

**AN APOLOGY FOR POESY VERSUS ASTROPHIL AND
STELLA BY SIR PHILIP SIDNEY**

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Abstract:

An Apology for Poesy presents certain implications by which the reader can determine Sidney's purpose in composing *Astrophil and Stella*. These implications generally emphasize the connection between his imaginative work, *Astrophil and Stella* and *An Apology for Poesy*, his critical book. Sidney left the readers no conclusive evidence that he intended *Astrophil and Stella* to reflect his poetic theory. The most essential function of *An Apology for Poesy* is that the poetry has to display a moral purpose. This has led to advice for all poets to consider this purpose within their own poetry. It is a fact that Sir Philip Sidney tries to apply the general principles in *An Apology for Poesy* in his composing of *Astrophil and Stella*

Key Words: Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poesy*, *Astrophil and Stella*, Sonnet

Öz

An Apology for Poesy, Sidney'in *Astrophil and Stella* adlı eserini yazmasının amacı hakkında okuyucuların bir yargıya varmasına yardımcı olmak için önemli ip uçları verir. Bu bilgiler genel olarak hayal ürünü olan *Astrophil and Stella* ile elstirel bir eser olan *An Apology for Poesy* arasındaki ilişkiyi vurgular. Sidney *Astrophil and Stella* adlı eserini yazarken okuyucuya kendi şiir düşüncesini yansıtmak kapsamlı bir bilgi vermez. *An Apology for Poesy*'nin en önemli işlevi şiirin ahlksal ders verme amacıyla yazılmasını vurgulamaktır. Bu da şairlerin şiirlerini bu tavsiyeler doğrultusunda yazmaya sevk etmiştir. Sir Philip Sidney *An Apology for Poesy*'de öne sürdüğü genel ilkelere *Astrophil and Stella*'yı yazarken uygulamaya çalıştığı bir gerçektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poesy*, *Astrophil and Stella*, Sone

There are many critical studies that analyze *Arcadia* in the light of *An Apology for Poesy* (Evans 14). These studies generally emphasize the connection between his imaginative work, *Astrophil and Stella* and *An Apology for Poesy*, his critical book. Unfortunately, there are not any satisfactory studies to establish the moral and stylistic links between Sidney's work *Astrophil and Stella* and his well-known theory *An Apology for Poesy*. Sidney left the readers no conclusive evidence that he intended *Astrophil and Stella* to reflect his poetic theory. Yet, *An Apology for Poesy* presents hints for confirming his purpose in *Astrophil and Stella*

and the work functions as a kind of overview to the style and structure of the sonnet sequence. *Astrophil and Stella* functions to serve as the same moral end that *An Apology for Poesy* maintains for the purpose of all good poetry.

Noteworthy interpretations have already been made about the seeming contradictions between Sir Philip Sidney's theory in *An Apology for Poesy* and his practice in *Astrophil and Stella*. One contradiction turns around the fact that *An Apology for Poesy* recommends a craftsmanship which stresses that a poet must know how to write poetry, whereas in *Astrophil and Stella*, Astrophil is found to advocate spontaneity and inspiration while at the same time using conscious craftsmanship. This contradiction motivated Hallet Smith to attempt "a resolution for this problem" (21). Another contradiction that baffles readers is the structure of *Astrophil and Stella*. *An Apology for Poesy* underlines unity and order, and a poet must consider the plot, foreground, or central idea to provide a structure for his poetry, but *Astrophil and Stella* seems to lack the structure, and the sequence seems to have been written together haphazardly. Richard B. Young deals with this issue with varying degrees of convincing analysis (71). A. C. Hamilton claims that the sonnets do not provide a sequence and that they are merely an attempt at an 'Anatomy of Love' (76).

In this study, some of the matters of style are dealt with i.e. matters of form related to deliberate craftsmanship versus spontaneous inspiration. In *An Apology for Poesy*, Sir Philip Sidney maintains

[n]ature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done – neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden (34).

Sidney's use of nature is commonly attributed to the attitude of Renaissance writers who "accepted a fundamentally Aristotelian view of imitation: the representation of general truths in nature. They tried to capture the significance of the external world of object and action" (Montgomery 34). Sidney says that nature is the object of art, and that the poet is blessed with the ability to provide things better than nature. This blessing is accepted to be a divine gift, which puts the poet above nature and enables him to go beyond to the actual world. He is inspired to present the nature more beautiful, because he is considered as a passive agent to the voice of divine inspiration. His poetic skill is a "synthetic expression" of some supernatural vision (Cooper 15). Similarly, in *Astrophil and Stella* Stella is identified as the natural source of poetic expression and Astrophil asserts that the 'sweet sounds' of Stella's name alone inspire him without concern for proper word choice:

But now I mean no more your help to try
Nor other sugaring of my speech to prove,
But on her name incessantly to cry.
For let me but name her whom I do love
So sweet sounds straight mine ear and heart do hit
That I well find no eloquence like it (LV 9-14).

But know that I in pure simplicity
Breathe out the flames which burn within my heart,
Love only reading unto me this art (XXVIII 12-14).

The first sonnet indicates the faults of other poets who relied on conventional devices and high decorative styles to write their poetry. Astrophil expects to write from the pure truth of Stella's natural effect on his emotions, not from conscious craftsmanship. He also cannot avoid using some craft himself in shaping the body of his verse. The aesthetic contradiction of spontaneity and craftsmanship reflects Astrophil's psychic and philosophical conflicts and sets the stage for the division within Astrophil. It is also played out in the rest of the sonnet sequence:

I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe:
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled stepdame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite:
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write" (I 5-14).

In *An Apology for Poesy*, Sir Philip Sidney goes on claiming that the poet should be conscious of his craft:

They that delight in poesy itself should seek to know what they do, and how they do, and especially look themselves in an unflattering glass of reason, if they be inclinable unto it (72).

As a matter of fact, the "inspired" poet works with the 'art', 'imitation' and 'exercise' of his own genius to "lead" the inspired words into poetry (*Apology* 72). The Glass of Reason leads us to believe that the poet must be conscious of what he is trying to achieve in his poetry, and he cannot be merely a passive transporter of divine reflections. Sidney was aware of the extremes of slavish style and ornament that poetry had fallen into, and this condition stimulated him to defend good poetry against criticism in his *An Apology for Poesy*. Instead of the stylistic and

mechanical aspect of good poetry, Sidney thought he could elevate poetry's significance by stressing the role of inspiration in its writing process.

Astrophil usually complains that he is the passive recorder writing only what Stella affects in him, but it is known that the responsibility of the poetry belongs to the poet. By his poetic craft Astrophil is out to convince Stella of his emotional sincerity concerning his being inspired by her. *Astrophil and Stella* exhibits logical, rational word choices and conventional rhyme schemes that they cannot be the voice of pure inspiration alone. When the poet feels the extremes of joy or anguish about Stella, he cannot arrange the words to write because his logical thought processes are too disorganised:

O joy high for my low style to show;
O bliss, fit for a nobler state than me (VXIX 1-2).
Oh fate, oh fault, oh curse, child of my bliss,
What sobs can give words grace my grief to show?
What ink is black enough to paint my woe? (XCIII 1-3)

It is possible to see the kind of contradiction between practice and theory that appears to violate *An Apology for Poesy*. M. Sherod Cooper makes an interesting and credible explanation that resolves this apparent contradiction in *Astrophil and Stella*. He maintains that Astrophil is a dramatic character who talks about sonnets sent to Stella. The sonnets do not represent Sidney's own opinion because the style of the sequence uses contrivances and styles that Astrophil derides and because protesting sincerity is the typical stance of the Petrarchan lover. Astrophil writes these sonnets as 'stage' properties in an attempt to justify his passions (21).

Readers wonder why the sonnet sequence appears so haphazard, disordered and sudden changes in mood and thought since Sidney's sonnets in themselves present order and unity. It is easy to believe that Hamilton is right to say that *Astrophil and Stella* is merely an "anatomy of love" with no deliberate narrative thread tying it together (76). Yet, in *An Apology for Poesy*, Sidney satirises the poets who lack strength, or 'poetical sinews' in their verses:

Do I not remember to have seen but few (to speak boldly) printed that have poetical sinews in them: for proof whereof, let but most of the verses but put in prose, and then ask the meaning, and it will be found that one verse did but beget another, without ordering at the first what should be at the last; which becomes a confused mass of words with a tingling sound of rhyme, barely accompanied with reason (74).

Sidney criticises their lack of overall structure and reason. He asserts that lyrical poetry must convey a meaning and, at the same time, must present a meaningful, structural thread. A. C. Hamilton's analysis of the sonnets as a sequence is supportive of Sidney's 'poetical sinews' because he suggested that a

three-part structure unifies the sonnets (78). Richard Young's assumption turns around the unity of *Astrophil and Stella* and maintains that the changes in mood and style can be drawn together under purpose consistent with each other (88). These assumptions are important in as much as they attempt to find some structure in the sonnets based on a unifying principle that reveals meaning in the sonnets. It seems logical to agree with Hamilton that *Astrophil and Stella* is carefully written with a structure underlying it, but that structure is not self-evident and simple(67).

In *An Apology for Poesy*, Sir Philip Sidney implies that a meaningful idea should permeate the entire work of a poet:

Many of such writings as come under the banner of irresistible love, if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings, and so caught up certain swelling phrases which hang together . . . than that in truth they feel these passions, which easily (as I think) may be bewrayed by the same forcibleness or *energia* (as the Greeks call it) of the writer (81).

In this extract, Forrest G. Robinson claims that Sidney employs *energia* to mean a conceptual clarity in language, but this clarity can result "only from the poets precise apprehension of his own fore-conceit" (81). *Energia* as used in this extract helps to emphasise Sidney's belief that the poet is to set forth an *Idea*, or fore-conceit, that shapes the moral theme of the poem. The comprehension that the reader should attain from the poem depends on that controlling fore-conceit:

For any understanding knoweth the skill of the artificer standeth in that *Idea* or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poet hath that *Idea* is manifest by delivering them forth in such excellency as he hath imagined them (*Apology 16*).

According to Sidney, *Idea*, or fore-conceit is

a mental object, a generic concept which comprehends an abundant variety of particular objects in any class. If the poet can translate his general "Idea" into the words of a poem, then he will have produced a moral example superior to the specific or particular objects of external nature (16).

There is a moral example, embodied in the fore-conceit of the poet, which is presented in the meaningful narrative of poetry:

[Readers] shall use the narration but as an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention (*Apology 58*).

It is a fact that Sidney is concerned with the structure involved in poetry, and "ground-plot" here emphasises the significance of a unity or framework that the reader used to "work out ('invent') the full meaning of the poet's original 'Idea or fore-conceit'" (*Apology 58*).

In respect to poet's function, the significant aspect of *An Apology for Poesy* is not only to teach the meaning of the poet's abstract fore-conceit, but also to move the reader to act upon that which has been taught. The end of the poetry is to delight and teach, but the readers do not like pure knowledge of the goodness which is taught if they cannot be delighted and thereby moved to "take that goodness in hand" (*Apology* 20). The end of the poetry is "to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of" (*Apology* 22). Sidney thinks that poetry provides the moral which leads reader to the highest moral perfection, for "our erected wit maketh us how what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepth us from reaching unto it" (*Apology* 17). It is difficult to imagine Sidney's writing *Astrophil and Stella* without guiding abstract moral principle or fore-conceit in mind because of his emphasis on the moral purpose of poetry because the moral quality in poetry is the essential principle in *An Apology for Poesy*.

In one-fourth of *Astrophil and Stella*, it is supposed that Astrophil who represents passion, will and carnal desires, will never be able to conquer Stella who represents virtue, reason and wit. Sidney would violate all principles of morality if Astrophil succeeded in his efforts to undermine Stella's virtue. At the same time Sidney would present a picture of a distorted love wherein passion has the upper hand. So, this would hardly be an instructive message for the readers. Shortly, the pedagogical moral purpose which Sidney assigns to poetry would not exist, or at least it would be violated. Love comes into Astrophil's heart in sonnet 8, and Stella is described as a citadel of virtue fortified by wit in sonnet 12. It is possible to form an image of a soldier employing all of his skill to get into a castle but finding it impossible:

At length he [Love] perch'd himself in Stella's joyful face,
Whose fair skin, beamy eyes, like morning sun on snow,
Deceiv'd the quaking boy, who thought from so pure light
Effects of lively heat must needs in nature grow.
But she most fair, most cold, made him thence take his flight
To my close heart, where while some firebrands he did lay,
He burnt un'wares his wings, and cannot fly away (VIII 8-14).

What words so ere she speak persuades for thee,
That her clear voice lifts thy fame to the skies:
Thou countest Stella thine, like those whose powers
Having got up a breach by fighting well,
Cry, "Victory, this fair day all is ours."
Oh no, her heart is such a citadel,
So fortified with wit, stored with disdain,
That to win it, is all the skill and pain (XII 7-14).

In this situation there is no question that desire will be disregarded and virtue will be the supreme hallmark.

It is not difficult to understand Sidney's fundamental moral concern for virtue over passion if it is considered that Renaissance writers accept Aristotle's concept of rational and irrational principles. This concept displays that the rational and irrational principles are in harmony only when the rational leads the irrational:

For we praise the rational principle of the continent man and of the incontinent, and the part of their soul that has such a principle, since it urges them a right and toward the best objects; but there is found in them also another element naturally opposed to the rational principle, which fights against and resists that principle . . . or shares in it so far as it listens to it and obeys it (Ross 14).

When the passions are disturbed, these two naturally hostile principles lead us to believe that reason is the instrument of self control. However, reason alone does not originate action though mind conceives the objects of action, some elements of desire are always necessary (Ross 15). Moreover, the rational power is divided into reason and will though former "seeks truth through a logical train of thought . . . the reason determines what is good and what is evil and informs the will of its conclusions" (Ross 15).

It is no coincidence that Sidney preferred the names Stella (star: the symbol of the Light of Reason) and Astrophil (star-lover: the Lover of Reason). Astrophil, because of his love of reason, is essentially teachable. He learns that Stella's virtue is the rational power which leads his basic nature. Yet it is part of Sidney's Protestant theology to prove Astrophil's perverted will in learning Stella's lesson of virtue. Astrophil is used by Sidney as the particular example of what happens when the will is corrupted by the passions and the understanding becomes confused by them. In sonnet IV, virtue allies with reason, and Astrophil's will, urged by his passion, objects to this alliance:

Virtue, alas, now let me take some rest.
Thou set'st a bate between my soul and wit.
If vain love have my simple soul oppress'd,
Leave what thou likest not, deal not thou with it.
The scepter use in some old Cato's breast;
Churches or schools are for thy seat more fit.
I do confess, pardon a fault confess'd,
My mouth too tender is for thy hard bit.
But if that needs thou wilt usurping be,
The little reason that is left in me,
And still th'effect of thy persuasions prove:
I swear, my heart such one shall show to thee
That shrines in flesh so true a deity,
That Virtue, thou thyself shalt be in love.

Astrophil is conscious of the power of reason, although in his confused state he pays it only nominal service.

Astrophil's misfortune in *Astrophil and Stella* is brought about by his abuse of reason. In the first ten sonnets, it is possible to see only one major abuse. He charges reason to quit meddling with and framing his passions. Reason does not concern itself with drawing the guidelines of his moral conduct, nor does it busy itself with his personal experience, but it ascends to a higher level of thought. He wills reason to fail in controlling his morals, and by willing reason to do so, he anticipates that reason will release him from the defect of understanding his moral corruption:

Reason, in faith thou art well serv'd, that still
Wouldst brabbling be with sense and love in me:
I rather wish'd thee climb the Muses' hill,
Or reach the fruit of Nature's choicest tree,
Or seek heav'n's course, or heav'n's inside to see:
Why shouldst thou toil our thorny soil to till?
Leave sense, and those which sense's objects be:
Deal thou with powers of thoughts, leave love to will.
But thou wouldst needs fight both with love and sense,
With sword of wit, giving wounds of dispraise,
Till downright blows did foil thy cunning fence:
For soon as they strake thee with Stella's rays,
Reason thou kneel'dst, and offeredst straight to prove
By reason good, good reason her to love (X).

Sir Philip Sidney shows us Astrophil, confused and passion-ridden, misunderstanding the role of reason. He considers reason disgraces itself when it insists on meddling with man's desires, and he insists that reason only deals with the impersonal, intellectual functions of thought, such as science, philosophy and literature. He cannot comprehend the true task of reason which is to help man first understand himself. As Sidney discusses in *An Apology for Poesy*, the knowledge acquired from all sciences

directed to the highest end of the mistress knowledge . . . which stand
(as I think) in the knowledge of man's self, in the ethic and politic
consideration, with the end of well doing and not of well knowing only
(23).

The exact knowledge of self orders that reason should be given a chance to guide and govern man's desires, thereby establishing internal harmony within the microcosm of man. On the other hand, if man allows the irrational, desirous part to lead the rational part, confusion, chaos and internal strife will be his lot. Man's moral vision will be chaotic in a state of confusion, and desires will be followed as if it is a virtue. Reason is firstly assigned to high intellectual endeavours, because it

protects man from falling victim to insatiable desires which damages man's moral stature. So, Astrophil uses reason to be that moral guide rather than the instrument of high intellectual knowledge.

On the other hand, Stella is the epitome of reason since she employs reason to serve and fortify her virtuous attitude. For Stella, reason is not divorced from the practical, personal experiences and daily moral decisions with which one has to cope. Song 8, the only song written in the third person, gives reader an observation of an incident between Stella and Astrophil. It displays an indication of Stella's ability to use reason to master her impulses. Stella confesses that she is very much in love with Astrophil. They sigh with arms crossed and communicate to each other their mighty emotions:

Sigh they did, but now betwixt
Sighs of woe were glad sights mixt ;
With arms crossed, yet testifying
Restless rest, and living dying.

Their ears hungry of each word
Which the dear tongue would afford ;
But their tongues restrained from walking,
Till their hearts had ended talking (Song 8 17-24).

Yet, as soon as Astrophil tries to explain a physical desire for Stella, she assumes complete control of her rational powers:

There his hands, in their speech, fain
Would have made tongue's language plain ;
But her hands, his hands repelling,
Gave repulse, all grace excelling.

.....

“ Trust me, while I thee deny,
In myself the smart I try ;
Tyrant Honour doth thus use thee,
Stella's self might not refuse thee (Song 8 65-68, 93-96).

Although she considers that honor can be restraining and cruel (tyrant honour), she maintains control over her own passions and knows better than to risk her virtuous honor. Stella does not refuse Astrophil only for public honor because her sense of virtue presides in the most private situations:

Your fair mother is abed,
Candles out, and curtains spread:
She thinks you do letters write.
Write, but first let me indite:

Take me to thee, and thee to me.
No, no, no, no, my dear, let be (Song 4 37-42).

Though Astrophil sneaks a kiss from her while she sleeps, she becomes angered at his risk-taking:

And yet my Star, because a sugar'd kiss
In sport I suck'd, while she asleep did lie,
Doth low'r, nay chide; nay, threat for only this:
Sweet, it was saucy Love, not humble I.
But no 'scuse serves, she makes her wrath appear
In Beauty's throne; see now who dares come near
Those scarlet judges, threat'ning bloody pain? (LXXIII 5-11)

Stella does not lose sight of the dangers, the dishonor, and the scandal, letting her rational concern for consequences guide her moral conduct although Astrophil loses sight of these dangers that could befall him in his attempt to fulfill his desires.

According to Sidney's philosophy in *An Apology for Poesy*, Astrophil commits a grave mistake when he tries to confine reason to the exploration of the abstract sciences. Man starves morally if he puts his faith in and devotes his reason to these abstractions:

One that no other guide but the philosopher shall wade in him till
he be old before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest (*Apology*,
27).

In *Astrophil and Stella*, Astrophil often abuses reason when he tries to employ it in the service of carnal desires. In order to conquer virtue and get some food for desire, he formulates logical arguments throughout the sonnets. Especially in sonnet 5, it is possible to identify that Astrophil is aware of dangers in trying to establish a willful illusion regarding reason's role in his life, but he does not wish to escape these dangers. Astrophil is aware that if he prefers passion to virtue, he rebels against reason and his own nature; however he passionately feels to be compelled to love Stella:

It is most true, that eyes are form'd to serve
The inward light; and that the heavenly part
Ought to be king, from whose rules who do swerve,
Rebels to Nature, strive for their own smart.
It is most true, what we call Cupid's dart,
An image is, which for ourselves we carve:
And, fools, adore in temple of our heart,
Till that good God make Church and churchman starve.
True, that true beauty virtue is indeed,
Whereof this beauty can be but a shade,

Which elements with mortal mixture breed:
True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made,
And should in soul up to our country move:
True, and yet true that I must Stella love (V).

Sonnet 18 exposes that Astrophil knows he has been bestowed reason and wit as spiritual gifts to be used to protect virtue, but instead he lets himself slip into a lost moral path as he employs wit to defend passionate carnal desires:

With what sharp checks I in myself am shent,
When into Reason's audit I do go:
And by just counts myself a bankrupt know
Of all the goods, which heav'n to me hath lent:
Unable quite to pay even Nature's rent,
Which unto it by birthright I do owe:
And, which is worse, no good excuse can show,
But that my wealth I have most idly spend.
My youth doth waste, my knowledge brings forth toys,
My wit doth strive those passions to defend,
Which for reward spoil it with vain annoys.
I see my course to lose myself doth bend:
I see and yet no greater sorrow take,
Than that I lose no more for Stella's sake (XVIII).

Astrophil next main abuse of reason comes about when he rebels against it. He sets reason against virtue and tries to convince virtue to break up with him and divide property with him if it continuous to work against his passion instead of using wit to strengthen virtue:

A strife is grown between Virtue and Love,
While each pretends that Stella must be his:
Her eyes, her lips, her all, saith Love, do this
Since they do wear his badge, most firmly prove.
But Virtue thus that title doth disprove:
That Stella (oh dear name) that Stella is
That virtuous soul, sure heir of heav'nly bliss,
Not this fair outside, which our hearts doth move;
And therefore, though her beauty and her grace
Be Love's indeed, in Stella's self he may
By no pretense claim any manner place.
Well, Love, since this demur our suit will stay,
Let Virtue have that Stella's self; yet thus
That Virtue but that body grant to us (LII).

Virtue should submit to passion; or it should be banished with Stella's soul. Astrophil's abuse of reason reiterates itself in its various forms in other sonnets in *Astrophil and Stella*, and these sonnets end with Astrophil in a paradox, for his passions still distress his virtuous devotion to Stella. Astrophil encounters reality that his love will be unconsummated because he has no other alternative but to accept defeat at the hands of Stella's constant virtue. It displays a small indication that though he remains distress by conflicting emotions, Astrophil begins to recover from his confusion. Astrophil's mind begins to clear and he meditates the active life again:

Sweet, for a while give respite to my heart,
Which pants as though it still should leap to thee,
And on my thoughts give thy lieutenancy
To this great cause, which needs both use and art (CVII 5-8).

Astrophil learns something from his experience although he does not escape its frustrations and depressions. Possibly, he is aware of himself better in present situation and goes towards that end which is "virtuous action, the end of earthly learning" (*Apology* 23).

Astrophil's story is a mere particularization of the generalized fore-conceit that Sidney sets out to impress on the reader. The poet is inspired to labor not to "tell you what is or is not, but what should or should not be" (*Apology* 45). Sidney expects the reader to see beyond the experience of a sad situation wherein the reader know Astrophil is fated to be overcome by Stella's virtues, and to realize his message "teacheth the uncertainty of the world and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded, that maketh us know" (*Apology* 45). Sidney's description of Astrophil as a tormented and introspective character is notably effective for the reader too see the array of feelings and the mental confusion to which the reader relate. In delighting the reader to teach them his moral fore-conceit, Sidney accomplishes a perfect task. He gives feelings a visible form in words that make the reader understand the troubled feelings. Sidney wants to convey to the reader that "true lively knowledge" (*Apology* 28) that only poetry can provide for the reader "an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much as that other doth" (*Apology* 27). Basically, the reader are taken inside Astrophil to share in all of his responses, and in doing so the reader can

see things vividly as if they were present, to make us participate in their life. . . Place, objects, and mood unite to create a poetry, which is immediately persuasive and which expresses the power of that 'inward touch' Sidney and Astrophil found lacking in the lyrics of other courtly poets (Rudenstine 227).

It is possible that Sidney composed *Astrophil and Stella* to represent that 'speaking picture', that poetic fusion of moral abstractions with actual characters, which teaches and delights the reader. Sir Philip Sidney introduces a two-part speaking picture to display what passion does to a man when it disrupts his mundane life and renders him distraught and sleepless, and what the person is like who is controlled and balanced with that perfect harmony between reason and passion. Astrophil is painted with darkness, night, sorrow and chaos, whereas Stella is painted with light, radiance, alabaster white and other vivid colours, all of which indicates her controlled, calm, harmonious stance. Astrophil's unfavourable description is illustrated in sonnet 99:

When far-spent night persuades each mortal eye,
To whom nor art nor nature granted light,
To lay his then mark-wanting shafts of sight,
Clos'd with their quivers, in sleep's armory;
With windows ope then most my mind doth lie,
Viewing the shape of darkness and delight,
Takes in that sad hue which the inward night
Of his maz'd powers keeps perfect harmony;
But when birds charm, and that sweet air which is
Morn's messenger, with rose enamel'd skies,
Calls each wight to salute the flower of bliss,
In tomb of lids then buried are mine eyes,
Forc'd by their lord, who is asham'd to find
Such light in sense, with such a darken'd mind (IC).

Shortly, *An Apology for Poesy* theorises useful facts in helping the reader to determine Sidney's purpose for composing *Astrophil and Stella*. Not only does *An Apology for Poesy* allow the reader to see the reasons behind Sidney's use of stylistic variations in *Astrophil and Stella*, but also helps the reader in their understanding of the sonnets as a structural whole. The most essential function of *An Apology for Poesy* is that the poetry has to display a moral purpose. This has led to advice for all poets to consider this purpose within their own poetry. It is a fact that Sir Philip Sidney tries to apply the general principles in *An Apology for Poesy* in his composing of *Astrophil and Stella*.

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