserable, Eurimachus 'almost frantike' and Marpesia gravely ill with grief. During his exile, Eurimachus meets and kills Cleander for betraying their secret. The lovers always cherish the hope that one day the Prince will relent but the situation has been complicated by the fact that Eurimachus is now a murderer, although no-one knows where Cleander is or what has happened to him. As his sister is near to death, as a result of her grief at the separation from her lover, the Prince recalls Eurimachus to 'great favour' and he is allowed to marry Marpesia. A completely happy ending to this

⁷¹⁰ Ibid. sig. I4ii.

⁷¹¹ Ibid. sig. I4ii.

⁷¹² Ibid. sig. I4ii.

love story is, however, spoiled by the fact that Eurimachus harbours a dark secret, the murder of Cleander. The reader is surely going to ask whether the message of this tale is that we are playthings of the gods who give and take away happiness on a whim. Happiness has apparently been granted to the couple, but the secret of the murder hangs heavily on Eurimachus. Although he has gained his heart's desire, he is a changed man and cannot enjoy it. He is 'melancholy' and full of 'dumps'. It was a cruel twist of fate that led Eurimachus to meet and kill Cleander just before his tale-telling no longer mattered and Eurimachus could return to court. It is also ironic that Marpesia's determination to discover the cause of Eurimachus's depression and to dispel it, 'even with the hazard of her own life', leads to his death.⁷¹³

We seem to be well and truly in the world of the *Aethiopica* with this tale of young love tormented by capricious Fate, but the narrative suddenly lurches in an unexpected direction. Marpesia's desperate concern for Eurimachus' health leads him to entrust her with his dangerous secret. She cannot keep this secret and it leads to his apprehension and execution. These details could be incorporated into the narrative with which we have hitherto been presented in that Fate's final twist, after all the suffering the lovers have endured, is to make Marpesia the instrument of Eurimachus' death. This is not what happens, however. Greene had stated at the beginning of the pamphlet, by way of Alcida's introductory remarks to the traveller, that her three daughters were metamorphosed for their failings. Unexpectedly, the tale turns into an invective against Marpesia, and women in general, for their inability to keep confidences. Eurimachus has revealed his murderous secret to Marpesia even though 'hee knew women's tongues were like the leaves of the Aspe tree', which is to say that

⁷¹³ Ibid. sig. K1ii.

they are in constant motion repeating information which they should withhold.⁷¹⁴ It is only this part of the narrative which critics appear to take notice of when they claim that *Alcida* is an attack on women and evidence of what Greene really thought about them. The point is that Greene wrenches the narrative away from its arc at this juncture in order to foist on it the point which has been clumsily grafted onto the end of the tales about Marpesia's sisters. It is in keeping for Eurimachus to go to his death with dignity, accepting his guilt for Cleander's murder and its justified punishment. He is 'merrie in his countenance, as one that sorrowed for the fault but was not daunted with death.'⁷¹⁵ His stoicism would be a powerful statement in the face of the supernatural powers which have tampered so catastrophically with his life, but he does not stop there. He presents himself as 'infortunate', not because he has been a victim of the gods, but because his wife revealed his secret. She becomes the object of opprobrium for revealing a murder rather than the man who actually committed it. Alcida herself rails against Marpesia at this point in the narrative, insisting that 'the depth of their [all women's] heart hath a string that stretcheth to the tongues end'.⁷¹⁶ Eurimachus has a great deal to say in the same vein, castigating the entire sex for being 'blabbes', as much with their eyes as their tongues, so incorrigible are they. It is highly unfair, he claims, that when men behave in this way the gods punish them, but the fault in women is so widespread that the gods see any attempt at punishment as pointless. The more he rails, the more venal he appears, but Greene does not stop here. All Taprobane turns against Marpesia for her 'little [i.e. 'insufficient'] secrecy' and she herself accepts her 'fault' for which she must do 'penance'.⁷¹⁷ In the end, Venus takes a 'meek revenge'

⁷¹⁴ Ibid. sig. K1ii.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid. sig. K2ii.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid. sig. K1ii.

⁷¹⁷ Ibid. sig. K3i.

on Marpesia by putting her out of her misery and metamorphosing her into a rose tree.⁷¹⁸

The lasting flavour of the whole pamphlet is not that of the end of each tale with its foisted-on morality which goes completely against the narrative leading up to it. Most of *Alcida* is a celebration of women's self-assurance and verbal prowess, qualities which are abundant in all of Greene's early pamphlets. *Alcida*, substantially, offers no new perspective, the last-minute declarations of misogyny notwithstanding. Artistically, and one presumes, intellectually, Greene admired the female characters he created, but it does not appear to have worried him that the particular way he chose to frame the tales means that each narrative has a contradiction on its final page.

Conclusion

It is hardly credible that Robert Greene did not notice the huge tension between the two narrative strands in *Alcida*. It is a tension which runs through all of his 'repentance' pamphlets written in the 1590s. They follow the pattern of introductory pages full of self-castigation and regret for a life spent writing romances, only to be followed by a carefully composed romance and then a conclusion in which moral doubts overcome him again. I explore these later pamphlets in my conclusion to the whole study, but it is worth pointing out here that the polar contrasts between self-hate and an apparent delight in writing romance narratives which constitutes the material of 'Greenes vision', the first in the repentance series, is clearly prefigured in the uncomfortable switches of perspective in *Alcida*.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid. sig. K3i.

Philomela Lady Fitzwaters nightingale

Philomela, the eponymous heroine of this pamphlet is another of Greene's female characters who is to be understood with reference to the three cardinal virtues of chastity, silence and obedience. In the introductory paragraphs she is described as the epitome of these virtues:

She was modest without sullenness, and silent not as a foole, but because she would not be counted a blab; chaste and yet not coy, for the poorest of all held hir courteous ... she never would goe abroad but in the company of hir husband, and then with such bashfulness'.⁷¹⁹

Although this sounds quite conventional and entirely appropriate for a young woman who is only seventeen when the story begins, it is important to note Greene's qualification of Philomela's display of these virtues in the 'but' and 'yet' which I have underlined. She is no domestic cipher. Like Mamillia and Barmenissa, her chastity is beyond question. She is obedient to her husband Phillippo in the sense that she is faithful, but this obedience is qualified when he unjustly accuses her of adultery and she feels compelled to speak out in her own defence. On the question of silence, although demure and self-effacing at the beginning of the narrative because she feels that such demeanour is appropriate to her social position, Philomela is prepared to be very vocal if she feels that the occasion requires it. Although the imposition of a rule of silence on women was meant to preclude any kind of speaking in public, Philomela, like Mamillia, contravenes this prohibition dramatically.

Despite the fact that in the pamphlet's title Greene refers to the well-known Classical myth of the raped and mutilated Philomel who is eventually turned into a nightingale, a bird with a beautiful song, he is actually drawing the readers' attention more to his own literary skills than to any parallel with the original story.⁷²⁰ It is true

⁷¹⁹ Robert Greene, *Philomela The Lady Fitzwaters nightingale*, 1592. Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 11296, sigs. B1i-ii.

⁷²⁰ The myth of Philomel is referred to by Shakespeare, Chapman, Sidney and Raleigh as well as

that in Greene's pamphlet *Philomela* is severely mistreated by a man, her own husband rather than her brother-in-law as in the myth, and that, like the nightingale, she has an eloquent voice, but the link between the two stories is tenuous. The title is actually a piece of self-presentation on Greene's part. Lady Fitzwaters is being encouraged to believe that the work dedicated to her is a piece of mellifluous prose, a nightingale's song, upon which it is hoped she will look favourably.

The Critical Reception

Kirk Melnikoff, citing Charles Crupi, names *Philomela*, together with *Alcida* and *Planetomachia*, as works by Greene whose 'complexity' has hitherto been 'underappreciated', a sentiment which is part of the ongoing rehabilitation of Robert Greene.⁷²¹ Crupi draws attention to the fact that *Philomela* was 'one of Greene's most admired works in the nineteenth century',⁷²² quoting as proof John Colin Dunlop's praise of the 'exquisitely drawn' character of *Philomela* 'with so many attractions of saint-like purity.'⁷²³ Dunlop's praise perhaps gives the impression that *Philomela* is more passive than she actually is. She proves to be very capable of speaking up for herself. Drawing parallels between Phillippo, *Philomela*'s husband, and Shakespeare's similarly intensely jealous husband Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* (based on Greene's *Pandosto*) and, more particularly, the figure of Othello, Crupi finds Phillippo more psychologically interesting than his abused wife. He sees Phillippo as 'an emblematic figure of obsessive jealousy presented with great force and consistency' and notes that

Greene and was also very familiar to Chaucer and Gower. Some writers focused on the cruelty of her treatment at the hands of her brother-in-law King Tereus, while others were more concerned with the beauty of the nightingale's lament. Greene could have read a Latin version of the myth in Book Six of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or in Arthur Golding's English translation of Ovid which first appeared in 1567 and was reprinted in 1575, 1584 and 1587 before the supposed date of the composition of *Philomela*.

⁷²¹ Kirk Melnikoff, *Writing Robert Greene*, pp. 3-4.

⁷²² Charles Crupi, *Robert Greene*, p. 94.

⁷²³ John Colin Dunlop, *History of Prose Fiction*, 3 vols. revised edition (1816; re-print, London: Bell, 1888) 2: p. 557.

‘Phillippo’s madness destroys institutions by assaulting the human feelings on which they rest.’⁷²⁴ I regard Phillippo as a threat and a foil to Philomela and therefore of secondary interest as I focus on Greene’s presentation of the titular heroine and the language she employs.

I can find few points of agreement with Katharine Wilson’s observations on *Philomela*. The main thrust of her interpretation is that, ‘Only by exposing their eloquence to the world can he [Greene] reveal their [women’s] chastity, silence, and obedience.’⁷²⁵ The exposure she speaks of occurs when male characters happen to overhear women in eloquent private moments and, by reacting to what the women say, expose it to a wider world. Greene’s point, she argues, is that it takes the agency of men to give women a voice, their usual state being one of anonymity and silence. As her two main pieces of evidence, Wilson cites Philomela’s singing of her first ode and her lament on board ship to Palermo. The first is overheard by her husband’s friend Lutesio and, because Philomela sings of the pleasures of love, it gives him an excuse to speak to her on that subject. The second is overheard by the sea captain and would-be rapist Tebaldo whose lust is transformed into virtuous adoration. Wilson believes that ‘like Penelope, she [Philomela] expresses her eloquence only in secret’,⁷²⁶ but this is not borne out by the evidence of the text. Philomela participates in a lengthy debate with Lutesio, countering his blandishments with an oration, a letter and a sonnet. This is a public exchange because she is face-to-face with her interlocutor and is not soliloquizing privately and being overheard. When she is accused of adultery, she is compelled to speak in her defence in a court of law and finally, at the end of the story, she enters a court room of her own volition in order to speak up for Phillippo who has

⁷²⁴ Charles Crupi, *Robert Greene*, p. 94.

⁷²⁵ Katharine Wilson, *Fictions of Authorship*, p. 108.

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 105.

divorced her by this stage. The arc of the narrative is thus the movement from a private moment to increasingly public and more dramatic ones and it misrepresents the work to focus solely on the private overheard moments. It is also not clear what Wilson means when she refers to Philomela's 'eloquence'. It seems to be a generalized use of the term and Wilson does not acknowledge Philomela's considerable technical skill in the composition of that rhetorical mainstay the oration. When she credits Philomela with being 'one of Greene's most active readers' ... 'with an ability to mobilize useful examples'⁷²⁷ she is drawing attention simply to Philomela's citing of *exempla*, one amongst many kinds of *copia*, and she does not explore Philomela's varied manipulation of the rhetorical structure in which these *exempla* are embedded.

The Work

The fact that the title of the pamphlet includes the name of the female dedicatee, Lady Fitzwaters, as well as that of the titular heroine confirms it as a work which is likely to be of particular interest to female readers.⁷²⁸ What Greene expected male readers to make of it is not clear. If they knew his earlier works then they would already have been well acquainted with his indomitable and verbally proficient heroines. In the address to his 'Gentlemen Readers', Greene is unusually brief and he admits that he can expect little from them other than 'hard censures and angrie frownes' for offering another of the 'wanton pamphlets' which he had promised in his 'Mourning Garment & Farewell to Folies never to busie myself about' ever again.⁷²⁹ This is not to say that, despite this dismissive comment, he did not hope to engage readers with a pamphlet in the old vein. His excuse for publishing the work is that it was 'published upon duty

⁷²⁷ Ibid. p. 107.

⁷²⁸ Bridget Radcliffe, wife of Robert Radcliffe, Lord Fitzwalter who succeeded his father as 5th Earl of Sussex in 1593. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'The couple gained a reputation as literary patrons in the 1590s.' It is believed that the Earl treated his wife badly and they had separated by 1602. 10.1093/ref.odnb/22992.

⁷²⁹ *Philomela*, sig. A4i.

to so honourable and bewtifull a lady' and that he would never have given his name to it if the printer had not insisted.⁷³⁰

The titular heroine of *Philomela* is a young woman with all the verbal accomplishments of Mamillia and Susanna. Like them, she is compelled to defend herself against persistent male sexual advances. Philomela's husband, the Venetian Earl, Il Conte Phillippo Medici is as pathologically jealous of her as Pandosto is of Bellaria, so much so that he sets his best friend Signeor Giovanni Lutesio to woo Philomela in order to test her fidelity to her husband. Like the patient Griselda in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Clerk's Tale*, Philomela is unswerving in her fidelity despite being tried for adultery and found guilty as a result of false witness brought against her by 'slaves' Phillippo has suborned. Although Philomela demonstrates the patience of Griselda, unlike Chaucer's heroine she does not suffer in silence.

For all that Greene claims that *Philomela* was retrieved from his 'loose papers' and considered by him to be too 'worthlesse' to be dedicated to Lord Fitzwaters, as opposed to his wife, the work does not read as if it has been hastily cobbled together.⁷³¹ It is neatly constructed and Philomela herself displays a number of verbal skills not seen in the heroines of the earlier pamphlets. The first two thirds of the work deal with Philomela's response to the consequences of Phillippo's jealousy. There follows a great deal of complicated and circumstantial plotting reminiscent of Heliodorus and which, as in the *Aethiopica*, points both to the power of Fortune and to the fact that 'time is the revealer of truth', an observation made on several occasions throughout the text.⁷³² The purpose of this plotting is to bring Philomela to a place of safety, Palermo in Sicily, that same island where Mamillia eventually triumphs. Here in the

⁷³⁰ Ibid. sig. A4i.

⁷³¹ Ibid. Dedication, sig. A3i.

⁷³² Ibid. sig.

presence of her father the Duke of Milan and Lutesio, both of whom Fortune has also brought to this place, she is able to mount a defiant public defence of her former husband. Both Mamillia and Philomela are able, by their words, to extricate wayward men from a death sentence. Mamillia presents Pharicles' judges with the truth which exonerates him, but Philomela shows herself to be an adept liar, taking Phillippo's supposed guilt upon herself with an outrageous description of her own murderous obsession together with a confession of witchcraft.

In the earlier part of the story, Philomela's rhetorical skills equal those of Mamillia as she rebuffs Lutesio's avowals of love, matching his persuasive orations with opposing orations of her own. Greene also makes use of the oration when Philomela, in private, apostrophizes herself, as Greene's protagonists, both male and female, are wont to do in moments of perplexity or emotional crisis. While she is sailing to Sicily, Philomela's distressed apostrophe and the ode which follows it are overheard by Tebaldo the ship's captain who is planning to make her his mistress or simply rape her even though he is married and she is pregnant (but he may not be aware of this). Philomela's words win Tebaldo's admiration and devotion and he invites her to be an honoured guest in the safety of his home. When Philomela later discovers that Phillippo, whom Fortune has also brought to Palermo, has been arrested for the supposed murder of Arnolfo Frozzo, the son of the Duke of Palermo, she delivers another impassioned apostrophe because she cannot initially decide whether to seize this opportunity for revenge or to attempt to save Phillippo's life.

Orations apart, Philomela responds to a letter and a sonnet Lutesio sends her, getting the verbal better of him on each occasion. She adroitly matches the structure and language of Lutesio's letter and sonnet and turns each on its head. She also sings to herself three self-composed odes which reflect her immediate situation. These

poems possess a lyric charm which makes them an attractive contrast to the structural regularity of the orations.

The narrative proper begins with an oration by Phillippo in which he convinces himself that he is right to be suspicious of Philomela because it is in the nature of women to be unfaithful and duplicitous ‘and so of Philomela’.⁷³³ The length of Phillippo’s struggle to convince himself of the likelihood of Philomela’s infidelity alerts the reader to the greater likelihood of her being chaste. When Phillippo persuades his friend Lutesio to test Philomela by courting her, Greene’s description of this as ‘compacted trecherie’, a contemptible plan hatched by two disgraceful men, reinforces the readers’ expectation that they are about to see another of Greene’s virtuous heroines assailed with no other justification than the fact that men are too weak to stop themselves from doing this sort of thing.⁷³⁴ When we meet Philomela in person for the first time, as opposed to simply hearing about her, two details stand out. Firstly, she is engaged in a sophisticated artistic activity, ‘plaieng upon a lute many pretie Roundelaies, Borginets, Madrigals’, and not only performing works by other composers but also one of her own.⁷³⁵ Greene is in the habit of giving his noble heroines such activities rather than suggesting that they are involved in more domestic or ‘female’ pursuits. On several occasions, both Mamillia and Philomela are discovered reading; we never see them at their stitchery, for example. It is also significant that, in the privacy of her garden, Philomela reveals herself as passionate, and quite the opposite of what Dunlop had suggested. Greene makes clear that she is a woman who believes that:

⁷³³ Ibid. sig. B2ii.

⁷³⁴ Ibid. sig. B3i.

⁷³⁵ Ibid. sig. B3ii.

Happie is Loves sugred thrall,
 But unhappie maidens all,
 Who esteeme your Virgins blisses,
 Sweeter than a wives sweet kisses.
 No such quiet to the mind,
 As true love with kisses kind.⁷³⁶

Hearing Philomela sing songs of ‘amorous love’⁷³⁷, Lutesio mistakenly assumes that she is likely to be receptive to his courtship. He should have paid more attention to the concluding lines of her ode in which she makes it absolutely clear that, for her, true love only exists within the bounds of marriage:

But if a kisse prove unchast,
 Then is true love quite disgrast,
 Though love be sweet, learne this of me,
 No love sweet but honestie.⁷³⁸

Greene may, throughout the tale, stress Philomela’s modesty, but this is in no way undermined by her admission that she enjoys the physical side of her marriage. When she later reveals to Phillippo that she is pregnant, it is a sexually intimate moment as they are lying together in bed and she points out the physical presence inside her of the child she is carrying.

When Lutesio discovers Philomela in the garden, the stage is now set for the battle between female constancy and the male desire to seduce. Greene’s sympathies always lie with the woman as he makes clear, symbolically, when he says that Lutesio ‘halfe mard hir melody’, unattractive male behaviour attempting, but failing, to destroy that which is female and more worthy of respect.⁷³⁹ The more steadfast the woman remains, the more desperate and venal the man is likely to become, in Greene’s

⁷³⁶ Ibid. sig. B4i., ll. 27-31.

⁷³⁷ Ibid. sig. B3ii.

⁷³⁸ Ibid. sig. B4i., ll. 33-36.

⁷³⁹ Ibid. sig. B4i.

version of the interaction between the sexes. Mamillia, Susanna and Philomela all remain paragons while Pharicles, the Elders and Phillippo slip further and further into contemptible venality, having to resort to outrageous lies as the only way of getting what they want. The women win all the battles of words which are played fairly.

Taking unfair advantage of his eavesdropping on a private and unguarded moment, and hoping to exploit his close friendship with Philomela's husband, Lutesio begins his assault on her chastity with the suggestive, and perhaps offensive, remark that anyone who sings about love in the morning must have enjoyed it the previous night: 'your morninges Antheme shewes your nights content'.⁷⁴⁰ In response, Philomela graciously does not chide him for the eavesdropping, nor does she show herself willing to engage in an inappropriate exchange full of innuendo. Lutesio is as disappointed that he has not been the one to set the linguistic register of his exchange with Philomela as Pharicles was when he attempted and failed to encourage Mamillia to participate in the kind of verbal games we see between a courtly lover and his mistress. Greene's heroines remain determinedly in control of their destiny and of their language, both of which unprincipled men seek to wrest from them.

The initial verbal skirmishes between Philomela and Lutesio have more of repartee about them than the long orations which Greene so often employs, but even Philomela's first response to Lutesio is a six-part oration in condensed form from which the rhetorical colouring has been shorn:⁷⁴¹ *exordium*: She greets him; *narratio*: She acknowledges that she has been overheard singing 'a wanton song' and she admits that there is now (*divisio*): The question of what is to be made of the content of her song; *confirmatio*: She asserts or confirms that 'mine own mening' was a chaste one,

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid. sig. B4i.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid. sig. B4ii.

an admissible passion for her husband and *confutatio*: She refutes any suggestion that might have been ‘immodest’; *conclusio*: She will take greater care in future not to reveal her innermost feelings if there is any danger that she might be overheard.

It is a feature of exchanges such as the one discussed above that, the more the male characters do and say, the more unattractive to the readers they become. In each case, whether the woman be Mamillia, Susanna or Philomela, the reader has already been let in on the secret of the man’s unworthy motives. We see the women reacting in all innocence to remarks that they do not initially recognize as preliminary manoeuvres in an attempt to seduce them.

It takes Mamillia and Susanna far less time to discover the nature of the predicament in which they find themselves. The reader knows from the outset the dishonourable intentions of the men and it is part of the piquancy of *Philomela* that, out of friendship and concern for Lutesio, the heroine encourages him to pursue his love and also to reveal the identity of the lady he adores. Greene’s intention is to arouse sympathy for her by having such innocent acts of friendship recoil on her in a catastrophic way. In the spirit of genuine friendship she encourages Lutesio in his suit, having no idea that she herself is the object of this fictitious passion. Lutesio is playing a cunning game and, rather than declare himself at the outset, he builds up to the revelation that his love is actually for Philomela herself. First he confesses to being in love and then he admits that it is adulterous. Philomela’s attitude changes at once and she moves from encouragement to strongly-worded disapproval. Their conversation thus far has served as a preamble and Philomela now launches into a lengthy oration embellished with a substantial complement of rhetorical *copia*.

Philomela’s oration is a further example of how Greene adapts this rhetorical template according to the characters of the speaker and interlocutor and the

requirements of the specific situation. Although the six parts of the oration remain unchanged, Greene is able to introduce flexibility and variety by reducing, expanding or repeating particular sections and by exercising a judicious choice of rhetorical colours. When Philomela responds to Lutesio's admission of an adulterous affection, her arguments are largely moral and religious and she makes use of far fewer of the Lylian colours employed by Mamillia.

Although Philomela is introduced at the beginning of the narrative as a modest young woman who is very self-effacing in public, nevertheless she takes it upon herself to 'schoole' Lutesio, in an oration, when he admits his desire for an as yet unnamed married woman.⁷⁴² Greene is again presenting his heroine as the arbiter of morality in the tale despite her youth and inexperience. The greater age and experience of her husband Phillippo and his friend Lutesio have not brought them wisdom or a knowledge of correct and rational behaviour. Instead, they have simply given Phillippo time to develop his obsessively jealous personality and brought Lutesio so close to his friend that, in an act of male bonding, he is willing to carry out actions which he knows to be highly questionable.

The simple *exordium* of Lutesio's name is followed by three *exempla* drawn from Nature in which a healthy or attractive exterior is shown to conceal a very unpleasant heart. Philomela follows the articulation of the concept of fair hiding foul with two *sententiae* relating to human behaviour which convey the same idea. The point of her *accumulatio* of similar material, she then explains by way of an *acclamatio* or *epiphonema*, a climax, is to show her hatred, *abominatio*, of 'them who seeming everie way absolute, will prove everie way dissolute'. For effect, the two key terms contrast with each other in an example of *contentio* or *dissimile*. Implicit in all that

⁷⁴² Ibid. sigs. C1ii-C2i.

Phimomela has said thus far is the possibility that Lutesio will become one of these dissolute people. In the oration's *narratio*, the summary of events so far, she reminds him of what he has always been, a highly respected man. Using *contentio* reinforced by alliteration, she highlights the fact that his reputation rests on moral rather than worldly qualities, on 'good partes' rather than 'parentage'. The brief *narratio* is followed by an equally brief *divisio* in which Philomela summarizes the question at the heart of her oration, whether Lutesio will continue in his virtuous path or become corrupt. In an impassioned *apostrophe* she urges him to 'darken not these honours'. This appeal to his emotions, *delectatio*, provides another of the climactic lists, *accumulationes*, leading to an *acclamatio/epiphonema* in which 'dishonestie' is shown to result in 'an everlasting penance of infamie'. The *confirmatio* of the oration consists of a re-statement of Lutesio's good qualities (he is 'modest' and 'honest' and possesses 'wit') and a hope that he will remain like this. Her description of him provides an example of both *dubitatio*, uncertainty, and *subjectio*, incredulity. What she is celebrating is his social success amongst 'the chastest' of 'Ladies' of both 'youth' and 'age'. This will be replaced by social exclusion if his behaviour deteriorates; he is certain to be 'banished out of the companie of all that are honest.' Just as the *confirmatio* enumerated the good qualities Lutesio should endeavour to retain, so the *confutatio* enumerates the faults he must shun. The word 'Besides' marks the transition between these fourth and fifth parts of the oration. Philomela urges Lutesio to 'enter into the consideration of the fault' and to fear 'the sequell of thy folly'. The penalties threatened are now graver. By paying court to a friend's wife, Lutesio risks turning that friend into 'a fatall enemy'. Worse than this personal consequence is the prospect of incurring the wrath of God. In a series of *accumulationes* Philomela builds to *epiphonemata* which paint the grimness of the consequences, generally in Christian

terms, if Lutesio continues in his adulterous desires. Structurally in these *accumulationes* Philomela shows a penchant for the list of three, ‘commended...condemned...punished’, and antithetical pairings, ‘a desire without...a gaine with’. Her final *accumulatio* is the longest as befits a coup de grâce. If ‘Barbarous nations’ and ‘Atheistes in Religion’ abhor adultery then how can he, a professed Christian, make ‘the harbour of thy soule the habitation of Satan?’ After such a dramatic image, with its balance of the alliterated ‘harbour’ and ‘habitation’ which are connected in meaning, and the sibilant ‘soule’ and ‘Satan’ which could not be more diametrically opposed, one would have imagined that Philomela’s work is done. She finds a second rhetorical wind, however, and launches into a further oration on a similar theme which is slightly longer than the first.⁷⁴³

As we have so often seen in Greene’s narratives, a woman’s words leave her male interlocutor ‘amased’ and ‘silent’ although, in this instance rather than giving him a flea in his ear she has left him ‘wondering at her virtues’.⁷⁴⁴ Being completely in charge of the situation, Philomela decides to ‘waken him out of his dumpe’, to alter Lutesio’s mood by a change of linguistic register.⁷⁴⁵ She sings him her second ode in which a young shepherd talks of the ‘folly’ of love.⁷⁴⁶ As well as giving Lutesio delight by its accomplished lyricism, the ode provides him with a further moral lesson on the dangers of promiscuity, ‘lawlesse love’.⁷⁴⁷

The sheer length of Philomela’s oration, its cogency, complexity and variety, indicate how comfortable Greene feels with this particular rhetorical paradigm and the extent to which he enjoys ringing its changes. The passionate expression of

⁷⁴³ Ibid. sigs. C2i-C3i.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid. sig. C3i.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid. sig. C3i.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid. sig. C3ii., l. 24

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid. sig. C4i., l. 65.

Philomela's moral arguments could simply be viewed as an artist inhabiting his subject, but it might also tell us something about an inner conflict in Greene, a man notorious for wild living and yet whose last published writings are fiercely self-condemnatory. The repentance pamphlets are often regarded as yet another pose by a man who was acutely aware of the market for which he wrote, but there is no doubting the power of Philomela's words and the effort Greene put into writing them.

Lutesio has been greatly impressed by Philomela's 'cooling card of good counsaile', and when he reports back to Phillippo he assumes that the question of her chastity will never be raised again. He has not bargained for the intensity of Phillippo's jealousy which is revealed in a long outburst on the deceitfulness of women, an ironic action considering the deceitfulness being practised by the two men on the blameless Philomela. Phillippo commands Lutesio to assail Philomela with another kind of language, the epistolary, and Lutesio duly obliges, adding a sonnet to the end of the letter.⁷⁴⁸ Phillippo approves these compositions and they are sent to Philomela. Lutesio's letter is constructed like an oration but the arguments it contains are entirely specious. An educated contemporary reader would have known that these arguments would be torn apart if presented in a university disputation although Lutesio does not seem to expect Philomela to possess sufficient dialectical skills to see through them. His illogical non-sequiturs and unconvincing analogies would have amused the Gentlemen Readers who could not miss the contrast between them and the cogency of the arguments Philomela uses in the letter she writes in response demanding he set aside his love for her.

The letter from Lutesio is highly reminiscent of Calamus' oration in the second tale of *Penelopes web* when he attempts to persuade Cratyna to be his mistress. I

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid. sigs. D1i-D2ii.

include a brief analysis of it as further evidence of the way that Greene uses the language of rhetoric to enable dishonest and venal men to condemn themselves out of their own mouths.

In the *confirmatio* of his letter, Lutesio is anxious to remove all blame from himself for loving her. His main point is that he cannot help it because she is so beautiful, so the situation should be seen as either inevitable or her own fault. The quality of his arguments, and of the reader's opinion of him, degenerate as the letter goes on. If sons disobey fathers, he says, then why cannot lovers betray friends? Why did Nature create beauty if she did not intend it to be won without exception. Assuming that he has now proved that love must be allowed, he jumps to the suggestion that if love affairs are carried on in secret they do no harm. In the *confutatio* he sets about demolishing the argument Philomela might put forward that Phillippo is a count and therefore should not be cuckolded by a man of inferior rank. He counters that love wreaks havoc even amongst the greatest lords and, in any case, women are not only by nature unfaithful they also know how to get away with it. His *conclusio* is that she must love him or he will die. The burden of the sonnet he appends to the letter is that women have two eyes so that they may fall in love with two different men. This is hardly a flattering missive but Phillippo is delighted with it, a reaction which reveals a great deal about his own character.

When Philomela reads the letter she is filled with righteous indignation but decides not to tell her husband in case he kills Lutesio. Instead, she writes a letter and a sonnet which severely reproach Lutesio for his declaration of love.⁷⁴⁹ As in her earlier oration, she adopts the rôle of mentor to one who is sorely in need of moral instruction. In the superscription to his own letter Lutesio had addressed 'fayrest

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid. sigs. D3ii-E1i.

Philomela' and her response is to call him 'the most false Lutesio'. His letter set out 'what he wants himselfe' and she neatly takes this same wording and gives it an entirely different gloss, playing with the double meaning of 'want' as both 'desire' and 'lack'. He wants not love, she says, but 'more honour and lesse dishonestie'. She does not answer the arguments in his letter individually, but instead offers three main points: How can he betray the friend who loves him? Has she ever given a single indication that she might be unchaste? If he persists in this behaviour she will destroy him either by denouncing him or killing him herself. She will 'aime at thy dishonour' and if he comes to her house still looking to be her lover 'looke for a dagger in thy bosome'.

I earlier stated that I could not agree with Katharine Wilson's observation that Philomela expresses her eloquence only in secret. This letter is clear proof of the opposite of Wilson's point. It contains threats of denunciation which Philomela suggests would be very vocal. The letter itself is discreet rather than secret. If Lutesio abandons his courtship, Philomela will never mention it to anyone and they will carry on as before. She is offering him a clear ultimatum and certainly not hiding herself away voicelessly as he is made fully aware that her voice is ready to cry out if occasion arises. Her probity and generosity shine out in this letter in contrast to the unworthiness of the two men who are seeking to entrap her. Lutesio courts her unwillingly and he hopes he does not succeed, but he is nevertheless prepared and very able to do it. In the sonnet with which she ends her own letter, Philomela takes Lutesio's conceit of a woman's two eyes and cleverly finds a different meaning for it. A woman has two eyes because 'The one must love, the other see mens shiftes.' Little does she suspect the extent to which she herself is the victim of these shifts. In her letter she raises the

suggestion that Lutesio's attentions might be meant 'to try me', but whereas she feels the letter should be the end of such a trial, there is far worse to come.

When Lutesio shows the letter to Phillippo, he trusts that the trial of Philomela's chastity is over, but Phillippo dismisses the evidence of the letter with a 'Tush ...all this winde shakes no corne'.⁷⁵⁰ Lutesio has had enough by now and refuses to play Phillippo's game any longer. He expresses his great respect for Philomela and warns Phillippo that if he continues to test his wife in this way he could drive her into being unfaithful. Phillippo therefore promises to trust his wife in future.

Lutesio seeks an interview with Philomela. Her tone towards him is at first 'honourably peremptorie', the latter word telling us that she is once again in charge of their conversation and that she has established this command by her use of language.⁷⁵¹ Lutesio explains that the letter was simply a trial of her love for his dear friend Phillippo but he does not mention that the trial was initiated by Phillippo himself. Greene confounds any expectation that life for these characters will now settle down by warning us that Fortune 'whose delight is to turne aside mirth, into tragick sorrowes', 'beganne to act a balefull seane in this matter'.⁷⁵² This suggests we might be entering the Fortune-influenced world of the *Aethiopica*. In fact what now occurs is a continuation of what has happened before. Phillippo's jealousy unhinges him and where he cannot find evidence to support his belief that Philomela is engaged in an adulterous relationship with Lutesio, he fabricates it. He is 'ever murmuring with himselfe'⁷⁵³ and is even reduced to spying through the keyhole when Philomela and Lutesio are engaged in friendly but innocent conversation. Such actions deamean him

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid. sig. E1i.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid. sig. E2ii.

⁷⁵² Ibid. sig. F1i.

⁷⁵³ Ibid. sig. F1i.

but their effect is to drive him into a ‘suspitious furye’ and make him ‘halfe frantick’.⁷⁵⁴

It is at this point that Greene writes one of his most tender scenes involving a female character. Lying in bed with her husband, Philomela tells him of her pregnancy and invites him to feel the baby moving inside her:

She ready to weepe for Joy, said: good newes my Lorde, you shall have a young sonne: at this his hart waxed coulde, and he questioned her if shee were with childe? Shee taking his hand laying it on her side, said: feelee my Lord, you may perceive it move: with that it leapt against his hande. When she creeping into his bosome, began amorously to kisse him and commend him: that though for the space of fower yeeres that they had beene married she had had no childe, yet at last hee had plaid the mans parte, and gotten her a boy.⁷⁵⁵

Greene presents Philomela as the innocent victim here, but she is neither passive nor silent, and certainly not in her sexuality. She is unembarrassed by the physicality of her pregnancy as we see when she is ready to speak frankly about it and to place her husband’s hand on her stomach to feel the baby. We remember her earlier conversation with Lutesio after he overheard her first ode and she stated that ‘women may be wantons with their husbands’.⁷⁵⁶ This intimate, highly personal moment stands out in comparison with the formalized nature of so many of the conversations between men and women that I have discussed thus far, but it has been overlooked by critics. It is brief and without rhetorical *copia* and it proves Philomela’s undoing. Her ingenuous remark that Phillippo has finally played the man’s part after four years can mean only one thing to a jealous husband, that his own virility is being questioned and that some other man has impregnated his wife. It is accepted that Greene’s *Pandosto* was a major source of Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, but Leontes’ violent rejection of the pregnant Hermione also owes a good deal in circumstance and tone, if not in

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid. sig. F1ii.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid. sig. F2i.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid. sig. B4ii.

actual dialogue, to this raging on the part of Phillippo. He refrains from killing her and the baby only because he wishes to denounce her publicly: ‘were it not base strumpet, that I reserve thee to further infamy, I would presently butcher thee and the brat, both with one stab.’⁷⁵⁷

Phillippo’s plan is to accuse Philomela and Lutesio before the Duke but, having no witnesses, he ‘suborned with sweet perswasions’ two Genoese to swear that they ‘did take Lutesio and Philomela, in an adulterous action.’⁷⁵⁸ We are forcibly reminded at this point in the narrative of Marquess Walter’s treatment of the patient Griselda in that both obsessive husbands are determined to have their innocent wives parade through the streets. Griselda returns to her father’s hut wearing only the smock in which she left it⁷⁵⁹ and Philomela is marched to her arraignment accompanied by ‘base catchpoles’ and ‘rake-hels’. Phillippo is deaf to Philomela’s protests, acting ‘as if he had participated his nature with the bloudthirstie Caniball’.⁷⁶⁰ Philomela also closely resembles Greene’s earlier heroine Susanna whose virtue and linguistic skills are confounded by men who lie. When Phillippo delivers an impassioned oration in arraigning his wife he may be following the rhetorical rules in a structural sense, but at the heart of what he claims is another appalling lie against a woman. The Elizabethans valued rhetoric because it provided professional men with a useful persuasive tool, but there was always the risk, as here, that the final persuasive proof would not be a logical one but an invented fact. Villains were as able to make use of rhetoric as honest men as we saw earlier in Pharicles’ courtship of Mamillia.

Phillippo’s false witness carries the day and Philomela is found guilty and generally reviled. She and Lutesio are initially condemned to death, but this is

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid. sig. F2ii.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid. sig. F2ii.

⁷⁵⁹ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Clerk’s Tale* in *The Works*, p.111, ll. 890-96.

⁷⁶⁰ *Philomela*, sig. F3ii.

commuted to divorce for her and perpetual banishment for him. Lutesio is confident that eventually ‘time wil discover any truth in my absence’, a reminder of the influence on Greene of the *Aethiopica* where the vicissitudes of Fortune are resolved by the passage of time.⁷⁶¹

Philomela’s final words before her accuser are naturally in the form of an oration which shows once again how Greene was able to tailor the paradigm to suit a particular situation.⁷⁶² The *exordium* and the *conclusio* are by far the longest sections because these are the ones in which Philomela speaks about Phillippo rather than herself. Her horror and grief at the way her husband has behaved are uppermost in her mind. The *exordium* contains three rhetorical questions articulating her disbelief at his accusations, each beginning ‘How canst thou...’ The *narratio* is short: he has deceived ‘these Magistrates’, but cannot ‘blind the divine Majesty’. The *divisio* is also very brief: ‘Thou has wronged Philomela’. The *confirmatio* and *confutatio* are combined within a few lines. She is well born and virtuous (the *confirmatio*), which facts, allied to the support of her friends (the *confutatio*), are likely to ‘finde out mine innocence’. The largest section of all is the *conclusio* in which she explains what she hopes for Phillippo. In this she is as patient as Griselda but publicly vocal in a way that critics have not credited. Thinking only of Phillippo, rather than her own unfortunate state, she offers Phillippo advice as well as forgiveness. There is some bitterness in her description of him as a ‘deafe Adder’, but generally her words show concern rather than rancour. She warns him that if he also suspects a new wife of infidelity he may drive her into the very behaviour he fears. Griselda similarly advises her Marquess against treating his new wife in the way he has treated her.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid. sigs. G1i.

⁷⁶² Ibid. sigs. G1ii-G2i.

The narrative towards the end of *Philomela* races along driven, like much of the *Aethiopica*, by the caprice of chance and time to which Greene refers numerous times in the story. Philomela changes her name to Abstemia and takes ship for anonymity in Palermo in Sicily, whither she is followed, coincidentally, by Phillippo, Lutesio and the Duke of Milan her father, all of whom are in search of her but who have no idea where she is. The significant moments are Philomela's three orations. In the first of these she reflects on her situation and decides how best to act, in the second she reflects on seeing Phillippo in prison and in the third she pleads for his life. Each oration is tailored in language and structure to the exigencies of its particular moment in the plot.

The first two orations closely parallel those of Barmenissa in similar situations. Both women lament what has been unfairly done to them and then they find themselves presented with the choice of whether or not to act to preserve the life of the husband who has treated them abominably.

Philomela delivers the first oration as a private apostrophe while sailing to Palermo.⁷⁶³ Her words are meant for her ears only but they are fortunately overheard by Tebaldo the ship's Master who is planning to rape her or make her his willing mistress. Once again a woman's words overpower a man. Tebaldo is so impressed by Philomela's virtue that he becomes her champion and offers her sanctuary in his house when they land.

Philomela's second oration is delivered after she secretly observes Phillippo in prison where he is being held on suspicion of murdering Arnolfo Frozzo the son of the Duke of Palermo.⁷⁶⁴ Phillippo is seeking execution (he will not commit the sin of

⁷⁶³ Ibid. sig. G3ii-G4ii.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid. sigs. I3ii-I4i.

suicide) as a justified punishment for his treatment of Philomela and he has seized the opportunity to confess to a capital crime he did not commit. The tone of this oration is moral and religious, much of the vocabulary consisting of abstract nouns such as ‘envye’, ‘honour’, ‘fault’, ‘lasciviousnes’ and ‘suspition’, a semantic field appropriate to the situation and a far cry from the abstruse euphuistic vocabulary for which Greene is often held to account.

The *confutatio* is the longest section. In it Philomela confirms the pious sense of duty evident in the *confirmatio* with a refutation of the arguments she might advance for taking revenge on Phillippo by remaining silent. The progress of Barmenissa’s thought is similarly structured. It is important to note that Greene is reminding us that Philomela is a highly intelligent woman who needs to feel that she has arrived at her decision by the exercise of logic as well as what she has been taught she ‘must’ do as a wife.⁷⁶⁵

There is a clear progression in Philomela’s presentation of points and within each point is a three-part structure reflective of the syllogism, the basic building block of dialectic.⁷⁶⁶ Philomela’s first point is a general one that: a) all men have faults and b) no fault is too great to be forgiven. We have here the first two lines of a syllogism with the implied conclusion that Phillippo, being a man at fault, has done nothing which cannot be forgiven. In her second point she moves from the general to the specific, from all men to Phillippo himself. Again the point is sub-divided into three parts which do not form an exact syllogism but which nonetheless do lead to a conclusion: a) Phillippo acted thus because he ‘overloved’ her; b) he was motivated by jealousy not lust; c) such jealousy arises in ‘kind-hearted’ loves. The argument is

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid. sig. I3ii.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. sigs. I3ii-I4i.

somewhat circular but it offers her an explanation for Phillippo's behaviour. In the third point she progresses to a consideration of Phillippo's punishment. There is a tripartite division here too, making the syllogism: a) God and the Duke of Milan have punished him; b) he is suffering as much as her; c) therefore she has no need to punish him further. As a rider to the conclusion of this syllogism, she observes that, ironically, to behave generously towards him will increase, 'heape coales on', his suffering which means that she might be able to save and punish him at the same time. Her fourth and final point focuses on Phillippo's crime and the extent to which she herself might be to blame. This point can also be read as a syllogism: a) Phillippo committed the murder when his mind was disturbed; b) she is the root of this disturbance and he only encountered his victim because he was in search of her; c) she must therefore help him.

All the above arguments lead Philomela in her *conclusio* to cite two *exempla* regarding plants which like her have been 'prest downe' (the palm) and 'troden' (chamomile) but which are nonetheless resilient. The moral is that she must forget her own feelings and rise up and be strong for Phillippo. This resolution leads to the delivery of her final oration when she speaks out at Phillippo's trial. It is important to remember that Philomela has not been recognized in Palermo and that she is quite safe in her anonymity. It is her choice to abandon this safety and anonymity and to reclaim her identity as Phillippo's much-wronged former wife. It is not a case, as Katharine Wilson has suggested, of a woman being acknowledged because accidentally overheard. Philomela takes centre stage, not only announcing her actual identity but constructing another sensational one with herself as a ruthless murderess who practises witchcraft, all in an attempt to take Phillippo's guilt on herself.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid. sigs. I4ii-K1i.

This last oration is as mendaciously cunning as those earlier ones spoken by the Elders and Phillippo. In the earlier instances, a virtuous woman was compromised by men's lies, but here we have a woman also prepared to lie although in order to save a man's life, not for her own gain. The oration is full of ironies and falsehoods from the very beginning. Philomela urges the Duke of Palermo not to give a verdict against Phillippo which will 'wrong the innocent' when this is precisely what she is asking him to do in her own case. As Phillippo's life stands in the balance, Philomela needs to get straight to the point, to offer a *conclusio* immediately and then to justify it. She cannot allow herself the luxury of a leisurely build-up to the point she has to make as the Duke could peremptorily order the execution of Phillippo at any time. The *exordium* is long. In it Philomela stresses that a guilty conscience has driven her to confess that she is the murderess of the Duke's son and that she accepts that her own death is likely to be 'exigent'. In order to overcome any requirement of proof that she is the guilty party, she uses a specious *sententia* to argue that 'a guilty conscience is a thousand witnesses' and reinforces this highly questionable point with a *comparatio* which suggests that just as the sun cannot be veiled by a curtain, nor can 'remorse of murder' be hidden in a closet. The *comparatio* and the *sententia* are the only rhetorical figures she has used thus far because the urgency of the situation requires her to be as direct as possible. She also reveals Phillippo's true identity at this point.

The *narratio* is plain and direct as she informs the court of her history thus far. Her listeners need this information but there is no point in wasting *copia* on it when she has to convince the Duke that, although she is an abused wife, she is willing to sacrifice her own life to save that of her cruel husband. In the *divisio* she asks the court to believe that the promptings of 'mine owne conscience' are more compelling than her sense of grievance at 'such wrong' as she has suffered at Phillippo's hands. There

may well be people present who find her confession improbable so she has to maintain a focus on the strength of the promptings of her own conscience and the ‘dispairing humor’ which has led to Phillippo’s false confession. In a conventional oration the *divisio* would be followed by a *confirmatio* and a *confutatio*. Philomela cannot afford to run the risk of diluting her pleading by presenting counter-arguments in a *confutatio*; she therefore merely offers a *confirmatio* which contains sensational reasons why she should be the one to be executed.

The comedy of the scene is surely intentional in that we have a husband and wife determined to out-do each other in reasons why they should be condemned to death. Phillippo vaguely mentions ‘an oulde grudge’ against his victim and a desire for revenge that was ‘restles in my minde’;⁷⁶⁸ Philomela is far more inventive and graphic. The details of her tale barely hang together. She acted on behalf of an unnamed third party, ‘a Sicilian gentleman, whome by no tortures I will name’ and, finding that ‘witchcraft’ did not work’, she eventually ‘stabd him [the Duke’s son] and after mangled him’. Her next remark, if taken at its face value, would have shocked contemporary readers. Her solemn oath that, ‘this I am by God informed to confesse’ is a blasphemous lie. However, Greene’s heroines are always attuned to the subtleties of language and so, perhaps, Philomela, in her own mind, is not telling a lie at all. For her, this speech may not be a confession of guilt but an equivocating confession of her love for Phillippo and therefore sanctioned by God.

Before a final verdict can be delivered, the supposed victim of the murder arrives in the court and the truth of the innocence of both Philomela and Phillippo becomes apparent. Phillippo is so morally compromised, however, that there can be no redemption for him and he does not survive the end of the narrative. He is not

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid. sig. I4ii.

allowed a reconciliation with Philomela, re-marriage to her and the remainder of his days spent happily. The emotional stress of the memory of his past history of infamy and the sight of a wife who is prepared to die for him, proves more than he can bear: 'in a sound betweene greefe and joy' he is carried 'halfe dead to his lodging' and within two hours 'in an extasie he ended his lyfe.'⁷⁶⁹ Phillippo has proved unworthy of Philomela and he departs the tale. They do, or did, have a son. Philomela's pregnancy is the plot-trigger for her trial, compelled divorce and banishment. When she eventually comes to reside in Palermo she gives birth to a son she names Unfortunatus.⁷⁷⁰ It is perhaps not surprising that the child is never mentioned again after his birth as his purpose in the plot has been served. Greene could have made Unfortunatus inherit his father's title and considerable estate as he was conceived in wedlock. This would have meant the narrative ending in circumstances that are tonally male, suggesting that the natural order of events is the procession from father to son with women, as wives and mothers, simply in attendance, by-standers rather than protagonists. For Greene, this story has to begin and end with Philomela and he does not allow her to be pushed to one side when the narrative concludes. The final paragraph sums up her remaining years. Admittedly her status is that of Phillippo's widow, her divorce being seen as something that should never have happened, but the emphasis is on *her* personal qualities. At the outset she is such a 'Venetian paragon that Italie held her life as an instance of all commendable qualities'⁷⁷¹ and the author's concluding remarks are in an identical vein when he insists on her fine qualities 'which

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid. sig. K1ii.

⁷⁷⁰ This name may be a reference to Greene's own son. Gabriel Harvey claims that Em. Ball, 'a sorry ragged queane' and sister of the criminal Cutting Ball, bore Greene a 'base sonne *Infortunatus Greene*'. (Gabriel Harvey, *Four Letters*, p. 20.) A Fortunatus Greene was buried in Shoreditch on 12th August 1593, the year after Greene's own death. Perhaps Harvey changed the name out of spite, although Greene's own choice of name for his son (if the boy were indeed his son) seems an ironic one considering the life his father led.

⁷⁷¹ *Philomela*, sig. B1i.

constant chastety made her so famous, that in her lyfe shee was honored as the Paragon of vertue.⁷⁷²

Conclusion

Unlike *Alcida*, *Philomela* is entirely consistent in its perspective, presenting us with an account of a wife's reaction to the increasingly obsessive machinations of a jealous husband. The readers' sympathies are never other than with Philomela, although that does not mean that the work is a simplistic tale of virtue oppressed but eventually triumphant. The fact that the pamphlet was written some years earlier than it was published (during Greene's 'repentance' period) accounts for this. In the introduction written at the time of publication (1592) Greene acknowledges, and apologises for, the nature of this earlier work and its difference from what he was currently engaged in writing. As I have shown, within the narrative Greene engages with a series of moral dilemmas expressed by way of orations which he constructs with the variety and subtlety we see throughout his oeuvre. Philomela is not a passive, suffering cipher, but a woman who has the power to admonish and perhaps expose a would-be lover and who, at the end, holds her wayward husband's life in her hands. The work is a genuine piece of story-telling and not a hagiography.

⁷⁷² Ibid. sig. K2i.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to explore Robert Greene's debt to rhetoric, in particular his use of the oration paradigm, and his unusually sympathetic portrayal of female protagonists. In order to demonstrate how central the oration is to Greene's work, I have analyzed many examples of declarations, apostrophes and letters, pointing out how these three kinds of oration are utilized by Greene to give his narratives structure and to help in the delineation of character. Further, I have included as Appendix 3 a table of all the orations in *Mamillia Part 1* with each oration broken down into its six constituent parts. I trust that my examples of close exegesis of extended passages of text, representing each kind of oration, will have proved convincing.

Greene's own comments are crucial when we consider his work and attempt to see it as a whole. His comments are of three kinds but they should not always be taken at face-value. The self-deprecating remarks in the dedications and introductory epistles to the early works are considerably at odds with the effort Greene has clearly put into the composition of these works and also with what appears to be his commitment to the sympathetic creation of his female characters. The freely-available printed pamphlet was an extraordinary new phenomenon in Greene's England and authors were not sure how seriously to take their published work. If pamphlets could be read by all classes, did that mean they were intrinsically worthless and should not be regarded as serious literary productions? Were they an embarrassment to the university-educated men who were often their authors? The fact that Greene was in the habit of referring to his pamphlets as 'trash', should not trick us into believing that

this is anything other than a convention arising from uncertainty. Throughout this study I have been at pains to counter such a sweeping evaluation of Greene's work as has been frequently voiced by commentators on the literature of the period. I hope that I have helped to ensure that the days of dismissive comments such as Robert W. Dent's that Greene was 'a hasty, or at least unimaginative hack' are well and truly over.⁷⁷³

Greene's pamphlets were the product of considerable thought and his commitment to his material, particularly in both parts of *Mamillia*, is evident from his authorial interjections, the second set of comments to which I draw attention. Greene makes it clear that he stands resolutely by his championing of women and does not care how he is judged for this. As I quoted above, he declares, 'Thinke of me what you please, I am constrained by conscience.' He truly was a 'Homer of Women' if the phrase is divested of Nashe's irony. The third set of comments appears in the late 'Repentance' pamphlets in which Greene claims to be rejecting his earlier 'lascivious pamphleteering',⁷⁷⁴ but in fact he cannot help himself falling back into the old habits.

Having established the accuracy of my two main contentions concerning Greene's work by way of a close study of his early romances, my final point is that he was consistent as a writer. Rhetoric and the sympathetic presentation of female characters figure in the romances he wrote subsequent to the ones I have discussed and they are a mainstay also of the late 'Repentance' pamphlets which purport to do something entirely different. Even the cony-catching pamphlets, which are an *exposé* of the Elizabethan criminal underclass, contain a portrait of an articulate and confident female cony-catcher. I shall look briefly at each of these three later groups of pamphlets as I round off my argument.

⁷⁷³ Robert W. Dent., *Greene's 'Gwydonius'*, p. 154.

⁷⁷⁴ *Greenes vision*, sig. A4i.

Greene's later romances vary in structure and genre. There are framed tales (*Planetomachia*, 1585, *Perimedes the Blacksmith*, 1588, and *Greene's Orpharion*, 1588), pastoral tales (*Pandosto*, 1588), tales influenced by Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* (many of them, in part, but particularly *Menaphon*, 1589) and single narratives in a Classical setting (*Euphues his censure to Philautus*, 1587, and *Ciceronis Amor*, 1589). The same motifs recur throughout all of them and contribute to the distinctive 'flavour' of Greene's work. At the heart of each narrative is a relationship between a man and a woman which might be offset by a sub-plot involving an unwelcome suitor. There may be a powerful male figure whose unattractive qualities serve as a foil to the constancy and articulacy of the heroine. There are likely to be misogynistic remarks, but we, the readers, are always encouraged, by a variety of means, to be more sympathetic to the women than to the men. The most entertaining sections of the narratives tend to be the extended verbal exchanges between a male and female character, perhaps adversarially or as lovers' banter. The woman invariably triumphs. Greene appears to relish composing these set pieces and they are the point when the works are likely to come most alive, even for readers not conversant with the rhetorical techniques being employed. The three kinds of oration appear less often in Greene's pamphlets as his career progresses, but they are always there, particularly when characters need to give vent to their feelings in private. Phrasing is often balanced and there are many *exempla* and *sententiae*, but without the abstruseness and alliteration which are such features of *Gwydonius*.

It would appear that around 1590 Greene underwent a crisis of conscience regarding the nature of his life and literary output. I regard this struggle as genuine, although I can offer no other cause than perhaps illness and indigence. I do not regard it, as many commentators have done, as simply a response to a perceived taste in his

readers for sensational material. I also consider these pamphlets accomplished pieces of work and not the hastily dashed-off make-weight trifles they are often held to be.

Greene produced seven 'Repentance' pamphlets: *Greene's Mourning Garment* (1590), *Greene's Never Too Late Parts 1 & 2* (1590), *Greene's Farewell to Follie* (1591), *Greene's Groatworth of Wit* (1592), *Greenes vision* (publ. 1592 but probably written in 1590) and *The Repentance of Robert Greene* (1592). Apart from the last named, which is brief and focuses only on Greene himself, all the other pamphlets are notable for the tension between the avowed subject, Greene's detestation of 'my detestable kind of life',⁷⁷⁵ and the harking back to the subject matter, mood and language of the earlier romances. Greene several times uses the image of the dog returning to his vomit, meaning a man to his sins, but, in a sense, this is exactly what he does himself in these pamphlets once he has established what a deplorable person he is. After each confession in the first six pamphlets, he slips into narratives which sympathetically depict confident, articulate women embroiled in a range of challenging situations. The sheer effort he puts into these narratives suggests a delight in the subject matter and form which runs contrary to the moral fulminations of the introductory material. The pamphlets may end with a sudden recollection that he ought to be sober and impervious to the temptations of love and beauty, but the experience the reader takes away from these works is that of their narrative heart, not the admonitions which top and tail them. I suggested earlier that *Alcida* consists of two narratives which run counter to each other and that is very much the experience one has from reading the 'Repentance' pamphlets.

Although the emphasis on the wit and constancy of Greene's female protagonists is consistent with what we have read before, there is a change in his use

⁷⁷⁵ *The repentance of Robert Greene*, sig. B1ii.

of rhetoric. These later works still employ similes with reasonable frequency and there are regular *exempla* and *sententia*, often in Latin, but the abstruseness is gone as is the over-use of *paramoion* which can make the earlier works distractingly sing-song. The oration still appears in declarations, apostrophes and letters, but it no longer provides the skeleton of the narrative. The internal structure of the orations tends to be more relaxed, with the *confirmatio* and *confutatio* often being much less clearly demarcated. Greene's style is clearly still developing and he makes considerable use of shorter verbal exchanges between characters which are much closer to our modern view of dialogue than the long orations. There is a good deal more reported speech and description, the latter showing a skilful use of incidental, individualizing detail, particularly in the tale of the wooing of the bumpkin Mullidor in *Francisco's Fortunes*, the second part of *Greene's Never Too Late*.

Greene's five cony-catching pamphlets are *A Notable Discovery of Coosnage* (1591), *The Second Part of Conny-Catching* (1592), *The Thirde and Last Parte of Conny-Catching* (1592), *A Disputation Betweene a Hee and Shee Conny-Catcher* (1592) and *The Blacke Bookes Messenger* (1592). They consist of technical accounts of various cony-catching activities, 'foisting' (picking pockets), 'prigging' (stealing horses) and 'cros-biting' (entrapment by prostitutes) for example, accompanied by 'merry' anecdotes which illustrate these and other criminal acts. These pamphlets also include, to a much lesser degree than in the other works I discuss, Greene's engagement with rhetoric and his predilection for creating articulate female characters.

In his dedicatory epistle to *The second part of Conny-Catching*, Greene mentions:

an objection, that some inferred against me, which was, that I shewed no eloquent phrases, nor fine figurative conveiance in my first booke as I had done in other of my workes: to which I reply that *το πρεπον*, a certaine decorum is to bee kept in everie thing, and not to applie a high stile in a base subject.⁷⁷⁶

The significance here is Greene's thoughtful relation of language to subject and, more importantly, the fact that both he and his readers share an appreciation of the attractiveness of the 'eloquent' phrases of the 'high stile' in his earlier works.

A disputation Between a Hee and Shee Conny-Catcher is a travesty of a university disputation in which Nan, a whore, and Laurence, a foist, debate 'whether a theefe or a whore, is most hurtfull in cousonage, to the common-wealth'.⁷⁷⁷ They both take pride in the harm they cause, but Greene manages to make them entertaining rather than contemptible, nonetheless. Nan is as brazen and witty as the other courtesans who figure regularly in Greene's narratives as foils to the virtuous heroines. Her self-confidence is such that when Laurence asks, in accordance with the rules of a university diputation, 'who shall be moderater in our controversies?' she boldly replies, 'Trust me Laurence I am so assured of the conquest offeeing ['affying' i.e. 'trusting'] so in the strength of mine owne arguments, that when I have reasoned, I will referre it to your judgement and censure.'⁷⁷⁸ Her superiority will be so self-evident that there is no danger of Laurence giving a biased judgement.

At the end of the debate, during the course of which, like Cambridge undergraduates, they have challenged each other's definitions and evidence, Laurence feels obliged to admit, 'I know not where to touch you you are so wittie in your

⁷⁷⁶ Robert Greene, *The second part of conny-catching*, (1591), Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12281.

⁷⁷⁷ Robert Greene, *A disputation, betweene a hee conny-catcher, and a shee conny-catcher whether a theefe or a whore, is most hurtfull in cousonage, to the common-wealth*, (1592), Title page, Henry E. Huntington Library copy, EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12234.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid. sig. A4ii.

answers,⁷⁷⁹ and he concedes that, 'I shall bee faine to give you the bucklars ['admit your victory']'.⁷⁸⁰ She has driven the debate and deserves, like all of Greene's other articulate female protagonists whose arguments carry the day, his description of her as, 'This good Oratresse'.⁷⁸¹ Nan's part in the narrative ends when Laurence invites her to a friendly supper at his expense. We, as readers, have been led, like Laurence, to admire Nan's cony-catching skills and sheer effrontery. Once she is out of the picture, about half-way through the pamphlet, Greene recollects himself and shakes off his relish at describing something he should abhor. The second half of the work echoes the strict moral teaching of the conclusions to the other 'Repentance' pamphlets. We are given the story of *The Conversion of an English Courtizan* which includes a warning of the dangers of 'dissolute pamphlets' which encourage lust.⁷⁸² Here we have yet another example of the mixed messages to be found in Greene's later works.

Having said that we should take heed of Greene's own words, I shall end this study with two of his most apposite self-judgements. In *Greene's Mourning Garment* he says 'I may terme myself a writer, though an unskilfull indighter'.⁷⁸³ What is significant here is his characterization of himself as a man who writes for a living. This is what he does and what he *is*. His dismissive view of the quality of his literary productions is not one we should take seriously in the light of what Chaucer says of him in *Greenes vision*. In this work, the elder poet's words encapsulate what Greene would really like to believe about himself. Chaucer says: 'Thou hast done Scholler-

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid. sig. C2ii.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid. sig. C3i.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid. sig. C4ii.

⁷⁸² Ibid. sig. D3ii.

⁷⁸³ Robert Greene, *Greenes Mourning Garment*, (1590), Henry E. Huntington Library copy (1616), EEBO STC (2nd ed.) / 12252, sig. K3i. The Cambridge University copy of the (presumably) first edition of 1590 lacks the last few pages in which this quotation appears.

like, in setting fourth thy pamphlets, and shalt have perpetual fame, which is learnings due for thy endeavour.' These words reflect the concern of 'university wits' such as Greene that their appearance in print might be an irretrievably demeaning act. From a distance of 450 years, the purpose of this study has been to establish just how 'Scholler-like' Greene's pamphlets are. And as for 'perpetual fame', he need not have worried.

APPENDICES

and

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX 1

Extracts from H.W. Saunders' transcription of sections of the 1566 Ordinances of Norwich Grammar School (*Norwich Corporation Assembly book of Proceedings, 1553-1583*, ref: NCR Case 16d/3 f. 129r-131v. concerning the Free School Statutes and Norwich Grammar School) as published in *A History of the Norwich Grammar School* (Norwich: Jarrold & Sons, 1932), a)pp. 150-1

'The daily Exercise of the Schollers

'Imprimis the Schollers of the first fourme shall daily lerne withowt booke som pt of the Accidens or gramer sett furth by the Quenis Maiestie also shall wright one copie or Example every daie for the better Exercise of their handes.

'Itm the Schollers of the second fourme shall dailye saie in the morning withowt booke som one part of speeche in stedd of their part, to the Ussher or in his absence to the high Mr. And at after noone som part of the gramer Rules at the discreesson of the seid Mr or Ussher, Also they shall lerne dailie one lecture withowt booke and constre to wisdom Ludovicus Vives or souche like Author at the appointment of the high Mr and som of them shall weekly by cours instruct the first fourme bothe in their Accidence and also in gyvying them copies to wright as they are placed by the high Mr in their senioritye And every ffridaie they shall Render all their lessons for that week in the forenoone of the same daie And after noone all their gramer Rules.

'And on Saterdaie in the forenoone their prt ended they shall tourne certayne Inglisshes into Latyn at the discreesson of the high Mr or Ussher wch they shall write in some fayer paper booke and con them withowt booke ageynst Mondaye then next following.

'Itm the Schollers of the thred fourme shall dayly saie a parte in the morning as is aforesaid and allso their gramer Rules in the after noone as afore, And at the appointent of the high Mr they shall lerne one Lecture daily withowt booke and constre and parce the same of Epitome Colloquiorum Ersmi or confabulaciones pueriles or some souche other Author accoriding to their capacities And every one of the saide third fourme shall weekly read the Lecture to them of the Second fourme as they shalbe placed in their Senioritie by the high Mr and also shall teache them to parce the same They shall daily read some of the Rules of Sintaxis sett furth in the Englisshe Accidence and daily tourne some Englisshe into Latyn.

And because the fourth, fifth and ye sixt fourmes are oft specially Reserved to the Instrucon and government of the HeadMaster we have thought good to pscribe unto him no certeyn exercise but to leave it wholly to his good consideracon So that in convenient tyme the Schollers of these fourmes may growe to the pfet understanding of all the partes of

gramer So as they maye be able to varye one Sentens diversely to make a verse exactly to Endight an Epistle Eloquently and Lersedly to declayme of a Theame simple and last of all that they may atteyne to some competent knowledge in the greeke tounge.

Item the high Mr shall yerly appoint betwixt Hallowmas & Christmas some lersed dyalog and comedie or twoo comedies at the least to be lersed withowt booke by the seid Schollers so as they maye be able to playe the same at Christmas following at the appointment of Mr. Mayor. And for the better accomplishment herof the cittie shall beare the chardges of the Apparell in that behalf requisite.

Item all and singular the Schollers of the seid Schoole shalbe psent and stonde in comonly araye at the seid Schoole the daie that Mr Mayor newelect Repayreth unto Christes Church and so to the hall to take his oth And some of the seid Schollers appointed by the mr for that purpose shall make a pitthe and short oracon in Latyn commending Justice and Obedyence or souche like matter at the discessyon of the seid Mr And evry Scholler of the seid Schoole that can make verses shall ageynst the same daie have in readynes syxe verses at the least subscribed with his name, wch shalbe affixed upon the West dore of the cathedral church against the Retourne of the seid Mayor. And if eny of the seid Schollers be negligent in that behalf or be not psent as if aforesaid Then he shalbe poonished at the discession of the Head Mr Except he have souche reasonable Excuse as the seid Mr shall allowe.

b)pp. 147-8

Of Authors to be Redd in the Schoole.

The high Mr shall read to the highest fourme these greke Authors

Grammaticum Ceporini	Dialogos Luciani
Novum Testamentum	Hesiodum
Cebetis Tabulas	Homerum
Aesopi fabulas	Euripidem

And for the Latyn tounge eny of the Authors

	Vergilium.
	Ovidii metamorposin.
Of Poetes	Horatium.
	Iuvenalem.
	Pertium.
	Tullium ad Herennium.
Of Oratours	Quintilianum.
	Aphthonii Progymnasmata.
Of Historio-	Comentarios Caesaris.

graphers	Salustium Valerium maximum
Of other books of Humanitie (promiscue)	Officia Ciceronis or eny pt of his philosophie. Eiusdem orations. Epistolas familiars eiusdem. Epistolas ad Atticum.
Of Gramarians	Thomam linacrum de figures. Gulaterum de ratione carminum. Erasmus De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia verborum et rerum.

‘Notwthstanding this pticuler nominacyon of som Authors yet the high Mr
shalbe at his libertie to appoint eny other Authors at his discession to be redd wthin the seid
Schoole whose stile is pure & eloquent and matter chast and honest.’

APPENDIX 2

A Selection of the More Common Rhetorical Devices Cited and Explained by Erasmus in His *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia* and by Thomas Wilson in his *Arte of Rhetorique* and Employed by Robert Greene in his Prose Works
(W)=Wilson who quite often says a usage is too self-evident to need an example

Rhetorical Device	Definition (If not provided by Erasmus or Wilson)	Erasmus's or Wilson's Definition (If provided)	Erasmus's or Wilson's example or note	Notes
Abominatio	Criticism		'He is a man of unusual vanity.'	
Acclamatio		'A climax in the form of an exclamation at the end of a narration or proof.'	Also known as Epiphonema . 'Do you want me to tell you what you are? You are a great busybody.'	Often used by Greene to end orations.
Accumulatio		'Heaping up of words and likewise of significant sententiae.'	'There was the jailer, the executioner of the praetor, the death and terror of the allies and the Roman citizens, the lictor Sextius.'	
Admiratio	Praise.		'Ye gods, how he loves money.'	This is Erasmus's only example and it is obviously ironic.
Aequipollentia		'The addition, doubling or taking away of a negative.'	'He holds first place, he is not among the last.'	
Allegoria		'A continuous metaphor'	'He would scuttle the ship in which he himself sails.'	
Antonomasia		'Change of name.'	'Which the Impious left hanging in the chamber. He [Vergil] used the Impious for Aeneas.'	
Apologue	A fable.		'The apologues under the name of Aesop are especially celebrated.'	
Apostrophe		'When we address an oration to some person or to some thing as though to a person.'	'Cursed thirst of gold, to what do you not force the hearts of men?'	Greene frequently uses this device to enable his characters to display and

				explore their feelings.
Asyndeton	Omission of conjunctions.			
Auxesis		‘When we put in place of an appropriate word a stronger one.’	‘When we say of one who has been slain, that he has been slaughtered.’	
Collatio	An extended metaphor.	.	‘Just as iron glows fiery with flame, so his whole countenance was inflamed with wrath.’	
Commemoratio		An example of ‘a deed done’.		
Comparatio		‘Points out that something which has been introduced is either equal or less or greater.’	‘If cities have been overturned because of a profaned marriage, what is fitting treatment for an adulterer?’	
Conciliatio (W)		We ‘make meanes by praier to winne favour.’	‘Through your help my Lords, this good deede hath bin done.’	
Constructio		‘Some variety of speech likewise comes from syntax or proper construction.’	‘He drank the whole night long, he drank throughout the night.’	Greene adapts syntax and word order to create particular effects, but Erasmus’s examples do not relate to English grammar, of course..
Contentio		‘There is also a kind of general contentio , especially in the demonstrative type, when for the sake of praise or censure we contrast one person with another.’	‘In order to praise Julius, the Roman pontiff, one might contrast him with Caius Julius Caesar and compare the good deeds of the former with those of the latter.’	Erasmus does not make much of this particular device and offers only a limited definition although it figures hugely in the writings of Lyly and Greene. Sonnino’s alternative name, Antitheton , or antithesis, gives a clearer indication of the particular use made of it by these two English writers, for example.

Contentio (W) (Antitheton)		‘Contrarietie’ ‘When our talk standeth by contrary words or sentences together.’	‘to his frend he is churlish, to his foe he is gentle.’	The definition and the example are taken directly from Susenbrotus.
Correctio	Pointing out an error.		‘Not a thief, but a brigand.’	
Delectatio		‘Appeals to emotion.’	‘Who does not read with pleasure Homer’s account of how Andromache ran to meet Hector.’	
Digressio		‘A discussion departing from the main subject.’	‘The famous recital of the virtues of Gnaeus Pompey in Cicero’s <i>For L. Cornelius</i> in which the divine orator...digresses abruptly from the speech.’	
Diminutio	Understatement.		‘touched’ for ‘struck’	
Dissimile	Contrast.		‘Brutus slew his sons for plotting treachery; Manlius punished the bravery of his son by death.’	Clearly this is very like sententia .
Divisio		‘The threshold of the argument as it were, where we explain briefly, in what order we are going to say what.’		
Dubitatio	‘An expression of uncertainty.’		‘I do not know whether he despises gods or men more.’	
Effictio		‘Description of personal appearance.’	‘As Homer described Thersites.’	
Epiphonema		‘A climax in the form of an exclamation at the end of a narration or proof.’	‘Does the speech, then, of those very men whose freedom from punishment is your title to clemency spur you on to cruelty?’ ‘Not every epiphonema is necessarily a sententia , although it generally is, but anything that subtly added at the close of a period, strikes the ear, can be called an epiphonema .’	Erasmus treats acclamatio and epiphonema as identical, the first being from Quintilian and the other from the Greek.
Epithet	As in the modern usage.			Erasmus often uses this word, but never

				defines it. His assumption must be that its meaning is too obvious.
Evidentia		‘For the sake of amplifying, adorning or pleasing...the description of things, times, places, and persons.’	‘As when in Euripides’ <i>Hecuba</i> , Talthybius relates to Hecuba how Polyxena was slain.’	
Execratio (W)		‘Sometimes we curse the extreme wickednesse of some past good Roisters.’		
Exclamatio (W)		‘when with voice we make an exclamation.’	‘O worlde, O life, O maners of men?’	
Exemplum	The citing of examples from a wide range of sources by way of proof.	‘Most powerful for proof, and therefore for copia, is the force of exempla .’	‘These are employed either as similes, or <i>dissimilia</i> , or contraries.’	
Expolitio		‘The name given to the device whereby we dwell a long time on the same point, varying the same sententia in different ways.’	‘The most copious expolitio consists of seven parts: general statement, reason, double sententia , to which a reason also double can be added, contrarium , simile , exemplum , conclusion .’	
Extenuatio (W)		‘We make our doings appeare lesse, when with words we extenuate and lessen the same.’		
Fabula		‘Fabulous exempla.’	‘In the case of those that are wholly lacking in credibility, it is well to have a preface, unless we are joking, to the effect that they were composed with good reason by the wisest men of olden time.’	
Fictio	Propositions of the ‘What if..’ kind		‘Suppose that Clodius was treacherously killed by Milo...’ ‘Granted that it may be fitting, permissible...’	
Geminatio Verborum (W)		‘Doublettes is when we rehearse one and the same worde twice together.’	‘Ah wretche, wretche, that I am.’	
Incrementum		‘When by several steps not only is a climax reached, but sometimes,	‘It is an offence to fetter a Roman citizen, a crime to	

		in some way, a point beyond the climax.'	flog him, treason to kill him, what shall I say it is to crucify him?' 'The opposite of this is comparatio . For as incrementum looks to something higher, so comparatio seeks to rise from something lesser. Moreover, comparatio employs either a hypothetical or actual exemplum .'	
Inductio	Leading a reader or auditor to a particular conclusion.		'In this type the Platonic Socrates is very rich.'	Erasmus looks at the way that the use of particular exempla can be used to guide a reader's response.
Intellectio		' Synecdoche '	'We understand one thing from another, as when from one we understand many.' 'The defeated Carthaginian.' Iron for sword; fir or pine for ship.'	
Interpretatio	Synonyms for the sake of variety.		'He went away, he broke out, he departed, he escaped.' 'Horace rightly enjoins: Let the thought move quickly/Lest it encumber weary ears.'	
Iracundia (W)		'We will take the matter as hot as a toste.'		
Iteratio		' Iteratio serves to convey an appeal to the emotions and some variety lightens the tedium of repetition.'	'Does he survive and breathe the upper air,/Nor yet lie dead in the cruel shadows?'	Erasmus does not believe in the use of synonyms simply for display
Judicia		'The sententiae of famous writers, of peoples, of wise men or renowned poets of antiquity, and also from historians, from philosophers, and from private letters.'		
Laesio (W)		'Sometimes we speake to hurt our adversaries, by		

		setting forth their evil behaviour.'		
Metaphor	As in the modern usage.	'Metaphor, which is called translatio (transference) in Latin because it transfers a word from its real and proper meaning to one not its own.	'As if one should say that a man of odious and fatuous loquacity brayed, or bleated, or grunted.' 'And now every field, every tree is in labour.'	Erasmus provides many subtle categories of metaphor, as from the irrational to the rational or the animate to the inanimate. See across for examples of these two.
Metonymy		'The change of a name.'	'Season most pleasing to heaven, i.e. to the heavenly ones.' "He tasted the old man," i.e., the money of the old man.'	
Notatio		'When we describe any thing by certain of its distinctive features.'	' Notatio is the name of these character sketches of a voluptuous lover, a miser, a glutton, a drunkard, a sluggard, a garrulous person, a braggart, a show off, an envious person, a sycophant, a parasite or a pimp.	
Onomatopoeia		'The coining of a name.'	'Of this type are tarantara for the song of a bugle, hissing, murmur, rumbling.' Paragoge , i.e., the development and derivation of new words by analogy, belongs in the same class.'	Erasmus's comments are on the sounds and coinings of Latin and are therefore not directly applicable to English, 'scripturire' being coined following the example of 'esurire', for example. Greene and his fellow Elizabethan writers certainly followed the spirit of this particular device and found plenty of opportunities for its

				application in English.
Optation (sic) (W)		‘Sometimes we wish unto God for redresse of evill.’		
Periphrasis		‘If the antonomasia includes very many words it will be periphrasis which some call circuitio .’	‘If someone should say destroyer of Carthage and Numantia for Scipio; or as Horace said, author of the <i>Trojan Wars</i> for Homer.’	
Polysyndeton	Repetition of conjunctions.			
Propositions		‘Rhetorical propositions for the proof of which arguments must be offered.’	‘Although general propositions can be devised according to the nature of the case, specific ones must come from a diligent consideration of the circumstances of the case.’	
Prosopographia		‘A sort of personification’	‘The figures of virtue and pleasure’	These abstractions are to be distinguished from notatio where actual human figures (albeit types) are described
Prosopopoeia		‘Description of persons’		
Purgatorio (W)		‘Sometimes we excuse a fault, and accuse the reporters.’		
Rogatio (W)		‘By asking other, and answering to the question ourself, we much commend the matter, and make it appear very pleasaunt.’		
Sententia	A maxim.		‘There are, moreover, various kinds of sententiae . Some are universal in application, as: Envy is its own punishment. Others are not suitable unless related to a subject, as: Nothing is so popular as kindness. There are others which refer to a person, as: The prince who wishes to know all things must ignore many.’	Erasmus has a great deal to say about the many kinds of sententiae . Greene makes extensive use of this device.

Synonymia		‘Words which, although they are different, express exactly the same thought.’	‘Nor will it be sufficient to have prepared an abundant supply and rich store of such words unless you have them not only ready, but in sight, so that even without being sought they may come instantly to mind.’	
Subjectio	An incredulous description of an adversary followed by the truth.		‘Genius? But you were surely born stupid.’ ‘Beauty? But you are uglier than Thersites himself.’	
Superlatio		‘ Hyperbole ...which some have named superlatio .’	‘He could split the very rocks by his eloquence.’	
Synecdoche (Intellectio)		We understand one thing from another, as when from one we understand many.’	‘The Roman victor in battle.’ ‘roof for house’	
Topographia		Descriptions ‘of actual places’	‘Frequently they are used as introductions to narrations.’	
Topothesia		Descriptions of ‘fictional’ places.		
Zeugma		‘When one word modifies several expressions.’	‘With either disease or age beauty withers.’	

APPENDIX 3

A Table and Analysis of the Orations in Mamillia Part 1

Speaker	The Divisions of the Oration	Folios
Pharicles declares his love for Mamillia.	Discussed in the body of the text	
Mamillia's response	Discussed in the body of the text	
Pharicles's response to his rejection	<p>Exordium – ‘Gentlewoman.’ Having been rebuffed, he deems it necessary to be even more polite and uses her status rather than her name.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘in that my arrival...your Muses.’ He is relieved that he has not disturbed her reading. He is clinging on to a very small positive in her words and flatteringly describes her reading as ‘Muses’.</p> <p>Divisio - ‘I thinke my fault so much the lesse.’ Although he has been dismissed, he needs to convince her that he is not at fault.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘but if I had known...into liccur.’ His eagerness to please her and his desperation are shown in his declaration that his love is such that he would have stayed away if he had known it would please her. The contradiction is repeated in the two pairs of opposites drawn from Nature. The relation of these exempla to his own feelings or those of Mamillia is unclear, a clear reflection of his floundering.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘As for my juggling...my desert.’ He uses sophistry in an attempt to turn her criticisms into praise.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘Thus...take my leave.’ A welter of images drawn from commerce. He hopes to be able to make up for ‘selling my freedom’ by finding the appropriate ‘coyne’ [words] to buy the ‘chaffer’ [Mamillia].</p>	4i
Mamillia's apostrophe concerning her feelings for Pharicles	Discussed in the body of the text.	4ii-5ii
Pharicles' apostrophe concerning his feelings for Mamillia.	<p>Exordium – The usual self-pitying repetition of his name because life is treating him so unkindly.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘now thou findest it true...resisteth his operation.’ He has learnt the dangers of being impetuous in love because he has been burnt. There is an overlap between the Narratio and the Divisio.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘that though the face...to coole desire.’ He wonders how he can suppress his feelings.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘But Pharicles...for a foole.’ He believes that his current distress is how own fault. He is being paid back for his previous inappropriate attitude to women.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘Why, Pharicles...crased conscience.’ He refutes the idea that he is to blame, and convinces himself that he has no reason to reproach himself regarding his behaviour.</p> <p>Interim Conclusio – ‘Mamillia, yea...the dead carcassee.’ He accepts that he must love Mamillia. He dwells on her beauty. This interim Conclusio becomes the Divisio of a new oration.</p> <p>‘Ah Pharicles is the foundation...her feature.’ The question is: does he love her for her beauty only.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘Consider with thy selfe...river Orme.’ He persuades himself that beauty is too dangerous.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘What Pharicles, wilt thou...a beautiful body.’ He castigates himself for ever disparaging beauty.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘Therefore Pharicles, recant...I wil cast at all.’ This is one of Greene's longest conclusions. It progresses in stages: he will recant; he will not delay; he is finally resolved; he will do what Nature calls him to do. The length of the conclusion confirms his passion for</p>	6i-7ii

	Mamillia, but also the shallowness of the man because it is all hot air and his head is soon turned by Publia.	
Florion's letter to Mamillia urging a virginal life	<p>Exordium - 'Mistresse Mamillia...'</p> <p>Narratio - 'the extreame pleasure...' He is pleased to hear that she has moved from Venice to Padua.</p> <p>Divisio - 'judging you to be wise...' He supposes that she has moved in order to avoid the temptations of pleasure.</p> <p>Confirmatio - 'The courtly life...' He is pleased that she <u>is</u> apparently avoiding these temptations.</p> <p>Confutatio (long) - 'Yea but the gold...' But would it have been better for her to have had her virtue tested in a more dangerous place?</p> <p>(Interim) Conclusio - 'So that in as much as virginity...' She is better away from the dangerous Venetian court.</p> <p>Narratio 2 - 'But I heare thou art...' She is receiving proposals of marriage at her father's house in Padua.</p> <p>Divisio 2 - 'take both heede and time...' The question of how she is to respond to proposals of marriage.</p> <p>Confirmatio 2 - 'Respect not his beauty...' She must beware of the allurements of beauty, wealth, rank and infatuation.</p> <p>Confutatio 2 - 'but why do I deale so doulitishly...' He has no need to offer advice to such a virtuous woman.</p> <p>Conclusio 2 - 'Therefore least I should be tedious...' He can trust her discretion.</p>	8i-9i
Castilla tries to persuade Mamillia to look favourably on Pharicles.	<p>Exordium - 'Mistresse Mamillia, the content of your friend Florions letter...' This is an 'insinuation' which is strategically very long as 'if she should have abruptly sifted her, her device should be spied.'</p> <p>Narratio - 'Florion, Mamillia, writeth to you of marriage.'</p> <p>Divisio - 'as nothing is more commendable than virginite: so nothing is more honourable than matrimonie.' She has been asked by Mamillia's father Gonzaga to sound out his daughter's feelings about Pharicles. She starts off by arguing in favour of marriage in general without actually naming Pharicles.</p> <p>Confirmatio - 'And I my selfe,...' She stresses the fruitfulness of marriage and the sterility of virginity.</p> <p>Confutatio (tellingly brief) - 'But as I do perswade...' However, Mamillia should not marry a man likely to impose 'bondage' on her.</p> <p>(Interim) Conclusio - 'Now Mamillia, as I have spoken in general...' She has proved that marriage is desirable and is now ready to name Pharicles.</p> <p>Narratio 2 - 'Pharicles it is...' Finally he is named as a suitable match and his high reputation in Venice stressed.</p> <p>Divisio 2 - 'thee, Mamillia, I wish to be his mate...' Castilla now has to convince Mamillia of Pharicles's suitability.</p> <p>Confirmatio 2 - 'The Gemme which is gallaunt in colour...' Pharicles is desirable because he is remarkable in appearance and in his inner qualities.</p> <p>Confutatio 2 - 'If the Ore...' If people and things which have an unprepossessing exterior but excellent inner qualities are valued, all the more reason for loving Pharicles.</p> <p>Conclusio 2 - 'Now, Mamillia, conster of my words...' Mamillia must decide whether Castilla has convinced her.</p>	9ii-11i

Mamillia's outraged response	<p>A disingenuous response which Mamillia has 'framed' because she does not wish to be thought too quick in liking Pharicles.</p> <p>Exordium – 'Madam...' Politeness through gritted teeth.</p> <p>Narratio – 'I stand in a mase...' She is astounded by what Castilla has just suggested.</p> <p>Divisio – 'For I may more muse...' The rumours concerning her possible marriage are false.</p> <p>Confirmatio – 'But if Florion have heard...' Reasons why the rumours cannot be taken seriously and why she should not marry. Florion has heard lies and Castilla is a credulous old woman to believe them.</p> <p>Confutatio – Castilla is contradicting everything she ever said to Mamillia in praise of virginity and therefore cannot be believed.</p> <p>(Interim) Conclusio – 'Therefore, Madame, your 332rguments...' Castilla's arguments have been the lustful fantasies of an old woman who should know better.</p> <p>Narratio 2 – 'but though the fowle...' An insulting comment that Castilla, like many old people, harbours youthful lust.</p> <p>Divisio 2 – 'I promise you for my parte...' Why Mamillia would be happier to see Castilla married than herself.</p> <p>Confirmatio 2 – 'if it be not a knot of bondage...' Mamillia rejects marriage as a form of bondage.</p> <p>Confutatio 2 – 'who so is addicted to maryage...' In contradiction to the above, marriage is only acceptable if it is with a 'good husband'. She concedes that Pharicles might 'in outward show' be such a man.</p> <p>Conclusio 2 – 'Therefore Madame...' Although she will remain a virgin 'yet', she would 'welcome' Pharicles if she changed her mind.</p>	11i-12ii
Castilla's angry reply	<p>An incomplete oration</p> <p>Exordium – 'Mamillia...'</p> <p>Narratio – 'so your hotte answere shewes...' Mamillia's angry response has revealed her true feelings.</p> <p>Divisio – 'yet of your choice...' Mamillia clearly now rejects virginity.</p> <p>Confirmatio – 'But the Foxe will eat no grapes...' Castilla suspects that Mamillia has already chosen a lover.</p> <p>There is no Confutatio because Castilla is so convinced of the truth.</p> <p>Conclusio – 'Mamillia, I will not make comparisons...' Castilla is reluctant to be specific but warns of the dangers of suppressing love.</p>	13i

Pharicles's speech when he escorts Mamillia on her way to visit a sick gentleman	<p>Exordium – ‘Gentlewoman, if I boldly...’ A very courteous and careful salutation. He does not use her name.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘offer my selfe...’ He offers to accompany Mamillia and Castilla.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘pardon my fault...’ Is he being too forward?</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘but let your bewtie...’ Her beauty is to blame for his action, not his own forwardness.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘<u>But</u> if any use...’ He refutes the idea that his address is too forward.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘but perhaps...’ He dreads that she may reject him after all.</p>	14i
Castilla's response	<p>An incomplete oration.</p> <p>Exordium – ‘Gentleman...’</p> <p>Narratio – ‘we neither can thinke ill...’ Their view of his character up to this point. His unexpected arrival.</p> <p>Confirmatio –</p> <p>There is no Confutatio because Castilla is anxious to encourage the relationship.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘<u>therefore</u> if you be content...’ It is a happy encounter for all of them.</p>	14ii
Pharicles reaffirms his love for Mamillia	<p>(Long) Exordium – ‘Mistres Mamillia...’ He is wary of her now. A long preamble about being full of emotion and hardly able to voice it.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘Therefore I (Mistress Mamillia)...’ they are not well acquainted and he has no credit with her.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘but only that...’ He wishes to prove his love.</p> <p>Confirmatio – Her beauty has bewitched, he is her slave and he pleads for mercy.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘<u>But</u> perhaps you will say...’ He refutes the idea that falling in love with her is his own fault and that his love and loyalty are unworthy of being returned.</p> <p>(Interim) Conclusio – ‘And <u>therefore</u> I hope that...’ He trusts that she will believe him. This becomes the Divisio of the second part of the oration.</p> <p>Confirmatio2 – ‘What though...’ Using pairs of contrasted natural objects, the short-lived and the long-lasting, he swears his undying love.</p> <p>Confutatio2 – ‘<u>but</u> alas, who can lay their love...’ He refutes any argument that he is undeserving. The perfection of his love outweighs any weaknesses.</p> <p>Conclusio2 – ‘<u>therefore</u> sith in you...’ She is his only hope of safety and must take pity on him.</p>	14ii-16i
Mamillia's response	<p>Exordium – ‘Syr...’ General comments on the dangers of being persuaded too easily.</p> <p>(Long) Narratio – ‘yet I would wish you...’ Her current position regarding love.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘Blame me not, Pharicles...’ Why she should not be condemned for being so suspicious.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘a woman may knit a knot...’ Her reasons for not accepting him: the dangers of a hasty decision; she is determined to remain a virgin; many women have regretted marrying.</p>	16i-17ii

	<p>(Interim) Conclusio – ‘sith therefore...’ She is right to be wary of marriage. The interim <i>Conclusio</i> becomes Divisio2 which repeats the topic of the first Divisio, the justification for her wariness.</p> <p>Confirmatio2 – ‘for if I were minded to marry...’ The ‘if’ is very significant. Her reasons for not marrying: she cannot trust men because they are so false and disloyal in contrast to women.</p> <p>Confutatio2 – ‘Well Pharicles, although I cast all these doubts...’ A complete <i>volte face</i>. She sweeps aside all her earlier arguments and declares her love for him.</p> <p>Conclusio2 – ‘be thou but Theagenes(a reference to the <i>Aethiopica</i>...’ She trusts his good faith and swears to be his.</p>	
Pharicles’s response to this declaration of love.	<p>Exordium – ‘Mamillia,’ He calls her simply by her name now.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘if where the water standeth...’ General comments and analogues on the theme of passion too deep for words.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘so that as the heart...’ He relates these observations to himself. He cannot express his feelings.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘Publius Metellius hearing his sonne...’ <i>Exempla</i> proving his point. She will have to ‘conjecture’ his feelings because he is too overcome.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘<u>But</u> this by the way...’ But he can say this, that she has him for ever.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘<u>Thus</u> enveighed...’ He repeats that he is forever hers.</p>	18i
Publia’s apostrophe after she has met Pharicles. She is Mamillia’s cousin.	<p>Exordium – ‘O unhappy fortune...’ She laments what Fortune has done to her.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘hath Publia prepared a banquet...’ She is utterly smitten by Pharicles’s beauty.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘Alas what shall I doe...’ A series of desperate questions as to how she should proceed.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘Ah Publia, consider thy state...’ She should give in to her love because it cannot be resisted, even by the gods.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘<u>Yea but</u> how if his heart...’ He may already love another. It is better to suffer a little now and avoid greater hurt later.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘<u>Then</u> Publia, <u>sith</u> Pharicles...’ She decides both to love Pharicles and to wait and see.</p>	19i- 19ii
Gostino explains to Gonzaga the nature of his illness.	<p>An incomplete oration which lacks a confutation because it is not a debate but an explanation.</p> <p>Exordium – ‘Signior Gonzaga’</p> <p>Narratio – ‘either you are expert...’ Gonzaga has mistakenly diagnosed Gostino’s illness as love.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘for my disease...’ Why the cause of his sickness cannot be love.</p> <p>Confirmatio – He has already loved and lost his wife and will not love again.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘But now, sith you are all...’ As a distraction from his pain, he would like one of the company to explain what love is.</p>	20i
Pharicles’ disquisition on love		20ii- 23i
Pharicles’s farewell to Publia	<p>Exordium – ‘Gentlewoman’. A circumspect address.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘If I take my leave more boldly...’ He is leaving slowly and perhaps discourteously.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘impute the fault...’ The reason is her beauty and not his impudence.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘which so hath fired...’ Her beauty is so powerful it overcomes him and gives him hope.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘The traveller talking of hunger...’ He refutes any idea that it is not true love that he feels.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘<u>so that</u> by the charge...’ He is her servant whether she wants it or not.</p>	

Publia's reply	<p>In such a short oration, the elements overlap.</p> <p>Exordium – ‘Gentleman’</p> <p>Narratio – ‘Your boldnesse...’ He has been forward.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘the fault...’ The cause of his so-called boldness.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘As I cannot...’ It is neither his impudence nor her flattery.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘and therefore I thinke...’ So he must be driven by ‘vapours’.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘But sure I am content...’ He is free to visit her again to recant his error. The sooner the better.</p>	23ii
Publia's apostrophe on her love for Pharicles	<p>Exordium – ‘I see, quoth she...’ She addresses ‘Things unlooked for...’ like love which causes such great changes.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘for neither the feature...’ She is an avowed virgin who now finds herself giving in immediately to love.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘Alas, what will they say...’ This is long reflecting the enormity of what she might be about to do. Is she guilty of a sin and should she show more circumspection?</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘But I almost lyke...’ her rush into love is an indication of its uncontrollable power.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘yea but Publia, flatter not thy selfe...’ Things too soon begun rarely last.</p> <p>(Interim) Conclusio – ‘Take time and choice...’ She should take her time and choose carefully. This becomes:</p> <p>Divisio 2 – Should she take time and not be blinded by his handsome appearance?</p> <p>Confirmatio2 – ‘for nothing so soone...’ She agrees that she must be careful and look into his heart and not just his face.</p> <p>Confutatio2 – ‘Ah Publia,...’ She rejects any idea that Pharicles is not perfect.</p> <p>Conclusio2 – ‘so that <u>conclude</u>...’ Pharicles has to be the man for her.</p>	23ii- 24ii
Pharicles's apostrophe on his love for Publia.	<p>This parallels Publia's apostrophe but is far more melodramatic as he hurls himself onto his bed and dissolves into floods of tears. He is literally throwing himself into the role of the desperate lover, appearing hysterical and somewhat ridiculous. The rhetorical colouring displayed in orations in general is heightened to an absurd degree here, highlighting the insubstantial and evanescent nature of the emotions in which Pharicles wallows. As ever, he is the role player, even to himself.</p> <p>Exordium – ‘O Pharicles, Pharicles...’ A self-pitying repetition of his own name in contrast to Publia who does not mention herself at the beginning of her apostrophe.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘what a doubtfull combate...’ He is torn between his infatuation for Publia and his pledge given to Mamillia.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘shal the flickering assault...’ Which woman to choose? A list of heavily alliterated questions and antitheses.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘the Turtle chuseth, but never changeth...’ Exemplified from nature which urge him to be faithful to Mamillia. As a rational creature, he has more reason to be faithful.</p>	24ii- 25ii
Pharicles's letter to Publia	<p>This is not a standard oration. It contains an Exordium, Narratio, Divisio and Conclusio, but the body of the letter is not arranged as a contrasting Confirmatio and Confutatio although it consists of two parts.</p> <p>Exordium – ‘Publia’</p> <p>Narratio – ‘If the Gods...’ He has struggled in vain to control his feelings.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘hoping by submission...’ Will she show him favour?</p> <p>The body of the letter is in two sections, a comment on the ‘contrarieties’ of life, ‘blisse’ paired with ‘bale’. His use of the images</p>	27i- 27ii

	<p>of the bee and the fly are exactly the ones which Greene mentioned earlier as typical of flattering lovers, so this is an 'I told you so' on Greene's part. The second section, 'But although in this respect...' stresses in very melodramatic fashion the effect her beauty has had on him.</p> <p>Conclusio – 'Then Publia...' He begs for mercy.</p>	
Publia's letter to Pharicles	<p>She is experiencing sundry 'dumps' and the letter is a 'dumpe' too.</p> <p>Exordium – 'Maister Pharicles'. She is formal and distant.</p> <p>Narratio – 'your letters...then I would.' She is reluctant to reveal her feelings and describes her situation very ambiguously.</p> <p>Divisio – 'hoping both to profit and persuade you.' What she intends in the letter. The nature of the profit and persuasion is unclear.</p> <p>Confirmatio – 'Profit, I meane...unknown vessel.' She explains that he will profit when he abandons his insincere flattery. He should know that women are 'wily' and not only will see through deception but will warn other women to avoid the deceiver.</p> <p>Confutatio – 'well put case...you shall finde it.' She is softening and is willing to consider the possibility that he might be sincere. She denies giving him encouragement because she is dedicated to virginity.</p> <p>Conclusio – 'yet in fine...no farther.' She is much warmer. If ever she chances to love, it is as likely to be him she loves as any other. She accepts him as a friend.</p>	28i-28ii
Mamillia's response to Pharicles' excuse for his absence	<p>An incomplete oration</p> <p>Exordium – 'Pharicles'.</p> <p>Narratio – 'your answer...greater credit.' She believes his excuses.</p> <p>Divisio – 'for surely...repented your chaunce.' She was beginning to think he regretted asking her to marry him.</p> <p>Confirmatio – 'but now I am otherwise persuaded...his consent.' She repeats that she believes him and her father will want to see them married.</p> <p>There is no Confutatio because she is concentrating on their love and forthcoming marriage.</p> <p>Conclusio – 'The match I say...perfect amitie.' She looks forward to their marriage and future happiness.</p>	29i
Pharicles' response	<p>An incomplete oration.</p> <p>Exordium – 'Ah Mamillia.' The 'Ah' is meant to indicate his sincerity and his hurt that he might not be trusted.</p> <p>Divisio – 'doe you think...divine bewtie.' How could she possibly think he is not sincere? He denies having the 'trayterous heart' he is eventually seen to possess.</p> <p>Confirmatio – 'No, no, Mamillia...my protestations.' He dramatically swears he loves her.</p> <p>There is no Confutatio because he wants to avoid all mention of doubt.</p> <p>Conclusio – 'and the heavens...such disloyaltie.' May the gods smite him if he proves untrue.</p>	29i
Gonzaga, Mamillia's wily father, sounds out Pharicles.	<p>Exordium – 'Pharicles'. Simply his name. This is man to man.</p> <p>Narratio – 'the old fox...glad of it.' A list of <i>sententiae</i> on the subject of the inability of young people to hide secrets from the old. He has spotted that Pharicles is in love with Mamillia and is pleased.</p> <p>Divisio – 'As I have taken care...his birth and honesty.' The question is the kind of man he would like his daughter to marry. There must be love and worthy personal qualities.</p> <p>Confirmatio – 'rather wishing with...lack of nurture.' He reinforces his belief that marriage should be based on the personal qualities of the couple and not on money.</p> <p>Confutatio – 'So that Pharicles, ...without breaking.' He warns Pharicles against choosing a wife for any reason other than her virtue.</p> <p>Interim Conclusio – 'Surely Pharicles, I speake...is any profer.' Pharicles needs to know exactly where Gonzaga stands. Mamillia is not</p>	30i-31i

	<p>to be bought or sold; she must love her husband and her consent is as important as her father's.</p> <p>This leads directly into a second oration.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘For others...privy to it.’ Mamillia has had rich suitors whom Gonzaga rejected because she did not love them. He is ignorant of her current feelings.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘but if she doe...may be chaunged.’ The most important present consideration: is Mamillia in love and is Gonzaga prepared to give his consent this time?</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘for you knowe...to course of kinde.’ He explains why he is so suspicious when it comes to accepting a possible husband for Mamillia.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘For, Pharicles...little honesty.’ He argues against Pharicles as an appropriate husband because he suspects ‘dissimulation’. He accuses Pharicles of being typical of young men.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘Pharicles, I inferre...you must doe.’ Gonzaga’s senses tell him that Pharicles must either change or lose all hope of winning Mamillia.</p>	
Pharicles' response	<p>Exordium – ‘Sir.’ He needs to be very polite.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘as it is hard...then a cryple.’ Pharicles declares that his faults are plain for all to see, but he has always been honest in love.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘But I hope...I have your counsel.’ He hopes that Gonzaga will find him true. His imagery of the ‘cunning Pylot’ and the ‘good Chapman’ should alert readers to the fact that he is devious and always has an eye for the main chance.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘The Lyons whelp...able to move.’ He is entirely in accord with Gonzaga’s thoughts and will be guided by the latter’s wise counsel.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘Now I know...with rotten bones.’ A long list of <i>exempla</i> warning against the danger of being attracted by beauty alone.</p> <p>Interim Conclusio – ‘I therefore fearing...draught of spight.’ This is why he has only felt able to love women whose ‘qualities of mind’ he can admire.</p> <p>New Divisio – ‘This I say...unto your daughter.’ He focuses on a specific woman, Mamillia, and gives the reasons he loves her.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘because the fame...inchaunted me.’ He enumerates Mamillia’s fine qualities to explain why he fell in love with her.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘But why...you may do so.’ A self-righteous refutation of the unfair way others have judged him.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘for I call...her own for ever.’ He dramatically calls on God to witness the sincerity of his love for Mamillia.</p>	31ii-32ii
Pharicles' apostrophe when he cannot decide whether to choose Mamillia or Publia.	<p>Exordium – ‘o fickle love...O traitorous hart...O cursed conscience...wrapped in wickedness.’ This comes after the Narratio and is addressed to love and to himself as he thrashes about in confusion.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘Of al evil...the first dash.’ The terrible power of love both in general and on himself.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘shal I request...other so lightly?’ Whether to abandon Mamillia for Publia. A long list of questions addressed to himself.</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘it is a common saying...a heavy bargain.’ The many powerful reasons for remaining faithful to Mamillia.</p> <p>Confutatio – By far the longest section of the oration. ‘Tush, he that seekes...my troath to Publia.’ His reasons for not staying faithful to Mamillia. This is very melodramatic and self-pitying. He eventually, and ludicrously, convinces himself that he is driven by ‘destinie’ to love Publia ‘to some greater ende.’</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘Now have I surely...my new mistres.’ A long conclusion. He has chosen Publia and will contact her without delay.</p>	33i-35i

Pharicles' letter to Publia	<p>Exordium – ‘mistres Publia’. It is going to be a begging letter so he needs to be courteous.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘The phisition...my careful disease.’ Introductory material with numerous <i>exempla</i> relating to the idea of cures coming too late. This leads to the confession of his own situation; he is madly in love with her.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘Sith therfore Mistress Publia...in love again.’ She has complete power over him, but will she be just and love him in return?</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘And although...your first lines.’ The strength of his love and declaration of fidelity should convince her.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘<u>But</u> as I was never...won by conquest.’ He knows it may be a challenge for him to win her love, but he is determined.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘And that these words...denial unto death.’ He hopes the sincerity of his words will win her grace.</p>	35i-35ii
Publia's apostrophe after receiving Pharicles' letter	<p>Exordium – ‘Nature’ and later ‘fortune’ but the two names are embedded in the Narratio.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘Alas quoth she...to bondage and thraldom.’ This is extremely long. General remarks about the fact that Nature always ensures that any happiness or success is always cancelled out by unfortunate events. This leads to a consideration of love as a particular example of the above. Her own situation.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘and so I call it...under bewty.’ Can love be a form of bondage?</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘If I be a slave...in token of a sure trust.’ Love will enrich her life so it cannot be bondage. She will not repent. Her love is focused on Pharicles. She will answer his letter.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘<u>But</u> Publia, be not too forward...wary of her honesty.’ It will not be politic to appear to give in too easily.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘Therfore I wil send...to this effect.’ She will send him a letter containing mixed messages.</p>	35ii-36ii
Publia's letter to Pharicles.	<p>Exordium – ‘M. Pharicles.’ She is formal at first because she is going to pretend not to trust him.</p> <p>Narratio – ‘It is hard...fooles paradise cannot love.’ There are introductory <i>sententiae</i> and <i>exempla</i> on the subject of misapplied praise. Her own situation: she does not merit such expressions of desire. She is unwilling to believe him as men are dissemblers by nature.</p> <p>Divisio – ‘These things...surging seas of suspition.’ The question is, can she trust him?</p> <p>Confirmatio – ‘but that the secret good...forth by force.’ She loves him.</p> <p>Confutatio – ‘Think therfore Pharicles...giveth over the chase.’ She did not mean her sour words. They were only to test the sincerity of his declaration.</p> <p>Conclusio – ‘but sith you stood...as speedy as may be.’ Since he has passed the test, she is his for ever.</p>	36ii-37ii

APPENDIX 4

Three Orations from *Mamillia*

a) *Mamillia's* Apostrophe (*Mamillia Part 1*, fols. 4i - 5ii)

Ah *Mamillia*, what straunge alteration is this? What sodaine change, what rare chance? Shal they, who deemed thee a mirror of modestie, count thee a patterne of lightnes? Shal thy staied life be now compared to the *Camaeleon* that turneth himselfe into the likeness of every object: or likened to the Fullers Mill, which ever waxeth worse and worse: to the hearbe *Phanaces*, whose bud is sweete, and the fruite bitter: to the Ravens in *Arabia*, which being young have a pleasant voice, and in their age a horrible cry? Wilt thou consent unto lust, in hoping to love? shall *Cupid* claime thee for his captive, who even nowe wert vowed a Vestall virgin? Shal thy tender age be more virtuous then thy rype yeeres? Wilt thou verifie the Proverbe, a young Saint an olde Divell? What? shall the beauty of *Pharicles* enchant thy mynde, or or his filed speech bewitch thy senses? Wil not he thinke the castle wanteth but scaling, that yeeldeth at the first shot: and that the bulwarke wanted but batterie, that at the first parle becomes Prisoners? Yes, yes, *Mamillia*, his beauty argues inconstancy; and his filed phrases, deceite: and if he see thee woon with a worde, he will thinke thee lost with a wynde: he wil judge that is lightly to bee gained, is as quickly lost. The hawke that commeth at the first cal, wil never be stedfast on the stond: the Niesse that wil be reclaimed to the fist at the first sight of the lure, wil baite at every bush: the woman that wil love at the first looke, will never be charye of her choyse. Take heede, *Mamillia*, the finest scabberd hath not ever the bravest blade; nor the goodliest chest hath not the most gorgeous treasure: the bell with the best sound, hath an yron clapper: the fading apples of *Tantalus*, have a gallant shew, but if they be toucht, they turne to Ashes: so a faire face may have a foule minde: sweete words, a sower heart: yea rotten bones out of a paynted Sepulchre: for al is not gold that glysters. Why? but yet the Gem is chosen by his hue and the cloth by his colour: condemn not then *Mamillia*, before thou hast cause: accuse not so strictly, without tryall: search not so narrowly, till thou hast occasion of doubt. Yea but the Mariners sound at the first, for feare of a rocke: the surgeon searcheth betimes, for his surest prooffe: one forewit is worth two after: it is good to beware, when the act is done too late commeth repentance. What? is it the beautie of *Pharicles* that kindleth this flame? Who more beautiful than *Jason*? Yet who more false? for after *Medea* had yielded, he sackt the forte, and in lieu of her love, killed her with kindnesse. Is it his wit? who wiser then *Theseus*? yet none so traitorous. Beware *Mamillia*, I have heard them say, she that marries for beauty, for every dramme of pleasure, shall have a pound of sorrow. Choose by the eare, and not by the eye. *Pharicles* is fayre, so was *Paris*, and yet fickle: he is wittie, so was *Corsiris*, and yet wavering. No man knows the nature of the hearbe by the outward shew, but by the inward Juyce, and the operation consistes in the matter, and not in the forme. Yea but why doe I stay at a straw, and skip over a blocke? Why am I curious at a Gnat, and let passe an Elephant? his beauty is not it that moveth me, nor his wit the captayne which shall catch the castle, sith the one si momentary, and the other may be impayred by sicknesse. Thy faith and honestie, *Pharicles*, whereof all *Padua* speaketh, hath won my heart, and so shall weare it: they civility without dissimulation, thy faith without fayning, have made theyr breach by love, and shall have their entraunce by law. Wel, *Mamillia*, the common people may erre, and that which is spoken of many, is not ever true. Who so praysed in *Rome* of the common people and Senat, as *Jugurth*? yet a rebel. Who had more voyces in *Carthage* then *Aeneas*? yet tried a stragler: who in more credit with the Romaines then *Scipio Affricanus* the great? yet at length found halting. The Foxe wins the favour of the lambes by play, and then devoures them, so perhaps *Pharicles* shewes himselfe in outward shew a demi God, whereas who tries hin inwardely, shall finde him but a solemne Saint. Why? all *Padua* speakes of his honestie, yea but perchance he makes a virtue of his need, and so layes this baulmed hooke of fayned honesty

as a luring bayte to trappe some simple Dame. Why? can he be faithlesse to one, that have been faithfull to all? The cloth is never tried till it come to the wearing: and the linnen never shrinkes, till it comes to the wetting: so want of liberty to use his will, may make a restraint of his nature: and though hee use faith and honestie to make his marriage, yet she perhaps that shall try him, shall either finde he never had them, or quite forgot them. For the nature of men as I have heard say, is like the Amber stone, which will burne outwardly, and freese inwardly: and like the Barke of the Myrtle tree, which growes in the mountaynes in *Armenia*, that is, as hot as fire in the tast, and as colde as water in the operation. The dogge bytest sorest, when hee doeth not barke: the *Onix* is hottest when it looks white, the Sirens meane most mischief, when they sing: the Tyger then hideth his crabbed countenance, when he meaneth to take his pray: and a man doth most dissemble when he speakes fairest. Try then, *Mamillia*, ere thou trust; prove ere thou put in practice, cast the water ere thou appoint the medicine, doe all thinges with deliberation, goe as the snaile faire and softly, hast makes waste, the maulte is ever sweetest, where the fire is softest. Let no wit overcome wisdom, nor fancie bee repugnant to faith, let not the hope of an husbände be the hazard of thine honesty, cast not thy credite in the chance of another man, wade not too farre where the foorde is unknowen, rather bridle thy affections with reason, and mortifie thy mynde with modesty, that as thou hast kept thy virginitie inviolate without spot, so thy choyse may be without blemishe; know this, it is too late to call againe yesterday. Therefore keepe the memory of *Pharicles* as needful, and yet not necessary: like him when thou shalt have occasion to love; and love when thou hast tried him loyall: until then, remaine indifferent.

b) Clarynda's Apostrophe (*Mamillia Part 2* pp. 29-33)

O unjust Gods, quoth shee, which have indued brute beastes with greater perfection in their kinde than reasonable creatures: The Garlicke killeth the Serpent, and she by instinct of nature escheweth the same. The juice of hemlocke poysoneth the beare and what more abhorred? The grease of the snayle infecteth the ape, and what more loathed? Yea every creature shunneth the occasion of danger, man only excepted, which seeketh with pursuit to obtaine that which breedeth his confusion: what bruiseth the brain? what mazeth the minde? what weakeneth the wit? what breedeth feare? what bringeth frenzie? what soweth sorrowe? what reapeeth care more than love? and yet the onely thing wherein man delighteth. The byrd loving the woodes loatheth the nets, the hare liking the lawnes hateth the snares: But man placing his felicitie in freedome, taketh greatest care to cast himselfe into perpetuall bondage.

O *Clarinda*, would to God thou mightest accuse others and be free thy selfe from this follie: but alas thou doest condemne others of that cryme wherein thou thy selfe deserves greatest blame: Wilt thou now fond foole become a professed friend to affection, which hast alwayes beene a protested foe to fancie? wilt thou now suffer thy minde to be noused up in captivitie, which hath alwaies been noursed up in libertie? Thou hast counselled others to beware of the traine, and wilt thou now thy selfe be taken in the trappe? thou hast boasted that thou couldest both like and loath at thine owne pleasure, and shall thy brags now bee daunted with disgrace? wilt thou now prove such a coward to yeelde to the file, to stoope at the stampe, to give over the field before there be a stroake stroken, yea and to such a cruell tyrant as love is? It is a saying not so common as true, that shee which soweth all her love in an houre, shall not reape all her care in a yeare, that shee which liketh without remembrance shall not live without repentaunce. So then *Clarynda* be wise, since thou art warned, looke before thou leapest: there is no better defence against daunger than to consider the ende of thine enterprise. Thou art intangled with the love of a stranger, who perhaps hath his heart fixed on some other place, thou hast fondly set thine affection upon one whose wealth, wit, and conditions, thou only knowest by the flattering report of fame: he is in outward shewe a Saint, and perhappes in inward mind a serpent, for his person a paragon of beauty, for his conditions since he sojourned in *Saragossa* most highlie to bee commended: yea so perfect in substance and qualitie as he may in no respect be approached of want: why? but *Clarynda*, fame is not alwaies true, and the bravest bloome hath not alwayes the best fruite: those birdes which sing sweetest, have oftentimes the sowrest flesh, the ryver *Silia* is most pleasant to the eye and yet most hurtful to the stomacke, the stone *Nememphis* is not so delicate without, as deadly within, all that glisters is not golde. *Pharicles* (*Clarynda*) for all his pompous fame of perfect conditions may bee a parasiticall flatterer of most imperfect conversation. Who was more curteous than *Conon* the *Athenian*? and yet a verie counterfeite; who more gentle than *Galba* in the shewe? yet none more treacherous in prooffe; *Ulisses* had a faire tongue but a false heart, *Metellus* was modest but yet mutable; the cloath is not knowne till it come to the weeting, nor a lovers qualities perceived till he come to the wearing. Well *Clarinda*, although it is good to doubt the worst, yet suppose the best: he is constant, trustie, not vain-glorious nor wedded unto vanitie, but a protested foe to vice and a professed friend to vertue: Alas fond foole! If thou wey thy case in the equall balance, the greater is thy care and the more is thy miserie, for by how much the more he him selfe is vertuous, so much the lesse hee will esteeme thee which art vicious; doest thou thinke he which is trustie wil regard thee which art trothlesse? that his faithfull curtesie will brooke thy fained inconstancie? is thy senses so besotted with selfelove to suppose that a Gentleman of great wealth and no lesse wit, famous both for his person and parentage, will bee so witlesse in chaunge or carelesse in choice, so light in his love or leaude in his life, as to fixe his affection upon a professed Curtizan, whose honestie and credit is so wracked in the waves of wantonnesse, and so weather-beaten with the billowes of immodestie, that it is set to sale in the shamelesse shop of *Venus* as a thing of no value to be cheapt of every

stragling chapman. No no *Clarinda*, there is such a great difference betweene thy haplesse chaunce and his happie choice, betweene thy owne carelesse living and his carefull life, as there remains to thee not so much as one dramme of hope to cure thy intolerable maladie. And why fond foole? was not *Lamia* in profession a Curtizan, in life a lascivious vasall to *Venus* vanitie, yea to figure her foorth in plaine tearmes, a staillesse strumpet racking her honestie to the uttermost, therby to raise renewes to maintaine her immodest life, and yet for all the blemish of immoderate lust, wherein she wa lulled a sleep by security, she so charmed and enchanted with her Syren subtleties the senses of King Demetrius, that he wa so blinded wit hthe beames of her beautie, and dimmed with the wanton vale of her alluring vanities, forgetting that she was by calling a curtizan and by custome common to all that could wage her honestie with the appointed price, he so entirely loved this gracelesse dame, that neither the remembrance of her forepassed follie, nor the suspition of her present immodestie, could drive that worthy king to mislike her, until the extreame date of death parted therir inseparable amitie? Were not manie noble Princes allured to the love of *Lais*? Was not that worthy Romane *Cassius* so fettered with the forme of *Flora* the renowned curtizan of *Rome*, that hee offered the prime of his yeeres at the shrine of that gorgeous Goddess, and yet the worst of these two worthie wights farre surpassing *Pharicles* as well in ripenesse of wit as renewes of wealth. Yea but *Clarynda* inferre no comparison, for these two stately dames were so decked and adorned with the giftes of nature, and so polished with princely perfection, that they were the most rare jems and peerelesse paragons of beautie that ever were shrowded under the shape of mortalitie, so that if *Jupiter* had but once frequented their companie, no doubt *Juno* would have been infected with jelowsie, whereas thy comelinesse deserveth no such surpassing commendation, but that thou mayst yeeld the palme of a victorie to a thousand whose beautie is such as their greatest imperfection may daunt thee with disgrace. Why but *Clarynda*, art thou so mad to lay a cutting corasive to a greene wound, to procure heat with colde, to repress hunger with famine, to salve dorrow with solitarinesse, and to mitigate thy misery with extreme dispaire? No no, since thou art once lodged up in the loathsome labyrinth of love, thou must like *Theseus* be haled out with the thread of hope: for better hadst thou met with *Minotaurus* in plaine combat, than be but once arrested with the miserable mase of distrust. And therefore *Clarynda* cast away care, retire not before thou hast the repulse, but keepe the course by thy compasse: and since thou hast the sore seeke the salve, applie thy wit and will, thy hand and heart to atchieve that thing, in atteining whereof consists either thy continuall calamitie or perpetuall joy, and with that she stept to her standish which stoode in the window, and wrote a letter to *Pharicles* in this effect.

c) Clarynda's Letter to Pharicles (*Mamillia Part 2*, pp. 33-37)

Signora Clarynda of Saragossa, to Don Pharicles prosperitie.

Although thou hast both cause to muse and marvell (O noble *Pharicles* and unacquainted gentleman) in that thou receives a letter from her whome neither familiaritie nor friendshippe can give just occasion so much as once to salute thee with a *Salve*, much lesse to trouble thy patience with such stuffe as may breede thy misliking and my miserie, if the gods be not ayding to my enterprise, yet if thou shalt vouchsafe to construe my meaning to the best, or at the least take the paines to turne over these imperfect lines proceeding from a perplexed person, which I hope thy noble minde and curtesie will command thee, thou shalt finde it no smaller cause than the fatall feare of death that forced mee to yeeld to this extremitie, nor the occasion lesse than the dread of pinching despair which drave me to passe the golden measure of surpassing modestie. In deede the noble and vertuous dames (*Pharicles*) of famous memorie, whose happie life hath canonized them in Chronicles for perfect paragons both of vertue and beautie, have with general consent averred, that shamefast modestie and silence be the two rarest gems and most precious jewels wherewith a Gentlewoman may be adorned. Notwithstanding they have all been of this mind, that where either love or necessitie extend their extreme rigour to the uttermost, there both humane and divine lawes surcease, as not of sufficient force to abide the brunt of two such terrible and untamed tyrants. For there is no silence such but the fyle of love will fret in sunder: nor no modestie so shamefast but the sting of necessitie will force to passe both shame and measure. *Sappho* (*Pharicles*) was both learned, wise, and vertuous, and yet the fire of fancie so scorched and scalded her modest minde, as she was forced to let slip the raynes of silence to crave a salve of *Phaon* to cure her intollerable malady. If *Phedra* (*Pharicles*) had not both surpassed in beautie and modestie, poor Theseus would never have forsaken his *Ariadne* in the desertes, to have linked himselfe with her in the inviolable league of matrimonie, yet her beautie and modestie were brought to such a lowe ebbe by the batterie of love, that shee was faine to sue for helpe to her unhappie sonne *Hipolitus*. I dare not (O *Pharicles*) of these exemplified premisses inferre either comparison or conclusion, for because to compare my self to them were a point of arrogancie, and to derogate so much from their degree, as to match them with my rudenesse were a trick of extreme follie. Yet this I am forced to confesse, that the selfsame fire hath so inflamed my fancie, and the like batterie hath so beaten my brest, as silence and modestie set aside, I am forced by love to pleade for pardon at the barre of thy bounty, whose captive I remaine, till either the sentence of life or death be pronounced upon me poore carefull caytife. Love, yea, love it is, (O *Pharicles*) and more if more may be that hath so fettered my freedome, and tyed my libertie with so short a tedder, as either thou must be the man which must unlose me from the lunes, or else I shal remaine in a loathsome Laberinth til the extreme date of death deliver me. The Deare *Pharicles*, is more impatient at the first stroake, than the Hynde which before hath beene galded and yet escaped, the souldier greeveth more at the first cut, than he which hath beene acquainted with many woundes; so I alas having never felt before the fire of fancie, nor tried the terrible torment of love, thinke the burthen more great, and the yoke more heavie, by how much the lesse I have bin acquainted with such insupportable burdens. Well *Pharicles*, I know thou wilt conclude of these my premisses, that since I have beene an inhabitour so long *Nell' la strada cortizana*, and professed my selfe a friend to *Caesar*, that either I have beene a deepe dissembler in feeding many fooles fat with flattery, or else that I never loved any but thee, is a trothlesse tale, and a flat trick of trecherie. Confesse I must of force (O worthis gentleman) that I have flattered many, but never fancied any, that I have allured some, but loved none, that I have taken diverse in the trap, and yet always escaped the snare, until too long flying about the candle, I am so scorched in the flame, and so surely fastened with the fetters of fancie by the only sight of thy surpassing beautie, as of force I must remaine thy carefull captive till either thy curtesie or crueltie cut asunder the threed of hope, which makes

me pine in miserie. It is not (*O Pharicles*) thy purse but thy person which hath pierced my heart, not thy coyne but thy comelinesse which hath made the conquest, not the helpe of gaine, but the hope of thy good will that hath intangled my freedome, not the glistring shape of vanitie but the golden substance of vertue, not thy living, lands or parentage, but thy rare qualities and exquisite perfections are the champions which have chayned me in the balefull bandes of lasting bondage. Lasting I may well tearme them, sith there is such a difference betweene thy state and my stay, as there remaines to me no hope of libertie. For perhaps *Pharicles* thou wilt say, that the crooked twig will prove a crabbed tree, that the sower bud will never be sweete blossome, how that which is bred by the bone will not easily out of the flesh, that she which is common in her youth wil be more inconstant in her age: To conclude, that the woman which in prime of yeares is lascivious, will in ripe age be most lecherous. Yet *Pharicles* I answere, that the blossomes of the *Mirabolanes* in *Spaine* is most infectious, and yet the fruite verie precious: that the wine may be sower in the presse, and yet by time most sweete in the Caske: that oftimes where vice raigneth in youth, there vertue remaineth in age. Who more perverse being yong than *Paulyna*, and who more perfect being old? *Losyna* the Queene of the *Vendales* at the first a vicious maiden, but at the last a most vertuous matrone. But to aime more neare the marke, was not *Rodope* in the prime of her youth counted the most famous or rather the most infamous strumpet of all *Egypt*? so common a curtizan, as she was a second *Messalyna* for her immoderate lust, yet in the floure of her age being married to *Psammeticus* the king of *Memphis*, she proved so honest a wife and so chaste a Princes, as she was not before so reproached for the small regard of her honestie, as after shee was renowned for her inviolable chastitie. *Phryne* that graceless *Gorgon* of *Athens*, whose monstrous life was so immodest that her carelesse chastitie was a pray to everie stragling stranger, after she was married to *Siconius*, shee became such a foe to vice, and such a friend to vertue, yea she troad her steppes so steddily in the trade of honestie, as the *Metamorphosis* of her life to her perpetuall fame, was ingraven on the brazen gates of *Athens*. So (*Pharicles*) if the Gods shall give me such prosperous fortune as to receive some favour of thee in lieu of my most loyal love, and I shall reape some rewarde for my desertes and have my fixed fancy requited with fervent affection, assure thy self I will so make a change of my chaffre for better ware, of my fleeting will with staied wisdom, of my inconstancie with continencie, from a most vicious liking to such a vertuous living, from a lascivious *Lamia*, to a most loial Lucretia, as both thou and all the worlde shall have as great cause to marvell at my modestie, as they had cause to murmur st my former disohnestie: and thus languishing in hope, I wish thee as good hap as thou canst desire or imagine.

Thine though the Gods say no, Clarynda.

APPENDIX 5

The Use of the Interim Conclusion in the *First Philippic* of Cicero⁷⁸⁴

This oration was addressed and read to the Roman Senate on September 2nd, 44 B.C. As a result of the instability of the times, Cicero is obliged to employ as much sophistry as rhetoric in order to present his opinions with as little risk of repercussions as possible. The *narratio* explains the reasons for his recent departure from and return to Rome and stresses the optimism he felt as a result of Mark Anthony's actions immediately following the assassination of Julius Caesar. The *divisio* asks whether it is unfair for Mark Anthony to single out and threaten Cicero for not appearing in the Senate as requested. The *confirmatio* argues that it is unfair because Cicero was not the only absentee, no important business was under discussion and he was fatigued after his long journey. The *confutatio* argues against Mark Anthony's threat to demolish Cicero's house which was self-evidently excessive. The *conclusio* is that, if there were to be a punishment for not attendance, a fine would be more appropriate.

The topic of Mark Anthony's extreme reaction to Cicero's absence now leads into a new *divisio*, the question of whether he, Mark Anthony, would have been so insistent on Cicero's presence if he had been aware of how firmly Cicero was opposed to the measures Mark Anthony forced through the Senate. Cicero's courage in absentia, what wouldn't he have said if he had been there, is unconvincing but understandable in the circumstances. Mark Anthony himself was absent from the Senate on the day the first Philippic was delivered and Cicero was able to say those things he might have been afraid to say to Mark Anthony face-to-face. In the new

⁷⁸⁴ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero's Orations*, transl. by Charles Duke Yonge (New York: Colonial Press, 1900, repr. Dover Publications: New York, 2018), pp. 325-340.

confirmatio, Cicero makes clear how rigorously he would have opposed Mark Anthony's request for supplications to be made to the late Julius Caesar as to a god. The *confutatio* is used to describe how Cicero would have defended his opinions against the Roman people and the somewhat self-righteous *conclusio* laments the fact that, bar Lucius Piso, not a single member of the Senate spoke against Mark Anthony in the way that Cicero himself would have done. We now have a third *divisio* which asks the question why the Senate should as a whole be afraid of bad laws in the way that Cicero is. And so on...

APPENDIX 6

The Texts of Three Orations from *Penelopes web*

Oration 1: Olynda's letter to Saladyne (sigs. C3i – C3ii)

Olynda to Saladyne health

If the inward affects of the mynd bee manifested by otward effects, or the browe the bashfull bewrayer of secretes, and yet the true discoverer of thoughts , may be credited, the Emperour of *Aegipt* in his loves resembleth the Pyne tree, whose leaves remaine in one colour but one day: Well might the censures of wise Clarkes have bin caveats of my likely misfortune: for they say Princes affections as they are glorious so they are brittle: that the favour of Kings hangs in their eye lids, readie with every wincke to be wiped out: that as they are full of Majestie and above law, so they are full of inconstancie becaue without lawe: this which other spoke by prooffe now I allledge by experience: for your Highnesse abridgeth me of my wonted allowance, not only in expence but in looks, so that I account that day happie when *Saladyne* but glanceth at *Olinda*. The mistris of my mishap is thy injurious wife *Barmenissa*, to whom I wish thy il fortunes and my miseries: she with a fayned obedience seeketh to inveagle thee with a concept of her love, who if she did love, could not content, for she wants the eye pleasure, beautie: thou tickled with an inconstant humour doest listen to the melodie of the old Syren, whose necke shadowed with wrinckles affords but bad harmonie: Keepe not (*Saladyne*) fire and waer in one hand: in running with the Hare holde not with the Hound: beare not both a Sworde and and an Olyve. *Paris* gave sentence but on *Venus* part, affection brooketh no division: therefore if thou love *Olynda*, hate *Barmenissa*: followe the example of *Anthonie*, who after his choice of thy Countrywoman never favoured *Octavia*: tis beautie that merites a Crowne, and as well would the diadem of *Aegipt* beseeme thy Lemons head as thy wives: the willes of Princes are lawes, their looked death, their censures are peremptorie: *Aegipt* affordeth confections and pysons, why then should *Barmenissa* live to disquiet thee, to envie mee, and to slaunder us both: if not with her tongue, yet with the paynted shewe of her vertues? This perfourme without delay, or excuse, if thou wilt bee counted the friend of *Olynda*. I want money, send me sixe thousand Aspers: though my counsaile be great my expences are small: And so farewell.

Olynda.

Oration 5: Barmenissa's Apostrophe (sigs. D1ii – D2i)

Unhappie *Barmenissa*, why are the Destinies so inequall allotters of mishap as to appoynt thy youth, which to others is a pleasant spring of good fortune, to thee a frosty winter of mishap? Are the Starres so inequall in their constellation, or so incertaine in their influence, that Majestie hath no priviledge against miserie, nor the title of a Queene no assurance of good hap? Is the seate of dignitie like the Chariot of *Phoebus*, whose wheelles challenge not one minute of rest? Then (*Barmenissa*) say with *Solon*, *Cressus* is not happie before his death. Confesse with *Amazias* King of *Aegipt*, that the prosperous successe of *Policrates* prognosticated some dyre event: that Fortune standeth on the wethercocke of tyme, constant in nothing but in inconstancie: that no man is happie before his end, and that true felicitie consisteth in a contented life and a quiet death: for I see well, that to assigne happinesse to him which lives (considering the alteration that tyme and fortune presents with sondrie stratagemes) is to allot the reward of victorie before the battell bee fought. The greatest miserie of all, sayth *Byas*, is not to beare miserie, and that man is most happie (quoth *Dionisius*) that from his youth hath learned to bee unhappie. *Demetrius* surnamed the *Besieger*, judged none more unhappie then he which never tasted of adversitie: for that fortune accounts of them as abjects and vassalles of dishonour, whom she presents not as well with bitter pilles as sweete potions. Alluding to that saying of *Plutarke*, that nothing is evill that is necessarie: understanding by this word, necessarie, whatsoever commeth to a wise man by fatall destinie: because, using patience in necessitie, he giveth a greater glory unto vertue. Sith then (*Barmenissa*) the fall from a Crowne ought to be no foyle to content, greave not at Fortune, least thy sorrowe make her tryumph the greater: but beare adversitie with an honourable mynd, that the world may judge thou art as well a Princesse in povertie as in prosperitie: for Kings are not called Gods for that they weare Crownes, but that they are Lords over Fame and Fortune.

Oration 7: Barmenissa's Apostrophe (sigs. D3i – D3ii)

Now *Barmenissa*, thou seests that delay in revenge is the best Phisicke: that the Gods are just, and have taken thy quarrell as advocates of thyne injurie: now shalt thou see wrong overruled with patience, and the ruyne of thyne enemy with the safetie of thyne owne honour: tyme is the discoverer of mishap, and Fortune never ceaseth to stretch her strings till they cracke: shame is the end of treacherie, and dishonour ever forerunnes repentance. *Olynda* hath soard with *Icarus*, and is like to fall with *Phaeton*: sooner are bruises caught by reaching too hye then by stooping too lowe: Fortune grudgeth not at them which fall, but Envy bytes them which clymbes: now shall the Lords of *Aegypt* by revenging thyne enemy worke thy content. And why thy content *Barmenissa*? doth content hang in revenge, or doth the quiet of the mind proceede by the fall of an enemy? Seest thou not (fond woman) that the prosperitie of *Olynda* is the preserving of thy glorie: that it is princely as wel to be faithfull as patient: that it is thine honour to put up causelesse injurie, and her shame to heare of thy unhappinesse: nay, what would *Aegypt*, yea the whole world say, (if by treacherie her bane be procured) but that it was thy trothlesse indeavour: so shalt thou lose more fame in a minute, then thou shalt recover in many yeeres: Then here lyes the doubt, eyther must I have myne honour by her mishap, or els seeke the ruyne of my friends by discovering their pretence. Treacherie thou knowest *Barmenissa*, is not to be concealed: friends have no priviledge to be false: amitie stretcheth no further than the Altar: *Saladyne* is thy Soverayne, she his wife, and therefore thy superiour: rather reveale their falshood then ruynate thine owne honor. The wife of *Manlius Torquatus* caused her sonnes head to be smit off for killing his enemy cowardly. *Sempronia* slewe her sonne for uttering speeches against the Senate. Kings are Gods, against whom unreverent thoughts are treacherie: The head that is impalled with a Crowne must be prayed for, not revenged. Then *Barmenissa*, be rather ingratefull to thy friends then treacherous to thy Prince: rather see them dye then *Olynda* fall into such fatall daunger.

APPENDIX 7

The Exchange Between Cratyna and Calamus

in Penelopes Web (sigs. F3i – F3ii)

Tenant (for so I thinke I may best tearme thee) I will not make a long harvest for a small crop, nor goe about to pull a *Hercules* shoo on *Achilles* foote: Orations are needlesse where necessitie forceth, and the shortest preamble is best where love puts in his plea: therefore omitting all frivolous prattle, knowe that as well at the sight of thy beautie, as by the report of thyne honestie, affection hath so fettered me in the snares of fancie, that for my best refuge I am come to thy sweete selfe to crave a salve for those passions that no other can appease. I denye not but thou hast both love and lawe to withhold thee from this perswasion, and yet wee knowe women have their severall friends. *Venus* though she loves with one eye, yet she can looke with the other. *Cupid* is never so unprovided but he hath two *Arrowes* of one temper: offences are not measured by the proportion but by the secrecie: *Si non caste tamen caute*: if not chastely yet charely: thou mayst both winne a friend and preserve thy fame, yea Tenaunt, such a friend whose countenance shall shroude thee from envie, and whose plentie shall free thee from penurie. I will not stand longer upon this poynt, let it suffice that in loving me thou shalt reape preferment, and in denying my suite purchase to thy husband and thy self such a hatefull enemye, as to requite thy denyall will seeke to prejudice thee with al mishap, *nunc utrum horum mavis accipe*.

Cratyna, who knewe the length of his arrowe by the bent of his bowe (resolved rather to taste of any miserie, then for lucre to make shipwracke of her chastitie) returned him this sharpe and short answer. In deede my Lord, a lesse harvest might have served for so bad corne, that how warely so ever you gleane it, will scarce prove worth the reaping: true it is, that preambles are frivolous that perswade men to such follies: and therefore had your honour spared this speech, your credite had bene the more and your labour lesse: if upon the sodaine my beautie hath inveagled you, (for as for my vertue you hazard but a suppose, sith oftimes report hath a blister on hr tongue) I must needs blame your eye that is bleared with every object, and accuse such a mynd as suffereth honour to bee suppressed with affection: and my Lord, soone ripe soone rotten: hot love is soone cold: the fancies of men are like fire in strawe, that flameth in a minut and and ceaseth in a moment: but to returne you a denyall with your owne objection, trueth it is that I am tyed to my husband both by love and law: which to vyolate, both the Gods and nature forbids me unlesse by death: *Venus* may love and looke how she list, and at last prove her selfe but a wanton: her inordinat affections are no presidents whereby to direct myne actions: and where as you say, offences are measured by the secrecie, I answer, that every thing is transparent to the sight of the Gods, their devine eyes pearce into the heart and the thoughts, and they measure not revenge by dignitie, but by justice: for preferment, knowe my Lord there is no greater riches then content, nor no greater honour then quiet: I esteeme more of fame then of gold, and rather choose to dye chaste then live rich: threatnings are smal perswasions, and little is her honestie that preferreth life before credit. Therefore, may it please your honour, this is my determined resolution, which take from me as an Oracle, that as preferment shall never perswade me to be unchaste, so death shall never diswade me from being honest.

APPENDIX 8**From Cratyna's Tale in *Penelopes web* (sigs. G1ii – G2i)**

Menon, who all this while had his eye on *Cratyna*, asked her what he was: May it please your Grace (quoth she) I am servant to this man who is owner of the pit, but under this other who is overseer of my work: So then (quoth the King) you serve two maisters, the one by day, the other by night: Nay my Liege (quoth *Cratyna*) but one maister, for we make smal account of any service that is done in the night. How say you sirha (quoth the King to *Lestio*) is not this boy your man: No my Lord (quoth he) only my bedfellowe, and that is all the service I crave at his hands. At this answer the King and *Calamus* smyled, and *Cratyna* fearing she was discovered began to blush: which *Menon* perceyving, demaunded of her what age she was: About eightene my liege (quoth she). *Menon* willing to trye them what the event would be: tolde the Collyar that he and his man, for that their faults were thorowe ignorance, might get them home: but for your boy (quoth the King) seeing he is so young and well faced I meane to make him my page. The Collyar was glad he was so dispatcht, but poore *Lestio* through aboundance of griefe, was almost driven into an extasie, so that changing colour he could scarce stand on his legges: which *Cratyna* perceiving, feeling now Fortune had done her worst, resolved to suffer all miseries whatsoever, fell down upon her knees, and unfoulded to the King what she was, and from point to point discoursed what had happened betweene her and *Calamus*, intermedling her speeches with such a fountaine of teares, as the King pitying her playnts, willed her to be of good cheere: for none in all his Kingdome should offer her any vyolence.

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