

“Freedom Among the Dead”: Greville’s *Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney*

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Fulke Greville’s curiously hybrid text, combining a biography of Sir Philip Sidney with a panegyric on Queen Elizabeth, a history of the Elizabethan age and more general observations on poetics, politics and government, was published as “The Life of the Renowned Philip Sidney” in *The Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke* (1652). As John Gouws notes, this title is “misleading as to both the content and the nature of the work.”¹ Only one of the earlier manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, has a title: “A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney” which refers to Greville’s intention to dedicate his own writings: “tragedies, with some treatises annexed” to the memory of his friend, as a means to “imitate or tread in the steps of so great a leader.”² The tragedies *Alaham* and *Mustapha* are discussed in this volume by Vassiliki Markidou and Brian Cummings respectively, while Robert Appelbaum considers Greville’s political writings and Rachel White’s essay analyses his *Treatie on Humane Learning* and *Treatise on Religion*.

In the manuscript and printed copies of the *Dedication* which have come down to us, the biography of Philip Sidney has been supplemented by the memoir of Queen Elizabeth and commentary by Greville on his own life and his writings in Chapters XIV-XVI.³ The *Dedication* went through several rewritings from its first composition c.1604 through to 1614, with the majority of the text we have now probably completed by 1612.⁴ The *Dedication* can therefore be seen as a lengthy critical introduction to Greville’s own works, placed in the contexts of Elizabethan history, political theory, and a literary tradition with classical origins. The life of Philip Sidney provides an anchor in the *Dedication*. It functions as “a sea-mark” - a landmark to

navigation - which holds all the diverse elements together.⁵ Joan Rees writes that Greville's friendship with Sidney is at the centre of the most powerful "acretive activity" – emotionally and intellectually charged revision and amendment – that characterizes Greville's writing. "What has its origins in a sequence of biographical facts," she argues, "acquires, especially after Sidney's death, an area of associations and significances which reaches far into Greville's political and also his religious experience."⁶ Gary Waller has argued that Greville was "deeply scarred by the Protestant dynamic" and Sidney's death in particular, which caused Greville to question the "secret judgements" of an inscrutable God. "He is uneasily aware that the God Sidney served chose to permit his death."⁷

Greville explicitly states that his long-deceased friend gives him "a kind of freedom even among the dead".⁸ This refers not just to the text's nostalgic reconstruction of English history, but to Greville's rewriting of himself. The title *A Dedication to Philip Sidney* can be taken literally. As well as being a history, a biography and a commentary, it is an autobiographical text in which Greville dedicates *himself* to the memory of his "long since-departed friend" and to mortality.⁹ The opening of the text points out Greville's reversal of the usual form of dedication to a powerful patron whose support will promote the work and the writer in the future. Instead, Greville self-consciously retires, seeking "employment in the safe memory of dead men" rather than "patronage out of hope or fear in the future." He compares himself to Nestor, "delighted in repeating old news of the ages past," and imagines that, if his own treatises are published and believed by future readers, they shall "rise upon the stage when I am not." He will be dead.¹⁰ Greville's "self-respect of dedication" or self-fashioning is therefore not to the living but to the dead. His *Dedication to Philip Sidney* is a work of mourning in which the process of writing and of rewriting to "imitate or tread in the steps" of Sidney redefines the limits of Greville's own

sense of self.¹¹ As Jacques Derrida points out, “funerary speech and writing do not follow upon death; they work upon life in what we call autobiography.”¹²

This essay will argue that the writing process enacts Greville’s own precarious identity in characteristically Protestant terms. In *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler claims that mourning “has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation (perhaps one should say *submitting* to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance,” an uncertainty which makes it futile to “invoke the Protestant ethic” in the face of loss.¹³ Early modern identities were undoubtedly transformed by the precarious religio-political environment of post-Reformation Europe, and the Calvinist doctrine of predestination was troubled, for Greville at least, by a deep sense of uncertainty. I argue that the *Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney* materialises the transformative process of mourning outlined by Butler, in which identity is deconstructed and reconstructed through loss: [S]omething about who we are is revealed, something which delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that these ties constitute what we are, ties or bonds compose us. It is not as if an “I” exists independently over here and then simply loses a “you” over there, especially if the attachment to ‘you’ is part of what composes who ‘I’ am. If I lose you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself. Who am ‘I’ without ‘you’? When we lose some of those ties by which we are constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do.¹⁴

Butler goes on to argue that it is the tie,” the relationality between self and other which constitutes identity, a familiar concept for early modern perceptions of self which we label pre-Cartesian. The relationality put into crisis by loss is carefully rebuilt by Greville’s writing, especially his depictions of friendship and his technique of *prosopopoeia*, as the essay will go on to discuss. Butler’s model is also useful for reading Greville’s multi-faceted text because she

reorients mourning from a private and depoliticizing experience to one which “furnishes a sense of political community” by bringing to the fore “relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility.”¹⁵ Political community and the relative responsibility and dependency of those within it are intimately bound up with Greville’s memorial for the friend he “observed, honoured and loved... so much.”¹⁶

The passion which binds the mourning Greville to Sidney beyond death creates an intersubjective relationship as described by Butler. Verses that Greville composed as an engraving for Sir Philip Sidney’s tomb celebrated “the sympathies of pure sparcks” which “remaineth between the spirits of the living and the dead.” As Sir John Coke remarked to Greville, however, the meaning of these words is “darck and hard to be construed to a literall planie sence.”¹⁷ The same is true of the *Dedication*: although Greville’s love for Sidney is obvious, at the same time the inter-subjective relationship between them which the text seeks to describe and to perpetuate through the act of writing remains mysterious. Reading the dissolution of boundaries between self and other in terms of both personal friendship and religious sympathy helps to illuminate what is at stake. The idea of the friend as another self, “*Amicus alter ipse*” as Erasmus’s adage put it, was part of a Renaissance humanist model of idealised friendship, going back to Pythagoras and to Cicero’s *De Amiticia*.¹⁸ Greville draws on this classical legacy as a metaphor for his bond to Sidney. He describes the “honour of being bred with him from his youth” and of being chosen by the Aeneas-like Sidney “to be his beloved Achates” in the proposed quest to America with Sir Francis Drake.¹⁹ Although Greville always puts himself in second place, finally entreating the reader to “judge honourably of my friend and moderately of me,” the *Dedication* melds their voices, opinions and identities, Greville taking on the authority

of Sidney's voice as his spokesman just as Sidney had reciprocated him in the "freedom of our friendship."²⁰

The classically derived image of equality in friendship invariably had an unsettling political effect when it was used in writings from the hierarchical societies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Laurie Shannon's study *Sovereign Amity* notes.²¹ Freya Sierhuis has sensitively argued that Greville's *Dedication* follows this radical tradition and "employs the language of friendship," strategically, "enlarging its boundaries [and] allowing the reader a glimpse of a more stable, more equal political world."²² In the *Dedication*, intersubjective friendship is characterised as Protestant in nature, underpinned by a perceptible ethos of spiritual and intellectual equality and based in a politically republican ethic of mutual support. Invoking the testimonies of key Protestant figures, Greville pointedly promotes a different kind of sovereignty. He will bring "regnant evidence from the dead" who value "the honour of true worth" much better than those living, who are more likely to profit from discrediting "old friends" in order to promote their own interests in the "markets of selfness," the competitive culture of the present.²³

The opposite of "selfness" is magnanimous intersubjectivity, a surrendering of self to promote the other which is detailed in Sidney's encounters with these Protestant brothers. Greville reports that Sidney is like the wind Zephyrus "giving life where he blew."²⁴ He is taught by the Huguenot scholar Hubert Languet, author of the radical *Vindiciae contra tyrannos: a defence of liberty against tyrants. Or, of the lawfull power of the prince over the people, and of the people over the prince* (1648). Greville depicts a "harmony" of mutual fascination and cultivation between teacher and pupil: "the elder grew taken with a net of his own thread, and the younger taught to lift up himself by a threat of the same spinning."²⁵ William Nassau, the

Protestant Prince of Orange, offers a fuller example of magnanimous and politicized interaction with Sidney and Greville. Michael Gadaletto perceptively argues that Greville's portrait of Orange in the *Dedication* offers a trenchant political critique of the English monarchy and a celebration of the Dutch Republic. Orange, who champions Sidney, is Greville's "ideal hybrid of an older chivalric order centred round action and worth, fused with the republican citizen of the future."²⁶ The nostalgia and idealism of the text must have been especially poignant when it was published in 1652. Viktor Skretkowicz traces how the subtitle of the published text "WITH the Are quotation marks needed here? *true Interest of England as it then stood in relation to all Forrain powers* foregrounds the "immediate relevance" of its political analysis of national and international matters to mid-seventeenth century readers.²⁷

Greville deliberately draws on the double meaning of the now obsolete word "assumpsit" to advertise his technique of *prosopopeia*, assuming the voice of another, and his complex relationship with his subjects as narrator of the *Dedication*. The OED defines "assumpsit" as an undertaking, a contract to another undertaken orally or in writing, not sealed but founded upon a consideration in legal terms. It also meant an assumption, or a taking for granted. Both terms are appropriate for Greville's project in the *Dedication*: his commitment to promoting Sidney's forward-looking Protestant politics, alongside a simultaneous recognition that he, Greville, has assumed (silently taken for granted) the voices of others to promote his own political beliefs in Jacobean England. In Chapter II, for example, he ventriloquizes both the Prince of Orange and Philip Sidney, recounting, firstly, the former's fears for the "dangerous fate which the crown of England, states of Germany and the Low Countries" as Protestant territories, faced from "this active King of Spain."²⁸ A critique of Queen Elizabeth's failure to adequately support the French Protestants "a party raised by God" is neatly reassigned to the Prince of Orange.²⁹ The

unfortunate consequences of Elizabeth's preoccupation with the Ottomans, which has distracted her from "popish and Spanish invisible arts and counsels" in Europe (especially Austria), is also recorded at length as one of William of Orange's concerns.³⁰

Finally, Orange's "free expressing of himself in the honour of Sir Philip Sidney" allows Greville to rehearse the shared feeling amongst forward-looking Protestants, that Sidney was "underemployed under her" and recommend, via Orange, a more active role for "one of the ripest and greatest counsellors of state, in Sir Philip Sidney."³¹ Sidney's refusal to allow Greville to convey this viewpoint to Queen Elizabeth, also ventriloquized and narrated by Greville, must have had immediate political bite if this section was written in early Jacobean London, when Prince Henry personified the revival of those hopes, and a match was contracted between his sister, Princess Elizabeth and Frederick the Elector Palatine. The loss of Protestant hopes in Sidney's early death were tragically repeated when Prince Henry died (after contracting what was probably typhoid fever) on 6th November 1612. Perhaps Greville was keenly aware of the fragility of Protestant aspirations when he recited Sidney's determination to leave "the success to His will that governs the blind prosperities and unprosperities of chance and so works out His own ends by the erring frailties of human reason and affection."³²

Greville goes on to "challenge a kind of freedom, even among the dead" by assuming Sidney's voice and perspective to comment on European affairs.³³ The biographical detail of Sidney's objections to the match proposed between Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou becomes a platform for an itemized list of eleven points of anxieties about a Catholic conspiracy to "steal change of religion" into the kingdom.³⁴ The Duke would use his authority, as a husband over his wife, to metamorphose "our moderate form of monarchy into a precipitate absoluteness," effectively a "tyranny" under which the English people would be reduced "to the

poverty of the French peasants” by taxation.³⁵ The “authors and Fathers” of the Reformed English church would be challenged, and her ministers replaced by “indifferent spirits whose God is this world and the Court their heaven.”³⁶ The “crafty” Duke is imagined taking advantage of what Greville sees as “earth-eyed Common Law” on religious conformity in England, to raise up “superstitious idolatry” nationwide.³⁷ Foreign policy would be affected too in the breaking of alliances with the Protestant rulers in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and the Hanseatic League in the Netherlands. Greville’s interpolations “he discerned,” “(as he said,)” “he did confess,” “he foresaw,” “as he conceived” and “he foresaw and prophesied,” alluding to Sidney, barely cover the vehemence of Greville’s rant against the Catholic threats to the Jacobean court and to the future of the nation.³⁸

As a mourning narrator, Greville is ec-static, meaning outside oneself, in Judith Butler’s understanding of the term: “to be transported beyond oneself by a passion, but also to be *beside oneself* with rage or grief.” Greville’s radical Protestant politics are not the same as Butler’s but the communal “we” of readers and political activists that his text invokes are perhaps not so distant from the community she addresses “those of us who are living in certain ways *beside ourselves*, whether in sexual passion, or emotional grief, or political rage” or all three.³⁹ Greville and Sidney’s political passions and misfortunes are deliberately mirrored in the text. Sidney’s attempt to join Sir Francis Drake’s expedition to America is “imprisoned within the plights of the fortunes” by the Queen’s command, just as Greville was later obliged to retire from the Jacobean court.⁴⁰ Greville’s narrative fantastically supervenes their sense of confinement and elevates them to a “high pinnacle” of transcendent contemplation to overlook “the present map of the Christian world” beneath them.⁴¹ In Chapter VIII Sidney (and Greville) have a panoptic view of “the vast body of this empire resting (as in a dream) upon an immovable centre of self-

greatness,” and, “under this false assumpsit,” failing to take the precautionary measures to counter “the creeping monarchy of Rome (by her arch-instruments the Jesuits).”⁴² As well as self-consciously acknowledging the audacity of assuming this panoptic critical overview, Greville draws attention to the dangers of complacency on the part of the English Protestant governors who “sit at home in their soft chairs playing fast and loose with them that ventured their lives abroad.”⁴³ He goes on to itemize, nation by nation, the problems facing the Protestant community. Sidney, via Greville, forecasts that Spanish ambitions in Austria “would soon multiply unavoidable danger, both to themselves [the Austrian cities] and to us.”⁴⁴ He notes problems in Poland, Denmark, Sweden; observes that the mercenary army of Switzers are “a dangerous body for the soul of Spain to infuse designs into,” punctuation mark inside quotation marks]and, on the bases of these more informed “assumpsits,” punctuation mark inside quotation marks]Sidney “resolves” that an attack on Spain’s source of gold in the New World, or an attack at home in Europe should be mounted.⁴⁵

What justification can Greville claim for assuming to speak for others and for assuming such an authoritative, didactic style? At the most obvious level, he situates his duty to write as a necessary supplement and complement to Sidney’s actions. “[T]he truth is, his end was not writing even while he wrote, nor his knowledge moulded for tables or schools, but both his wit and understanding bent upon his heart to make himself and others, not in words or opinion, but in life and action, good and great.”⁴⁶ *The Dedication* laments that Sidney’s “short life and private fortunes” afforded him little opportunity to fully display the “ingenuity of his nature” and “public affection” in service to his country.⁴⁷ On the shortness of Sidney’s life, Greville has no answer to his own implicit question as to why it should have “pleased God, in this decript age of the world, not to restore the image of her ancient vigour in him otherwise than in a lightning before

death.”⁴⁸ Gary Please delete; mentioned above Waller suggests that “Greville’s Calvinism reads Sidney’s death as God’s harsh but just judgment on England”⁴⁹ and the *Dedication* offers some trenchant criticisms of those governing England for neglecting Sidney’s advice and potential in service. Recording that Sidney “never was magistrate, not possessed of any fit stage for eminence to act upon,” the *Dedication* observes that the “sparks of extraordinary greatness” in Sidney “lay concealed and in a manner smothered up” because they were given no “clear vent” or expression through great office.⁵⁰ The complaints on behalf of Sidney also advertise Greville’s own grievance that his talents have been passed over in the Jacobean court. While Sidney is dead, Greville is left on the stage of the world without opportunities for service in “life and action,” and must therefore turn to words to proclaim Sidney’s virtues to English readers so that “by a right meridian line of their own” they may “learn to sail through the straits of true virtue, into a calm and spacious ocean of human honour.”⁵¹

A Protestant commitment to the word underlies Greville’s confident tone as a prophet for the nation. His and Sidney’s teacher Hubert Languet endorsed the power of Christian subjects, living by “the sword of the spirit only, to wit, the word of God, wherewith St. *Paul* armes all Christians,” to counterbalance the material swords and authority of princes.⁵² Greville’s own prophetic tone in the *Dedication*, sometimes disguised by *prosopopoeia*, translates the situation of Elizabethan England to the Jacobean present from which Greville is writing. He calls Sidney “our unbelieved Cassandra” for his warnings about “this limitless ambition of the Spaniard” and offers an apocalyptic vision of the growing power of the Inquisition “rising out of the old age of superstitious phantasms, utterly to root out all seeds of human freedom,” The “true glass” of insight would prove, according to Sidney (and Greville), “that tyrants be not nursing fathers,” and “no anointed deputies of God, but rather lively images of the Dark Prince.”⁵³ When Civil

War broke out in England, Greville's speech to Parliament in 1643 seemed designed to awaken the English people to resist such tyranny. He argued "we ought to leade our lives according to the rule of Gods Word; and that the Lawes of the Land (being but mans invention) must not check Gods children in doing the worke of their heavenly Father," noting that those who followed this doctrine "will not faint in their duty" to the state.⁵⁴

As well as being memorial, then, Greville's *Dedication* looks prophetically to the future. Its presentation of Sidney's biography and celebration of Elizabethan history encourages the patriotic Protestant reader to "look upon the stage whereon he is an actor, even the state he lives in," and to turn words into action, following Philip Sidney's model.⁵⁵ Greville's idealization of Sidney and of the Elizabethan age whose best virtues he embodies, is assuredly part of a wider nostalgia for what has been lost, as critics have pointed out.⁵⁶ Patrick Crutwell astutely observes that the knights Sidney and the Earl of Essex both appealed, in their own age, to an Elizabethan "Gothick" or nostalgic cult of chivalry which idealized them as figures from a purer, simpler past. Even in the fifteen years between their deaths, perceptions had changed. By 1601, Essex "stood for the 'good old days': hateful modernity had killed him. He died because he was out-of-date. His fate, and Sidney's, are in significant contrast: Sidney dying, in 1586, universally honoured; Essex in 1601, on the scaffold."⁵⁷ Greville's Jacobean perspective intensifies the contrast between the idealized past embodied by these Protestant knights, and the wrongness of the present. He attributes the fall of Essex to those "sect-animals" whose malice makes them manufacture and libellously publish texts "against the state" under Essex's name.

Unsurprisingly, Greville defines their motives as religious: "[H]is power, by the Jesuitical craft of rumour, they made infinite, and his ambition more equal to it; his letters to private men were

read openly by the piercing eyes of an attorney's office, which warrants the construction of every line in the worst sense against the writer."⁵⁸

Justice is perverted and Greville himself is rendered powerless to help because he is "abruptly sent away" to Rochester to guard against "a figurative fleet of danger of nothing by these prosopopeias of invisible rancour."⁵⁹ As is clear from these lines, Greville's passion as a historian is driven by religious zeal. Sir John Coke's letter reminded Greville "it is now as necessarie to have diligent historians as learned divines" and equally necessary "that your historian bee also a divine able to ioyn church & comonwealth together wch Could you please confirm that the spelling of this word is correct? to seperate is to betray."⁶⁰ He also told Greville "(your honor knoweth best) theis tymes neither live, nor govern by honor nor patterns of tymes past," giving voice to a Jacobean nostalgia that was accompanied by a spur to present action: "the chief use of this profession is now the defence of one church and therein of one state."⁶¹ Greville's account of Elizabethan history in the *Dedication* seems to follow Sir John Coke's advice that, in the face of crumbling Catholic authority, Protestant writers should "purse [puruse] them hard" and "so discover their ambition, coteousnes, impostures [,] tyrannies [,] treacheries & al the depths of hel in that Roman gulph" and thus "shew there religion as now it standeth to be incompatible wth Could you please confirm the the spelling of this word is correct? al free minds and estates."⁶² Greville undertakes this task with fervent energy in his account of Elizabethan history in the *Dedication*. He confesses that he wrote the "short memorial" of Queen Elizabeth in Chapters XV, XVI and XVII in a state of mental distress. It was not just "false spirits and apparitions of idle grief" that haunted him after the Queen's death but a sense of alienation from the Jacobean present where "the more discomfortable I found those new revolutions of time to my decayed and disproportioned disabilities."⁶³ He senses that, like Essex, he is out of date. He

acknowledges that he has “ever since been dying to all those glories of life” he enjoyed under “the blessed and blessing presence of this unmatched queen and woman.”⁶⁴ His sense of loss seems to increase his vehemence in praising Elizabeth as a tolerant, wise, but zealous ruler. Queen Elizabeth is a “she-David” determined to repair “the precipitate ruins of our Saviour’s militant church through all her dominions” like the Old Testament king. Not only this, Elizabeth, like David, “ventured to undertake the great Goliath among the Philistines abroad (I mean Spain and the Pope).”⁶⁵

Greville saw writing, both fictional and historical, as a powerful didactic tool. He argued that the “dead images” of Sidney’s *Arcadia* served as a caution against neglect of state matters, through which “the conspiracies of ambitious subalterns” can cause “the ruin of states and princes.”⁶⁶ His own eulogy for Queen Elizabeth I’s Protestant rule is a means “to revive myself in her memory,” to retain a political voice.⁶⁷ This voice is undoubtedly biased; Greville’s strict Calvinism which produces polemic. Nevertheless, by using *prosopopeia* to merge his voice with others, the mourning narrator combines his wish for ethical responsibility and political autonomy with a tangible sense of the inter-dependence of vulnerable human subjects in the collective political sphere. Judith Butler points out that “this way of imagining community affirms relationality not only as a descriptive or historical fact of our formation, but also as an ongoing normative dimension of our political lives, one in which we are compelled to take stock of our interdependence.”⁶⁸ Discursive interdependence becomes a source of strength in the *Dedication*. When Greville acts as substitute for the voices of Sidney and Orange in Chapter II, for example, he appears to efface himself but in fact cleverly creates the illusion of a collective political voice. Having ventriloquised Orange, Greville ventriloquises Sidney arguing that the Queen would not welcome advice on governing her courtiers from a foreign prince such as Orange. Moreover, if

the Queen could not see good enough reasons for promoting Sidney in his actions “daily attending on her,” then Orange’s report would be of little use.⁶⁹ As Gadaletto argues, Greville’s account draws attention to Elizabeth’s damaging lack of the noble skill of “ingenuous recognition,” the ability to perceive Sidney’s worth, which Orange displays so magnanimously. Greville’s exposure of the Queen’s shortcoming is surely part of his wider criticism of absolute sovereignty advocated by James I: “a political system based more upon bonds of idolatrous worship” than upon spiritual and intellectual brotherhood.⁷⁰ Elizabeth’s neglect of Sidney is repeated in the way Greville himself has been passed over. I would argue that a more important point about testimony is also being argued by the Protestant Greville. While Sidney, the man of action, believes wholly in the power of present deeds, Greville shows a subtle and more modern ingenuity, in implicitly suggesting that the pen is mightier than the sword, that the written words “of dead men,” including the *Dedication* and its writer, have greater lasting power as testimonies of worth. As a dedicated Protestant, Greville believes in the power of the word: in the virtue and worth incarnated in Sidney, as witnessed and told as a parable for future ages by Greville himself.

The thunderous warnings about England’s future, based on a historical account of religious divisions from the past, undoubtedly give an Old Testament feel to the narrative of the *Dedication*. However, as Victor Skretkowicz argues, “to a strong Calvinist like Greville, the gospels offer an obviously superior model to the biographer of a Christian hero.” For Greville, Sidney is “a parable through which to illuminate his own times.”⁷¹ The biographical strand of the *Dedication* is gospel-like in its loving celebration of Philip Sidney’s life, in contrast with the broader anti-Catholic bombast elsewhere in the text. The testimony of Sir Henry Sidney, Philip’s father, opens the account by proclaiming him “*Lumen familiae suae*” [the light of our family]

and England soon comes to take him as “a light, or leading star, to every degree within her.”⁷² Sidney’s uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester functions as a John the Baptist figure who, having led the expedition to the Netherlands, “saw” in Sidney “the sun so risen above his horizon that both he and all his stars were glad to fetch light from him.” Dudley finally acknowledges to Greville that it was by Sidney’s natural authority “that he held up the honour of his casual authority” in the campaign.⁷³ Greville as biographer thus functions as an apostle whose words guide the pilgrim readers. The opening pages of the *Dedication* suggests that he is fully aware of the dangers of slipping into a Catholic pattern of hagiography by praising Sidney’s exceptional virtues. He tells readers that in Sidney “the life itself of true worth did (by way of example) far exceed the pictures of it in any moral precepts” written in fiction, that “he himself hath left such an instance in the too short scene of his life as I fear many ages will not draw a line out of any other man’s sphere to parallel it.”⁷⁴ According to Greville, Sidney’s life ironically confounds his own thesis in *The Defence of Poesy* that transcendent virtue belongs in the golden world of fiction rather than the brazen world of real life. Greville deftly differentiates the narrative voice of the *Dedication* from such fictional “characteristical kind of poesy” (3) please shift to end of sentence and add note and presents his praise of Sidney as the truth. His record of Sidney’s active life in the form of “passing fair and well-drawn lines” is a testimony by which “all pilgrims of this life may conduct themselves humbly into the haven of everlasting rest.”⁷⁵

If Greville’s text does have beneficial consequences, these would go some way to resolving what Gary Please delete first name; mentioned above Waller calls the “grim Calvinist paradox” between a belief in predestination and the necessity for “continual activity” within the corrupt world as a test of one’s election. Waller says Greville “could not escape the responsibility of public duty, even in an unredeemable world.”⁷⁶ Writing the parable of Sidney’s

life, even from retirement, was a “continual activity” and public duty of sorts. In Chapter III, Greville makes an explicit intervention in the narrative to say

For the sincere affection which I bear to my prince and country, my prayer to God is that his [Sidney’s] worth and way may not fatally be buried with him, in respect that both before his time, and since, experience hath published the usual discipline of greatness to have been tender of itself only, making honour a triumph, or rather trophy, of desire set up in the eyes of mankind either to be worshipped as idols or else, as rebels, to perish under her glorious oppressions.⁷⁷

Far from being a fashionable celebration of Sidney’s greatness due to his birth or riches (or, indeed, an idolatrous piece of Catholic hagiography), Greville’s *Dedication* will celebrate “true worth” and “noble actions.”⁷⁸ Ultimately, however, Greville is acutely aware that his written monuments to Sidney or to Queen Elizabeth are not immortal or finally of value in the religious context of divine judgement and eternity. In Chapter XII he self-consciously announces the abrupt ending of his account of Sidney’s life: “to suit with the more equally with his fortunes, I will cut off his actions – as God did his life – in the midst, and so conclude with his death.”⁷⁹ Greville’s bleak recognition that he cannot understand why “it pleased God” to determine Sidney’s early death is registered candidly in Chapter III.⁸⁰ Greville cannot “complain of God” for taking away a person of such “exorbitant worthiness,” but, left behind in the world of “our corruptions,” he does not stop mourning.⁸¹ He displaces his own anger and bewilderment into the mouth of the Catholic Bishop of Mendoza who expresses sympathy for “the poor widow” England who has been bereaved of the “eminent spirit” that was Sidney “by the hands of a villain.”⁸² Greville cannot call God a villain but, in the unlikely ally of the Bishop, *prosopopeia*

gives a him another ecstatic voice in which to confess (and simultaneously condemn) his heretical view and the sexual passion he felt for Sidney. Greville's grief makes him "the poor widow," beside himself in a mixture of yearning, political rage, and despair. Pessimism rather than hope is the dominant tone in the *Dedication*. Greville's text, perhaps as a symptom of his religious uncertainty, deconstructs itself: confident in its purpose to witness Sidney's worth for ages to come, it simultaneously acknowledges the insufficiency of words to create immortality. As Derrida noted in his *Memoirs for Paul de Man*, "We cannot write what we do not wish to erase. We can only promise it in terms of what will always be erased."⁸³ Greville asks "no exemption" from the "common fortunes of books" whose life depends not on their authors but on the "grace and capacity" of future readers.⁸⁴

In the knowledge that his writing cannot provide certainty for the future, in this world or the next, all that remains for Greville is the truth of his enduring love for Sidney. This passion and dedication annihilates his sovereign subjectivity, reconstituting it across temporal, spatial and mortal boundaries. As I have discussed, Greville's skilful use of *prosopopoeia* merges his own voice with that of Sidney to perpetuate the values he believes Sidney held and he, Greville, continues to hold in the corrupted world of the seventeenth-century. It is a playful and liberating form of intersubjectivity through which Greville counters "these prosopopoeias of invisible rancour" made by the "Jesuitical craft of rumour" against the Protestant ideals personified by Sidney.⁸⁵ Although Greville does not claim to speak with Sidney in the Catholic sense of talking with the dead as spirits or ghosts, the *Dedication* is a textual version of haunting where Sidney's presence is self-consciously invoked through words. The figure of Sidney allows Greville to cross temporal boundaries. As Gavin Alexander's account of the text brilliantly elucidates: "Sidney never dies for Greville but lives on his mind, evolving and mutating as Greville's life

and intellect move on and develop. The events of Sidney's life are always present for Greville, overlaid on to his own present." Thus the Sidney resurrected by the text is strangely omnipresent "he has always been there and is always the same."⁸⁶

Victor Please delete first name; mentioned above Skretkowicz refers to the text as a "confession,"⁸⁷ and perhaps its most touching words are when Greville tells the reader "I ingenuously confess that it delights me to keep company with him even after death esteeming his actions, words and conversation the daintiest treasure my mind could lay up."⁸⁸ It is finally a personal rather than a theological truth that sustains Greville's faith. His writings are "monuments of true affection between us, whereof, you see, death hath no power."⁸⁹ Greville's dedication and *Dedication* to Philip Sidney, his love and his writing, is the lifeline of faith that takes him beyond uncertainty and affords him "freedom among the dead."⁹⁰

Notes

¹ John Gouws, ed., *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), xiii.

² *A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney*, in *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, ed. John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 89-90. References are to page numbers in this edition.

³ For detailed discussion of the manuscripts and dating see Gouws, *Prose Works*, xv-xxiii.

⁴ Gouws, xxiii.

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- ⁵ Greville, *Dedication*, 4.
- ⁶ Joan Rees, *Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, 1554-1628: A Critical Biography* (London: Routledge, 1971), 45.
- ⁷ Gary Waller, *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2013), 126, 131.
- ⁸ Greville, *Dedication*, 4.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 3
- ¹⁰ Greville, *Dedication*, 3-4, 132.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3, 89.
- ¹² Jacques Derrida, *Memoires for Paul De Man*, revised edition, trans. Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava and Peggy Kamuf (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 22.
- ¹³ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 21, cf Derrida *Memoires*, 28.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* 22.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Greville, *Dedication*, 4.
- ¹⁷ These comments were included in a letter from Sir John Coke to Greville written c.1615 as Norman Farmer Jr argued in "Fulke Greville and Sir John Coke: An Exchange of Letters on a History Lecture and Certain Latin Verses on Sir Philip Sidney," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 33 (1970), 217-36.
- ¹⁸ Desiderus Erasmus, *Proverbes or Adagies with newe addications of thie Chiliardes of Erasmus*, trans. Richard Taverner (London, 1539), notes "Frendshyp (sayth pythagors) is equality & al one mynde or wyll, and my frende is as who shuld say an other I." sigs. C5-C5v. See also Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Laelius De Amiticia* (44BC) trans. John Harrington, *The Book of freendship of Marcus Tullie Cicero* (London, 1550).
- ¹⁹ Greville, *Dedication*, 44.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 155, 44. Same as above
- ²¹ Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).
- ²² Freya Sierhuis, "Friendship and Freedom of Speech in the Work of Fulke Greville," in *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 139.
- ²³ Greville, *Dedication*, 13.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ²⁶ Michael Gadaletto, "'Prince and No-Prince': William of Orange and the Politics of Friendship in Greville's *Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney*," *Sidney Journal* 35: (2017) Special Issue: Fulke Greville and the Arts, ed. Freya Sierhuis and Brian Cummings, 95-118, 115.
- ²⁷ Viktor Skretkovicz, "Greville, Politics and the Rhetorics of *A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney*," *Sidney Journal*, 19:1 (2001), 103. Gadaletto notes one such reader in Marchamont Needham who cites Greville's portrait of the Prince of Orange in the *Dedication* as a model of republican liberty (117-18).
- ²⁸ Greville, *Dedication*, 14.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 16
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 17.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 18.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29, 30, 33.
- ³⁹ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, 24.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 48.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 52.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 50, 53.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 24-5.

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- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 23. “her” refers to the world. i.e. Sidney was a short-lived image of the world’s “ancient vigour”.
- ⁴⁹ Waller, *English Poetry*, 131.
- ⁵⁰ Greville, *Dedication*, 24, 7-8.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 12, 4.
- ⁵² Hubert Languet, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos: a defence of liberty against tyrants. Or, of the lawfull power of the prince over the people, and of the people over the prince.* (London, 1648).
- ⁵³ Greville, *Dedication*, 68.
- ⁵⁴ Clarendon, Edward, *Tvvo speeches made in the House of Peeres, on Munday the 19th. of December, for, and against accomodation. The one by the Earl of Pembroke, the other by the Lord Brooke. The latter printed by the desire of the House of Commons* (London, 1643), 7.
- ⁵⁵ Greville, *Dedication*, 135.
- ⁵⁶ Joan Rees summarizes these views, noting “It is often observed that the views on politics attributed to Sidney are infected by hindsight, and that the account of Elizabeth’s rule is shaped to offer parallels to that of James” Joan Rees “Past and Present in the Sixteenth Century: Elizabethan Double Vision,” *Trivium*, 20 (1985), 112.
- ⁵⁷ Patrick Crutwell, *The Shakespearean Moment and its Place in the Poetry of the C17th Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), 35.
- ⁵⁸ Greville, *Dedication*, 93.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, 94.
- ⁶⁰ Farmer, “Fulke Greville and Sir John Coke,” 221.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 220
- ⁶² Ibid., 221.
- ⁶³ Greville, *Dedication*, 130.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 129.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 98-9.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 8
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 131.
- ⁶⁸ Judith Butler, *Precairous Life*, 27.
- ⁶⁹ Greville, *Dedication*, 17.
- ⁷⁰ Gadaleta, “Prince and No-Prince”, 113-15.
- ⁷¹ Skretkovicz, “Greville, Politics and Rhetorics,” 120-1.
- ⁷² Greville, *Dedication*, 5.
- ⁷³ Ibid., 18.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 76, 3.
- ⁷⁶ Waller, *English Poetry*, 126.
- ⁷⁷ Greville, *Dedication*, 23.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 25.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 76.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 23.
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Ibid., 21.
- ⁸³ Derrida, *Memoires*, 123
- ⁸⁴ Greville, *Dedication*, 135.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 94.
- ⁸⁶ Gavin Alexander, *Writing After Sidney The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 243.
- ⁸⁷ Skretkovicz, “Greville, Politics and Rhetorics”, 107.
- ⁸⁸ Greville, *Dedication*, 71.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 86.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., 4.