WRITING HERBERT WRITING SIDNEY:
MARY SIDNEY HERBERT, LITERARY PATRONAGE,
AND EARLY MODERN TEXTUAL PRODUCTION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

ENGLISH

MAY 2008

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ABSTRACT

“Writing Herbert Writing Sidney: Mary Sidney Herbert, Literary Patronage, and Early Modern Textual Production” analyzes constructions of Herbert and Sidney to identify rhetorical strategies and critical approaches that both affirm Herbert’s authority as a writer, patron, and editor and that undermine representations of her as an important literary figure. While many twentieth-century scholars construed Herbert’s role in the publication of the Sidney texts as either negligible or intrusive, attention to the ways in which these texts functioned as signs in what Barthes describes as a “second-order signifying system” contributes to a greater appreciation of Herbert’s influence on British culture and of the process through which texts are appropriated to serve social, political, and economic interests. Through her use of literary conventions, print publication, and social display, Herbert redefined Sidney’s role in Elizabethan mythology. By identifying him with the aristocratic ideal, Herbert contributed to her family’s increased wealth, status, and power, and validated England’s hierarchical class structure by mystifying its operations and valorizing its elites.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation problematizes the prevalence of the single-author paradigm, arguing that as Sidney’s patron and editor, Herbert profoundly affected reception of his texts. Chapter 2 proposes that sexism, misconceptions about sixteenth-century patronage, and investments in the male heroic tradition have affected representations of Herbert’s and Sidney’s relative roles in the Wilton coterie. Chapter 3 considers Herbert’s agency in textual meaning-making. By examining
continental and domestic models for the coterie, this chapter supports the contention
that Herbert, as its patron, significantly affected both the direction and the style of its
literary production, including the introduction of continental genres. Chapter 4
provides close readings of Herbert’s poems “Even Now That Care” and “Angell
Spirit” that demonstrate her use of hagiography and feudal allusions to establish
Sidney’s mythic stature and to identify her own persona with it. Through her use of
syntax, zeugma, and ellipsis, Herbert appropriates the cultural capital she assigns him;
in the process, she affirms and enlarges sixteenth-century notions of women’s
heroism. The epilogue broadens the discussion of textual appropriations to include L.
Rigoberta Menchú and the late twentieth-century debate about literature.
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Preface

This dissertation began as an exploration of Mary Sidney Herbert's and Philip Sidney's versification techniques, the correspondences between the psalm and sonnet as lyric forms, and the similarities and differences between the erotic experiences constructed by these forms. However, in the course of my preliminary research, I arrived at a number of questions and concerns that substantively altered my focus. These two early modern writers, who were also siblings, are almost inevitably paired. As a feminist, I was troubled by the extent to which Philip Sidney's status both as a literary icon and as a cultural myth continues to shape contemporary constructions of Mary Sidney Herbert and of her work. Reading page after page of twentieth and twenty-first century scholarship, I became increasingly frustrated with criticism that overlooks Herbert's role in the tradition, subsumes her work into Sidney's, or makes claims for her that are then undermined through ineffectual rhetorical strategies. My most urgent objective, I decided, was to better understand how and why efforts to write women into literary history so often have the effect of seemingly reinforcing the standards through which women traditionally have been accorded secondary status.

As I continued my research, I came to believe that the relatively limited interest in and appreciation for Herbert's work was the outcome of a number of different factors, including twentieth and twenty-first century literary tastes and values. Herbert's extant body of work is limited, consisting for the most part of translations, and she positions much of her writing as a completion of her brother's
work. She evidently limited her choice of subject matter in response to what Wendy Wall describes as “genre-specific interdictions on women’s writing” (311),¹ and Herbert’s surviving texts, whether “original” writing or translation, address subject matter and make use of literary conventions that interest contemporary readers less than those that construct other emotional and psychological experiences, most notably erotic love. Critics rate Herbert highest for her technical skills, and these are unlikely to engage anyone but scholars and other poets; perhaps not even many of them. But there are other reasons that Herbert’s participation in early modern textual production and her influence on the Anglophone literary tradition are not as widely recognized as they perhaps should be. These factors include her subject position as the sister of a major British writer and her involvement in her brother’s work as editor, collaborator, and de facto literary executor, historical and biographical contexts which are crucial to their textual production and in which Herbert has most often been devalued, at times in order to maintain focus on Sidney as the more appropriate subject of literary history and criticism.

But if in the course of researching and writing this dissertation I was frustrated by Herbert’s frequent construction as a literary “little sister” instead of as an influential early modern writer and editor, I was even more confused by conflicting representations of her as a literary patron. Although Herbert had been celebrated as a major patron by many twentieth and twenty-first century critics and by early modern

¹ Wall cites the Dedication to Margaret Tyler’s 1578 translation of A Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood as a source on early modern gender policing of specific literary genres (310-11).
literary figures, in the late twentieth century her patronage activities were reassessed and demoted to secondary status.² The model of literary patronage that provided the context for this assessment seemed riddled with inconsistencies, and I had difficulty conceptualizing it. In an effort to better understand the role patronage played in early modern textual production, I conducted extensive research in this area, including among my sources social historians as well as literary critics. In the process, I came to doubt the connotations of the term “literary patronage” as it had traditionally been employed by literary scholars and to query critical analyses that construct the practice as somehow distinct from the operations of the social network whose primary purpose, as historian Penry Williams explains, was to supply personnel for posts and offices throughout the kingdom and to administer the day-to-day functions of governance (120-24). I concluded that the model of literary patronage through which twentieth and twenty-first century critics had represented both Sidney and Herbert as major patrons did not always apply in early modern England and that to represent Herbert’s patronage as a continuation of Sidney’s is misleading. While Sidney’s influence as a literary model pervades the early modern tradition, Herbert in her roles as patron and as Sidney’s literary executor profoundly affected his construction as a cultural icon and, as a consequence, his place in literary history. To a large extent, it was Herbert who determined the ways in which his texts and her own would be read,

² This reassessment is the primary focus of Mary Ellen Lamb’s dissertation and some of her early criticism; her thesis is that evaluations of both Herbert’s and Sidney’s patronage based on early modern book dedications are likely to be inflated, since these appeals for financial assistance or position seek to influence the recipients by constructing them as ideal patrons. Lamb’s dissertation and an essay on this topic she published in 1982 are both titled “The Countess of Pembroke’s Patronage.”
valued, and understood for centuries to come, and it was Herbert who “wrote” the Sidney familiar to literary historians into the British literary tradition.

Yet another factor which contributes to a limited understanding and inadequate representation of early modern women’s active participation in discourse communities is critical practices that privilege aspects of textual production which have been and to some extent still are subject to gender policing. Critical constructions of literary value as closely associated with the male heroic ideal is one such paradigm. Just as significant is the prevalence of the single-author paradigm in the analysis of early modern texts, which has resulted in a primary focus on the writer’s role in textual meaning making. The outcome has been studies that exaggerate writers’ intellectual independence and that under-represent the extent of patrons’ influence on the construction of meaning in the texts dedicated to them. While I value the single-author study as one source of necessary information about textual production, I argue that the use of complementary critical approaches is needed to increase understanding of the ways in which texts influence social and political history. Chapter 1 of this dissertation explores the history of the single-author paradigm, its influence on the modern critical tradition, and the postmodern attempts to critique, broaden, re-conceptualize and, in some cases, displace it. Chapters 2 and 3 closely examine representations of Herbert and Sidney as patrons and writers in part to identify some of the assumptions about social and cultural roles that have affected critical representations of them. Chapter 4 employs the single-
author study as a means of examining the rhetorical strategies at play in Herbert’s
textual constructions of herself and Sidney.

My analysis of Herbert’s strategies as a writer, a patron, and an editor has
enlarged my understanding of the ways in which populations that are nominally
excluded from discourse communities nonetheless actively participate in them. These
insights increased my concern that the dominance of the single-author paradigm as an
approach to literary criticism not only directs attention away from other equally
important aspects of textual production, but also from the roles texts play in cultural
interventions and the ways in which these interventions affect social and political
history. As I closely considered Herbert’s use of her own and Sidney’s texts to
aggrandize her own family in ways that naturalized the British aristocratic ideal and
closely associated the Sidney name with it, I wondered to what extent a primary focus
on authorship has deferred investigations into the interests served by promulgation of
cultural fantasies, some of which mystify the operations of oppressive social and
political hierarchies. This concern is no less relevant to analyses of twenty-first
century art and entertainment. In the Epilogue to this dissertation, I draw on Barthes’
conception of myth as a metalanguage or “second-order signifying system” to discuss
both Herbert’s textual appropriations and those that played such a large role in the
late twentieth-century debate about literature. By making visible some of the practices
that have contributed to minimizing representations of women’s roles in early modern
textual production and the appropriation of texts to promote self-interested
ideological agendas, I hope to contribute to ongoing efforts by feminist scholars to
promote responsible criticism through the examination and re-evaluation of analytical approaches.

I appreciate my dissertation committee’s patience and support as I wrote and researched myself out of one focus and into another. It has been an intellectual journey that has broadened my understanding of the different roles literature plays in culture without decreasing my investments in literature as an art form. In the process, I have learned to reconcile the very different demands literary and cultural studies place on students and scholars at this juncture in literary history, and for me that alone has made the process worthwhile.
Chapter 1

Writing Sidney/Writing Herbert: The Single-Author Paradigm and Critical Constructions of Sir Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke

Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, her brother, Sir Philip Sidney, and the texts on which they collaborated have long been the focus of literary studies. Since the 1590s, Sidney has been recognized as a major figure in the English-speaking literary tradition and as a model for other contemporary or near-contemporary writers, while twentieth-century critics have celebrated his role in initiating continental high-culture genres into English and in developing a specifically English elite literary tradition. In Sir Philip Sidney (1977), A. C. Hamilton described Sidney as “the seminal writer of the Elizabethan age” while Jan van Dorsten claimed that “he provided the ambience and the inspiration that was to initiate one of the greatest periods in European literary history” (Hamilton 10; Van Dorsten, “Elizabethan Literary Patronage” 200). With the impact of cultural studies approaches on the direction and purpose of literary criticism, the Sidney texts have become a site for explorations into the role of literature in early modern culture: in The Making of Sir Philip Sidney (1998), for example, where Edward Berry explores

3 In his Arte of English Poesie (1589), George Puttenham lists Sidney among a “crew of Courtly makers Noble men and Gentlemen of her Maiesties owne seruauntes, who have written excellently well” (49), providing extracts from Sidney’s poetry as models of specific rhetorical “ornaments.” In his Preface to the first, pirated edition of Astrophil and Stella (1591), Thomas Nashe compares Sidney to Apollo and Orpheus, lamenting that Sidney’s work had been for so long “imprisoned in Ladies casks” (224-25). H. R. Woudhuysen affirms that Sidney’s poems appear in thirteen contemporary or near-contemporary manuscript miscellanies as well as seven late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century print publications (245).
Sidney’s textual self-representations in the context of Stephen Greenblatt’s ideas about the uses of literary writing in social self-constructions.\(^4\)

While attention to Sidney as an author and as a patron has been fairly consistent, critics and historians have treated Mary Sidney Herbert very differently: at times applauding her work, at others denouncing it, and at still others, ignoring it almost completely.\(^5\) Although Herbert was recognized during the 1590s as a significant literary figure, public attention to her diminished when her son William Herbert acceded to his father’s title in 1601 and assumed her role as the family literary patron (Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 184). Even so, Herbert’s writing was well known to and evidently respected by late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century coterie readers (Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan, Introduction 47). Her poetry was praised by contemporaries like John Donne and Samuel Daniel (Brennan, “Psalms Date” 34), and the Sidney Psalms, which is largely her work, was a major influence on the seventeenth-century religious lyric (Martz 273; Rienstra 84). According to Gary Waller, her reputation as a writer remained current for fifty years subsequent to her death in 1621 (“Gendered Reading” 337). In the first half of the twentieth century, however, attention to Herbert as an early modern literary figure occurred primarily in the context of Sidney studies. A growing interest in her as an author in her own right

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\(^5\) Literary critics and historians have for the most part referred to Mary Sidney Herbert either by her birth name or by her title, and my use of her full family names or the cognomen “Herbert” may at first seem awkward or unfamiliar to some readers. However, the use of a less familiar designation is well suited to the focus of this dissertation, which is to analyze cultural constructions of Herbert and the interests they serve.
is evidenced by publication in 1912 of Frances Young’s book-length biographical study, *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke*; in 1963 of John Rathmell’s edition of the entire psalm sequence, *Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke*; and in 1979 of Waller’s *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke: A Critical Study of her Writings and Literary Milieu*. Waller’s treatment of Herbert is at times sexist, condescending, and predicated on anachronistic gender assumptions, but he makes strong claims for her technical skills and, more tentatively, for her influence on seventeenth-century poets like John Donne and George Herbert (*Critical Study* 198, 200, 226-29). These claims, and others like them, illustrate the process of critical re-evaluation that was slowly taking place. For example, after citing Alexander Grosart’s acknowledgement that Herbert’s psalm translations are “‘infinitely in advance of her brother’s in thought, epithet, and melody’” (xi), Rathmell extends to Herbert’s psalm paraphrases the assessment Louis Martz accords Sidney’s alone: that they are an “‘attempt to bring the art of the Elizabethan lyric into the service of

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6 The only print version of the entire sequence prior to Rathmell’s was a limited edition of 250 copies published by the Chiswick Press in 1823.

7 See my chapter 3, “Contexts and Constructions of Sidney’s Patronage and the Wilton Coterie,” for a more detailed analysis of Waller’s constructions of Herbert and her work. In “The Countess of Pembroke and Gendered Reading,” Waller acknowledges that his *Triumph of Death and Other Unpublished and Uncollected Poems by Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (1977) and *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke: A Critical Study of her Writings and Literary Milieu* (1979) participate in a tradition of “masculinist critical discourse” which he says is characterized by “a general blindness to the received, seemingly gender-independent criteria of traditional scholarship and criticism” (329). He asserts the importance of theorizing his own criticism in ways that acknowledge gendered reading, claiming that his essay is a “record of such (if as yet partial) change” (331). The essay, however, illustrates the difficulty in overcoming the constraints associated with gendered reading in its continued deference to characterizations of Herbert that insist on her passivity and deference to male authority at the expense of literary and historical evidence of her agency and her initiative. See chapter 4, “Mary Sidney Herbert’s Self-Representations, 1590-1599,” for an analysis of rhetorical strategies through which Herbert foregrounded her agency in writing, revising, and disseminating the Sidney Psalms.
psalmody" (xxi). By 1990, interest in Herbert and her work had increased to such an extent that a bibliography of early modern women writers devoted twenty-four pages to her. The entries include Margaret Hannay’s exhaustively researched biography, Philip’s Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke; and Mary Ellen Lamb’s study, Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle; both of these books also appeared in 1990.

There are a number of reasons for the extended periods of critical inattention to Herbert’s writing and to her importance as a writer, patron, and literary model. This neglect occurred in part because her extant literary output is limited, consisting of three or four “original” poems, translations of three early modern texts, and verse metaphorases of psalms 44-150. Although what remains of Herbert’s literary writing is now recognized for its technical virtuosity, the bulk of it is translation, a genre that is less highly valued than “original” writing. For some critics, Herbert’s importance as a writer and patron has been overshadowed by her role as literary executor for

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9 Lamb’s study addresses four women writers in the extended Sidney and Herbert families. Herbert is the primary focus of chapter 1, “Pembrokiana and the Bear Whelps: Inscriptions of the Countess of Pembroke” (28-71), and chapter 3, “The Countess of Pembroke and the Art of Dying” (115-141).
10 In the Collected Works (1998), Herbert is credited with three translations; metaphorases of psalms 44-150, some in multiple versions; and authorship of the poems “A Dialogue Betweene Two Shepheards, Thenot and Piers, in Praise of Astrea,” “Even Now That Care,” and “To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Phillip Sidney” (89-91, 102-04, and 110-15). According to Hannay, the poem “The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda” was attributed to Herbert without debate prior to 1912, when the attribution was first contested by Ernest de Selincourt. For a detailed account of the arguments contesting her authorship and Hannay’s responses to them, see Philip’s Phoenix, pp. 63-67. While Hannay claims in Philip’s Phoenix that the “Dolefull Lay” is “the first and weakest” of the poems Herbert wrote in her brother’s memory (63), in their commentary on this poem in Herbert’s Collected Works, editors Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan leave the question unresolved, concluding that Herbert “may have found her poetic voice by singing ‘The Dolefull Lay’” (1: 132). Herbert translated Robert Garnier’s Marc Antoine, Philippe du Plessis Mornay’s Discourse de la Vie et de la Mort, and Petrarch’s Trionfo della Morte.
Philip Sidney, who is one of the period's most valorized male writers. Until the last few decades, Herbert's writing and literary activities were almost invariably constructed as an outcome of her brother's, while her agency has been so closely identified with his at times as to be barely visible. In criticism that pairs two writers, Jonathan Goldberg asserts, the figures constitute what he calls a "literary couple" and are constructed as a set of hierarchical binary terms ("Homoeroticism in Literary History"). Critical perceptions and evaluations that take place within this frame are often skewed to fulfill the expectations set by it, and for much of British literary history Herbert has been represented as Sidney's acolyte. Even critics like Hannay,

11 Sidney's will names his wife, Dame Frances, as his executor (Miscellaneous Prose 151), but does not specify a literary executor. Because Sidney bequeathed his books to his friends Fulke Greville and Edward Dyer (149), Duncan-Jones speculates that this legacy may have included his "manuscripts and personal papers" as well (Courtier Poet 300). When Sidney left England for Flushing in 1585, he gave the draft of the unfinished New Arcadia to Greville for safekeeping (280), and in November 1586 Greville wrote Sidney's father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, to alert him that an authorized edition of Sidney's Old Arcadia had been submitted to the authorities for licensing prior to publication (Woudhuysen 224-25, 416-18). With Walsingham's concurrence, Greville then took control of Sidney's literary legacy, supervising the publication of the first edition of the Arcadia. In this process he was assisted by John Florio and Matthew Gwinne. Herbert's dissatisfaction with this edition may have precipitated her decision to supersede Greville as Sidney's literary executor; she assumed this role as early as 1592 and maintained control of Sidney's texts at least through the 1598 edition of the collected works (Brennan, Literary Patronage 57; Woudhuysen 234). There is some disagreement about her role in the 1613 edition (Woudhuysen 239).

12 In his critical study, Waller lists the pairs of binary terms that position Herbert's literary work as secondary: "Much of her work is of course translation. She wrote no great body of original lyric poetry; she imitated the Psalms. She wrote no prose romance as her niece Lady Wroth was to do; she edited the Arcadia. She wrote no original drama; she translated Garnier's closet-drama Marc-Antoine. Instead of writing her own heroic poem, she translated one of Petrarch's Trionfi; instead of writing an original devotional treatise, she translated one by her brother's friend Philippe de Mornay" (Critical Study 106).

13 In English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century (1986), for example, Waller almost invariably frames Herbert's work in terms of Sidney's. For example, Waller claims that Herbert "devoted most of her adult life to forwarding her brother's cultural ideals and, particularly, after his death, his hopes for the advancement of poetry" (151-52). Some more recent criticism has focused on Herbert's political objectives in publishing Sidney's work and promoting his literary reputation. One example is Davis' essay "Multiple Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke."
Lamb, Rathmell, Barbara Lewalski, and Waller, who make claims for Herbert’s greater agency and for her importance as an independent literary figure, do so in the context of biographical scenarios in which Herbert’s literary activities are an outcome of her devotion to her brother’s memory and her determination to complete his work. These scenarios make appealing narratives and they are supported by a number of contemporary accounts, including Herbert’s own written statements. In this context, however, it is difficult to convincingly represent Herbert’s literary activities as anything other than auxiliary to Sidney’s. But although Herbert describes her work as a continuation of her brother’s and foregrounds his writing and agency at the expense of her own, there are good reasons not to accept these representations at face value. The modesty *topos* was a normative fifteenth- and sixteenth-century writing convention; Sidney almost invariably makes use of it as he opens or introduces his texts, and yet scholars rarely if ever take these statements at face value. Herbert’s deference to her brother’s objectives and her depreciation of her own writing skills can be construed as rhetorical strategies she draws on in part to construct and validate her role as a writer. Lamb contends that the family name authorized public discourse for a number of Sidney women; she says that “for his sister, daughter, niece, and an anonymous poet in his family or circle, Sir Philip Sidney’s name provided a competing discourse enabling authorship” (Gender and Authorship 21). I argue that

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14 Pearl Hofgrefe’s discussion of the Cooke sisters provides an example of a less asymmetrical construction of writers who have been closely associated in the British literary tradition. See my chapter 3, “Contexts and Constructions of Sidney’s Patronage and the Countess of Pembroke’s Circle,” for a comparison of critical representations of Mary Sidney Herbert and the Cooke sisters.
Herbert, through her own writing, her use of her brother's texts, and her constructions of herself and her brother, produced this "competing discourse," which was then available to other early modern women, both those in her own family and others like Aemilia Lanyer who, as Lewalski points out, sought to model themselves on her ("God and Good Women" 210). Herbert's agency and her independence as a writer and as an intellect are evidenced as well by the strategies through which she sought to achieve her objectives, which at times differ significantly from Sidney's. These differences will be addressed at greater length in the chapters that follow.15

Yet another reason that Herbert's importance as a literary figure is still at times undervalued or ignored is that much of her active participation in textual production took place through her roles as a literary patron, a public figure, and an editor. Her interventions into the Sidney texts influenced public reception of them for centuries, but her work has often been overlooked or misconstrued in part because its importance could not be adequately represented through dominant critical approaches like the single-author paradigm. This has been the case despite the fact that more than two-thirds of the psalm translations are her work and that she made and/or approved the editorial decisions that determined the versions of the Arcadia, Astrophil and Stella, and the Sidney Psalms that would be read for the next several centuries. Idealized projections of Sidney as a culture hero, inherited from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century propaganda in part generated by Herbert, have often

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15 See my chapter 4, "Mary Sidney Herbert's Self-Representations, 1590-1599," for a detailed analysis of Herbert's rhetorical strategies in the dedicatory poems that preface the presentation copy of the Sidney Psalms.
predetermined critical perceptions of these texts, directing attention to Sidney’s role as their author and the texts as quasi-religious relics, while directing attention away from the political, social, and economic motives of those who published his work.  

For a feminist scholar, however, Herbert’s interventions into the Sidney texts can be one of their most interesting features.

Recognition of Herbert’s importance in shaping Sidney’s texts has often taken the form of censure, as it does in literary criticism by Albert Feuillerat and William Ringler, Jr., who describe Herbert’s edits of and revisions to the Sidney texts as intrusive and ill-conceived. In the passage that follows, Feuillerat characterizes Herbert’s editing as a perilous trap:

this fascinating lady made no scruple to revise and, as she probably thought, to better the writings of her deceased brother. Hence, the danger of printing, as Sir Philip’s, passages which fell from the pen of Mary. In many cases, it is hopeless to determine how much is due to her collaboration; in others, unauthorized editions fortunately permit us to escape the effects of her revisory spirit. (1: vii)

Feuillerat’s pejorative use of the phrase “fascinating lady” conjures up a vision of Herbert with an apple in one hand and a fig leaf in the other, while the paradisical

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16 Donald Cheney claims that “With the death of Sidney in 1586, the Countess of Pembroke became a significant player in the attempts to define and exploit her brother’s cultural and political capital” (214). Yet as recently as 1987, Alan Hager could write an article that addressed investments in the Sidney legend without discussing Herbert or her role in constructing it. See “The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney’s Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader.”

17 These comments are taken from the Prefatory Note to Feuillerat’s edition of Sidney’s Complete Works (1922-39). The Prefatory Note is dated “10 November 1911” (x).
fields of Sidney’s originary text recede into the distance. Though perhaps less frightened by Herbert’s breach of textual gender boundaries, Ringler is no less angry. Like Feuillerat, he negates Herbert’s status as a literary writer and editor in gender-inflected terms, describing her as “an inveterate tinkerer who finds it difficult to make up her mind” and suggesting that her revisions to her brother’s poems were made by “trial-and-error” (Sidney, Poems 502, 504). Colm Freer, who contests Grosart’s claim that Herbert’s psalm versifications in some ways surpass Sidney’s (90), mocks first her imagery (93), then her metrics (96), and finally her syntax, concluding that “When she strikes on a natural phrasing in her psalms, it is as much by accident as design” (97).

The overt hostility of these and other mid-twentieth-century male critics toward Herbert’s interventions into Sidney’s texts and the efforts by some of them to eradicate traces of the collaborations that have determined readers’ experiences of the Sidney texts for centuries suggest deep-seated cultural anxieties. Sidney’s writings have exerted tremendous influence on the British literary tradition, and the mid-twentieth-century effort to “restore” his work to a mythical originary state by eradicating Herbert’s edits, revisions, and completions implies a commitment to the single-author paradigm that takes precedence over the text’s role in British literary history. The sexist overtones and attitudes which imbue much of the critical language in which discussions of Herbert’s interventions take place suggest latter-day gender

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18 Ringler’s assessment of Herbert’s revisions to Sidney’s poems was published in 1962.
19 Freer’s remarks were published in 1972.
policing: an attempt to re-inscribe, whether consciously or inadvertently, early modern cultural paradigms that deny women the authority to construct meaning through writing and, above all, to alter or re-interpret male constructions of meaning.

Much of the impetus behind the recent expansion in Herbert studies comes from feminist scholars. In an essay first published in 1983, Lillian Robinson identified two directions for feminist literary scholarship: “It can emphasize alternative readings of the tradition, readings that reinterpret women’s character, motivations, and actions, and that identify and challenge sexist ideology. Or it can concentrate on gaining admission to the canon for literature by women writers” (214). Publication of Herbert’s writing in the feminist anthologies that appeared in the late 1980s, served the second of these objectives,20 as did Herbert’s inclusion in the Longman Anthology of British Literature (1999), which attempts to “balance” the canon by printing texts by women writers along with canonical texts. In part these anthologies respond to social and political pressures to address issues of representation by acknowledging and recording women’s historical participation in public discourse communities, including literary communities, and by providing a venue in which their voices can be heard.

The addition of women’s texts to a canon constituted on the basis of unexamined assumptions about aesthetic values and cultural importance, however, left unresolved questions about appropriate criteria for canonicity (Robinson 214-15),

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whether for an inherited literary tradition, a specifically women’s literary tradition, or a heterogeneous amalgamation. Changing ideas about the role of literary criticism, including a gradual acceptance of cultural studies perspectives and value systems, eventually validated arguments for the importance of investigations into early modern women’s writing and the strategies through which they gained access to discourse communities, even where traditional literary aesthetic values would not have warranted close attention to the individual texts. It is in part because of these unresolved tensions that Herbert’s writing is still at times undervalued, along with texts by other early modern women, whose writing does not always reflect the criteria for aesthetic value and cultural importance developed in conjunction with and at times in response to the traditional literary canon. One example of these criteria is the text’s association with models of male heroism, either as constructed in the text or as associated with the text’s author: Sidney is one instance of a writer whose association with ideals of male heroism has contributed to the canonical status of his texts. As Alan Hager has demonstrated, representations of Sidney as a military hero and as the “ideal of chivalric heroism and courtesy” continued to affect constructions of him and of his texts well beyond the mid-twentieth century (Dazzling Images 22), these in

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21 Hager also addresses the Sidney legend and the effect of that legend on reading experiences of the Sidney texts in “The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney’s Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader.”
turn affected constructions of Herbert, which are often imbued with the values and attitudes associated with the paradigm.  

One of the few women writers in sixteenth-century England to publish her writing in her own name, Herbert gained access to public discourse communities that attempted to exclude women through strategies that included appropriating her brother’s texts and his public persona in her own self-representations. By closely identifying herself with her dead brother through her extended mourning and public displays of devotion to him, activities which were celebrated in texts written by those who enjoyed or actively sought her patronage, Herbert capitalized on the moral authority that devolved on Sidney through his posthumous construction as a religious martyr and the epitome of English chivalry. Through her skillful use of cultural conventions like the *ars moriendi*, or “art of dying,” Herbert satisfied contemporary gender expectations in ways that paradoxically made it socially acceptable for her to violate them. As Lamb says, “Her representation of her various literary activities as an extended elegy for her famous brother enabled her writing at a time when the boundaries were tightly drawn around women’s public speech or published words”

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22 In “The Exemplary Mirage,” Hager describes the strategies through which Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Sir Francis Walsingham, and others promoted Sidney’s posthumous construction as a Protestant martyr and the ideal Christian knight, along with the motives behind the successful campaign to transmogrify him (45-54). Hager discusses the effect of Sidney’s elevation to legendary status on reader reception of his texts on pp. 58-59.

23 Mary Ellen Lamb explains that Herbert’s self-positioning as an author is validated in part by her participation in the *ars moriendi* tradition. During the early modern period, the “art of dying” was one of the few socially accepted paradigms for women’s heroism. According to Lamb, three of the works Herbert translated engage this cultural tradition: Robert Garnier’s *Marc Antoine*, Philippe du Plessis Mornay’s *Discours de la Vie et de la Mort*, and Petrarch’s *Trionfo della Morte* (Gender and Authorship 115).
(Gender and Authorship 115). Through her successful use of literary traditions like the *ars moriendi* and her self-construction as Sidney’s literary partner, Herbert validated her public discourse in ways that made her participation seem less a violation of cultural norms than a fulfillment of social expectations.

It is Herbert’s constructions of herself and Sidney and the uses to which they have been put that are the primary focus of this dissertation, along with representations of Sidney and Herbert by early modern writers, other historical figures and by the twentieth-and twenty-first-century literary critics and historians who have sought to define Sidney’s and Herbert’s roles in and contributions to the British literary tradition. As Louis Montrose, Leonard Tennenhouse, and Wayne Rebhorn have so effectively demonstrated, self-representations and social performances were an important part of aristocratic social life;²⁴ both Herbert and Sidney appear to have been adept at closely associating themselves with appealing cultural fantasies. During her lifetime, Herbert’s authority as a literary figure derived in part from her constructions of herself and of her dead brother, which she dramatized not only through textual production, but also through personal display and elaborate social play. Herbert’s and Sidney’s constructions of themselves and of each other are so effective that they continued to influence British culture, most specifically its notions of gentility, well into the twentieth century; these projections

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²⁴ See Louis Montrose, “Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship” and The Purpose of Playing; Wayne Rebhorn, Courtly Performances; and Leonard Tennenhouse, Power on Display.
of the aristocratic ideal have profoundly affected how their texts have been read and interpreted.

In analyzing these representations, this dissertation also self-consciously contributes to them. Critical constructions of women writers and of their work are the means through which scholars write women back into historical events and conversations in which they participated in varying ways and to different degrees, but from which historical records and literary representations often exclude them. My object is to contribute to the body of feminist criticism that seeks to counteract or supplant representations that minimize women’s roles in and influence on literary history through representations of Herbert that are both credible and consistent with historical evidence, by which I mean representations that neither aggrandize her through improbable claims nor that denigrate her or other women through an unexamined acquiescence in traditional assumptions about their inferior intellectual capacities and lack of initiative and/or competence. Representations of historical figures can only be layered over previous representations, including those produced during the subject’s lifetime; this process of accretion can be figured as a palimpsest, in which one text is wholly or partly visible through others that overwrite it. This dissertation constructs yet another layer in the centuries-long process of writing Sidney and writing Herbert.

As I researched and drafted the chapters on Herbert and Sidney that follow, I came to believe that one of the greatest obstacles I faced in analyzing and adequately describing their roles in the production and reception of the texts so closely associated
with them was the undue emphasis accorded the single-author paradigm in the literary criticism of the last two centuries. A disproportionate focus on individual authorship has at times deflected attention from the importance of patrons' roles in textual production, whether in directing or eliciting content, style, and ideological perspective, or in influencing reader reception. Patronage was one of the few socially sanctioned ways in which early modern women could participate in public discourse. It was not only acceptable, but expected, that women from prominent families would take active roles in certain kinds of patronage interactions. These included marriage negotiations; intercession for suitors seeking posts, financial assistance, or pardon; and the appeals for patronage that occurred through the medium of book dedications. Although publication of women's writing was considered unsuitable, "literary patronage" provided a venue for their active or passive participation in textual production. While Sidney wrote the bulk of the texts on which he and his sister collaborated, as his patron Herbert played a major role in determining how they would be read. Through patronage, social display, and an aggressive use of print and manuscript publication, Herbert succeeded in redefining Sidney's posthumous legend to better serve the social, political, and economic interests of the extended Sidney and Herbert families. Through the use of literary theory that addresses the role authorship plays in Western culture, it is possible to explicate the ways in which Herbert

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25 The distinction between "active" and "passive" patronage is addressed in my chapter 2, "Contexts and Constructions of Sidney's Patronage and the Wilton Coterie."
intervened to help determine how Sidney would be “written” into British literary history.

In the essay “What Is an Author?” Michel Foucault contends that “the author” is a cultural construct that determines the “meaning and value” assigned to a text (1629). Foucault distinguishes between the writer and the cultural construct to which the text is attributed through his use of the term “author-function,” claiming that “these aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author . . . are projections, in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts: in the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities assign, or the exclusions we practice.” As Sidney’s de facto literary executor, Herbert sought to establish Sidney as the apotheosis of the British class system by widely disseminating the texts that most closely associated him with Elizabethan courtly mythology. By promulgating cultural fantasies that idealized herself and her brother and by supporting certain readings of their texts through patronage and social display, Herbert contributed to cultural constructions that identify her and Sidney with aristocratic ideals, and these constructions in turn affected the ways in which their texts would be read. In her use of Elizabethan courtly mythology to constitute herself and other members of her family as cultural icons, Herbert made use of what Roland Barthes describes as a “second-order semiological system” (114). According to Barthes, cultural myth, which he identifies with ideology, constitutes a meta-language that, in Kaja Silverman’s summative paraphrase, exists “for the purpose of expressing and surreptitiously justifying the dominant values of a given historical period"
(Barthes 142; Silverman 30). As a metalanguage, myth references a previously existing linguistic system: "it is a second language in which one speaks about the first" (115). In this process, the last term of a semiological chain in the first-order system becomes the first term in a semiological chain in the second-order system (114-15). The "signifier of myth" is both "concept" and "form," and the concept is "open" and "unstable"; the "fundamental character of the mythical concept is to be appropriated" (119). Myth distorts the meaning of historical materials: it "transforms history into nature" (128-29).26 To use Barthes' terminology, the effect of Herbert's publication and social strategies was to "appropriate" a mythical concept—the Elizabethan aristocratic ideal—and "invest" it with "forms" associated with the Sidney and Herbert families.27 The short-term outcome of Herbert's strategies was to facilitate the extended Sidney and Herbert families' greater access to wealth and power through ennoblement and public office. As early as 1588, James IV of Scotland was known to contemporaries as an admirer of Philip Sidney (Hay 63), and following his accession to the English throne in 1603, James awarded members of the Sidney and Herbert families a number of titles and offices, elevating Herbert's brother Robert Sidney to chamberlain of the Queen's household (1603), Viscount Lisle (1605), and Earl of Leicester (1618); her son William Herbert to chamberlain of the King's household (1615); and her son Philip to Earl of Montgomery (1605). The

26 Barthes exemplifies myth's "duplicity" by citing a photograph on the cover of Paris-Match of a "Negro" soldier saluting the French flag (116-143 in passim). The concept appropriated in this signification is "French imperialism" (116); the photograph becomes the justification or "alibi" for the concept (128).
27 Barthes defines the terms "concept" and "form" on pp. 117-121.
long-term outcome of Herbert’s strategies was to establish her own and her brother’s family names, as well as the texts associated with them, as the hallmarks of an elite tradition that depended in part on its literary associations as a status marker. Herbert’s edition of the *Arcadia* became a necessary accoutrement for families with pretensions to gentility; according to Katherine Duncan-Jones, “it went through fifteen editions during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, until no gentleman’s residence in England can have lacked a copy” (Introduction to the *Old Arcadia* x). If the text was ubiquitous, however, by the eighteenth-century tastes had changed, and its popularity may well have had more to do with its class associations than with its value as literature. Duncan-Jones cites complaints about its “tedium and prolixity” dating from 1768 (ix), while Walter Greg once remarked that “of the books which everybody knows and nobody reads, The Countess of Pembroke’s *Arcadia* is perhaps the most famous” (147). To appropriate the text’s value as a sign in social self-constructions, however, there may have been no need to actually read the book: its display, whether as a concrete object or as the subject of discourse, may well have been sufficient. Barthes explains that “a whole book may be the signifier of a single concept,” and the *Arcadia*’s function as a class marker illustrates his point.

With critics like Heather Hirschfeld, Jonathan Hope, and Jeffrey Masten, I share the belief that an undue emphasis on the single-author paradigm constricts literary scholarship in ways that can not only obscure the roles of other participants in textual production, but also the uses to which the text has been or is being put. Critical approaches that emphasize the roles played by a variety of different agents in
textual production and that foreground interconnections among agents, events, and processes can usefully complement more traditional critical approaches like single-author studies. The single-author paradigm focuses attention on the intersection between a writer and a text in ways that promote idealization of both text and writer. A primary focus on the relationship between the text and the writer may also be disproportionate and even obfuscatory to certain kinds of projects: for example, studies that approach the text or the text's history as a source of information about the exercise of power and the constructs that govern its use. This dissertation examines Herbert's and Sidney's agency in textual production through their roles as writers, patrons, and in Herbert's case, as Sidney's collaborator, editor, and literary executor. The following chapters employ a variety of critical approaches, including the single-author paradigm, to analyze constructions of these two literary figures, both contemporary and historical, with their social and political implications, and the uses to which their texts have been put. The object is in part to complete these analyses without either idealizing or denigrating the subjects of this study. This approach builds on the work of G. E. Bentley, Charles Cathcart, Hirschfeld, Hope, Masten, and others who have argued for the importance of collaborative authorship in the early modern period, and who have explored this avenue as a means of acknowledging a broader range of contributors to and political, economic, and cultural investments in textual production.

For more than half a century, different critics and theorists have argued the need to re-conceptualize the role of the individual author in textual production.
Values and assumptions that foreground the author function have at times precluded attention to other modes of textual production, at times inspired futile efforts to impose the narrative of single authorship on texts that were composed or that developed in entirely different writing situations. Many of the beliefs and assumptions about authorship that have affected the practice of literary criticism through the end of the twentieth century are widely perceived as a legacy of the Romantic period. These include the notion that a literary masterpiece is composed by an extraordinary individual (almost invariably male); that the text possesses a definite meaning that can be arrived at through reading and/or literary analysis; and that by studying the text and its author it is possible not only to learn more about literature, but also about the process through which individual geniuses produced the masterworks so useful to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europeans in substantiating the claims to cultural and racial superiority that served as a justification for imperialist foreign policies.

Even before the advent of post-structuralism, however, some critics had already begun to question the characterization of a literary work as the product of an individual consciousness. In 1946, W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley published “The Intentional Fallacy,” an essay that situated the text as an autonomous entity and denied the writer’s “authority” over its meaning. Barthes’ essay “The Death of the Author” appeared in 1968, and S/Z followed in 1973. Foucault’s “What Is an Author?” published in 1979, further problematized the one man/one text paternal relation. Julia Kristeva’s Desire in Language introduced the concept of intertextuality,
which in turn characterized the text as the product of a culture rather than an individual: as a pastiche of allusions, quotations, and cultural conventions made meaningful by the writer's and the reader's shared familiarity with previously existing codes (1980). In critical practice, scholars began to question the applicability of the single-author paradigm to the early modern drama as early as the mid-twentieth century, when Bentley hypothesized that "as many as half of the plays by professional dramatists in the period incorporated the writing at some date of more than one man" (as qtd. in Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author* 19). More recently, work by Cathcart, Hope, Masten, and Brian Vickers suggests that critical practices that position individual authorship as normative are particularly ill-suited to the early modern period, which considerably antedates Romantic ideology. In *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama*, Masten contends that studies that inappropriately foreground individual authorship are an outcome of contemporary investments in outdated critical practices. He identifies Shakespeare studies as a field in which Romantic constructions of individual authorship are least likely to be challenged and suggests that their retention is due in part to the "privilege and privileging of Shakespeare in literary studies" and in part to cultural anxieties, citing Foucault on the ideology of the individual author as a means of containing ""proliferation of meaning"" (9-10). Masten links the disproportionate critical focus on individual authorship as well to the dependency on scholarly apparatus, including traditional bibliographic and citation procedures for authorial attribution (11). Cathcart, who in his essay on plural authorship acknowledges the continued value of
attribution studies to the critical analysis of collaborative texts, observes that “a thorough distrust of the traditional emphasis upon the author has certainly created the conditions for us at last to acknowledge plural composition more fully and to explore its nature with greater care” (3). While these four critics primarily address early modern drama, their work attests to the widespread practice of collaborative writing in at least one genre during the early modern era and demonstrates the potential for further explorations into critical approaches that can usefully complement the single-author paradigm.

In “Early Modern Collaboration and Theories of Authorship,” Hirschfeld provides a summative account of recent efforts to redefine authorship and other related literary concepts in a context that is candidly post poststructuralist. Her explorations seek to situate paradigms of authorship, she explains, “not as ahistorical givens, but as contingent constructs and institutions whose changing shapes represent responses to particular social, cultural, and economic pressures.” Hirschfeld provides an overview of projects in three fields—extra-literary texts, manuscript and print cultures, and drama—in which substantive work on authorship in the early modern period has taken place or is ongoing. Many of these projects employ the term “collaboration” as a catchall category that encompasses a wide variety of non-authorial contributions and alterations to the text, including “the activities of printers, patrons, and readers in shaping the meaning and significance of a text” (610). Citing Herbert as an example, Hirschfeld emphasizes the importance of re-conceptualizing traditional notions of authorship to include translation as a species of collaboration:
"Such a move is essential for approaching and appreciating figures such as Mary Sidney Herbert, countess of Pembroke, who was both writer and patron, who worked alongside and then after her brother Philip in their translation of the Psalms, and who also translated Petrarch and Robert Garnier" (615). While Hirschfeld’s contention that Herbert and Sidney actively collaborated on the Psalms during his lifetime is unsubstantiated, her argument illustrates ways in which the redefinition of collaborative authorship circumvents literary conventions that effectually re-inscribe the exclusion of women writers from active participation in early modern discourse communities.

The texts on which Sidney and Herbert collaborated include several that would profoundly influence ways in which English speakers construct themselves, their erotic experiences, and their literary writing: The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia, Astrophil and Stella, and the Sidney Psalms. The Arcadia is modeled on continental pastoral romances, including Jacopo Sannazaro’s Arcadia, Jorge de Montemayor’s Diana, and the French version of the Amadis de Gaule. Ringler describes the Arcadia as an “entirely new and original literary form . . . . combining tragic and comic, prose and verse, heroic and pastoral” (Sidney, Poems xxxviii). Like Sannazaro, Sidney modifies the Virgilian pastoral model by adding prose

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28 For more detail on the sources for Sidney’s Arcadia, see Duncan-Jones’ Introduction to the Old Arcadia, p. xii; and Robertson’s General Introduction to the Old Arcadia, pp. x-xi, p. 3, and xxi. 29 As Robert Levine points out, the Arcadia’s genre has been the subject of debate since the recovery of the manuscripts of the Old Arcadia in 1907 (1). Robertson describes the Old Arcadia as a tragicomedy; Katherine Duncan-Jones concurs with Robertson’s statement that the text has a five-part Terentian plot structure (Robertson xx; Duncan-Jones, “Introduction to the Old Arcadia” xi). The work has also been described as an epic.
passages between a series of verse dialogues, or eclogues. The outcome, according to Ringler, is “the most important original work of English prose fiction produced before the eighteenth century” (Sidney, Poems xxxvi). The Arcadia exists in a number of different versions: the Old Arcadia, the New Arcadia, and the composite version, which provides a conclusion for the unfinished New Arcadia by affixing the last three books of the Old Arcadia to it. This composite, published under the title The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia, was the only version widely available from its publication date in 1593 to 1926, when the Old Arcadia appeared as the fourth volume of Albert Feuillerat’s edition of Sidney’s collected Works (Robertson, Textual Introduction xliii).  

30 Herbert was evidently dissatisfied with the first print edition, published in 1590, which divided the text of the New Arcadia into three books. These books were subdivided into chapters with headings and summaries provided by the editors, while the eclogues from the Old Arcadia were positioned after the first and second books (Ringler, Poems 532-33). Woudhuysen says that the first edition’s flaws “ranged from simple errors of transcription to the inclusion of moralizing, pretentious, and inaccurate chapter headings, gaps in the text, and the wrong positioning of the poems, to the more serious fact that 1590 was incomplete” (229). After publication of the 1590 edition, Herbert moved to take control of the Sidney literary legacy and, according to Davis, to align it with the philosophical and political stance of the extended Sidney and Herbert families (421). As Brennan
observes, from 1592, Herbert "becomes the most important figure in the editing and publication of Sidney's compositions" (Literary Patronage 57).

Ringler and Michael Spiller identify *Astrophil and Stella* as the first Petrarchan sonnet sequence in English. Composed 1581-83 and first published in a pirated edition in 1591, *Astrophil and Stella* is credited with precipitating an "Elizabethan sonnet-sequence craze" from 1593-97 (Spiller, Sonnet Development 102). A series of 108 songs and sonnets with Lady Penelope Rich as their ostensible object and primary audience, *Astrophil and Stella* investigates Neoplatonic displacement as a means of sublimating erotic desire and finds it unsatisfying. At the same time, the sequence provides the occasion for Sidney's scrutiny of and commentary on Petrarchan literary conventions, which he variously mocks, makes use of, and rises above. Manuscript circulation of these poems appears to have been severely limited during Sidney's lifetime, and the sequence did not appear in print until five years after his death in 1586. In *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts* (1996), Woudhuysen accepts Ringler's stemma, which posits three primary manuscripts, concluding that Sidney kept the manuscript "fairly close to himself, his family, and his friends" (383). This was perhaps because Rich was a married woman, and knowledge of Sidney's adulterous poetic courtship might have exposed her to ridicule or worse. In the first three editions of *Astrophil and Stella*, which were pirated, the texts of the poems are corrupt, incomplete, and/or out of

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31 For more detailed background information on *Astrophil and Stella*, its composition, and its influence on contemporary writers, see Ringler's commentary (*Poems* 435-91) and Spiller's *The Development of the Sonnet: An Introduction* (102-03, 107, and 123).
sequence, and the cycle does not include sonnet 37, which identifies Rich as “Stella” through a series of puns on her married name (Woudhuysen 365-69, 382). Sidney’s text set a standard for Petrarchan sonnet sequences to follow, and it is to Herbert that the British literary tradition owes the complete, corrected, and appropriately sequenced text, which she published in 1598 as part of her edition of Sidney’s collected works.

While the Arcadia and Astrophil and Stella are categorized as single-author texts, the Sidney Psalms has been considered a “collaborative” work since it encompasses the work of more than one writer. Sidney wrote the translations for the first forty-three psalms, while Herbert revised seven of his poems and translated the majority of the 150 poems in the psalm cycle (Rathmell xxvi). Herbert’s role in completing the translations became an important element in her self-representations; for example, in the 1618 portrait commissioned from Simon van de Passe, Herbert chose to be depicted holding a book in her right hand; the leaves are inscribed David’s Psalms (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 193). Although the text of the Psalms did not reach print publication until 1823, the poems circulated in manuscript during Herbert’s lifetime and appear to have been well known to sixteenth- and seventeenth-

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32 In the brief “Life” of Mary Sidney Herbert that serves as part of the prefatory material for her Collected Works, Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan say that “someone, probably Pembroke, altered occasional phrases and revised some of the endings” of Sidney’s psalm metaphrases (8-9), while Rathmell claims that Dr. Samuel Woodforde’s transcription of Herbert’s working copy “shows she modified the final stanzas of seven of Sidney versions” (xxvi). Historically, critics have accepted the revisions of these poems as Herbert’s work (Rathmell xxvi; Ringler, “Commentary: The Psalms of David” [Sidney, Poems 303-5]; Zim 186).
century literati (Rathmell xi). Hallett Smith attests to the cycle’s influence on other poets, claiming that the Sidney Psalter “constitutes a school of English versification” (269), while a number of critics point to the text’s extraordinary stanzaic and metrical variety. While Herbert modeled her versification on other psalm translations in both English and French, including those by Robert Crowley, Matthew Parker, George Gascoigne, Anne Lok, Sternhold and Hopkins, and Clément Marot and Théodore Béze, she incorporated echoes of Sidney’s sexual poetry into the Psalms as well. According to Waller, “The metrical, stanzaic, and tonal variety of her psalms is as much a tribute to the inspiration of Astrophel and Stella as to the Beza-Marot Psalter” (Critical Study 164). Rivkah Zim cites connections between Astrophil and Stella and two of Herbert’s psalm translations: Psalm 73 with sonnets 5 and 31, and Psalm 51 with sonnets 1 and 31 (199-201). Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan identify as well connections between Herbert’s Psalm 126 and sonnet 5 and Herbert’s Psalm 114 and sonnet 15 (69-70). By putting the Psalms into conversation with the sonnet sequence, Herbert alters the character of the psalm sequence, implicitly linking religious and sexual erotic forms in a way that blurs the distinctions between them. Both Astrophil and Stella and the Sidney Psalms became models for English metrical structure and, along with the Arcadia, foundational influences on the literary tradition in English (Hallett Smith 264-5; Spiller, Sonnet Development 102). While

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33 Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan cite publication of Herbert’s metaphrases of psalms 51, 104, and 137 in manuscript miscellanies as evidence of wide readership (Herbert, Collected Works 2: 343).
34 See Buxton 152-53; Campbell 52; Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan, “Methods of Composition and Translation” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 56-58); Martz 273-74; Spencer 254; Rathmell xvii; and Ringler, “Commentary: The Psalms of David” (Sidney, Poems 501).
all of these texts are discussed at length in the chapters that follow, these discussions focus primarily on the uses to which the texts have been put, rather than the ways in which they may be construed through the process of close reading.

Herbert’s and Sidney’s idealized self-constructions in these texts supported claims to elevated status within the social hierarchy of which they were a part and had the effect of validating that hierarchy and its claims to economic and social privilege, along with a directive role in governance, well beyond the terminus of the early modern era. As Dominick Baker-Smith observes, Protestant hagiography transformed Sidney “into the martyr-hero whose gesture to a dying man at Zutphen would serve a later imperialism as the defining note of Christian chivalry” (Preface x). During the debate about literature that took place during the last two decades of the twentieth century, some scholars came to believe that critical attention to high-culture art like Herbert’s and Sidney’s poetry is complicit in the imperialist subjugation of indigenous populations and the suppression of native cultures. As a graduate student during the last two decades of the twentieth century, my studies were indelibly affected by this debate, and I cannot close this account of my critical approach and objectives without addressing this issue.

36 Sidney’s death resulted from an infected wound received at the Battle of Zutphen on September 22, 1586. The battle was part of the English effort to support Protestant states in the Netherlands in their resistance to Spanish overlordship. Efforts to make use of Sidney’s injury in militant Protestant propaganda were already under way the following day, when Leicester wrote Sir Thomas Heneage an account of the event that claimed Sidney made speeches glorifying the Queen as he was transported back to camp for treatment. See Duncan-Jones’ Courtier Poet, pp. 294-96, for a more detailed account.

37 The Epilogue to this dissertation provides a summary of and a response to the late-twentieth-century attack on literature and arguments for its displacement by alternate forms like the testimonio.
Even those scholars who have openly questioned the value of continuing to teach literature would probably acknowledge that to explore the ways in which Herbert's and Sidney's texts replicate and promote the Elizabethan social hierarchy through cultural fantasies that served the interests of the specific political and social communities with which they self-identified is a valid endeavor. However, to confine critical focus to the ways in which the Sidney texts supported the operations of an oppressive state would be to impoverish our understanding of them. Both Sidney and Herbert contributed to the great sixteenth-century project of extending the range of expression in vernacular languages. In *A Defence of Poetry*, Sidney valorizes oral story telling and traditional ballads along with classical sources and elite forms, attesting to the mesmeric quality of literature in its most humble and familial incarnation by saying that the poet "cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner" (93, 97). With other Elizabethan writers from a range of social classes, including Isabella Whitney, Elizabeth Carey, Aemilia Lanyer, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare, Sidney and Herbert helped develop the English language and its literary genres and conventions, and through imaginative writing made it possible for English speakers to conceive their experiences in new and different ways. Despite the stigma associated with what was perceived to be too great an interest in literary writing among the upper echelons of the Elizabethan hierarchy, Sidney in his *Defence* spoke out for the importance of the imagination against proponents of an emerging ideology that would eventually send the British theatre into a forty-year eclipse. Despite the stigma
associated with women's writing and publication, Herbert not only wrote but allowed print publication of her work. At a time when very few women were considered capable of heroic behavior, she promulgated models for women's heroism both through her publications and her self-representations. If her literary activities were self-promoting, they also opened doors and served as a model for other early women writers. Both the figures and the texts that are the subject of this dissertation are complex and multi-faceted, and despite their own self-representations, no larger than life. Both in analyzing Herbert's and Sidney's self-constructions and in articulating my own constructions of them, I hope to contribute to a greater critical understanding of them in ways that neither aggrandize nor minimize their contributions to British literary history.
Chapter 2

Contexts and Constructions of Sidney’s Patronage and the Wilton Coterie

From the sixteenth to the twenty-first century, Mary Sidney Herbert’s literary production and patronage has for the most part been constructed as a continuation of her brother’s. While the connections between their bodies of work are integral, one outcome of this literary coupling is that critics and historians frequently overlook or ignore Herbert’s agency and minimize her achievements. Denigration of Herbert’s work is frequently inadvertent; it occurs as a consequence of critical or narrative strategies that foreground individual figures without regard for joint intellectual endeavor, or that privilege aesthetic values at the expense of historical and cultural contexts. In the same way, criticism that construes Herbert’s activities either solely or primarily as a continuation of her brother’s, or that situates them in narratives in which they are the outcome of his death, has the effect of minimizing Herbert’s achievements by subsuming them within the ongoing heroic narrative of Philip Sidney’s life, writing, and death—a narrative that is re-inscribed within the British and American literary tradition even as it is deconstructed through putative acts of iconoclasm.38

38 For example, Hager’s deconstructive analysis of the Sidney legend in “The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney’s Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader” simultaneously re-inscribes it as a part of the English-speaking literary tradition. This process is in part an inevitable outcome of any iteration of the Sidney legend, even where the ostensible purpose is to query correspondences between the legend and other kinds of historical documentation. Hager’s own susceptibility to the Sidney legend appears in his concluding paragraphs, where he argues that Sidney’s legend represents “an ideal we would or should not part with easily, even in the search for truth” (58).
A study that attempts to foreground Herbert’s agency in her own and in her brother’s literary production faces formidable challenges. The first of these derives from Sidney’s status as a culture hero. Idealized during his lifetime by European humanists who viewed him as a potential leader for the Protestant cause, upon his death Sidney was celebrated as a military hero, a literary maven, and a model courtier. With the advent of single-author studies, Sidney was constructed by critics as a major literary icon. Herbert too has undergone a series of metamorphoses: at times accounted an accomplished poet, at times characterized as a bowdlerizing, interfering female. Considered in literary partnership with her brother’s legend, Herbert has suffered from an effect of scale. To study Sidney’s or Herbert’s texts in isolation, however, is to pose a different set of problems. Because much of their work can be described as a series of collaborations, some of which occurred during Sidney’s lifetime and with his active concurrence, and others after his death and without his prior knowledge, single-author studies may not be the most effective means of exploring the texts in relation to the figures who participated in their production. In the case of the Sidney Psalmes, for example, it has at times meant truncating the psalm cycle in a way that to a greater or lesser extent obviates its effects not only as a poetic sequence but also in its primal function as a vehicle for spiritual and psychic negotiations, meditations, and resolutions."An analytical
strategy that treats the two figures in tandem but employs comparison and contrast as means of differentiating between the objectives, strategies, and practices of each may facilitate representations of both that subsume or denigrate neither. The remainder of this chapter and much of the next considers Mary Sidney Herbert’s and Philip Sidney’s roles in the sixteenth-century Tudor patronage system from this perspective.

The extent and significance of Philip Sidney’s and Mary Sidney Herbert’s literary patronage has long been the subject of debate. The extravagant claims once made for it by critics like John Buxton and Jan van Dorsten have been countered in work by Mary Ellen Lamb, Michael Brennan, and others.\footnote{Buxton says that “the Elizabethan poets never doubted that but for Philip and Mary Sidney their work would have been negligible” (Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance 3), while Van Dorsten asserts that Sidney “against all odds and almost single-handedly ... provided the ambience and the inspiration that was to initiate one of the greatest periods in European literary history” (“Early Patronage,” 200).} Much of Lamb’s early critical work, including her dissertation (1976) and essays published in 1981 and 1982, has as its focus a re-assessment of Herbert’s role as a patron; she concludes that “The Countess’s patronage, like that of Queen Elizabeth, has been overrated” (“Pembroke’s Patronage,” 1976, 255).\footnote{See “The Countess of Pembroke’s Patronage” (Diss. Columbia U, 1976); Lamb’s essay of the same title (ELR 12.2 [Spring 1982]: 162-179); and her article “The Myth of the Countess of Pembroke: The Dramatic Circle” (194-202). From this point references to Lamb’s identically named dissertation and essay will be differentiated by including the date of publication.} In addition, Lamb debunks contentions by Herbert’s work that includes psalms 44-150, variants of these poems, and a description of Herbert’s revisions to psalms 1-43. See Grosart, 3: 71-199; Ringler, Poems, pp. 265-337; and Herbert’s Collected Works, 2: 35-307, 358-61. Rathmell has edited an edition of the Sidney Psalms that includes all 150 poems: see The Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke, R. E. Pritchard’s edition, The Sidney Psalms, includes selections from both writers. According to a notice in the Sidney Journal, a new edition of the complete psalm cycle is due out from Oxford World’s Classics in 2009. The volume will be titled The Psalms of Philip and Mary Sidney, and it will be edited by Hannibal Hamlin, Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan. The text will be accompanied by explanatory notes, a chronology, a brief bibliography, and a critical-historical introduction (“Professional Communication” 158).
T.S. Eliot and others that Herbert actively fostered Senecan closet drama as a high culture alternative to public theatre ("Pembroke's Dramatic Circle"). Brennan, in his book-length study of the literary patronage of the extended Sidney and Herbert families, argues that Philip Sidney’s limited resources curtailed his efforts as a literary patron, and that Sidney’s posthumous reputation for large-scale financial liberality to his fellow writers is a myth (Literary Patronage 38-39). The debate about Sidney’s and Herbert’s patronage has been precipitated in part by misrepresentations made by the contemporary and near-contemporary writers who sought, after Sidney’s death, to enhance his prestige for political, financial, or personal reasons, and in part to slippage in a number of key terms like “patron,” “patronage,” “literary circle,” and “coterie.” These terms overlap and have at times been used without an attempt to define the processes signified by them in the context of specific cultures and eras. In the past few decades, much work has gone into redefining Tudor patronage and differentiating between it and the literary patronage practiced during different periods or by other cultures. Because this information is crucial to an analysis of Sidney’s and

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44 Hager claims that Sidney’s lavish funeral and the books of eulogies published shortly after his death represent attempts by the militant Protestant faction at Queen Elizabeth’s court to generate continued support for military intervention on behalf of Protestant communities on the continent (“Exemplary Mirage” 48-50). Dominick Baker-Smith concurs with this contention; he says that “the commemorative miscellanies issued by the two universities were a novelty and reveal signs of careful political orchestration” (x). Hager argues that Sidney hagiography served the Queen’s purposes as well by diverting attention from the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, which took place at about the same time as Sidney’s funeral, and by enriching court mythology that in turn centered on and idealized the monarch. Although Hager does not address it, Mary Sidney Herbert played a major role in shaping and promoting the Sidney legend through her patronage, publishing, and writing. Herbert benefited from the Sidney legend in a variety of ways, ranging from consolation for her brother’s loss to aggrandizing the extended Sidney and Herbert families at a time when she was seeking to enhance the social, career, and marital prospects of her two sons.
Herbert’s roles and practices in the Tudor patronage system, it will be helpful at this point to review some of this literary scholarship, to consider it in conjunction with research and analysis on the same topic by historians Simon Adams and Penry Williams, and to apply it within the context of the extended familial and political interests with which Sidney and Herbert were allied.

The term “patronage” is used to describe a variety of Tudor practices that differ widely in scope and purpose. They include assuming the expense for a book’s publication; supporting a friend’s or an associate’s suit for a position, patent, guardianship, or other source of income; taking into service a suitor who has demonstrated intellectual capacity and courtly behavior through research, writing, and/or translation; and maintaining networks of clients, whether civil servants, clergy, or military personnel, who owe their employment to the patron’s influence and through whom the patron exercises some degree of control over land areas or institutions. The term “literary patronage” is used to describe the process through which writers made appeals for money and position to individuals with wealth and influence through the medium of book dedications.45 The subject matter of the books varied widely, and was often what latter day critics and academics would consider “extra literary.” Literary patronage could be either passive or active. The phrase “active literary patronage” is used to indicate that the textual production occurred at the patron’s initiative, under her direction, and/or at her expense; the term “passive

45 According to Brennan, a few pounds was a liberal response to an appeal for patronage through the medium of a book dedication; he says that “£2 to £3 has generally been regarded as the upper limits of what an author might expect to gain” (Literary Patronage 13).
literary patronage" suggests that the work and/or its dedication were undertaken without the encouragement—often without the knowledge—of the dedicatee. While a few clients had enduring and even intimate relationships with one primary patron, most sought and received patronage from a variety of different patrons during sequential or overlapping time periods. Multiple dedications for a single work were common, and as Brennan observes, "a patron-client relationship was rarely a permanent or exclusive one" (Literary Patronage 4).

At the heart of the Tudor patronage system was a cultural practice that had structured social intercourse between the different ranks of society from the medieval period through a causative relationship between reward and service. Service to the monarch was a means through which the gentry and nobility attained greater wealth and social status. Adams construes the process as one in which "new creations were made at the level of barons, while the upper ranks were replenished by the promotion of the wealthier barons and viscounts to earldoms" (75); he observes that the contemporary expectation was that a substantial land grant would accompany elevation to the peerage. Land was a heritable source of wealth and status, and the purpose of the grant appears to have been in part to ensure that titles were supported in a manner that authenticated differences in degree between the varying ranks of the social hierarchy. According to Adams, "Underlying promotions was the unwritten assumption that a peerage was an absurdity without sufficient landed wealth to

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46 Rowland Whyte's association with Robert Sidney is one example of a close, long-term clientage relationship. According to Brennan, Whyte served Sidney in different capacities for more than fifty years ("College to Grave" 2).
maintain the estate, and further that there should be a clear distinction in stature between the various ranks of the peerage" (72). In the course of Elizabeth's reign, however, a change in fiscal policy undermined the traditional relationship between reward and service. In an effort to preserve sources of income associated with Crown lands, public servants who did not already possess the income necessary to support an honor in the expected style were often passed over, and available peerages were awarded instead to families that could support the honor without an accompanying land grant. "One effect of this policy," Adams explains, "was almost to detach peerages and honours from any 'patronage' system, since they were so rarely rewarded for service" (75). The impact on the patronage system was great, since clients who served the monarch frequently did so at their own expense in the expectation that their service would in turn be rewarded in a manner that augmented their fortunes and elevated their social status.

Members of the Sidney and Herbert families engaged in all the above named practices as patrons, and in many of them as clients, although considerably less attention has been paid to their roles as clients by literary critics and historians. As clients, the Sidney and Herbert families were significantly affected by the change in fiscal policy that took place during Elizabeth's reign. For example, the expenses Sir Henry Sidney incurred as President of the Council of the Marches of Wales and as

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47 For an account of changes to the patronage system during the reign and the effects of these changes in policy on Elizabethan nobility and gentry, see "The Patronage of the Crown in Elizabethan Politics: The 1590s in Perspective" in Simon Adams's Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics, pp. 68-94.
Elizabeth’s deputy in Ireland depleted the family’s financial resources, and the family’s lack of funds in turn adversely affected Philip Sidney’s marital prospects. While Henry Sidney’s service to the monarch was recognized through the offer of a baronetcy in 1572, Lady Mary Sidney declined it on her husband’s behalf because no land grant accompanied it (Adams 74). As a result, Henry Sidney never attained the peerage, and he left no heritable title to his oldest son and heir, Philip. During the negotiations in 1583 preceding Philip’s marriage to Frances Walsingham, Henry Sidney wrote her father explaining his financial situation; as Katherine Duncan-Jones explains, “The essential point he wanted to get across was that his substance had been exhausted, through no fault of his own” (Courtier Poet 225). According to Henry Sidney’s letter, the Queen’s service had left him £20,000 poorer than he had been when he inherited his estate from his own father (226).

Henry Sidney’s younger son Robert similarly spent a sizable portion of his wife’s inheritance to serve as Elizabeth’s ambassador to James VI of Scotland during the 1588 attack of the Spanish Armada. Robert, however, proved to be far more successful than either his father or his brother Philip in obtaining the perquisites associated with government service. In 1603, Robert became Baron of Penshurst and Lord Chamberlain of the Queen’s household (Hay 210); in 1605, Viscount Lisle (213); and in 1618, Earl of Leicester (223). However, Robert gained his titles and his high government position not during Elizabeth’s reign, but after James I acceded to

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48 The Sidney family’s relative poverty was probably one factor in the termination of Sidney’s marital contract with Anne Cecil, daughter of William Cecil (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet, 47). Marriage was an important means of social advancement for Elizabethan gentry and nobility.
the throne of England. Robert's greater success in attaining titles and the income to support them was in part due to his access to a resource that had not been available to his father and his brother: the cultural capital associated with the Sidney legend.

During the fifteen years that had elapsed between Philip Sidney's death and James's accession, Sidney had attained his status as a cultural icon, in part due to Mary Sidney Herbert's assiduous promotion of his writing and his reputation; within three months of his accession date, James awarded Robert a baronetage and named him chamberlain of Queen Anne's household. Robert was not the only member of the extended Sidney and Herbert families who was well served by Herbert's literary activities; her sons, William and Philip Herbert, benefited as well. The glamour of a royal court is dependent on its associations with the most illustrious personages in the realm and, thanks in part to Mary Sidney Herbert's work, the Sidney and Herbert families were now legendary. The Herbert men had the skills and physical attributes necessary to put this entrée to good use: William Herbert became chamberlain of the King's household in 1615 and retained this position until James's death in 1625, while Philip Herbert quickly reaped the rewards of royal favoritism when James created the earldom of Montgomery for him in 1605.

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49 Robert Sidney's biographer, Millicent Hay, connects his elevation under James with the monarch's admiration for Philip Sidney. Hay observes that at Sidney's death, "James had been moved to the point of writing an elegy." The 1588 embassy to Scotland gave Robert the opportunity to establish a relationship with Elizabeth's successor prior to her death in 1603; a contemporary source claims that Robert was selected for the embassy because of James's high opinion of his brother (Hay 63). While under the Stuarts the connection between rewards, service, and the peerage was further diminished as patents of nobility became available through purchase, Hay contends there is no evidence that Robert Sidney was obliged to buy his titles (223).
The primary function of the patronage system in early modern England was to staff the posts and offices through which the day-to-day business of government was conducted. The practice of clientage was no less important to patrons than it was to those who served them; Williams affirms that the ability to place the members of one’s affinity in key positions was crucial to the effective administration of major offices like the presidency of the Council of the Marches of Wales (120-24), a position that was held at different times by both Mary Sidney Herbert’s father, Henry Sidney, and her husband, Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. Relationships between the families that were served and the families that served them sometimes persisted through several reigns, and appeals for patronage often lay claim to such a history even when the basis for the claim was questionable. For patrons, the nature and quality of the clientage relationship appears to have been at least as important a factor in the designation of posts and offices as whether the client possessed the necessary skills, engaged in abuses like extortion, or deputed the duties of an office to others while retaining a significant share of the revenues associated with it.\textsuperscript{50} The practice of patronage was fundamental as well to one of the major methods of military recruitment during the Tudor era, which was by retinue: Adams reports that Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, assembled the cavalry contingent that accompanied him to the Netherlands in 1585 by sending more than two hundred letters to clients and

\textsuperscript{50} Although the appointment and protection of unreliable or dishonest officers was recognized as an abuse, it appears to have been a common practice. Williams lists the friends and relatives that Henry Herbert recommended for the office of deputy-lieutenant (124). Three who were closely associated with Herbert were variously accused of bribe-taking, embezzlement, and extortion. Williams describes Herbert’s recommendation, appointment, and protection of Cadwallader Price and John Lewis Owen as “discreditable” (124-26).
friends asking them to report for service, bringing with them their horses and their armor (176-77).

Brennan identifies two previous cultural contexts that helped shape mid- and late sixteenth century English literary patronage. The first is the longstanding association of art with the nobility, a tradition that extends through the classical and medieval periods into the early modern era and beyond; the second is Thomas Cromwell's propagandistic use of scholarly writings during the 1530s to justify his wholesale transformation of English religious institutions (9). A third context is Renaissance humanism, which spurred sixteenth-century textual scholarship and educational reform and which closely connected textual production, education, and civic responsibility (H. Smith 10-11). Literary patronage was not a self-contained practice with the production of literary writing as its ultimate purpose; rather, literary display was one of the ways through which men seeking employment could attract the attention of patrons with enough power and influence to help place them in profitable positions, while their “utilitarian” humanist educations prepared them, as Hilda Smith says, “to apply the moral, political and rhetorical lessons gained from the ancients and the Christian insights elicited from Scripture to the governance of their families, their local magisterial and judicial responsibilities, and their service to a prince” (10). Patronage was an integral part of the system that, as Brennan says, served as “a means of unifying the whole nation” through networks of sociopolitical alliances (7). Criticism that isolates Tudor literary patronage, instead of contextualizing it, risks distorting the events and processes it seeks to represent by
foregrounding the practice of literary writing as if it were an end in itself instead of emphasizing its importance as a means of advancing political, social, and economic objectives.

In the sixteenth century, religion, politics, and literature were inextricably interconnected, and not only the dedications but the books as well were most often written with the object of promoting a political or social agenda, procuring a place, or obtaining monetary reward (Van Dorsten, “Elizabethan Literary Patronage” 192). This value system was common to dedicatees as well as dedicatores: Brennan contends that despite the claims made in Elizabethan texts for literature as a means of conferring immortality upon the object or the dedicatee, for patrons “the call of posterity was often a distinctly secondary consideration, as compared with their appreciation of literary skills as a powerful tool through which to influence public opinion” (Literary Patronage 11). Claims that one major objective for much of Sidney’s literary writing was to improve the scope and quality of Elizabethan vernacular literature are substantiated by Sidney’s own statements and those of his contemporaries; nonetheless, Sidney’s and Herbert’s texts are politically inflected in accordance with the humanist tradition in which both were educated. Van Dorsten differentiates between contemporary and latter day ethical perceptions about the use of literary writing to promote political and social interests, observing that in the early

51 For Sidney’s statements about the need to improve English literary writing, see his criticisms of vernacular literature, his strictures regarding its better composition, and his contentions regarding its right purpose in “A Defence of Poetry” (Miscellaneous Prose 59-121). For contemporary statements about Sidney’s intent to “reform” English literature, see the “Spenser-Harvey Correspondence, 1579-80” (Elizabethan Critical Essays 87-126).
Elizabethan period, “Books tended to be purposely propagandistic. No true humanist would raise an objection to this, for what use are the bonae litterae if they fail to serve the interests of the res publica?” (“Elizabethan Literary Patronage” 192). Criticism of the last three decades has identified religious and political contexts and objectives for much or even most of Herbert’s and Sidney’s literary writing. 52

No rigid distinction was drawn between literary and other kinds of writing in the pursuit of patronage, nor was the production of literary texts the primary object of Elizabethan “literary patronage.” If clients sought patronage by displaying their rhetorical skills, those skills might be exercised on a wide variety of extra-literary subject matter; among the topics of treatises dedicated to different members of the Herbert family, Brennan lists “statecraft, natural and local history, mathematics, emblems, agriculture, needlework, astronomy, horsemanship, and New World exploration” (xii). A position attained in part through a display of writerly sprezzatura was unlikely to have the production of literary texts as its principal focus. 53 Brennan observes that Edmund Spenser became “a secretary and a civil servant, Christopher Marlowe a political agent, Sir John Davies and Abraham Fraunce court lawyers,

52 For critical exegesis of religious and political contexts for Philip Sidney’s and Mary Sidney Herbert’s writings, see Jennifer Richards, “Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney and Protestant Poetics”;
Danielle Clarke, “The Politics of Translation and Gender in the Countess of Pembroke’s Antonia”; Joel Davis, “Multiple Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke,” Hannay, “‘Doo What Men May Sing’: Mary Sidney and the Tradition of Admonitory Dedication; Annabel Patterson, “‘Under . . . Pretty Tales’: Intention in Sidney’s Arcadia”; and Victor Skretnikowicz, “Mary Sidney Herbert’s Antonius, English Philhellenism and the Protestant Cause.”
53 In The White Bear, the Elizabethan Earl of Leicester, Alan Haynes gives an example of the process of place seeking through the medium of book dedications that illustrates the secondary importance of literary writing to many clientage relationships once they had been established. Scholar and writer Gabriel Harvey attracted Leicester’s attention by dedicating poetry to him; however, Leicester dropped Harvey after determining that Harvey’s social skills—his understanding and practice of courtly behavior—were not on the same level as his rhetorical gifts (125).
Joshua Sylvester a Groom of the Chamber, and Giles Fletcher an Ambassador to Moscow". Moreover, while literary writing was one of the many skills in which courtiers were expected to be proficient, the construct “author” was not at this point open to them as an acceptable occupation. Literary writing as a means of social display functioned as a status marker for the gentry. For courtiers, whose every accoutrement, speech, and gesture was the object of public scrutiny, extensive involvement in literary writing could be problematic. Stephen May claims that “poetry was held in very low esteem by mid-sixteenth-century aristocrats,” and that the courtier poetry produced during the first decade or so of Elizabeth’s reign appears to have been written under circumstances that “justified or even excused a courtier’s declining into verse” (45). Edward Berry goes so far as to argue that Sidney’s prolonged absence from the court during the years 1579-81 provided him with the opportunity for literary writing while eliminating the social validation for it. According to Berry, “Courtly language of various kinds could be justified, as it was by Castiglione, as a means of ingratiating oneself with the prince in order to serve the state”; however, without the opportunity either to influence his prince and or to promote his own chances of serving her, Sidney “lost any possible vocational justification for his poetry” (71).54

54 While a number of Tudor courtiers who were out of favor or who had been banished from court turned to literary writing as a means of regaining their favored status, Sidney’s Arcadia is not part of this tradition. Although most or all of it was composed during Sidney’s long absence from court during 1580 due to lack of favor (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 174), lack of money (May 98), or both, the work was not written to influence the sovereign. It was addressed to Sidney’s sister, her companions at Wilton House, and to members of the Wilton coterie.
The number of individuals who during Elizabeth’s reign vested their social and professional aspirations primarily in their roles as writers was limited. The importance of textual production from more recent aesthetic and cultural studies perspectives should not be taken as an indication that the writer constructed himself as “an author.” Crossing the divide between the yeoman and the gentry classes was a major objective for William Shakespeare and, according to Richard Rambuss and Waller, it is unlikely that Spenser conceived or even desired to conceive himself primarily as a writer (Montrose, *Purpose of Playing* 36-37; Rambuss 24-25; Waller, *Edmund Spenser* 17). Spenser’s situation differed from Sidney’s in that literary writing promoted, rather than endangered, the former’s efforts to achieve higher social status. However, Spenser could no more realize his social and financial objectives as a writer than Sidney could. Rambuss contends that Spenser’s career goals “were inscribed within an established sixteenth-century career track for humanists, one that projected patronage and preferment by means of a multiform career that combined the profession of letters with other modes of public or private service” (25). And although he supplies the case history of a court writer who attempted to support himself solely by his pen, Brennan concludes that “the wise—and generally far more successful—patronage-hunter was he who realized from the outset that the possibility of aristocratic sponsorship or favor was to be viewed as no more than an unpredictable source of occasional support” (*Literary Patronage* 18). According to Wendy Wall, it was the posthumous publication of Sidney’s works that had the effect of making available to gentlemen the authorial role unavailable to
Sidney during his own lifetime. She claims that "Sidney's social credentials . . .
created an ambiguous legacy for later writers: his refusal to publish set a powerful
precedent for withholding poetry from the press, yet the posthumous publication of
his works carved out a newly defined gentlemanly authorial role" (Imprint of Gender
13).

The practices of Elizabethan literary patronage should not be confused with
those of the continental and classical traditions. Practices for patrons in these
traditions included taking a sole or major role in the artist's maintenance with
production of text as the primary object. Patrons' generosity in these traditions is
attributed to expectations associated with their privileged social status, including a
commitment to aesthetic values and a sense of public duty. Brennan describes this
attitude towards patronage as "dependent upon the medieval and renaissance tradition
of 'noblesse oblige,' in which a healthy relationship between the arts and the nobility
was both expected and widely admired" (Literary Patronage 9). While some
Elizabethan writers did obtain posts or sources of income in part because of their
literary talents, and the patronage they received made it possible for them to pursue
their craft as writers, for the most part they did so in posts which at least in theory
required them to provide other services, whether as secretaries, tutors, or civil
servants (Literary Patronage 13). The term "literary patronage" may well be a
misnomer for most of the traffic in place-seeking that took place during the Tudor
period through the vehicle of writing, translation, and book publication. It is perhaps
the tendency to bring to discussions of Tudor patronage expectations shaped by
beliefs about the classical and continental traditions that has led to so many confused accounts of the extent and importance of both Sidney’s and Herbert’s literary patronage. Efforts by critics to consider the production of early modern English literary texts without reference to contemporary constructions of social roles, textual kinds and objects, and the function of verbal display are likely to lead to anachronistic characterizations of these concepts, objects, and processes.

As Jason Scott-Warren observes, the early modern English social structure was such that most Elizabethans were bound to play both roles in the patronage relationship. He says, “In a world ordered by strict hierarchies, every individual was a potential patron to those beneath them, a potential client of those above” (50). However, the extent to which individuals assumed one role or another was largely dependent on their subject positions. Sidney’s and Herbert’s functions in the patronage system differed fundamentally due to disparities in their subject positions. The most significant of these were wealth, status, and gender. Despite his many acts of generosity to writers seeking patronage, Philip Sidney’s lack of wealth, status, and position ensured that his role in the patronage system was primarily that of a client—for the most part a client of his uncle, the Earl of Leicester. Throughout his limited career as a diplomat and as a soldier, Sidney was a member of the Dudley affinity, as was his father, Henry Sidney, and his mother, Mary Dudley Sidney. Despite his relatively low rank and subordinate status in the Dudley affinity, however, Henry Sidney wielded a great deal of power and influence through his government offices. As the Queen’s deputy in Ireland and President of the Council of the Marches of
Wales, it was Henry Sidney’s duty to effectively administer the Queen’s dominions through the responsible exercise of patronage. Brennan describes Henry Sidney as “a keen book collector” and “an accomplished scholar” (Literary Patronage 40), and this reputation for erudition, combined with his influence over appointments to posts in Wales and Ireland, ensured that Henry Sidney would attract appeals for patronage through scholarly and literary writing. Philip Sidney, like his father, rose to a knighthood but never attained the peerage. Unlike his father, however, Philip Sidney gained his first opportunity to play a major role in governance only at the very end of his life, serving as governor of Flushing from November 22, 1585, to his death on October 17, 1586 (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 283, 303).

Much of Sidney’s “literary patronage” took place during his three-year tour of the European continent during 1572-75. According to Wallace MacCaffrey, one of the major objectives of English foreign policy during this period was to develop alliances that would make England less vulnerable to threats of foreign aggression from either France or Spain. These efforts included, on one hand, long-drawn-out negotiations with France for a marriage between Elizabeth and the Due d’Anjou; on the other, support for Protestant insurrectionism in the Netherlands through the Protestant Defensive League against the Hapsburg overlordship that had devolved on Philip II of Spain. According to MacCaffrey, supporters of the Valois marriage in the 1570s included William Cecil, Lord Burghley; Thomas Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex; and Queen Elizabeth; while the major proponents for military intervention in the Netherlands were Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Leicester
Much, though not all, of Sidney’s “literary patronage” supported the political objectives of the Dudley affinity by developing a network of Protestant allies and supporters on the continent. These “friends” became increasingly important in the early 1580s, as English foreign policy shifted slowly but inexorably away from failed diplomatic initiatives focused on France and toward military intervention on the continent.

During his tour of Europe in 1572-75, Sidney disbursed large sums of money to secure the friendship of some key political and intellectual figures, who often reciprocated by dedicating texts to him. Duncan-Jones explains this practice as follows: “However eager continental noblemen and humanists were to make the young Englishman’s acquaintance, it seems that, like the wealthy Portia in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice, many of them expected some show of munificence from him in the initial stages” (70). Sidney’s overtures to Théophile de Banos included a large sum of money, and Duncan-Jones attributes his dedication to Sidney of the book Petri Rami Commentariorum in part to this “very handsome present.” However, the interaction appears to have been more complex. At this point in time Sidney was expected to succeed his uncle Leicester as the leading proponent of English military intervention in support of Protestant allies on the continent. As Roger Howell observes, “the young Englishman was not only seen as a potential leader of the Protestant cause but was being actively prepared for such a role by a large group of European statesmen” (32). Sidney’s financial patronage of leading European Protestant intellectuals and their dedication to him of texts associated in one
way or another with the Protestant cause contributed to the development of a body of political or politically inflected positions and affiliations. According to Van Dorsten, to European humanists Sidney represented “the promise of realizing the ideal derived from their renaissance doctrine—and, more particularly, a Protestant, north-European doctrine” (Poets, Patrons 31-32). Other texts dedicated to Sidney by European Protestant intellectuals include the Greek New Testament (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 77-78; Van Dorsten, Poets, Patrons 30), W. Temple’s Petri Rami Dialecticae Libri II (30), and the anti-Catholic satire The Beehive of the Romishe Churche (Van Dorsten, Poets, Patrons 31-32). Much or most of Sidney’s patronage promoted the interests of the Dudley affinity, and he practiced it in part at the direction of its senior members.

Mary Sidney Herbert’s patronage was not, as some critics have suggested, simply a continuation or an outcome of her brother’s. Her patronage also served a specific set of interests; but, although these were closely allied with his during his lifetime, they were not entirely the same. At the age of sixteen, Herbert married into a family that was already well known for its patronage. Her father-in-law, William Herbert, the first Earl of Pembroke, and her husband, the second earl, served at different times on the Privy Council and as President of the Council of the Marches of Wales. The Herbert family had its own well-developed affinity in Wales, and as the Countess of Pembroke, Herbert’s wealth, social role, and gender situated her as a patron. While contemporary gender ideology ruled out, at least in theory, Herbert’s agency in politics and her suitability for any official position other than as a
gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, it affirmed as part of her privileged status the
exercise of patronage to aspiring writers.\(^{55}\) Herbert's role as a client was more
limited. While her attendance at Elizabeth's court prior to her marriage to Henry
Herbert positioned her as the Queen's client,\(^{56}\) after her marriage Mary Sidney
Herbert did not again regularly spend time with the Queen at court in either an
official or an unofficial capacity.\(^{57}\) Herbert did participate in the patronage system as a
client by making and supporting appeals in the interests of family business or on
behalf of her family and close affiliates,\(^{58}\) but her wealth, and gender, and social
status favored her participation in the process of clientage as a patron, and she made
use of this opportunity in a variety of different ways. As Adams observes, the decade
during which Herbert's known literary activities took place was one in which
patronage became an even greater factor in the ability to attain and exercise political
power. He says: "The 1590s therefore saw the emergence of a politics of patronage

\(^{55}\) Brennan observes that a tradition extending back to Margaret Beaufort Tudor, mother of the first
Tudor monarch, validated aristocratic and royal women's patronage of writers, and he names as
Herbert's contemporaries and fellow patrons Mildred Cooke Cecil and Lucy Russell, Countess of
Bedford (Literary Patronage 8).

\(^{56}\) According to Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan, Mary Sidney Herbert attended the Queen for a
period of less than two years between the spring of 1575 and her marriage to Henry Herbert on April
21, 1577 (Collected Works 1: 4).

\(^{57}\) Mary Sidney Herbert's mother, Mary Dudley Sidney, had contracted smallpox as a result of nursing
Elizabeth through the disease and had been disfigured by it. Elizabeth's disinclination to reward the
Sidney family for their sacrifices on her behalf extended to this act of service as well (Duncan-Jones,
Courtier Poet 3-4).

\(^{58}\) See Mary Sidney Herbert's letters to Julius Caesar Adelmare (Collected Works pp. 1: 287, 293-96),
to William Cecil (288-89), to Queen Elizabeth (290-92), and to Robert Cecil (289-90, 292-93 and 297-98).
which had not been present earlier . . . the wealth generated by the concessionary interest became essential for anyone seeking to play a major political role” (85).\(^59\)

As perceptions of Sidney have altered in response to historical circumstance and ideological utility, valuations of his patronage have perhaps at times been calibrated, whether deliberately or inadvertently, to contemporary estimations of his importance as a culture hero and as a literary writer. In “The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney’s Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader,” Alan Hager describes how appropriations of Sidney’s personae in the interests of promoting political and ideological agendas led to posthumous constructions of him as a Protestant martyr and as the figure of English chivalry.\(^60\) These representations in turn shaped reader reception of Sidney’s texts in ways, Hager says, that “cluttered our reading of his works” (45). By developing within the English tradition genres like the romance and the sonnet sequence, Sidney, like Chaucer, Wyatt, and Surrey, played an important role in re-inventing within his native culture literary forms and kinds closely associated with the aristocracy. Sidney’s posthumous legend and his utility as a means of idealizing Britain’s elitist culture and social structure, along with an appreciation of his contributions to the development of English as a literary language, have led at times to overestimations of the importance of his activities as a literary patron, particularly when these assessments have taken place in the context of critical

\(^59\) The political implications of Mary Sidney Herbert’s patronage are addressed in greater detail in my chapter 3: “Contexts and Constructions of Herbert’s Patronage and the Countess of Pembroke’s Circle.”

\(^60\) Hager examines Sidney’s careful constructions of his own personae in greater detail in a later publication: Dazzling Images: The Masks of Sir Philip Sidney.
perspectives that presuppose a patronage economy of aesthetic value and a model of literary history as a progression.

According to many sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century sources, Sidney’s enthusiasm and generosity greatly benefited many of the writers who sought his patronage by dedicating their books to him. However, while Sidney’s response to these appeals was probably more generous than it should have been in light of his own financial resources and obligations, his limited income, heavy debts and, prior to 1585, lack of a position in which he could influence lower level government appointments, prevented him from offering these potential clients anything more substantial than a minimal gratuity.61 Brennan gives this account of the posthumous exaggerations of Sidney’s patronage:

During his life, Sidney’s powers of patronage had been severely restricted by his lack of high office and persistent shortage of finance; in death such limitations became irrelevant. The elegists were free to represent him . . . as the ideal patron—generous, discriminating and a source of inspiration for other writers. (Literary Patronage 52)

If the representations in these elegies are misleading, so are narratives that present the greatest achievements of Elizabethan literary writing as the outcome of Sidney’s patronage. Sidney’s literary texts when used as models exercised extraordinary

61 After Sidney obtained the governorship of Flushing in 1585-1856, he exercised considerable patronage of place, much of it military. Duncan-Jones describes Sidney’s retinue, and reports that Sidney attempted to compensate for the shortfall in his soldiers’ wages through personal generosity and by appealing for rewards and for patronage on their behalf to others (Courtier Poet 279, 291). An example of his military patronage is his success in obtaining for his brother Robert Sidney the captaincy of a Netherlands company (Adams 182).
influence over many writers, but this influence is not the outcome of Sidney’s patronage.

That Sidney apparently did not restrict his patronage to writers whose work he admired or thought valuable undermines contentions that its primary object was to improve the quality of English literary writing. For example, Sidney may well have rewarded Stephen Gosson for dedicating his *Schoole of Abuse* to him (Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet* 229), although Spenser claims that Gosson was “for hys labor scorned, if at leaste it be in the goodnesse of that nature to scome” (Spenser and Harvey, “Spenser-Harvey Correspondence” 89). Sidney rewarded Richard Robinson (Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet* 232), a court writer whose work, according to Brennan, was often poorly regarded and unrewarded by other dedicatees, including Queen Elizabeth, Sir Thomas Egerton, and the Bishop of Lincoln (*Literary Patronage* 16).

The volume and the complexity of Sidney’s literary writing attest to his interest in and his commitment to literature; however, the halo effect precipitated by his literary achievements and his posthumous legend should not preclude the recognition that both his patronage of writers and scholars and his literary writing were also status markers and were closely associated with his performance as a courtier. Sidney’s literary patronage and his use of genres like the pastoral and the romance affirmed his claims to elevated social status, which in turn marked him as a suitable candidate for

62 Spiller attributes the unprecedented outpouring of English sonnet sequences in the last decade of the sixteenth century to the 1591 edition of *Astrophil and Stella* (*Sonnet Sequence* 4). He reports that while only three sonnet sequences were published during the decade in which Sidney wrote *Astrophil and Stella* (*Development of the Sonnet* 103), nineteen more sequences were published between 1591 and 1597 (198).
important government posts. In Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier*, writing poetry in the vernacular is one of the many skills associated with the ideal courtier (86-88), and a number of the historical figures on whom the fictionalized characters in this book are loosely based were known for their poetry, knowledge of literature, and patronage of writers and other artists. George Bull in the introduction to his translation of the *Book of the Courtier* describes it as “a handbook for gentlemen” (17), and Sidney is said to have carried a copy of it in his pocket. He was identified by his contemporaries with its ideals of courtly behavior: Bull comments that “a poem by Gabriel Harvey justly bases its praise of Sir Philip Sidney on his affinities with Castiglione’s perfect courtier” (13). Analyses that address Sidney’s character and his reputation as a patron and as a writer should not overlook the importance to him of maintaining for a contemporary audience the kind of public persona that evoked Harvey’s response, nor the pitfalls associated with an uncritical acceptance of this assessment and others like it.

Sidney’s role as a client has received less attention than his role as a patron. However, members of the Sidney family were clients of Sidney’s uncle Leicester (Adams 152, 155, 162, 166; Williams 251). It was as members of the Dudley affinity that Lady Mary Sidney became a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber at the very beginning of Elizabeth’s reign and that Sir Henry Sidney became the President of the

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63 Characters in Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* who were known for their poetry, literary taste and knowledge, and their patronage of artists include Bernardo Acoli, Pietro Bembo, and Vincenzo Collo, also known as Calmetta. See the prefatory material of the 1967 Penguin edition of *The Courtier* for biographical sketches of the historical figures associated with Castiglione’s characters (“Characters in *The Courtier*” 23-29).
Council of the Marches of Wales in 1559 (Adams 162). According to Adams, the close family relationship between Leicester and the Sidneys affirms rather than undermines the characterization of them as members of the Dudley clientele: "As in any sixteenth-century affinity," Adams says, "the family formed the core" (155). It was as Leicester's client that Sidney obtained the colonelcy of a Zeeland regiment in 1586 (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 285), and it was as his client that Sidney in 1579 composed the letter to Queen Elizabeth opposing her marriage to the Duc d'Anjou that was to seriously damage Sidney's relationship with the Queen. 64 Duncan-Jones suggests that the letter was the outcome of an August 1579 meeting attended by Leicester, Sidney, and Sidney's father at the Herberts' London residence, Baynard's Castle (162). In a letter to Sidney dated October 22, 1580, his mentor Hugh Languet describes his understanding of the circumstances under which Sidney had written the letter:

... I suspected that you had been urged to write by persons who either did not know into what peril they were thrusting you or did not care for your danger, provided [that] they effected their own object. Since

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64 May and others have argued that Sidney's relationship with the Queen was not adversely affected by his public opposition to her proposed marriage to the Duc d'Anjou, pointing to records that show that Sidney continued to exchange New Year's gifts with her during his absence from court (98). However, although the Queen may not have explicitly withdrawn her favor as a result of Sidney's widely circulated letter to her listing arguments against the marriage, his exercise of the courtier's privilege to advise the monarch was part of a larger pattern of behavior that included his confrontation with a social superior, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and that suggested a lack of deference to authority in general and more specifically to the degrees of nobility that constituted England's social hierarchy. As Leonard Tennenhouse has demonstrated, Elizabeth's regulation of marriages among the nobility and the gentry had the effect of accentuating the importance of the distinction between the two categories, as well as of substantiating the Queen's own claims to social supremacy through blood (26, 32).
However you were ordered to write as you did by those whom you were bound to obey, no fair-judging man can blame you for putting forward freely what you thought good for your country, nor even for exaggerating some circumstances in order to convince them of what you judged expedient. (Languet and Sidney 187)

The characterization of Sidney as “bound to obey” the senior members of the family alliance points not only to Sidney’s role as a son, nephew, and brother-in-law, but also to his status as a junior member of Leicester’s clientele. Languet’s suggestion that Sidney had been given the thankless task by “persons who either did not know into what peril they were thrusting you or did not care for your danger, provided [that] they effected their own object” may well be an accurate representation of Leicester’s attitude toward his sister’s son. Although after Sidney’s death in October 1586 Leicester describes him as having been “my greatest comfort, next Her Majesty, of all the world” (Wallace 381), Fulke Greville reports that in 1584 Leicester had reservations about Sidney’s judgment and capability. Greville quotes Leicester as having said that “when he undertook the government of the Low Countries, he carried his nephew over with him, as one amongst the rest, not only despising his youth for a counsellor, but withall bearing a hand upon him as a forward young man” (29). Leicester’s estimation of Sidney’s abilities may have been a factor in Elizabeth’s reluctance to employ Sidney in any major posts between 1579 and 1585 despite his considerable skills, apparent success in diplomacy, and popularity with princes and other Protestant leaders on the continent.
The letter Sidney wrote to Elizabeth about the Anjou marriage, however, does not represent his only effort to promote through writing the special interests of the Dudley affinity. Two others are his "Discourse on Irish Affairs," a defense of Henry Sidney’s policies in Ireland, and the "Defence of the Earl of Leicester." The last is a reply to an attack on Robert Dudley called Leicestcr’s Commonwealth. Both essays are political propaganda written with the object of shaping public opinion in ways that serve special interests. In writing his "Defence of the Earl of Leicester," Sidney may have made the kind of miscalculation about how best to serve Leicester’s interests that could adversely affect the patronage relationship. Duncan-Jones characterizes Sidney’s argumentation in this essay as “inadequate” ("Introduction" to the "Defence of the Earl of Leicester" 124), while Adams describes the tone as “near-hysterical” (314). Poorly conceived and poorly executed, Sidney’s defense focuses not on the damaging attack on Leicester’s character, but the effort to invalidate Leicester’s claim to noble birth on the grounds that the descent passed through the female line (Duncan-Jones, Introduction to the "Defence of the Earl of Leicester" 124, 126). Sidney’s attention to this point coincides with his own self-interest in two ways. First, the death of Leicester’s son Robert in July 1584 had renewed Sidney’s prospects of inheriting Leicester’s title, and Sidney’s claim to noble birth, like Leicester’s, devolved through the female line. Second, Leicester’s precise rank would have been an important factor in considerations of his suitability to lead the English

65 The title of the first edition of Leicestcr’s Commonwealth is The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge to his Friend in London... about the Present State, and Some Proceedings of the Earl of Leicester and his Friends in London (Sidney, Miscellaneous Press 123, n. 1).
military expedition to the Netherlands (127), since the Treaty of Nonsuch, finalized in 1585, specifically stipulated that the commander be a nobleman (MacCaffrey 349).

As Leicester’s client, Sidney’s prospects were closely tied up with his patron’s, and he had good reason to defend them. The approach he takes, however, was not an effectual one. In the conclusion to his “Defence of the Earl of Leicester,” Sidney challenges the unknown author(s) of Leicester’s Commonwealth to defend the truth of their statements on the field of honor (140-41). His effort to negate the effects of the Catholic propaganda machine by invoking the chivalric code was neither practical nor astute. As Duncan-Jones attests, Leicester “was surely a prudent enough politician to know that Sidney’s challenge to the unknown libeler could not help him” (125). The accusations of rapacity, power seeking, and Machiavellian ruthlessness made in Leicester’s Commonwealth were eventually countered through the far more authoritative vehicle of the Privy Council, and plans to defend Leicester’s name may have already been underway at the time Sidney wrote his response (123). According to Duncan-Jones, the composition of the “Defence of the Earl of Leicester” probably took place prior to the summer of 1585; she suggests that Sidney was responding to the edition that became available in England during the summer of 1584 (Introduction to the “Defence of the Earl of Leicester”123). It is to 1584 that Greville attributes Leicester’s description of Sidney as a “forward young man” (33), and Sidney’s
apparent misstep in addressing his patron’s interests may well have informed this assessment of his abilities.\(^ {66} \)

The extent and literary importance of Sidney’s patronage is sometimes overestimated as a result of constructions that conflate it with his influence on the writers of the Wilton coterie, especially Fulke Greville and Sir Edward Dyer. However, it would be inaccurate to describe either Greville or Dyer as Sidney’s client in this context. The term “coterie” implies a group of writers or intellectuals drawn from roughly the same social stratum who engage in literary writing, reading, and discussion in a context of mutual support, competition, and experimentation (Wall 13). The structure of relationships in a coterie is different from that of patron/client relationships, which is asymmetrical; as Lamb says, “relationships among equals cannot be properly termed ‘patronage’” (“Pembroke’s Patronage,” 1982, 167). And although Sidney’s abilities and exposure to continental literary practices support the contention that he took a directive role in the Wilton coterie, his posthumous fame should not be allowed to obscure the importance of the roles played by others or the degree of mutuality that characterizes a coterie.

Some slippage has occurred over time in the use of the terms “Wilton coterie,” “Sidney Circle,” and the “Countess of Pembroke’s Circle.” Imprecise use of these designations has contributed to the conflation of Mary Sidney Herbert’s and Philip Sidney’s literary activities and to characterizations of Herbert’s patronage as a

\(^{66}\) Duncan-Jones points out that while Sidney’s “Defence of the Earl of Leicester” was evidently written for publication, it was not printed until 1746 (Introduction to the “Defence of the Earl of Leicester” 123).
continuation of Sidney’s. Critics disagree as well about the constituents of these groups: for example, Van Dorsten mentions Edward Dyer, Fulke Greville, Gabriel Harvey, Daniel Rogers, and Edmund Spenser (“Elizabethan Literary Patronage” 204) in connection with the “areopagus;” Gary Waller lists as writers of the “Sidney Circle” Nathaniel Breton, Samuel Daniel, Dyer, Abraham Fraunce, Mary Sidney Herbert, Robert Sidney, and Spenser (English Poetry 136); and Duncan-Jones identifies as participants in Sidney’s literary “circle” Lodowick Bryskett, Edward Denny, Dyer, Sidney, and “the younger members of his family” (Courtier Poet 176, 192). A lack of detailed and reliable information about these literary communities, their constituents, and their activities has resulted at times in speculative statements about them that add to the confusion. There is evidence that at some point in time each of the writers mentioned above participated in projects that involved Philip Sidney, Mary Sidney Herbert, or both; however, there is considerable difference in

67 Two of Waller’s statements about Herbert’s literary activities may be used to illustrate the process through which Herbert’s patronage is subsumed into Sidney’s. In his 1979 critical study of Herbert’s work, Waller writes: “it was at Wilton that the Countess gathered the poets and men of letters to continue her brother’s work to improve English literature” (Critical Study 17). The effect of the sentence would be quite different if Waller had used the phrase “their work” instead of “her brother’s work.” Similarly, in English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century (1986, 1993), Waller says, “In 1577 Mary Sidney married Henry, second Earl of Pembroke, and her home at Wilton became for some twenty years the centre of Sidney’s attempt to give direction to Elizabethan high culture” (151). In this book, Waller characteristically uses “Mary Sidney” and “the Countess” to denote Mary Sidney Herbert; he uses “Sidney” to identify Sir Philip Sidney. The second statement cited above represents Sidney’s agency as continuing eleven years subsequent to his death. Both statements foreground Sidney’s agency at the expense of Herbert’s and characterize her work as subsidiary to his.

68 Because Robert Sidney’s extant lyrics were written during the late 1590s, long after his brother’s death (Hay 196), I do not address his work in the context of the Wilton coterie.

69 A cumulative list of writers who have been described by different critics as participants in the literary work of the “Sidney Circle” or the “Wilton coterie” would include Nathaniel Breton, Lodowick Bryskett, Samuel Daniel, Edward Dyer, Edward Denny, Abraham Fraunce, Fulke Greville, Mary Sidney Herbert, Daniel Rogers, Robert Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and Thomas Watson.
the ways and the extent to which Sidney and/or Herbert actively and purposefully engaged in these writers’ projects or were passively engaged by them.

At this point, I would like to re-define the terms “Sidney Circle” and “Wilton coterie” in order to construct some meaningful distinctions between them and to clarify my own usage. Following Waller’s example in *English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century*, the phrase “Sidney Circle” will be used here to designate without reference to a specific point in time a loosely connected group of writers associated with either Sidney or Herbert or both (136). However, there are significant differences in the objectives and the constituents of the “Wilton coterie” in the period before 1586, the year in which Sidney died, and during the 1590s, the decade in which most of Mary Sidney Herbert’s known writing and publishing activities took place. In order to differentiate between these two groups of writers, I will use the term “Wilton coterie” to describe only the earlier community, which apparently did function much like a coterie. Use of this term points to the centrality of place in many of the group’s endeavors and, by abjuring the use of Sidney’s or any other individual’s name as a denotation, avoids erasing the mutuality of influence that characterized the coterie’s interactions. The group that is often referred to as “the Countess of Pembroke’s Circle” and whose literary writing took place during the 1590s was not, strictly speaking, a coterie. Many of the members of this group were either engaged in or seeking patronage relationships as clients of the Herbert family. Either at their own or at their patrons’ initiative, these writers produced texts designed to please members of the extended Sidney and Herbert families or to promote their special interests.
Although Mary Sidney Herbert as patron and Wilton as locus provide continuity between the two communities, in many ways they are quite different, as the following accounts of their constituents, practices, and objectives will demonstrate.
Some evidence links Lodowick Bryskett, Samuel Daniel, Edward Denny, Abraham Fraunce, Daniel Rogers, and Edmund Spenser to different degrees of

Lodowick Bryskett accompanied Sidney for the years 1572-74 of Sidney's tour of the European continent (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 25, 83). On Henry Sidney's reappointment as Lord Deputy of Ireland in August 1575, Bryskett was appointed Clerk to the Irish Privy Council, and he went with Henry Sidney to Ireland. Moreover, Bryskett spent time with Philip Sidney in England during the years 1579-80 (Palmer 26), when, according to the Spenser-Harvey correspondence, Spenser was engaged with Sidney in the quantitative experiments (Spenser and Harvey 89-91, 98-99). From 1577, Bryskett held government appointments in Ireland, where his literary circle included Spenser (Maley 86).

Bryskett contributed two elegies to the collection of tributes to Sidney that Spenser appended to Colin Clouts Come Home Again. In one of the two elegies, Bryskett refers to his involvement with Sidney in literary activities during Sidney's travels. Duncan-Jones observes that Bryskett's models for both elegies were poems by Bernardo Tasso, and she speculates that Bryskett may have been alluding to time he and Sidney spent in Venice with Cesare Pavese, a close associate of both Bernardo and Torquato Tasso (79-80).

A client of Mary Sidney Herbert, Samuel Daniel dedicated to her the 1592 and 1594 editions of Doiia (Hamny, Phoenix 166-18), his Civile Wares betweene the Howses of Lancaster and Yorke (119), and the 1594, 1609, and 1611 editions of his Cleopatra (n. 47, p. 248), which he states was written at Herbert's suggestion: he calls it the "worke the which she did impose" (qtd. in Philip's Phoenix, 119). Pierre Spriet puts Daniel at Wilton during the years 1584-88. In her critical and biographical study of the poet, Joan Rees places Daniel at Wilton from 1592 (9). Daniel later became a client of Fulke Greville; Bullough describes Daniel as Greville's "closest literary associate" after Sidney's death (18). In the dedication to his Musophilus, Daniel credits Greville with bringing his "infant Muse . . . / From out the darkness wherein it was nursed/ And made to be partaker of the light" (qtd. in Bullough, 19). Since Daniel claims in his dedication to William Herbert of A Defence of Rhyne (1603) that his first instruction in versification took place at Wilton and that he was "incourag'd or fram'd thereunto" by Mary Sidney Herbert (qtd. in Philip's Phoenix, 117), the dates of this literary relationship have significant implications for representations of Herbert's career as a literary patron. Rees bases her argument on the date of Daniel's first dedications to the Countess. However, Spriet makes a good case for Daniel's employment at Wilton as a tutor for young William Herbert as early as 1584 and no later than 1588, when Daniel accompanied Sir Edward Dymoke to France (59). If Spriet is correct, then Mary Sidney Herbert's active patronage of household writers may have begun prior to her brother's death or departure for Flushing in 1585, but in any case was ongoing long before Herbert was supposedly spurred into writing, editing, and publishing by the need to defend her brother's legacy in 1590. What is at stake here is a characterization of Herbert's literary activities that does not portray them primarily as a response to her brother's death or as a continuation of his practices. A narrative that dates Herbert's active patronage of writers like Daniel and Hugh Sanford from before Sidney's death disrupts the sentimental narrative that has served to render her agency as writer and editor largely invisible to many earlier critics. The possibility her patronage was ongoing prior to 1586 deserves serious critical consideration.

Edward Denny was a friend of Sidney's whose close association with him seems to have developed during the late 1570s and early 1580s. Denny was a member of Grey de Wilton's entourage when he took up his position as Lord Deputy of Ireland during the summer of 1580. In a letter to Denny dated May 22, 1580, Sidney asks Denny to remember to sing Sidney's songs; Osborn follows Croft in suggesting that a second party included in this message may well have been Edmund Spenser, who was also to accompany Grey (Osborn 535-36). Duncan-Jones contests this identification (Courtier Poet 172, 322 n. 11); she identifies Denny, as well as Sir Edward Dyer, as members of the Wilton coterie (Courtier Poet 192).
association with Sidney in the coterie writing projects of the late 1570s. Spenser is linked to the quantitative experiments, as are Fraunce and Rogers, who also wrote Latin poetry. More substantive evidence, including mutually referential texts, indicates that Greville and Dyer were closely associated with Sidney in coterie writing during his lifetime. However, while some critical work gives the impression that the structure of the relationships in this coterie was widely asymmetrical,75 other sources suggest a less hierarchical configuration. Sidney appears to have considered Dyer a role model in a range of different endeavors, including writing poetry.

Duncan-Jones suggests that after Sidney returned from his Grand Tour in 1575, Dyer became his mentor; she points out that Dyer was not only eleven years older than

73 Abraham Fraunce was Sidney’s protégé; Sidney paid for his education at St. John’s College, Cambridge (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 155; Palmer 88). Woudhuysen dates Fraunce’s personal contact with Sidney from 1580-81 (339); Waller says that Fraunce participated in the quantitative verse experimentation associated with Sidney, Dyer, Spenser, and Harvey (Edmund Spenser 14). Fraunce dedicated different segments of a manuscript containing his Shepherd’s Logic to Dyer and Sidney (Ringler xxxi, n. 1; Woudhuysen 339), and produced a holograph volume that contains commendatory Latin acrostic verses written to Sidney as well as an illustration that identifies Sidney with Aeneas. Prior to Sidney’s knighting in 1583, Fraunce dedicated his Latin comedy Victoria to him (Woudhuysen 339). Fraunce used the St. John’s College manuscript of the Old Arcadia in preparing his Arcadian Rhetorike, which he dedicated to Mary Sidney Herbert and published in 1588 (338). Woudhuysen describes Fraunce as “closely involved in the literary and intellectual life of the Sidney family” (339). If Waller is correct, then Fraunce, unlike Byskett, Daniel, and Denny, would have been actively involved in the work of both of the literary communities described above: the Wilton coterie and the Countess of Pembroke’s Circle.

74 Daniel Rogers was a minor diplomat employed intermittently in Elizabeth’s service between 1570 and 1591 (Phillips 11-12). Writing in the late 1570s, Rogers dedicated six of forty largely autobiographical poems to Sidney (20). One of these, dated January 14, 1579, celebrates Sidney’s involvement in efforts to “purify and unify” Christianity and expresses Rogers’s gratitude for his inclusion in “pious studies” of different kinds with Sidney, Dyer, and Greville (20-21). Van Dorsten describes Rogers as “always accurate” (English Literary Patronage 203). Rogers is also linked to the “areopagus” through the Spenser-harvey correspondence discussed above. In the last of his letters, Harvey asks Spenser to share the poetry included in it with Rogers and two others, who, though unnamed, would appear from the context to be Sidney and Dyer (Spenser and Harvey 122).

75 Duncan-Jones gives Dyer a minimal role in the Wilton coterie; she suggests that he “seems to have been involved in Sidney’s verse experiments more as a patron or spectator than as a participant. The older man presumably watched with excitement as the much more talented Sidney made English poetry and the English language over anew” (104).
Sidney, but also a trusted friend of his mother’s (Courtier Poet 105). MacCaffrey describes Dyer as “Leicester’s friend and protégé” (305), a statement that provides a context for Sidney’s and Dyer’s activities, particularly during the years 1577-79 when as members of the Dudley affinity both spent time in attendance at Leicester House. Dyer’s skill as a poet was recognized in court circles well before his association with Sidney in the late 1570s; Ralph Sargent says that Dyer’s “poetic activity began in the 1560s, flourished chiefly in the 1570s, continued irregularly in the 1580s, and had probably run its course by the beginning of the last decade of the sixteenth century” (166).76

In his study of Elizabethan courtly poetry, May asserts that Dyer was an important influence on Sidney. “The extent to which he surpassed all of his contemporaries, courtier or professional,” says May, “tends to obscure the fact that he was influenced by Dyer’s earlier writings and, no doubt, by the work of other Elizabethan courtiers as well” (69). There is textual evidence for the claim that Sidney’s early poetry was influenced by Dyer’s; May lists a number of poems that are modeled on, respond to, or allude to Dyer’s (69-70, 78-80, 83). Sargent, who is Dyer’s biographer, cites a contemporary account suggesting that in the closing years of Sidney’s life, he still revered Dyer’s literary accomplishments. Sargent’s source is

76 May ascribes Dyer’s writing to the mid- and late 1570s (288). May observes that Dyer’s first dated lyric is the “Songe in the Oke” that Dyer performed for the Queen at the 1575 entertainment at Woodstock. May argues that there is no textual evidence to support Sargent’s contention that Dyer began writing much earlier; however, the “Songe in the Oke” is written in a polished style that suggests the poem is not an early effort. Buxton appears to concur with Sargent that Dyer’s poem beginning “He that his mirthe hath lost, whose comfort is dismayd” (May 290), sometimes titled “A Fancy,” was written prior to the mid-1570s. The poem is written in poulter’s measure, unlike the “Song in the Oke,” and Buxton says that the poem is “likely to be quite early” (110).
Geffrey Whitney, who in his book *A Choice of Emblemes and Other Devises*, claims that Sidney had asked him to address dedicatory verses crediting Sidney with initiating a rebirth of English letters instead to Dyer (Sargent 84-85). Nor had Dyer’s reputation as one of the reign’s pre-eminent poets faded by the end of the century: in the margins of his copy of Thomas Speght’s 1598 edition of Geoffrey Chaucer’s poetry, Harvey noted that Dyer’s “written deuises farr excell most of the sonets, and cantos in print” (Marginalia 232-33). These two sources clearly indicate that Sidney and his associates recognized Dyer as an eminent poet.

The failure of one of the primary sources about the Wilton coterie to mention Greville has raised doubts about his participation in Sidney’s and Dyer’s metrical experimentation and other writing projects during the early years of the coterie. This source is a series of five letters dated 1579-80 and published in 1580. In it, Spenser and Harvey claim association with Dyer and Sidney in their quantitative verse experiments; mention their access to other important figures, including the Queen; and exchange and comment on their own verses (Harvey, Spenser 87-122). Some of these have been written to the same rules for quantitative verse drawn up by Thomas Drant and modified by Sidney. In his letter dated October 23, 1579, Harvey engages in a long critique of Spenser’s quantitative verses, playfully but painstakingly pointing out his metrical deviations (Spenser and Harvey 94-96). In the final letter in the series, written in April 1580 (G. C. Smith 87), Harvey goes on to identify

77 Thomas Drant, who belonged to Leicester’s circle, had been influenced as a student at St. John’s, Cambridge, by Thomas Watson and Roger Ascham, who sought to introduce classical prosody into English and to eliminate rhyme, which Ascham thought “barbaric” (Buxton 116-17).
deficiencies in Drant’s rules as Spenser practices them (Spenser and Harvey 117-22). In 1576-77, Harvey had tutored Sidney in Roman history (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 117-18), and in 1579, both he and Spenser were seeking Leicester’s patronage. It was at some point in 1579 that Spenser moved into Leicester House to take up a position with the Earl, possibly as either a clerk or a secretary. The publication of their correspondence was apparently designed to advance Spenser’s and Harvey’s pursuit of patronage through a display of intellectual prowess and to enhance their social standing by publicizing their contacts with members of the court. This focus is evidenced in the first of the letters in the series. Spenser opens the discussion of the “areopagus” with a social claim: “the twoo worthy Gentlemen, Master Sidney and Master Dyer, haue me, I thanke them, in some vse of familiarity,” and goes on from there to describe Stephen Gosson’s dedication to Sidney of his Schoole of Abuse as a misstep in his pursuit of Sidney’s patronage (Spenser and Harvey 89). Rambuss characterizes the letters as part of a “public courtship of Sidney’s notice and favour” begun by Spenser in December 1579 with the dedication to Sidney of the Shepheardes Calendar (22). Sidney biographer James Osborn limits Sidney’s and Spenser’s association to a series of “occasional meetings” during a “brief period of less than six months” in 1579-80 (536), and the critical consensus appears to be that

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78 According to the chronology in the Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser, Spenser was in London by July of 1579 (xv); he arrived in Ireland to serve as a secretary to the new Lord Deputy, Arthur Grey de Wilton, on August 12, 1580 (Rambuss 26).
Spenser’s involvement with Sidney and Dyer during 1579 was minimal,79 with little to no contact after August 1580 when Spenser attained his position as secretary of the new Lord Deputy of Ireland, Arthur Grey de Wilton, and departed for that country.

Nonetheless, the letters provide substantive evidence that Spenser was involved in the Wilton coterie’s vernacular quantitative experiments (Spenser and Harvey 89-91, 98-99), and at least one of Spenser’s rhymed poems suggests that he may have participated in some of the group’s other poetic endeavors as well. May points to use of a heavenly fire motif in poems by Dyer, Greville, Sidney, and Spenser; he describes it as part of the group’s common exploration of certain themes and figures (90-91). Ringler notes that an early version of this poem, which Spenser later published as Amoretti 8, appears in a manuscript that contains court poetry from the late 1570s and the 1580s, where it is attributed to Dyer (xxxiii, n. 1). Buxton argues that the use of archaic diction in Old Arcadia 66 can be attributed to Spenser’s influence; Ringler suggests that the poem may be modeled on the “February” eclogue, observing that Sidney’s poem is also a beast fable and that “nearly half of his archaisms or pseudo-archaisms also appear in the Shepheardes Calendar.” Ringler attributes the poem to the second half of 1579, since the fable addresses tyranny and two likely sources for it were published that year (413). Although Buxton describes Old Arcadia 66 as the only instance of Sidney’s use of archaic diction (125), Duncan-Jones adduces Old Arcadia 64 as well. Further textual correspondences between

79 Critics who contend that Spenser’s involvement with Sidney and Dyer was more limited than the Spenser-harvey letters suggest include, in addition to Osborn, Duncan-Jones (Courtier Poet 192), Rambuss (22), Sargent (60), and Waller (Edmund Spenser 17).
Spenser's and Sidney's poetry occur in the "August" eclogue and in Old Arcadia 70 (Ringler xxxiii, 365; Woudhuysen 297), which are described as the earliest sestinas in English and in Old Arcadia 75, which is an elegy; and the "November" eclogue, which contains one (Woudhuysen 297). These textual correspondences provide yet another indication that literary influence amongst the members of the Wilton coterie was mutual. Woudhuysen does not draw a distinction on the basis of social status between Sidney's literary interchanges with Spenser and those with Greville and Dyer; he maintains that they were conducted to "a similar pattern of exchanging and imitating each other's poems" (297).

While Spenser's literary associations with the Wilton coterie are generally accepted as bona fide, if brief, there is some reluctance to acknowledge Harvey's affiliation. This is despite or perhaps in part because of his self-aggrandizing claim that it was he who stimulated Sidney's and Dyer's interest in the use of quantitative meters in English vernacular poetry (Spenser and Harvey 101). Claims as to Harvey's minimal or non-participation in the activities of the coterie are sometimes predicated on location. For example, Rambuss argues that Spenser, who was living in Leicester House, had greater opportunities for involvement in the coterie at this point in time than Harvey, who was then located in Cambridge (22), while G. C. Smith says that he finds "nothing in these letters to support the common statement that Harvey was a

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80 Ringler attributes the sestina in the August eclogue of Shephearde's Calendar to Sidney's influence (xxxiii, 365); however, in the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser, editors William Oram et al. describe Spenser's as "apparently the first English sestina, with Sidney's soon to follow" (136). Woudhuysen describes the two poems as "comparable" (297).
regular visitor at Leicester House at the meetings of Sidney’s and Dyer’s ‘Areopagus” (30). Yet there is some question as to whether the group held regular formal meetings (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 192; Sargent 60), and it would be difficult to explain why an absent party could not participate in the conversations of a literary coterie through the medium of the written word. Harvey’s quantitative verse makes up part of the same correspondence that is cited to validate claims that Spenser participated in coterie experiments (104-09); both Spenser and Harvey talk of sharing Harvey’s verse and ideas with Sidney and Dyer, and Spenser imparts Dyer’s “great good liking and estimation” of Harvey’s “Satyrical Verses” (Harvey, Spenser 90, 100, 122); according to G. C. Smith and Buxton, Harvey’s critiques of Spenser’s quantitative verse and Drant’s rules are both valid and insightful (G. C. Smith 30-31, Buxton 120).

The difference between Harvey’s and Spenser’s approaches to the quantitative experiments in these letters is striking. Spenser appears to be making a valiant effort to follow the rules as his social superiors have conveyed them to him; Harvey, while advocating quantitative verse, analyzes Drant’s rules, demonstrates their inadequacies, and ridicules both the rules and their originator. While there is no record of Sidney’s or Dyer’s reaction to Harvey’s comments, it seems unlikely that the two courtiers could have been unaware of them, especially after they had been published. Duncan-Jones describes Harvey’s position in the coterie as “marginal” and observes that by the time the letters appeared in print, the coterie’s interest in classical meters had waned (192). Buxton, however, draws a causal connection between the
two events, claiming that "Harvey by his ridicule put an end to the experiments in quantitative scansion" (120). It is possible that the letters were published in part because Harvey simply could not resist the opportunity to publicly display his intellectual superiority. In light of all these factors, both Buxton and Duncan-Jones may be correct in their assessments of Harvey’s degree of involvement: it is possible that Harvey’s position in the coterie was marginal and that his comments on the quantitative experiments were definitive.

The publication of this series of letters damaged Harvey’s career and may have adversely affected Spenser’s prospects as well. Courtly writers avoided print as a medium because it breached the carefully policed boundaries that maintained through exclusivity the mystique associated with the higher ranks of the social hierarchy. Dissemination through print of letters that publicized literary activities pursued in apparent intimacy with a minor secretary and a Cambridge tutor may have embarrassed Sidney and Dyer; in and of itself, as G. C. Smith observes, “the publication of five private letters of two young Cambridge men of thirty or under was a proceeding certain to excite ridicule.” Some of the content of Harvey’s letters was offensive to Cambridge authorities; he was called upon to explain it, and the letters became a factor in his failure to win a post as the university’s public orator (G. C. Smith 31-41). Sargent, like Duncan-Jones, attributes the social blunder of publishing the letters to Harvey, adding that it was a “violation of the code of secrecy surrounding the art of courtly poetry . . . of which he must surely have been aware”

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81 See Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the Renaissance Lyric*, p. 228, on the “stigma of print.”
(59). However, Spenser shared both Harvey's predilection and his need for strategic self-promotion, and it is possible, as Rambuss suggests, that both were involved in the decision to publish (20).

To construe Sidney as Spenser's mentor, either as a patron or as a writer associated with the Wilton coterie, would be to greatly overestimate the role he played in Spenser's poetic development. While it is likely that Sidney provided Spenser with some limited financial patronage and may have participated in efforts to secure for him the post as Grey de Wilton's secretary (Osborn 537), it is not through Sidney's direction as a patron or influence as a fellow coterie writer that Spenser developed either his technical skills or his subject matter.82 Despite his experimentation with quantitative meters, according to Rambuss, Spenser had already attained his technique and his direction prior to the publication of his first public overture to Sidney. Rambuss accuses Sidney of failing to properly recognize in his A Defence of Poetry the importance of Spenser's work:

Arguably, The Shepheardes Calendar had already answered Sidney's call in An Apology for a neoclassical vernacular poetry . . . . Indeed,

82 In The Ruines of Time, published in 1591, Spenser claims Leicester as his patron and Sidney as the "Patron of my young Muses" (Spenser, Shorter Poems 230). However, in one of the dedicatory sonnets that prefaced The Faerie Queene, Spenser similarly describes Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, as "Patrone of my Muses pupillage" (Spenser, Faerie Queene 29). Ruines is a memorial to the Dudley alliance dedicated to Mary Sidney Herbert. This context diminishes the value of Spenser's statement as a historical record, and it is more likely, in light of the textual evidence adumbrated above, that Spenser's statement served other purposes. In part it may reflect Spenser's desire to publicly associate himself (as he does in his letters to Harvey) with Sidney, who had since become a legendary hero. In addition, Spenser may have wished to ingratiating himself with Mary Sidney Herbert. The reference in the dedication to Herbert's "manie singular favours and great graces" to the poet (Spenser, Shorter Poems 231) suggests either an ongoing patronage relationship or Spenser's desire to cultivate one.
with its virtuoso display of the possibilities of English as a literary language, The Shepheardes Calendar had heralded a new movement in English poetry with its appearance in 1579. (21)

While May and others have demonstrated through textual analysis multiple instances in the late 1570s and early 1580s of Sidney’s, Dyer’s, and Greville’s mutual literary influence, Sidney and Spenser soon rejected significant aspects of each other’s practice. Rambuss points out that Spenser “continued to employ rhyme instead of the quantitative meters advocated by Sidney and the Areopagus” (22), while Sidney’s distaste for Spenser’s use of a deliberately antiquated and invented diction is a matter of public record (Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose 112). Brennan’s representation of Sidney’s and Spenser’s mutual influence actually inverts the implications of their relative social stations. Rather than attributing contemporary estimations of Spenser’s literary abilities to any efforts on Sidney’s part to mentor or sponsor him, Brennan claims the opposite: “Edmund Spenser and Gabriel Harvey appear to have been the individuals most responsible for the formulation, in its earliest stages, of Sidney’s public reputation in England as a man of letters” (Literary Patronage 50). Through their attempts to promote their own careers by publicizing their contacts with members of the court, Spenser and Harvey instead helped to initiate the process that would culminate in the 1590s, largely through Mary Sidney Herbert’s efforts, with Sidney’s elevation to the status of a literary legend.

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Of the writers most closely associated with Sidney in his explorations of the forms and conventions of amatory verse during the late 1570s, Dyer and Spenser had each independently developed a body of work and a distinctive style prior to their involvement in the Wilton coterie. According to Fulke Greville, however, it was Sidney’s importance as a model to Greville in his own self-constructions that moved him to engage in literary writing. Greville says that he considered it “no small degree of honour to imitate, or tread in the steps of such a Leader. So that to saile by his Compasse, was shortly . . . one of the principall reasons I can alleage, which perswaded me to steale minutes of time from my daily services, and employ them in this kind of writing” (150).85 The centrality of Sidney’s theory and practice to Fulke Greville’s early writing is demonstrable not only through Greville’s own statements, but also through the intertextual evidence mentioned above. But while May and others have attributed the correspondences in amatory verse written by Dyer, Greville, and Sidney to their practice as coterie writers, Ringler contends that Greville was not engaged in the coterie writing of the late 1570s, discounting the statement on the title page of Greville’s collected works, which claims that these were composed “in his Youth, and familiar Exercise with Sir Philip Sidney” (xxx), and pointing instead to Greville’s many absences from England during the relevant years (xxxi).

May disagrees with Ringler’s contentions, pointing to evidence of the three men’s

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84 Spenser’s earliest known publication, A Theatre for Worldlings, appeared in 1569, which shows that he had been in the process of developing his material and his approach to it from the late 1560s.  
85 I follow Rehholz in his suggestion that although Greville makes this statement with specific reference to his “tragedies” and his “treatises,” it is most likely applicable to Greville’s love poetry as well (50).
repeated contacts within the same timeframe (80, n. 5), as well as to themes, images, approaches, motifs, and narrative lines addressed in common by Greville, Dyer, and Sidney and in poems believed to have been completed no later than 1580 (90). May argues that it is more likely that Greville, with his avowed adherence to Sidney as a role model, “dealt with most of these themes and phrases while they were of immediate concern to the group,” rather than that Greville would have imitated in the mid-1580s meters and approaches that had since been abandoned by Sidney and Dyer as “old-fashioned” (91-92).

May’s position is in harmony with J. M. Purcell’s earlier contention that the coterie writers together selected topoi that they would then address in their verse; Ringler rejects this suggestion (xxx, n. 3). However, similar practices were associated with the sixteenth-century continental “academies,” or literary coteries, that convened under the auspices of a local noble or prelate (Spiller, Sonnet Sequence 22). Buxton endorses J. E. Spingarn’s suggestion that the activities of the Wilton coterie had been influenced by Baif’s Académie de Poésie et de Musique, which had been founded in November 1570 (Buxton 49; Spingarn 300). Sidney may have been exposed to their practices during his three month visit to Paris in 1572 (Ringler 391), and Languet’s letters confirm that Sidney did meet on more than one occasion with Guy du Faur de Pibrac, who was later to re-establish the Académie de Poésie et de Musique as the Académie du Palais (66).86 However, as James Phillips and Van Dorsten have

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86 Buxton affirms that “whether or not Sidney met de Baiff or de Courville, Ronsard or Jean Dorat, he certainly knew of their discussions and their poetry” (49).
demonstrated, a key figure connecting the practices of the Wilton coterie to those of other literary communities on the continent after Sidney’s return to England in 1575 is Daniel Rogers. Rogers’s association with Sidney is documented from 1575 (Van Dorsten, Poets, Patrons 39), and he accompanied Sidney on one stage of the journey during Sidney’s 1577 embassy to Prague (49). While the purpose for this embassy was ostensibly to convey Queen Elizabeth’s condolences to Emperor Rudolph following the death of his father, a second and more significant objective was to explore interest in a Protestant Defensive League, the second of the two strategies described by MacCaffrey as efforts to develop alliances that would help shield or defend England from military aggression from either France or Spain (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 120; Van Dorsten, Poets, Patrons 49; MacCaffrey 336-347). After Sidney’s return to England in June 1577, Rogers was appointed ambassador to the Netherlands (Van Dorsten, Poets, Patrons 53-54), and his negotiations led to a draft treaty that same year (MacCaffrey 337). However, the arrangement was set aside during the years 1577-84, while Elizabeth and her Privy Council pursued diplomatic initiatives with France.

If Rogers’s participation in policy initiatives closely associated with the Dudley affinity during the late 1570s is well documented, so too is his involvement in the network of politically inflected literary exchanges that took place between members of the Wilton coterie and humanists on the continent during the same

period. Rogers wrote in 1575 a poem that was the first of forty Latin effusions to Sidney; Van Dorsten describes it as “the earliest poem ever addressed to Philip Sidney” (Poets, Patrons 39). The poem mythologizes Sidney’s recent tour of the continent and forecasts his eventual apotheosis as “viceroy” of Ireland (39, 173). A poet named Dominicus Baudius says that Rogers introduced Baudius into Sidney’s family circle (94), while Sidney’s continental mentor Hubert Languet describes a 1577 visit from Rogers. Languet reports that during this visit Rogers delivered one of Sidney’s letters, and that the two men talked of Sidney (54-55). The practices of Baïf’s Académie were well known to Rogers, who lived in Paris from 1561-70, knew Baïf well, and attended literary gatherings at his home (Phillips 13). Rogers is linked to the quantitative experiments of the Wilton coterie through the Spenser-Harvey correspondence of 1579-80: Harvey invites Spenser to share the verses and analysis of “reformed versifying” contained in Harvey’s letter with “M. Daniel Rogers” and two other gentlemen, presumably Dyer and Sidney (Spenser and Harvey 101, 122).

The Wilton coterie’s quantitative experiments have bewildered a number of scholars who, considering them from a critical perspective that privileges aesthetic values, have observed that the attempt to impose meters based on the duration of syllables on an accentual language was bound to fail. Research on the political and philosophical contexts behind the quantitative movement, however, demonstrates that attempts by members of Baïf’s Académie and by the Wilton coterie to assimilate classical meters in vernacular French and English were not solely motivated by a desire to produce aesthetically pleasing poetry. The intent was also to develop and
employ a certain type of aesthetic effect in the service of a major religious and political objective. As Phillips, Roger Howell, and Alfred Upham have argued, the quantitative experiments both in England and on the European continent were closely associated with a movement to restore unity to the Christian church through effects of poetry, music, and mathematics. The theory that poetry written to classical meters and performed to the right music could palliate aggression and move the human spirit toward unity in Christ was arrived at through a synthesis of cabalistic philosophy, Neoplatonism, and legendary stories like the myth of Orpheus (Howell 36). According to Phillips, the desire to achieve such effects was the impetus behind both the French quantitative verse experiments and the founding of Baif's Académie:

Such experiments cannot be separated from a second interest that really underlay the Academy of Poetry and Music which Baif ultimately founded. This was the effort to devise a kind of music and a kind of poetry which, when properly united, could achieve the remarkable moral and physiological effects attributed to David, who by such means cured Saul; to Orpheus, who similarly affected beasts and trees; to Amphion, who thereby built the walls of Thebes; to Timotheus, who in such fashion assuaged the mighty Alexander. (15) Phillips claims that “at least some of Sidney’s friends on the Continent, notably Hubert Languet, saw this effort as a step in the direction of the reunification of all Christendom” (24). While a plan to unite Christian sects through an approach that relied in part on syllabic duration may seem impossibly naïve, the scheme is no less
fanciful than some of the other intellectual pursuits of the early modern era, including alchemy. During the 1570s there were still grounds to believe that the object of the strategy, Christian ecumenicalism, was attainable. The very instability of the state’s positions on religious issues during the previous half century and the complexity of proposed and actual political alliances across supposed religious boundaries during that period attest to the fluidity of Christian affiliations in England at this time.

This account of the constituents of the Wilton coterie and of activities engaged in by some of its members during the middle to late 1570s and early 1580s demonstrates the integral connections between politics, philosophy, and religion characteristic of literary writing during this period. To focus primarily on the aesthetic value of verse written by and to members of the Wilton coterie without differentiating between early modern and contemporary investments and to treat the political positions and affiliations expressed through or associated with the verse as secondary is to risk obscuring its function as a cultural practice. Sidney’s writing and patronage during the mid 1570s and especially during his travels on the European continent appear to have been directed primarily toward developing a network of social and political affiliations that would serve political interests. These ranged from promoting a Protestant defensive league to supporting and participating in efforts to heal Christian religious and political divisions through poetry, music, and mathematics.

The research and analysis above supports a construction of Sidney that integrates his political activities and investments with his patronage and literary
writing. To return to the figure of successive representations as a palimpsest, this chapter self-consciously attempts to affect future constructions of Sidney and Herbert through its discussions of and additions to the body of literary scholarship that writes Sidney. This chapter constructs a Sidney who was one of many influential writers and theorists that helped shape the transition to a vernacular literature in England and on the European continent during the late 1500s. His privileged status as the nephew and sometime heir of the Queen’s long-term favorite, the Earl of Leicester, and as the son of the man who served both as Lord Deputy of Ireland and the President of the Council of the Marches of Wales ensured that Sidney would be looked on as a role model during his lifetime not only by the larger population but also by other members of the gentry and the aristocracy. However, his posthumous positioning as a Protestant military hero and a literary legend has resulted in exaggerated estimations and misrepresentations of the extent and purpose of his patronage, and of his influence on other literary writers during his lifetime. Groomed to succeed the Earl of Leicester as the leader of the militant Protestant faction in England, as a very young man he became the nexus of efforts to develop an alliance linking Protestant interests in England and on the continent, and he brilliantly succeeded in forging a network of supporters that served the political interests of the Dudley affinity. Until his death in 1586, continental Protestant humanists continued to vest their aspirations in him, and his loss accelerated their disillusionment with England as a source of military support and political leadership. Underemployed in part because of his aggressive temperament and political stance, in part because of his uncle’s fluctuating
relationship with the Queen, and in part because of his success in forging Protestant alliances that could be perceived as a threat to Elizabeth’s control of foreign policy, Sidney spent much of his adult life waiting at court for preferment that would advance his own and his family’s financial and political interests. His career as a courtier depleted family resources and left him with crushing debts, but it also enhanced his standing as a role model through his courtly behavior and social display. In concert with friends and associates who looked to him for leadership because of his social standing, his exposure to European literary practices, and his personal and intellectual abilities and achievements, he engaged in literary writing with a variety of personal, political, religious, intellectual, and more specifically literary objectives. These include, in addition to those described above, questioning contemporary social and sexual mores; seducing a married woman; grappling with major philosophical and theoretical issues; participating in intellectual social play; critiquing Elizabeth’s governance; supporting the Protestant cause; introducing European forms and genres; and helping to extend the range of expressivity in the English language.
Chapter 3
Contexts and Constructions of Herbert’s Patronage and the Countess of Pembroke’s Circle

During the late 1570s and early 1580s, Mary Sidney Herbert acted as the patron of a literary coterie closely associated with her brother, Sir Philip Sidney. One of the objects of this collaborative enterprise was to explore continental forms and conventions in order to develop a more sophisticated vernacular literature. Critical representations of this coterie have for the most part constructed Sidney’s role in it as directive, while minimizing the roles of other participants. Sidney’s achievements as a lyric poet are major, and he profoundly influenced the British literary and critical traditions. However, as I argued in chapters 1 and 2, literary critics have often aggrandized and/or misinterpreted Sidney’s roles and activities in the patronage system and as a “literary” writer in part because of a reliance on anachronistic cultural constructs that predicate fundamental distinctions between “literary” and “extra-literary” texts and artistic and political endeavors. Sidney’s interest in improving English poetry, which he defines as imaginative rather than versified writing, is documented in A Defence of Poetry (110-17). Nonetheless, to over-represent Sidney’s accomplishments is to risk discrediting the critical enterprise, especially where such representations de-emphasize or erase the attainments of those whose

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88 In his introduction to Sidney’s Defence of Poetry, Van Dorsten tentatively attributes it to early 1580 (Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose 60).
89 See my chapter 2 for an in-depth discussion of critical constructions of the Wilton coterie and the evidence for the active participation in it of a number of historical figures, including Edward Dyer, Fulke Greville, Gabriel Harvey, Daniel Rogers, and Edmund Spenser.
achievements have historically been under-represented because of race, class, gender, religion, or ethnicity. In this chapter, I argue that Herbert’s roles and participation in both the Wilton coterie and in the patronage system have at times been undervalued and/or misrepresented by critics in part due to assumptions about gender difference; some of these assumptions are predicated on an anachronistic construction of the public/private distinction. I argue that Herbert, as its patron, most likely played an active and significant role in the Wilton coterie and that her tastes and interests helped determine its direction.

In the late sixteenth century, coterie writing was one venue for the social display through which courtiers like Edward Dyer, Philip Sidney, and Fulke Greville sought preferment to posts and offices as well as financial perquisites of other kinds, including patents, loans, and grants of land or the revenues from it. In addition to textual constructions of self and others, sites and occasions for social display included performances of courtly practices like jousts, hunts, masques, dances, royal progresses, dramatic entertainments, and scripted or impromptu verbal interchanges.⁹⁰

Taken together, these and other forms of self-conscious and purposeful aristocratic social display can be construed as a rhetoric, or persuasive discourse, through which elites constructed themselves for audiences that consisted both of potential patrons and of a larger public outside the court and the social spheres of the magnates. These

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⁹⁰ An example of an impromptu verbal exchange that constitutes an act of social display is the Tennis Court Quarrel; for a close reading of this verbal exchange and its cultural implications, see Maureen Quilligan’s “Sidney and his Queen,” pp. 171-96. Examples of scripted dramatic entertainments include Sidney’s “A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds, Uttered in a Pastoral Show at Wilton” and “The Lady of May,” and Mary Sidney Herbert’s “Dialogue Between Thenot and Piers” (Major Works 1-2, 5-13; Collected Works, 1: 89-91).
performances were designed to affect different audiences in different ways. For the
audience that fell below the demarcation that divided the gentility from the
commonality, aristocratic social play served to validate claims to economic and social
privilege both for the individual and for the class to which the individual belonged or
aspired. By associating themselves with legendary, mythological, or fictional
characters and casting themselves as the heroes and heroines of cultural fantasies,
England's elites maintained the illusions that masked the self-interested objectives
behind the operations of the social hierarchy.91 For the elite audience, social
performances provided opportunities for individual performers to attract the attention
of potential patrons and to seek their support.92 Aristocratic social play was a
rhetorical practice for which the exigence was the rhetor's pursuit of money, social
status, and power; the constraints included rivals and disinterested patrons.93 Herbert,
through her own writing, social play, and aggressive use of print publication,

91 An example of a courtly cultural fantasy that served as a basis for an entertainment in which Sidney
prominently participated is the "Triumph of the Four Foster Children of Desire." This entertainment
was part of a tournament that took place in 1581. The audience included the Queen's marital suitor,
François-Hercule, the duc d'Anjou. The piece was published contemporaneously without attribution,
but Duncan-Jones posits Sidney's involvement and identifies phrasing and motifs she believes may be
his (Courtier Poet 205-12). May also posits Sidney's probable collaboration in the creative process for
this pageant (75).
92 These aristocratic social performances were subject to oral and textual mediation, and their effect on
different audiences depended on how they were mediated and whether they supported or threatened
specific investments in cultural constructions of social class. For example, in The Life of the
Renowned Sir Philip Sidney (1652), Greville cites Sidney's response to Edward de Vere, Earl of
Oxford, in the so-called "tennis court quarrel" to support claims for Sidney as an exemplar of courtly
behavior (63-65). However, Queen Elizabeth, whose patronage Sidney needed in order to attain a high-
level public position, was evidently alienated by Sidney's behavior, which she believed did not show
the proper deference for Oxford's superior rank (Quilligan 174, 179-80).
93 The criteria for a discourse are taken from Edwin Black's Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method.
assiduously promoted cultural fantasies that instantiated herself and her brother as
courtly ideals.

Barthes identifies such discourse as “myth,” and describes it as a “second-
order signifying system” (“Myth Today” 142). As I argue in chapter 1, Herbert makes
use of this “second-order signifying system” to promote her family’s legendary
associations in ways that increased their social status and subsequently their
opportunities for advancement. Her strategies for promoting her family’s interests
differed significantly from her father’s, her mother’s, and her brother’s. Sir Henry
attempted to increase his family’s wealth and status through service to the monarch;
however, as I explained in the previous chapter, according to his own account his
service was insufficiently rewarded, and he was unable to obtain either a heritable
title or a substantial land grant (Adams 74; Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 225-27).
Lady Mary also provided service to the monarch; she was disfigured by the smallpox
after nursing Queen Elizabeth through the same disease, but the Queen does not
appear to have substantively rewarded Herbert’s mother for this service (Hannay,
Philip’s Phoenix 17-18). Sir Philip sought preferment through service to the family
patron, the Earl of Leicester, but the activities of the Dudley clientele exposed Sidney
to the Queen’s displeasure through his role in writing and distributing the open letter
opposing her projected marriage to the Duc d’Anjou. Sidney’s involvement in this
political maneuver appears to have been a major factor in his failure to secure any
major post until about a year before his death in 1586. Herbert, on the other hand,
after her marriage in 1577 does not appear to have spent extended periods of time
serving at court in order to promote family interests as her mother, father, and brother had done. While Margaret Hannay reports that Herbert continued to visit the court during the early years of her marriage (Philip’s Phoenix 42), prior to her husband’s death in 1601 she evidently spent much of her time either at family holdings or traveling with her husband to participate in family undertakings or official business.

It is through her patronage, social display, and literary activities that Herbert most effectively advanced her family’s interests. Building on the cultural capital that had accrued to Sidney’s name through his posthumous construction as a Protestant martyr and model of Elizabethan chivalry, Herbert made aggressive use of print publication to disseminate her own and her brother’s texts. In doing so, she succeeded in glamorizing her family in the eyes of the wider audience beyond the court. Herbert either sought or allowed publication of two of her own translations in 1592; one of which, the Antonius, associated her with a tradition of women’s heroism. The first edition of her brother’s Arcadia that was produced under her

94 An example of social display that aggrandized the family through its figureheads is Mary Sidney Herbert’s spectacular entry into London in 1588 for the Accession Day celebrations. According to the Spanish ambassador, Herbert’s procession included more than forty attendants on horseback and another forty on foot (as qtd. in Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix, pp. 59-60).
95 It is likely that Herbert acquiesced in the print publication of her translations, since the publisher was William Ponsonby, whom Brennan describes as the “recognised publisher” for Sidney’s and Herbert’s writings (Literary Patronage 57). Ponsonby continued to publish texts by Herbert’s associates, including Abraham Fraunce and Edmund Spenser, through the 1598 edition of the Arcadia. Herbert’s continued patronage suggests that Ponsonby published her work with her knowledge and consent, since action was taken against the publishers of the unauthorized editions of Astraphil and Stella and the Arcadia that appeared in 1581 and 1599, respectively (56-58).
96 Through her translations, Herbert associated herself with a tradition of women’s heroism that included Garnier’s Cleopatra and Petrarch’s Laura. Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan cite the tradition that constructs Cleopatra as a heroic figure who died for love (Collected Works, 1: 140); in “Sixteenth-Century Women Petrarchists and the Legacy of Laura,” Virginia Cox explains how, for early modern readers, Laura’s chastity and self-denial constituted a kind of heroism (586-87).
supervision appeared in 1593, and Brennan posits her active involvement with
Sidney’s literary properties and their publication through the augmented 1598 edition,
which Brennan describes as “effectively the first collected edition of Sidney’s
writings” (Literary Patronage 57). 97 Though still dependent on royal favor for
advancement, Herbert’s use of print publication and social display to enhance the
extended Sidney and Herbert family’s quasi-mythological status across class lines
increased the likelihood that succeeding monarchs would consider it in their own best
interests to prominently employ members of the Sidney and Herbert families at the
royal court, since their participation in government at the highest levels would
contribute to the court’s glamour and credibility.

Despite sixteenth-century examples of women’s significant involvement in
literary coteries as patrons, sponsors, and writers, Herbert’s role in the Wilton coterie

97 There are several different versions of Sidney’s Arcadia. The first edition of the Arcadia derived
from Sidney’s revision of his first version. The revision was incomplete, breaking off in the middle of
a sentence part way through the third book. In the editing process of the first edition, which took place
under the direction of Sidney’s friend Fulke Greville, chapter headings and summaries were added to
this version, some text was cut, and there was a change to the sequencing of the sections of poetry and
prose. The second edition, edited under the direction of Mary Sidney Herbert, fused the first two books
and the incomplete third book of Sidney’s revision (often referred to as the New Arcadia) with the last
three books of his first version (which is known as the Old Arcadia). Mary Sidney Herbert’s objective
was evidently to construct a text that provided a complete narrative but that otherwise came as close as
possible to Sidney’s plan for the text as Herbert best understood it. Both of these editions are titled The
Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia. In the 1621 edition, an attempt was made to coherently connect the
two segments, which are inconsistent both in plot events and in the names and number of characters,
through a textual bridge. This is the version of the text that was made available through successive
reprints and editions through the end of the nineteenth century (Evans 9-48). In 1907, the manuscript
of the Old Arcadia was recovered, and it became available in print in 1926. The Old Arcadia, The New
Arcadia, and the The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia are all available in relatively recent editions.
The most recent editions of The Old Arcadia were edited by Jean Robertson and Katherine Duncan-
Jones; they were published in 1973 and 1985, respectively. An edition of The New Arcadia edited by
Victor Skrétkowicz was published in 1987, and an edition of the composite version edited by Maurice
Evans was published in 1977 and reprinted in 1987. I have identified the different editions of the text
wherever they are relevant. Where the textual history is not relevant to the point under discussion, I
have used “the Arcadia” as a generic term.
has most often been minimized in deference to Sidney's. Considering Herbert's excellent education, her later literary output, her evident literary gifts and interests, and her probable exposure at the Elizabethan court to the discursive spaces available for women as writers and patrons, it is both surprising and disappointing that critics have not more consistently postulated a wider role for her in the Wilton coterie. For example, in his early criticism Waller constructs Herbert as the coterie's hostess and as an "enlightened" audience (Critical Study 44, 45).98 As the first scholar to produce both a critical edition of Herbert's writings and a book-length study of her and her work, Waller's criticism influenced the focus of many studies to follow.99 Regrettably, as Waller himself later acknowledged, his early Herbert criticism was written in a tradition of "masculinist critical discourse,” which he says is characterized by "a general blindness to the received, seemingly gender-independent criteria of traditional scholarship and criticism” (“Gendered Reading” 329). In addition to unexamined assumptions about gender, Waller's findings in his Critical Study are limited by an anachronistic application of the public/private distinction, which Leonard Tennenhouse dates from John Locke's publication in the late

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98 For an account of women's participation in courtly writing, see Ilona Bell's Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship, which discusses lyrics written by Queen Elizabeth, Anne Vavasour, and others.

99 In 1977, Waller published a critical edition of Herbert's work that included one of her translations, Petarch's Triumph of Death: the two dedicatory poems that preface the psalm sequence in the presentation copy, which Waller titles "Even Now That Care" and "To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney"; two previously uncollected poems, "The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda" and "A Dialogue Betwenee Two Shepheards, Thenot and Piers, in Praise of Astrea"; and psalm versifications and variants that had not been included in Rathmell's 1963 edition. Waller's edition is titled The Triumph of Death and Other Unpublished and Uncollected Poems by Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke. In 1979, Waller published the first major single-author study of Herbert and her work, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke: A Critical Study of her Writings and Literary Milieu.
seventeenth century of his *Treatises on Government* (171-74). Shannon Miller argues that criticism of women's and men's writing has been widely affected by an inappropriate application of this opposition, which she says has helped determine "the accepted critical view about writing by women: that women's writing is focused on issues of or representations of the 'private' or the internal while men's is oriented toward 'public' subjects and audiences" (156). Waller's *Critical Study* does take a similar approach: his close readings of Herbert's poems frequently foreground the tone or emotions he attributes to her on the basis of the poem's internal evidence. Although Waller emphasizes Wilton's importance as both a social and a symbolic center for the coterie's activities, these statements lead to a construction of country house hospitality that obscures the political, economic, and administrative functions of the early modern magnate's household and of the mistress's participation in them. For example, Waller says that "gatherings of Sidney's friends united by diverse cultural interests acquired some sense of continuity in the relaxed atmosphere of Wilton" and that "To her brother's characteristic sense of vocation, Mary added the stability and continuity of Wilton" (*Critical Study* 44). Waller describes Herbert as a "patroness," but he constructs Herbert's patronage through her brother's and as an extension of it, and he rarely distinguishes her role or her activities from Sidney's (20). A comparison of Waller's description of Mary Sidney Herbert's role in the Wilton coterie and of Jan van Dorsten's and Pearl Hofgrefe's account of Mildred

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100 In his *Critical Study* of Herbert's writing, see Waller's close readings of Psalm 51, pp. 234 and 236; Psalm 88, p. 234; and Psalm 90, p. 248.
Cooke Cecil’s activities at Cecil House usefully illustrates the extent to which Waller’s critical constructions of Herbert are limited by untheorized assumptions about gender behavior and the public/private distinction.

Waller identifies Count Baldassare Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier*[^1], which gained in popularity in England during the late 1570s, as both a model and a source of impetus for the Wilton coterie (47-48, 52), along with Sidney’s exposure to continental literary practices during his tour of the continent in 1572-75 (39). Waller establishes English familiarity with Navarre’s writing by citing Elizabeth Tudor’s 1554 translation of *Miroir de l’Âme Pécheresse*, adding that “extracts from *The Heptameron* were known to English readers well before its first English translation in 1597” (41).[^2] There is considerable difference between these two models. *The Courtier* is a fictionalized account, set in 1507, of entertainments at Urbino; the text promotes a specific ideal of courtly behavior (Bull 23). Waller also suggests that Sidney most likely learned about literary practices at Navarre’s court from the accounts he received during his visit to France in 1572 from members of Navarre’s immediate circle (*Critical Study* 39), although like *The Courtier*, *The Heptameron* dramatizes courtly literary discussions. While both texts idealize historical figures and events in accordance with contemporary beliefs about the uses and value of literature, Castiglione’s model for women’s courtly behavior is more conservative in

[^1]: As support for his contention that the *Book of the Courtier* provided one of the models for the Sidney coterie, Waller cites the dedication to *The Pilgrimage to Paradise* in which Nicolas Breton explicitly compares Herbert to Castiglione’s Duchess of Urbino (*Critical Study* 47-48).

[^2]: In *The French Influence in English Literature*, Alfred Upham presents considerable support for claims that as a patron Herbert modeled herself on Navarre (60-64).
the roles it prescribes for women, depicting the women of the court primarily as an
audience for the men’s discussions. As Rebhorn explains, the ladies in The Courtier
do not participate in the discussions for which the Duchess or her close associate
Emilia Pia select the topics, with the exception of those that address the debate on
women (125-26). Navarre, on the other hand, was a prominent intellectual whose
writing and publishing activities outstripped contemporary gender expectations. A
leader of the reform movement, her ideas were controversial: Miroir de l’Âme
Pécheresse was condemned by John Calvin as antinomian and briefly proscribed by
French theologians (Ferguson 226). Textual representations of literary discussions at
the courts of Urbino and Navarre would have been available to Herbert through the
English translations of The Courtier and Miroir de l’Âme Pécheresse, and there is no
reason to presuppose that she did not take an active role in discussing and planning
the coterie’s gatherings at Wilton, their literary objectives, and the topoi and motifs to
which they wrote. Herbert’s literary activities, which include politically significant
writing and translation, suggest that she would have been comfortable with the
kinds of cultural interactions depicted in both of Navarre’s and Castiglione’s texts.

It is likely that in their efforts to develop a literary community, Sidney and
Herbert were influenced as well by a contemporary model that existed much closer to

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103 See my chapter 2, “Contexts and Constructions of Sidney’s Patronage and the Wilton Coterie,” for a brief account of the coterie’s practice of writing to specific topoi and motifs. See May, The
Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts, for a more detailed discussion (80-94).
104 For Herbert’s political objectives in her writings and translations, see Joel Davis, “Multiple
Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke” and
Margaret Hannay, “‘Doo What Men May Sing‘: Mary Sidney and the Tradition of Admonitory
Dedication.”
home. In “Literary Patronage in Elizabethan England: The Early Phase,” Van Dorsten describes Cecil House, under the aegis of William Cecil and his wife, Mildred Cooke Cecil, as “England’s nearest equivalent to a humanist salon in the days after More and possibly the only one in early Elizabethan England” (195). Mildred Cooke Cecil and her sisters, Anne, Elizabeth, Katherine, and Margaret, were exemplars of the humanist commitment to educating women; they learned Greek and Latin, and all but Margaret produced translations and/or poetry in Latin, Greek, English, or more than one of these languages (Schleiner, Women Writers 34-51). William Cecil shared his wife’s interests: his biographer Michael Graves says “there can be no doubt about the genuineness of his love of learning . . . . The ‘cultivated man’ was not a pose” (209).

Pearl Hofgrefe also describes the importance of Cecil House as a site for gatherings of international visitors, noting that Mildred Cecil’s fluency in Latin, the language of diplomacy, would have been an important factor in the success of these assemblies (109). Mildred Cecil was a close friend of Herbert’s and Sidney’s mother, Lady Mary Sidney (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 22), and Philip Sidney had been in close contact with the Cecil family for a period during 1567-69 while plans for a match between him and the Cecils’ daughter Anne were going forward. Sidney spent part of 1567 at Cecil House and was there again for the Christmas holidays in 1568 (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 39; Osborn 16; Van Dorsten, “Elizabethan Literary Patronage” 199).105

105 Charlotte Merton suggests that one of the Sidney daughters, either Ambrosia or Mary, was in part brought up at Cecil House (40). However, Merton’s source is a letter from Sir Henry Sidney to Cecil dated October 26, 1569 (HMC Salisbury I:438), in which Sidney sends his “lovyng and father’s kys”
While the marriage did not take place, Van Dorsten argues convincingly that Sidney’s experiences at Cecil House would have served as an early and influential introduction to what then in England most closely approached the literary circles that flourished on the continent.

In comparison to Van Dorsten’s and Hofgrefe’s construction of Cecil House and Mildred Cooke Cecil’s place in it, Waller’s characterization of Herbert’s contributions to the Wilton coterie as hospitality and “enlightened enthusiasm” seem incongruous (44, 45). In his statement that “it is one of the more charming minor ironies of literary history that much of the continuity possessed by this dedicated group . . . was provided by a domestic event, the marriage of Sidney’s sister,” Waller draws on an opposition between the intellectual and the domestic that seems inconsistent with his suggestions that Wilton was a “‘little Court’” with Herbert at its center (73), and that she was “recreating in her own, perhaps typically English, way a pattern of patronage by noble women that had flourished in Italy and France for a century or more” (39). The effect of Waller’s use of words like “domestic” and “charming” is to undercut Wilton’s status as the country estate of the one of England’s most powerful families and to diminish Herbert’s role in household management. Van Dorsten, on the other hand, in his description of the literary

to his “daughter.” Hannay more credibly interprets this as a reference to his future daughter-in-law, Anne Cecil (Philip’s Phoenix 22).

106 Waller accords Herbert a more active role after Sidney’s death. For example, he describes her “furthering the ideals of her brother through the Circle of poets and intellectuals . . . associated with her in the 1580s and 1590s” (35).

107 Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan point out that Mary Sidney Herbert was a member of a family alliance that controlled one third of the territory ruled by Elizabeth (“Life,” Collected Works, 1: 1).
“salon” at Cecil House, presents hospitality and intellectual discourse as interconnected and does not gender either. Van Dorsten claims that “Cecil’s hospitality to men of letters followed the familiar pattern of humanist dinner-table conviviality: informal symposia where the bonae litterae were a standard subject” (“Elizabethan Literary Patronage” 196).108 Other accounts of literary patronage in England during the early Elizabethan period emphasize its informal character and limited financial rewards; Van Dorsten quotes John Buxton to the effect that writers’ dedications were written “as often as not, for someone with whom they had dined a few days ago” (Buxton 22; Van Dorsten, “Elizabethan Literary Patronage” 192).

The contrast between Waller’s and Van Dorsten’s approaches is particularly pronounced in their representations of Mary Sidney Herbert’s and Mildred Cooke’s roles in these two prominent households, both of which were recognized by contemporaries as centers of learning. Van Dorsten describes Mildred Cooke Cecil as the “manager” of a household that was both an important source of hospitality for visiting statesmen and an informal “humanist college” (198). After locating Burghley’s practice of “private patronage” in his household, Van Dorsten says of Burghley, “If he himself was only present at dinner time, his wife, supremely able manager of a very large household, would have supervised the activities of wards, tutors, and visiting scholars during the day” (198). In this context, Waller’s opposition between the domestic and the intellectual appears anachronistic. During

108 From what Graves says, Cecil took a more active role as patron later in the reign, encouraging Richard Camden to write his History of the Famous Empresse Elizabeth (209).
the early modern period, social dictates may have prescribed that a woman’s identity
would be subsumed by her family’s, and the family’s by its ranking member, but a
woman’s gender did not preclude her taking an active part in family business. Sara
Mendelson and Patricia Crawford report that women managed estates in their
husbands’ absence, and that extant correspondence indicates that such women were
not dependent on their husbands for direction: “Wives’ letters to their husbands
usually reported what they had done; they did not solicit advice about what they
might do” (310). Such activities would have involved an extension of women’s
responsibilities rather than their assumption of entirely new roles, since the operation
and provisioning of the gentry’s and aristocracy’s multiple large households came
under women’s jurisdiction under normal circumstances (307). The term “domestic”
is applied to activities such as these only when it is women who perform them. The
entertainment of guests who were engaged in the family’s political and economic
undertakings was neither a “private” nor a “domestic” matter; the distinction Waller
draws on with his use of the word may not have existed in the late 1570s. In the
Oxford English Dictionary Online, examples of usage from the fifteenth and sixteenth
centuries associate the adjective with early modern constructions of the word
“household.” As David Starkey points out, in the first half of the sixteenth century,
the public/private construct did not apply to the household as it does today:

The household was the main unit of economic activity: the household
of the farmer worked the land; the household of the artisan supplied
manufactured goods; and the household of the noble was the centre of
conspicuous consumption. The family and family relationships were the chief channels through which wealth was transmitted. The household was the foundation of political alignment. As far as the arts are concerned, the greater household provided both the patronage that financed them and the setting that shaped them; it even conditioned the language in which literature expressed itself. 109 (225)

The household of a great magnate was a site of local governance, and for families like the Herberts and the Cecils, in which political and economic alliances were affirmed through intermarriage, the private/public distinction did not operate the way it would in later eras. There is substantial textual evidence, including surviving examples of her correspondence, to establish Herbert’s active involvement in family business of many different kinds both during her husband’s lifetime and subsequent to his death 1601. 110 Waller’s use of an oppositional private/public distinction minimizes

109 The title of Starkey’s essay, “The Age of the Household: Politics, Society and the Arts,” brackets his notion of the “household,” associating it with the period c. 1350-c.1550. However, it is reasonable to posit a gradual transition to a different model of social organization. Starkey’s description is in many ways congruent with Van Dorsten’s account of the operations of Burghley’s household in the late 1560s as well as with Mendelson’s and Crawford’s more general description of estate management c. 1550-1720 (310). According to Mendelson and Crawford, during this time period “The basis of politics was shifting from the medieval household of the monarch to the modern liberal oligarchy/property model. By the end of the seventeenth century, a new basis of political rights had been enunciated” (348).

110 For Herbert’s extant business correspondence, see Collected Works, “Correspondence” (1: 285-301); for an account of her responsibilities in estate management and in family business, see 1: 4, 16, and 19-20 in the same volume as well as Philip’s Phoenix, pp. 43, 62, 123, 131, 133, 143-48, 151-56, 158-68, 171-184, 186-88, 191-93, and 203-4. Herbert’s active involvement in promoting the interests of her family, clients, and other acquaintances is also evidenced as well in letters by Rowland Whyte. See Brennan’s essay “‘Your Lordship’s to Do You All Humble Service’: Rowland Whyte’s Correspondence with Robert Sidney,” pp. 25, 29-30.
Herbert's participation in the intellectual and the political activities of both the Wilton coterie and the Dudley affinity. It seems to me neither appropriate nor convincing.

The key attribute of the ideal courtier was to provide appropriate service by anticipating and fulfilling the needs and desires of his patron, and aspiring clients sought to demonstrate this ability. As the center of what Nicholas Breton once described as "the little court at Wilton," Herbert was the figure to whom service was due, and it was by pleasing her that those who were either her servants or her clients would have demonstrated this crucial skill. By directing their assiduous attentions to Mary Sidney Herbert, her suitors courted her powerful husband as well. As a senior member of the powerful alliance that included Queen Elizabeth's favorite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the Herberths' favor was instrumental in securing posts and sources of income for family friends and clients. Mary Sidney Herbert's construction within the context of the Wilton coterie as Sidney's patron and as the lady to whom he accorded a knight's service not only allowed for a more graceful negotiation of the abrupt change in their relative social status following her marriage to the Earl of Pembroke; it also provided Sidney and his associates with a socially acceptable means of seeking to benefit from Herbert's wealth and elevated position in ways that enhanced their self-presentation as aspiring courtiers. Herbert's and Sidney's roles as patron and suitor, while founded in aristocratic social play, validated Herbert's later self-constructions as Sidney's literary executor and collaborative

111 Lamb observes that Breton uses this phrase twice, both in The Countess of Pembroke's Passion and later in Wit's Trenchmur (Gender and Authorship 51).
writing partner. These in turn facilitated her efforts to promote Sidney’s associations with gentility by appropriating his texts and to simultaneously valorize the texts through their associations with Sidney. While critics like Hannay and Brennan have recognized that Herbert’s role in Sidney’s literary life included providing patronage: further examination of the evidence and contexts for that patronage relationship supports a construction that foregrounds Herbert’s agency and initiative. 112

Perhaps the weight of Herbert’s achievements as a writer, translator, and patron is less evident to some literary critics because her work is so closely connected to her brother’s, whose stature in British literary history, in part because of Herbert’s efforts, is monumental. Resistance to crediting Herbert’s substantial contributions to English literature may be due to a variety of unarticulated and un theorized anxieties and predilections as well as to the predictable masculinist resistance to acknowledging collaborations by those who occupy unauthorized speaking positions in regard to projects that have been coded as male. These may include an inclination to perceive text as the product of an individual author and also as a commodity in an economy in which one writer’s achievements diminish in value in direct proportion to recognition of the collaborative involvement of others. Herbert’s perceived stature may also suffer from an effect of scale: next to the Arcadia, Astrophil and Stella, and

112 In her account of Herbert’s role as patron, Hannay draws on an earlier cultural construction: “the medieval lady of the castle” (Philip’s Phoenix 106). Hannay claims that Herbert encouraged her “young troubadours” to engage serious subject matter instead of the “light poems and songs thought suitable for young ladies.” Observing that “The lady herself may have been quite blind to the political dimensions of the extravagant praise showered on her, but if she lost her socioeconomic position, she lost her troubadours,” Hannay points out that “This is exactly what happened to Mary Sidney, who was celebrated by poets until the death of her husband.”
A Defence of Poetry, the accomplishments of a translator and expert versifier may seem less significant than they would juxtaposed to a different comparator. Mildred Cooke Cecil's writings and translations are almost invariably considered in the context of her sisters' work and constructed in the aggregate. This anomalous critical construction of the Cooke sisters and their achievements may occur partly because there is less resistance to perceiving women's writing as an ongoing collaboration and partly because when women's work is considered without reference to a male comparator, there is less anxiety about the writers' relative stature.

In any case, in the courtly tradition associated both with Castiglione and with Marguerite Navarre, it is the lady whose "personalities or taste" (in Waller's own words) sets the frame for the community's exchanges, whether "trivial, delicate conversation or . . . deep interests in literature, philosophy, music, or theology" (40), and this stipulation implies that Herbert's role in the community's literary activities from its inception would have been central to its intellectual as well as its social practices, and therefore not, as Waller implies, primarily domestic.\textsuperscript{113} This is not to discount the importance of Sidney's role in the coterie's direction, to which his access to formal education, his wide exposure to cultural practices on the continent, his privileged gender status, and his own exceptional gifts and abilities all attest. It is rather to make a case for Herbert's collaborative participation in framing the group's literary practices and objectives. In the letter to Herbert that serves as a dedication to

\textsuperscript{113} In accordance with the tenets of social constructivism, both the ladies' selection of topics and the courtiers' performances can be described as variations on a limited number of acceptable models.
The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia, Sidney asserts that the work was written at her request and that its “chief protection” will be “bearing the livery” of her name. His statements not only support claims for Herbert’s active involvement in developing the coterie’s intellectual focus, but take on additional cultural resonance in this context by gesturing toward Herbert’s role as the great lady for whom and at whose direction the members of the Wilton coterie, including Sidney, tender their literary performances (57). The patron’s direction or encouragement to pursue a specific topic is one of the distinctions between active and passive patronage, and such direction is often noted by the writer in dedications to men as well as women patrons. There is no more reason to discount as a social courtesy Sidney’s assertion that Herbert desired him to write a romance in English than there is to dismiss the significance of William Cecil’s request that Richard Camden write his History of the Famous Empresse Elizabeth. It is most probable that Herbert, in her role as patron, played an active and significant role in the Wilton coterie and that her tastes and interests helped determine its direction.

Among the other factors that may evoke a skeptical response to my contention that Sidney in the late 1570s and early 1580s positioned Herbert as the great lady to whom he paid court is their relative status in the Sidney family as they were growing up: Sidney’s seven years seniority in age, his gender, and the familial expectation that he would one day assume the role in government for which he had been carefully prepared. Sidney and Herbert may well have experienced Herbert’s elevation as a pronounced disjuncture of their familial roles prior to her marriage; however, one of
the rhetorical ploys that generates an erotic charge in Petrarchan forms is a playful inversion of the social hierarchy in which the lady is constructed as all powerful and the male suitor as her thrall. Arthur Marotti has described forms like the sonnet and the sonnet sequence as "heterocosms" in which the male courtier imaginatively exercises power over the prince, who is figured as the lady, while Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have described the rhetorical strategies through which the speaker of the sonnet or sonnet sequence vociferously deplores the lady's dominance over him as he actively constructs her through literary representations.\textsuperscript{114} While the act of writing made it possible for the writer to exercise power—or "authority"—over those situated above him in the social hierarchy, the forms also provided a means of exploring the ruptures in the social hierarchy occasioned by the contradictions that occurred as a result of a given subject's multiple social roles. While Sidney's new role as Herbert's "servant" may have inverted their previous familial relationship, this does not negate the recent disjunction in their relative status: in the highly stratified social world in which they lived, after her marriage Herbert was indeed a great lady, while Sidney was an aspiring courtier who prior to 1583 had yet to attain an English knighthood and who, in late 1577, still held no official post other than Royal Cupbearer (Duncan-Jones, \textit{Courtier Poet} 135). Herbert's wealth and her rank as the Countess of Pembroke comprised "real" cultural capital that Sidney could and did make use of to establish his literary and aristocratic pursuits.

\textsuperscript{114} See Marotti, ""Love is not Love": Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order"" and Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, ""The Politics of \textit{Astrophil and Stella}.""
If Sidney's and Herbert's relationship was rife with contradictions, their situation was not unusual. A more prominent rupture was visible at the juncture of Queen Elizabeth's roles as a monarch and as a woman in a culture that constructed women as essentially passive and necessarily subordinate. The authority with which the Queen occupied her multiple and contradictory roles for most of her reign, not to mention the capability with which men like William Cecil, Lord Burghley, executed offices marked for those above them in the social order, threw these cultural contradictions into high relief. Although they could be and were addressed through a variety of strategies, including the doctrine of the monarch's two bodies and Cecil's ennoblement, these apparent anomalies undermined state ideology that instantiated the early modern social order as "natural" and divinely ordained. In their writing, both Sidney and Herbert explored the extent to which these ruptures in the social fabric could be exploited to evade restrictions imposed according to social degree or gender role.

Another question raised by Sidney's position as his sister's client is whether their adoption of these social roles would imply incest. In his Critical Study, Waller revisits a question raised much earlier by John Aubrey in his Brief Lives, which is  

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115 In Puzzling Shakespeare, Leah Marcus describes Elizabeth's use of the doctrine of the monarch's two bodies to underpin her political authority. On a number of occasions, after acknowledging the fallibility and limitations attributed to her mortal female body, Elizabeth explicitly authorizes her edicts through reference to the monarch's immortal body—what Marcus describes as the "incarnation of a sacred principle of kingship" (54). Elizabeth genders this second body male, creating a dual identity Marcus calls a "composite nature": "her 'body natural' was the body of a frail woman; her 'body politic' was the body of a king, carrying the strength and masculine spirit of the best of her male forebears."
whether Sidney and Herbert had incestuous relations or feelings.\textsuperscript{116} In his close reading of the variant of Herbert’s poem “To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Phillip Sidney” Waller interprets line 43,\textsuperscript{117} in which the speaker of the poem alludes to the “strange passions” that arise when calculating Sidney’s worth, as an indication of Herbert’s incestuous feelings for Sidney. Here is the line in context:

\begin{quote}
Oh! When to this Accompt, this cast upp Summe,
this Reckoning made, this Audit of my woe,
I call my thoughts, whence so strange passions flowe:
Howe workes my hart, my sensues striken dumbe?
\end{quote}

\textit{(Collected Works, 1: 111, lines 43-46)}

Waller goes on to cite Aubrey’s report of a contemporary or near-contemporary rumor that Herbert and Sidney had committed incest and that Sidney fathered Herbert’s son Philip (\textit{Critical Study} 100; \textit{Brief Lives} 151-52). Waller concludes that “Aubrey’s gossip may vaguely point to something real, to the degree of intensity of feeling between Philip and Mary, especially on the side of the Countess.” Waller’s impulse to interpret the line in the poem as Herbert’s transparent expression of her

\textsuperscript{116} Waller makes the same claim in a review, “Mother/Son, Father/Daughter, Brother/Sister, Cousins: The Sidney Family Romance,” where he is even less cautious about identifying line 43 of “Angell Spirit” as a transparent expression of Herbert’s emotional state and then interpreting it as an expression of incestuous feelings for Sidney. In “Mother/Son,” Waller alludes simply to “what Mary Sidney termed her ‘strange passion’ for her brother” without supplying context from the poem (402). Referring to Mary Wroth’s affair with her cousin, William Herbert, Waller further claims that these “strange passions” characterize two generations of the extended Sidney and Herbert family.

\textsuperscript{117} The phrase “strange passions” does not appear in the earlier version of “Angell Spirit,” which was published in 1623 in \textit{The Whole Workes of Samuel Daniel Esquire in Poetrie}, where it was attributed to Daniel (\textit{Collected Works}, 1: 325). In the variant, a similar passage reads “Sometime of raise my swelling passions know” (p. 114, line 59).
feelings for her brother is, I think, mistaken. While Herbert’s love for and devotion to her brother are evidenced elsewhere, it is likely that in this poem she is drawing on contemporary literary conventions for a variety of purposes. Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan connect Herbert’s rhetorical practice in this version of “Angell Spirit” with classical literary traditions, observing that “Pembroke adopts the voice of the grieving female relative, modeled on classical precedents” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 108). As support, they cite Lisa Jardine (108, n. 13), who relates Herbert’s self-presentation in this poem to models in Progymnasmata, which she describes as “the standard school[boy’s] textbook on rhetorical, public self-presentation” (Reading Shakespeare Historically 145). Herbert may be drawing as well on the tradition of heroic love described by Giordano Bruno in De gli Eroici Furori, which Bruno dedicated to Sidney and published in England in 1585. Paul Kristeller places Bruno’s “heroic love” in the Neoplatonic tradition articulated by Ficino, in which sexual love is superseded by divine love (131-32). Kristeller says that for Bruno, “Heroic love has a divine object, and leads the soul in a gradual ascent from the sense world through intelligible objects to God” (132). Bruno describes intense suffering as part of this process, and it is likely that what Waller interprets as inchoate and partially repressed incestuous longings is a stylized expression written to a specific early modern cultural tradition that eroticizes grief.

In a later essay, “The Countess of Pembroke and Gendered Reading,” Waller revisits his comments on “Angell Spirit.” He says that “there is perhaps not a little prurience in the remarks” he made in this essay, and he again contextualizes his
criticism as part of "an existing discourse": "the male-created discourse of the gaze, spying on and anatomizing women as objects and so placing them under male control" ("Gendered Reading" 335). However, Waller does not acknowledge that he not only participated in this tradition but promoted its continuance into the emerging field of Herbert studies. As one of the first scholars to make Herbert a major focus of his critical endeavors, Waller's constructions of Herbert and his analysis of her writing served as a foundation for criticism to follow. While his work in editing and publishing Herbert's poems and translations was groundbreaking and has been recognized as extremely valuable, his demeaning constructions of Herbert have continued to affect studies of her writing and her influence on the literary tradition well into the twenty-first century. My own re-assessment of his early criticism seeks to increase awareness of the extent to which the Mary Sidney Herbert that students come to know by reading twentieth-century and twenty-first century scholarship is a fictionalized historical figure shaped in part by a critical tradition which, as Miller points out, foregrounds the emotions of women writers at the expense of their intellectual lives. Like the layers of a palimpsest, early representations affect later constructions, continuing to influence perceptions even where the critical contexts for the earlier analyses have altered almost beyond recognition. Ongoing re-assessment and active awareness of the traditions that affect perceptions of literary texts and figures should be recognized as an important part of the process of re-inventing intellectually, morally, and politically responsible analytical approaches to contemporary literary criticism.
Sidney’s tone in the dedication to the *Arcadia*, which is both playful and intimate, may at first appear to compromise my characterization of Sidney and Herbert as client and patron. The intimacy with which he addresses his patron would certainly have been inappropriate if he had been addressing a lady of Herbert’s rank with whom he had no close family ties. In itself, the tone of the dedication suggests that the appeal to Herbert’s patronage is made in the spirit of play: that the different functions in the hierarchy of the “court” at Wilton are as much a matter of “role playing” as they are social “roles.” However, as Montrose and others have demonstrated, courtship behaviors were normative rather than exceptional social conventions at the royal court as well as at the estates of the great magnates. Montrose describes these courtship behaviors as “the play-forms of aristocratic culture” (“Celebration and Insinuation” 30). Sidney’s and Herbert’s social play may be compared to similar practices at the royal court, which both had observed and participated in as official members of the Queen’s retinue. The theatricality of Petrarchan behavior at the Elizabethan court and the extent to which it functioned both as a vehicle for the distribution of patronage and as a means of promulgating monarchist ideology has been addressed by Montrose, Tennenhouse, and Sir Roy Strong.\footnote{See Louis Montrose, “Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship” and *The Purpose of Playing;* Sir Roy Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* and Tudor and Stuart Monarchy: Pageantry, Painting, and Iconography; Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display*, and Wayne Rebhorn, *Courtly Performances: Masking and Festivity in Castiglione’s Book of the Courtier.*} The overtly amorous and even erotic language directed to Elizabeth by courtiers like Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir Walter Raleigh was not likely to move
the Queen to engage in sexual activity, nor was it intended to do so, despite the recent rewriting of history in films that indicate the contrary. On the European continent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, one of the functions of the Petrarchan tradition was to sublimate sexuality to spirituality; in sixteenth century England, Petrarchan tradition also served as a socially acceptable means of seeking preferment. To interpret Sidney’s and Herbert’s eroticized social play as incest is perhaps to fail to draw a distinction between the erotic and the sexual. Although sexual behavior is directed toward eroticized objects, not all eroticized objects are sexual objects. Nor is it necessary to concur with Freud that eros is inevitably sexual in its origins; perhaps sexual activity could more accurately be described as one of many outlets for eros, along with work, play, religion, and art. Sexuality and eros are two distinct though closely related terms, and it is not helpful in this case to conflate them. The tendency to characterize Mary Sidney Herbert’s emotions and/or behavior as incestuous may result from a projection of anachronistic cultural anxieties onto the historical figures of a previous era or from a critical dependence on unhistoricized assumptions about the relationship between emotional intensity and sexual practice.

Although dedicating his writing to Herbert is the most prominent strategy through which Sidney conducted his courtly relationship with his sister, it was not the only one. In the late 1570s Sidney, along other members of the Wilton coterie, addressed Herbert in their lyric poetry as the unattainable lady of Petrarchan tradition. In these poems she is figured by different literary personae, but most often by the character “Mira.” Through the voice of his own literary persona “Philisides,” Sidney
celebrates Mira’s beauty, chastity, and other Petrarchan attributes in verse and song.

Seven of the poems attributed to Sidney have been identified as having been written to or about Mira. One of these is believed to have been and performed as part of a pageant; the poem is the second in a sequence Duncan-Jones titles “Two Songs for an Accession Day Tilt” (Major Works 2). Ringler identifies OA 31, 62, 73, and 74, and OP 5 as Mira poems. Another was revised and incorporated into the Astrophil and Stella sequence as Song 5.119

The pageant at which Sidney performed one of the Mira poems most likely took place on November 17, 1577. November 17, which was Queen Elizabeth’s accession date, had by the second decade of the reign become a national holiday celebrated with courtly spectacle. At the 1577 celebration, according to Duncan-Jones, “Though the central object of these courtiers’ devotion was the Queen, Philisides first proceeded to the tiltyard ‘With songs of love, and praise of Mira’s hue’” (Courtier Poet 144). By presenting his own theatrical and literary persona, the character Philisides, as Mira’s devoted suitor, Sidney positioned Mary Sidney Herbert within the context of courtly social play as the object of his gallantry. A number of the Mira poems are tentatively dated 1577, and it was after his return in June 1577 from his diplomatic mission to Prague that Sidney began to spend a significant

119 I use Ringler’s verbal abbreviations and numerical designations for Sidney’s poems not only because of the accuracy and durability of the 1962 edition, but also because this continuity clarifies references to the extensive body of criticism that employs them. In this practice I follow Peter Beal (“Poems by Sir Philip Sidney: The Ottley Manuscript”), May (The Elizabethan Courtier Poets: The Poems and Their Contexts), and H. R. Woudhuysen (Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640). Ringler’s abbreviations are as follows: Astrophil and Stella: AS; “Wrongly Attributed Poems”: AT; Certain Sonnets: CS; The Old Arcadia OA; and “Other Poems”: OP.
amount of time in his sister’s company, visiting her in August, September, and December (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 47). While this detail does not constitute support that Sidney wrote some or all of the Mira poems to her, it is consistent with Duncan-Jones’s argument that it is during this period that Sidney developed a close personal relationship with his sister, and that at the 1577 Accession Day Tilts he expressed his devotion to her through his use of the personae “Philisides” and “Mira.” According to Duncan-Jones, Herbert “is the most plausible candidate for “Mira,” which she describes as “the first named object of devotion in Sidney’s poetry” (Courtier Poet 16).

In the notes to his edition of Sidney’s Poems, Ringler contests the attribution to Sidney of the two poems Duncan-Jones titles “Two Songs for an Accession Day Tilt”; however, the weight of scholarly opinion has come to rest behind the attribution. In his 1962 edition, Ringler placed the two poems, labeled “AT 19” and “AT 21,” in a grouping titled “Wrongly Attributed Poems” (347-358). These, he said, were poems “that cannot positively be rejected from the canon, but which I am personally convinced are not by Sidney” (349). Duncan-Jones’s more substantive argument posits as evidence for the poems’ authenticity their inclusion in the Otley manuscript “alongside authentic early poems of Sidney’s, with a linking sentence in the first person and a final impresa” (Sidney, Major Works 333). In Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, H. R. Woudhuysen devotes eleven pages to the attribution and the dating of the two poems (268-78), concluding that “it is more likely than not” that Sidney is the author and that the poems were written to be
performed as part of the 1577 Accession Day Tilt. In an essay published in 1990, Ringler concedes that AT 19 and AT 21 are “probably by Sidney” and, citing subscriptions in the Ottley manuscript, adds that they were “performed before Queen Elizabeth, probably in 1577” (“Text of Sidney’s Poems” 137).

Sidney employed Philisides as a persona in the Old Arcadia as well; the figure is consistently associated with him both in his own literary and theatrical representations and in others’.120 While Herbert’s identification as Mira has been contested and the results of the debate are not conclusive, I posit Sidney’s Mira poems as further support for my argument that Sidney in the late 1570s playfully positioned his sister as the object of his courtly devotion. This identification is credible for a number of reasons. The use of the anagram “Mira” for the name “Marie” (or “Mary”) corresponds to Sidney’s use of the anagram “Philisides” for his own literary persona: Ringler explains that the “Philisides” is composed of syllables from Sidney’s first and last names and means “lover of a constellation or star,” while “Mira” means “wonderful” (418). The spelling is consistent as well with the little that is known about Sidney’s usage from studying his holographs; Ringler observes that Sidney “used certain equivalences interchangeably, such as i, ie, and y” (lxiv). The use of anagrams as designations for courtly personae was a common practice in early modern England, and “Mira” could conceivably have been used to designate another woman with that given name; this possibility is put forward by May, who points out

120 Ringler says that “Philisides is Sidney’s fictionalized self-portrait” (Poems 418), while Berry includes Philisides among the “literary self-portraits” that serve as “sketches towards a kind of fictional autobiography” (4).
that a maid of honor named Mary Burgh is listed in the New Year's rolls for the years 1575-77. However, May also observes that there is no evidence that links her to Sidney (82). On the other hand, Herbert is alluded to or depicted as "Mira" in works written subsequent to Sidney's death by members of her own household at Wilton. The physician Thomas Moffett uses the designation "Mira" for Herbert in a fictionalized and versified account of silk cultivation titled The Silkwormes and Their Flies (1599). Lamb suggests that the object of this work may have been to promote the English silk industry (Gender and Authorship 55-56), which was later sponsored by James I (249, n. 47). A closing image in which the Queen is depicted as nursing silk worms between her breasts may be construed as support for this contention. A second allusion to the literary tradition that identifies Herbert with Mira appears in the dedication to The Tragedie of Cleopatra (1594), where she is described as "The starre of wonder." Cleopatra was written by Samuel Daniel and, according to the dedication, at Herbert's request (Daniel 23). Woudhuysen, who places Daniel at Wilton in 1592, suggests that he may well have worked with Herbert and Sanford to prepare the edition of the Arcadia that was published the following year (229-30). It is probable that both Moffett and Daniel, who were closely associated with the

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121 May does not accept Herbert's identification with Mira: he says that Mira is described as chaste, while Herbert married in 1577; and that Philisides claims that Mira rejected him (OA 73 and 74, AS v), while Herbert was devoted to Sidney (81).

122 Other historical figures identified with the Mira persona are Queen Elizabeth and Penelope Devereux Rich. For arguments in favor of the Queen, see Edward Berry, The Making of Sir Philip Sidney, 81-82, and Dennis Moore, "Philisides and Mira: Autobiographical Allegory in the Old Arcadia," 125-137. For Penelope Devereux, see John Aubrey, Brief Lives, 2: 250, Friedrich Brie, Sidney's Arcadia: ein Studie zur Englischen Renaissance, p. 271. For Mary Sidney Herbert, see Ralph Sargent, The Life and Lyrics of Sir Edward Dyer, 67, 69-70. For arguments for and against Mary Hughes and Mary Sidney Herbert, see May, The Elizabethan Courtier Poets, 81-82.
Herbert household, would have been aware of the pseudonym's place in the Sidney literary legacy that played such an important part in their patron's life. Consequently, it is improbable that they would figure her as "Mira" unless they believed that the allusion would be welcome to her. It was under Herbert's aegis that the Mira poem OP 5 was restored to the 1593 edition (Ringler 418). Her dissatisfaction with Greville's 1590 edition of the Arcadia has been attributed to editorial practices that significantly altered Sidney's text, and Kenneth Rowe argues convincingly for Herbert's fidelity to what she understood to be her brother's literary intentions for this text. In this context, it seems unlikely that Herbert would countenance being associated with "Mira" in works written for publication by members of her own household unless she wished to be so identified.

The possibility that some or all of the "Mira" poems may have been written for Mary Sidney Herbert was raised in 1935 by Ralph Sargent, who proposed that Sidney and Dyer in the late 1570s and/or the early 1580s competed through lyrics for

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123 See Joel Davis, "Multiple Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke" (Studies in Philology, pp. 401-30), for the argument that Greville's editorial practices, including his chapter headings and summaries, position the Arcadia as an exponent of the Neostoic philosophical tradition associated with the Essex circle.

124 See Kenneth Thorpe Rowe, "The Countess of Pembroke's Editorship of the Arcadia." Rowe argues that the critical tradition that postied Herbert's arbitrary revision of the Arcadia was due to a misreading of the Preface to the 1593 edition. Collation of the first two books in the 1590 and 1593 editions indicated that Herbert and her staff had made errors, but very few changes (127). However, discovery in 1907 of the manuscript texts of the Old Arcadia made possible R. W. Zandvoort's collation of the manuscripts with the last three books of the 1593 hybrid edition, and differences between them led to application of what Rowe describes as "the fixed idea of revision by Lady Mary" to this part of the text (124). On the basis of Greville's mention in his 1586 letter to Francis Walsingham of Sidney's plan for revision, which Greville describes as "set down under his own hand," Rowe posits instead Herbert's knowledge of Sidney's intentions and her fidelity to them (128). Rowe attributes Zandvoort's belief that Herbert had bowdlerized Sidney's text to "a postulation purely on the ground of an ethical judgment that the sex-aspects of the original version were unacceptable to her taste because she was a woman" (130).
Mary's affection (65-70). Sargent contends that Dyer's poem "Amaryllis" was written as part of this courtship, and he identifies as Dyer's literary persona the figure "Coridens" (or "Coridon"), who is one of Amaryllis's two suitors and who figures in poetry by both Sidney and Dyer. While Sargent does not include Greville in this poetic and romantic rivalry, seventeen of the poems in Greville's Caelica address or refer to a figure named "Myra." Greville uses the designation "Miraphill" for the speaker in one of his sonnets, while Richard Latewar uses Mirafilus as a pseudonym for Greville in one of the commemorative poems dedicated to Sidney (Buxton 106). Sidney biographer John Buxton does include Greville in the poetic rivalry for Mira, and he accepts her association with Mary Sidney Herbert. Buxton points out a further connection between Sidney's and Greville's poems, observing that the name of Greville's literary persona "Miraphill" is constructed "by analogy" to the name of Sidney's literary persona "Astrophil" (107). Greville scholar Geoffrey Bullough, however, soundly rejects Sargent's identification of the biographical figure of Mary Sidney Herbert with the character Mira, saying that "The proposition is more amusing than tenable, despite Aubrey's scandalous stories about the brother and sister; otherwise we should have to make it a quadrilateral affair, adding Greville to the list of suitors" (43-44). However, as Buxton observes, it is a mistake to interpret the personal allusions in Elizabethan poetry as biography (107). Early modern lyrics were written within a tradition that drew on stock situations, formulaic narrative lines, and gender stereotypes as well as conventional imagery. Within most bodies of work

125 Sargent claims that "Coridens" is an anagram for "Cosn Dier" (66).
there is a range of practice: some poems, like Greville's *Caelica 8*, achieve their effect through concrete detail so specific that the poem fairly bristles with immediate social context, while others have been written to identifiable classical or continental models, working out traditional topoi and aphorisms to arrive at received truths. Even where the writer gestures at biographical identities, as Sidney does in *Astrophil and Stella*, these are characteristically attached to stock figures in a loose narrative structure that moves to a pre-determined conclusion.

Personification as a mode of thought appears to have played an extremely important role in early modern culture. In their studies of pictorial and theatrical representations of Queen Elizabeth, Strong and Frances Yates have demonstrated the extent to which the Queen was simultaneously associated with multiple mythological and literary figures personifying different attributes. The emphasis on specific attributes appears to have shifted with contemporary anxieties; for example, in 1588 when the English were awaiting the attack of the Spanish Armada, the Queen, as the personification of England, became closely associated with the figure of the Amazon, who personifies the woman warrior. The figure of the lady in the early modern English lyric appears to serve a similar function, constructed by the writer at different points in the sequence as a personification of his fantasies, anxieties, and/or desires. If Sidney, Dyer, and Greville were in the late 1570s exploring together constructions of love and courtship through the vehicle of the lyric, their focus on Mary Sidney Herbert as the object of their lyrics would not have precluded figuration by her of

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126 See Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*, 29-120.
multiple abstract qualities. For example, Greville’s sequence of love lyrics addresses, sometimes separately, sometimes in different combinations, Myra, Cynthia, and Caelica. Bullough suggests that the names “Cynthia” and “Caelica” may be associated with attributes like chastity and changeability as different aspects of the same woman, or perhaps of a personified abstraction that represents all women (42). Some reluctance to associate Myra with the idealized figure of Mary Sidney Herbert depicted in the many dedications to her is understandable if such an association is taken to substantiate the claims of incest. However, if Sidney and Herbert did have an incestuous relationship or even one with incestuous overtones, it is most unlikely that Sidney would have drawn attention to it by addressing Petrarchan lyrics to her.

A courtly game involving a competition between Sidney, Dyer, and Greville is a far more credible explanation for the existence of poems by all three men figuring Herbert under one or more literary persona. The literary practices figured in the Eclogues of Sidney’s Arcadia, as well as his pastorals OP 6 and 7, suggest that he and his close associates may well have conceived their coterie writing as a playful competition. The Eclogues depict entertainment provided by the Arcadian shepherds for Duke Basilius and his entourage, including games in which the shepherds spontaneously compose and sing lyrics which are then written up, according to the narrator, by one “whose pen, having more leisure than their tongues, might perchance polish a little the rudeness of an unthought-on song” (Major Works 42). In “The First Eclogues,” the shepherd Lalus challenges Dorus, a nobleman disguised as a shepherd, to a performance in which the first singer models a verse pattern, and the second
replies in a lyric composed to the same meter and rhyme scheme (44). OP 6 and 7 were first published in A Poetical Rhapsody (1602), where they are identified as “Two Pastoralls, made by Sir Philip Sidney . . . Upon his meeting with his two worthy Friends and fellow-Poets, Sir Edward Dier, and Maister Fulke Greville” (260). The first poem celebrates the men’s friendship, figuring them as shepherds and describing their revels, which consist of playing music and singing lyrics:

    Ye Hymnes, and singing skill
    Of God Apolloe’s giving,
    Be prest our reedes to fill,
    With sound of Musick living. (Sidney, Poems 260, lines 7-10)

The second poem, titled “Disprayse of a Courtly life,” deprecates the courtier’s life in comparison with a pastoral existence in which the friends tend sheep and sing lyrics:

    Well was I, while under shade
    Oten Reedes me musick made,
    Striving with my Mates in Song,
    Mixing mirth our Songs among,
    Greater was that shepheard’s treasure,
    Then this false, fine Courtly pleasure. (263, lines 43-48)

Ringler appears to discount this poem’s value as an indication that the coterie’s poems may have been written in a spirit of playful competition: he says, “The only one of Sidney’s poems written in competition with his friends that can be identified is CS 16, an answer to a sonnet by Dyer” (Poems, 498). However, May provides
detailed internal evidence that Dyer, Greville, and Sidney together explored similar themes and motifs in their poetry with, upon occasion, Spenser as well (90-91).

Criticism about Sidney’s “Mira” poems and about other poetry written by members of the Wilton coterie has at times been limited by attempts to construe it as an expression of private feelings arrived at within the context of specific erotic and heterosexual relationships. However, when construed as a homosocial cultural practice that includes social display among its primary objectives, there is nothing baffling about a lyric competition between three courtiers for one woman’s favor, especially when that woman serves as the coterie patron. Julie Crawford claims that although Sidney, Greville, and Dyer addressed their writing to Herbert, “Their dedications can be read as a form of the triangulation of desire in which the woman to whom the poetry is dedicated is merely titular, a figure through whom men establish homosocial bonds or enact homoerotic desire” (3).

A second disincentive to identify Mira as one of Herbert’s literary personae is that Greville at times constructs his Myra as conceited, fickle, mercenary, and promiscuous. Again, the characterization seems incongruous when compared to the idealized figure of Herbert depicted in the many dedications to her. However, it might well be simplistic to attempt to create an uncomplicated connection between the biographical figure and the characters in the poems. Greville appears to have revised his sequence over a long period of time. He may, as some critics suggest, have used “Myra” as a literary persona in lyrics that address or depict a number of different women; in the course of his revisions he may have come to associate with different
names attributes of one representative figure that embodied his ideas about women. Greville’s concern that the protagonist and plot line of his play Antony and Cleopatra would be associated with the Earl of Essex and his fall led Greville to destroy this work (Rebholz 151), and May suggests that Greville may have changed the sequence of his poems and the name(s) of their object(s) in later years to deliberately obscure any biographical associations (92-93). Despite the strong indications that some or all of Sidney’s and Greville’s Mira poems may have been addressed at one point in time to Mary Sidney Herbert, it is neither feasible nor appropriate to attempt to create a seamless correspondence between the biographical figure and the characters in the poems.

The Mira poems Sidney addressed to his sister, along with Dyer’s “Amaryllis” and many of Greville’s lyrics, are the artifacts of a courtship conducted to a traditional model in a context of social play designed to assert and support claims to specific roles associated with privileged status. The extent to which the Mira poems approximate steps in a previously choreographed social dance is also illustrated by the interchangeability of the objects to which they have been addressed. Of the poems Ringler identifies as having originally been written by Sidney in celebration of Mira, two were rewritten to express devotion to a different lady. As OA 62 and Song 5 of

127 I am indebted to Bullough for this idea, which he develops in a different manner. See p. 42 of the Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville.

128 Re-writing love lyrics so that they address a different woman, or dedicating poetry to one woman that was written to another, does not appear to have been an uncommon practice. For example, May speculates that the poem published as Amoretti 8 may well have been written in the late 1570s, before Spenser met Elizabeth Boyle, who is thought to be the object of the sequence (Elizabethan Courtier Poets 91). Similarly, Samuel Daniel dedicates the sonnet sequence Delia to Mary Sidney Herbert,
Astrophil and Stella, they address the character “Stella” (May 98); OA 62 is the sensuous blazon that celebrates Stella’s naked body. Ringler observes that Sidney extensively revised this poem before it appeared in the Old Arcadia; he says that “Sidney worked over this “poem more carefully than he did any of his other pieces . . . he added to or revised it on at least four different occasions.” The poem is written to a model for the blazon developed by Geoffrey of Vinsauf, and it incorporates as well an image from Petrarch (Sidney, Poems 410). These antecedents point to the poem’s formulaic construction, while its wide circulation suggests that for contemporaries it was one of the artifacts that validated Sidney’s self-construction as a model courtier. 129

OA 73 is a dream vision; of all the Mira poems, this is the one whose internal evidence most effectively supports Herbert’s association with “Mira.” In the poem, Philisides dreams of an encounter with the goddesses Diana and Venus, who are accompanied by their serving woman, Mira. The two goddesses lament the decrease in their number of worshippers and agree to cede their special powers and attributes to the winner of a competition that recapitulates the judgment of Paris. Philisides, who re-enacts the role of Paris, awards the prize to Mira rather than to either goddess. Mira is described as “a Virgin pure” (64), who displays humility and modesty as well as surpassing beauty:

though it was very likely written before his association with her; see Margaret Hammay’s discussion on pp. 116-18 of Philip’s Phoenix. Perhaps the practice indicates not only the extent to which literary courtship followed a pre-determined pattern, but also the extent to which in the early modern era women were constructed not as individuals but as exempla of a characteristic set of attributes. 129 Ringler places OA 62 in eight manuscript miscellanies, as well as England’s Parnassus, and notes its use by Puttenham and others as a literary exemplum (410).
... she was attir'd, as one that did not prize
Too much her peerles parts, nor yet could them despise.
But cald [called], she came apace wherein did move
The bande of beauties all, the little world of Love.
And bending humbled eyes (6 eyes the Sunne of sight)
She waited mistresse' will . . . . (87-92)

Duncan-Jones connects Mira's role as the goddesses' waiting woman with Herbert's service as one of the Queen's maids of honor in 1575-76, and she construes both Diana and Venus as representations of the Queen. Claiming that Sidney may initially have written the poem as "a verse epistle addressed to his sister," Duncan-Jones adds that in this poem, "Sidney bluntly declared his preference for Mira/Mary over Elizabeth" (Courtier Poet 146). In the remainder of the Mira poems listed above, Sidney similarly focuses on the lady's chastity, beauty, and humility, without the emphasis on sexual attraction that imparts so much intensity to Astrophil and Stella.

To my knowledge, with the possible exception of AS v, there is no striking internal evidence either for or against Herbert's association with the central figure in the remaining Mira poems (AS v, OA 31, OA 74, and OP 5). AS v is one of eleven songs interspersed among the 108 sonnets in Astrophil and Stella. Ringler says that "Internal evidence indicates that this song was composed earlier than the Astrophil and Stella sonnets, and that the 'Stella' of line 31 was originally 'Mira'" (Sidney, Poems 484). In AS v, Philisides seeks revenge on Mira, who has rejected him. May, who rebuts arguments for Herbert's association with Mira, does so in part on the basis
of this poem: he points out that there is no biographical parallel, since Herbert never rejected Sidney (81). However, elsewhere May identifies poems by both Dyer and Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, as possible models for the poems in the Mira sequence (79, 83), and acknowledges that “it may be neither a coincidence nor a function of biographical happenstance that the Philisides-Mira poems center on the plight of the lover now banished after enjoying a measure of success in his courtship of the lady” (80). AS v heaps abuse on the former mistress, balancing phrases from the earlier poems, which praise the lady, against threats and vicious language to create a shocking poetic effect that dramatizes the pitfalls of erotic love. Astrophil calls Stella a thief (Poems, 212-15, line 43), a witch (74), and a murderer (49-51, 55). He also says that she must be beaten (36). These are harsh words, and it is difficult to imagine that Sidney’s beloved sister inspired them. However, even Sidney’s use of the terms “thief” and “murderer” has been traced to an earlier model. In his commentary on AS v, Ringler cites R. B. Young, who attributes to Ficino’s \textit{Symposium} the claim that one who fails to reciprocate the suitor’s affection is not only a thief and a murderer, but also a desecrator (484). Mira poems OA 31, OA 74, and OP 5 are innocuous in comparison. OA 31 is an echo poem that explores the opposition between love and reason; OP 5 is Philisides’ “dittie” to the absent Mira; and OA 74 is a lament following Mira’s final rejection. With the possible exception of OA 73, Sidney does not emphasize biographical connections between the historical figures and the literary personae in the Mira sequence as he does in \textit{Astrophil and Stella}. I follow Buxton and May in their contentions that much Elizabethan
Petrarchan poetry follows conventional narrative lines, addresses stock situations, and makes little effort to individuate the lady it depicts and to whom it is putatively addressed. Sidney's own practice in adapting to the *Astrophil and Stella* poems written as part of the earlier sequence bears out the suggestion that the earlier poems may more appropriately be contextualized in terms of their function as aristocratic display than as amatory expression. Therefore, neither their content nor their style conflicts with my claim that Sidney addressed them to Herbert as part of a homosocial competition for her favor as coterie patron or with my characterization of Sidney's courtship of his sister as eroticized but not sexual play.130

Establishing Herbert as the patron whose tastes and interests helped set the focus for the Wilton coterie's literary endeavors benefited both Sidney and Herbert. Herbert's status as the ranking lady of an aristocratic family with a tradition of responding to appeals for patronage made through the medium of book dedications ensured that she would be solicited in this manner and that she would have the opportunity to develop a literary circle. But while Herbert's wealth and status validated the coterie as an aristocratic social endeavor, it also benefited Herbert as a patron to have a poet of Sidney's stature writing to and for her. Sidney's writing was much prized by his contemporaries,131 and his skill at presenting himself as a model

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131 Woudhuysen has attempted to trace the process through which Sidney's writings circulated in manuscript. He concludes that while it is difficult to determine who authorized the copying of specific manuscripts, in some cases there are records of transmission, and these make it possible to "build up a
courtier contributed to the glamor of Herbert’s “court” in much the same way that the elaborate social display of figures like Raleigh, Hatton, and Leicester, not to mention Sidney himself, contributed to the prestige of the royal court. Sidney probably provided scripts for and participated in entertainments at the Pembroke estates at Wilton, Ramsbury, and/or Ivychurch; both Duncan-Jones and Ringler suggest that Sidney’s *A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds, Uttered in a Pastoral Show at Wilton* (Major Works 1), was written for such an occasion (Duncan-Jones 33; Sidney, Poems 517). Since he includes the piece in a section titled “Poems Possibly by Sidney,” Ringler must have had reasons to query the poem’s provenance. However, he notes that a contemporary source attests to Sidney’s involvement in the preparations for a social event near Wilton in early 1584.

Sidney’s positioning of his sister as his literary patron benefited her as well by helping to enlarge the discursive space in which Herbert could construct herself, after his death and in part because of it, as an authorized speaking subject. It is unfortunate that many critics describe Sidney’s death as the impetus for Herbert’s literary activities, when contemporary accounts and other artifacts support a construction of her as an active patron who instead seized the opportunity afforded by Sidney’s death in 1586 to enlarge her role in public discourse. It is not my purpose to cast doubt on

picture of a group of men and women interested in Sidney’s work, eager to obtain copies of his poems and to hear them set to music” (202). He gives examples of the transmission of a number of Sidney’s works in manuscript, including his letter opposing the Queen’s marriage to the Duc d’Anjou (220-21).

132 *A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds, Uttered in a Pastoral Show at Wilton* (Major Works 1) was first published in the 1613 edition of Sidney’s *Arcadia* and other collected works, and as such it was the last addition to Sidney’s published works made during Herbert’s lifetime. Its authenticity was not challenged by Sidney’s friends and immediate family, and is therefore widely accepted as his work (Sidney, Poems 517).
Herbert's commitment to her brother or to the goals they shared as members of the Dudley affinity. I object rather to constructions of her that focus on her personal life and her emotions, interpreting her intellectual activities through them in ways that deflect attention away from the ways in which her literary writing, editing, and patronage influenced British literary history. Acknowledging Herbert's love for and devotion to her family as a given, I wish to foreground her use of print publication to disseminate her own and Sidney's texts. Her innovative use of this technology to widely disseminate courtly art made it possible for her to exert greater influence on emerging ideology that validated her class's near monopoly on governance and the means of production while firmly establishing her own and her family's centrality to that tradition.

During Sidney's lifetime, much of his work was available to a limited audience through manuscript transmission; however, it appears that little he wrote was intended for widespread dissemination. With the exception of some of his more overtly political writings, Sidney's normative practice seems to have been to narrowly inscribe his audience. According to Duncan-Jones, the only text Sidney wrote for publication was his Defence of the Earl of Leicester, which was among the last of his writings to reach the press.\(^{133}\) Sidney's letter opposing the Queen's marriage, however, circulated widely in manuscript (Woudhuysen 150). His reasons for carefully limiting transmission of his work probably included concerns about

\(^{133}\) Sidney's Defence of the Earl of Leicester was first published in 1746; see Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet, pp. 260 and 267, and her Introduction to the text in Sidney's Miscellaneous Prose, p. 124.
contemporary prejudices against literary writing as a frivolous and/or immoral pursuit; the so-called "stigma" that associated print publication with crass commercialism; and the possibility that the political implications of and personal allusions in some of his texts might put Sidney or his associates at risk. Duncan-Jones argues that Astrophil and Stella’s limited circulation may in part have been due to Sidney’s concern that knowledge of the sequence might adversely affect his career; she says that “An inessential social grace in a courtier had become for him a serious and central activity, lacking the ‘recklessness’, or apparent carelessness, that should mark the incidental recreations of the true courtier” (Courtier Poet 233). Woudhuysen observes that “The stigma of print, real or imagined, inhibited public displays of authorship among better-born writers” (150), while Wall and Marotti contend that the posthumous publication of Sidney’s poetry had the effect of legitimizing print publication of courtly lyrics.134

Annabel Patterson suggests that concern about possible political repercussions led Sidney to suggest in the dedication to the Arcadia that its audience be limited to his sister and her immediate circle.135 Citing the passage in Sidney’s Defense of Poetry that describes the pastoral tradition as a means of addressing political tyranny “under pretty tales of wolves and sheep” (Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose 95), Patterson

134 See Wall, Imprint of Gender, p. 13; Marotti, Manuscript, Print, and Lyric, p. 229. Wall describes writing “private poetry” as “an act of social classification”: “it was Sidney’s social credentials that set an ambiguous legacy for later writers: his refusal to publish set a powerful precedent for withholding poetry from the press, yet the posthumous publication of his works carved out a newly defined gentlemanly authorial role.”

135 According to Woudhuysen, Sidney permitted eight copies of the Arcadia to be made over a period of two years (8).
claims that the Arcadia addresses under tales of lovesick youths issues of Elizabethan
culture and politics, including the censorship imposed on the debate about Elizabeth’s
proposed marriage to the French Catholic Duc d’Anjou (Censorship and
Interpretation 26-31). Public criticism of the Queen’s policy in promoting the match
led to serious consequences for those who opposed it, including the brutal public
punishment of John Stubbs,136 while Sidney’s role in the controversy probably
contributed to his failure to advance and his extended absence from court during the
years 1579-80. Patterson suggests that the statement in the dedicatory material to the
print editions of the Arcadia that the text’s “chief safety shall be the not walking
abroad” is in part a response to these events (Sidney, Arcadia 3; Patterson,
Censorship and Interpretation 27, 29).137 A number of critics have speculated that
printed editions of Astrophil and Stella remained incomplete until 1598 in order to
protect Penelope Rich’s reputation; textual additions to 1598 edition include sonnet
37, which through play on her last name identifies her as the subject of the sequence.
Malcolm Wallace says that the “additions are of such a character as to make
inevitable the deduction that they had been previously withheld from publication—or
circulation—because they revealed too much” (249), and Hannay says that inclusion

136 Patterson relates the history of this controversy, which includes the introduction in the House of
Lords in 1581 of a bill that restricted public comment on the proposed French marriage (Censorship
and Interpretation 25). MacCaffrey provides a detailed account of Stubbs’ public punishment and the
content of his pamphlet, which he titled The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf Wherein England Is Like to
be Swallowed by an Other French Marriage, If the Lord Forbid not the Banns by Letting Her Majesty
See the Sin and Punishment Thereof (255-61).
137 Patterson observes that the provenance of the letter that serves as the dedication to the Arcadia is
not known; subsequently, it is not clear whether it refers to the completed Old Arcadia or the
incomplete New Arcadia. She introduces as well the possibility that Greville may have fabricated the
letter (27).
of sonnet 37 in the sequence was delayed until Rich had been Charles Blount’s mistress for ten years and the evidence that she and Sidney may have harbored an adulterous passion for each other could no longer cause her harm (Philip’s Phoenix 69). To conclude, although Sidney’s printed texts would profoundly influence the British literary tradition and the ways in which social elites would construct themselves for centuries to come, his strategies for self presentation and for political activism did not include print publication.\textsuperscript{138} It is ironic that critics have so often construed Herbert’s activities as little more than a continuation of Sidney’s when her circumstances and her methods so often differed widely from his.

While the historical evidence indicates that Sidney’s family was initially coerced into print by the pirating of Sidney’s work, it suggests as well that Herbert was quick to perceive the medium’s potential and to use it to promote her own objectives. The impetus for the first authorized edition of Sidney’s work seems to have come within weeks of his death in October 1586, when Greville received news that two unauthorized editions of work attributed to Sidney were being licensed for the press: the first was the \textit{Old Arcadia}, the second a translation of Du Plessis Mornay’s \textit{De la Vérité de la Religion Chrétienne}. Greville wrote to Sidney’s father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, to suggest that an attempt be made to stop

\textsuperscript{138} The continuing importance of the Sidney texts to elite social self-construction can be illustrated in part by the \textit{Arcadia’s} centrality to Caroline culture. Patterson reports that “the \textit{Arcadia} became, for the Caroline court, the center of a little renaissance,” adding its re-publication in 1627, 1628, 1629, 1633, and 1638. When William Prynne in 1633 published \textit{Histriomastix}, an attack on the court’s entertainments, he cited the \textit{Arcadia}. According to Patterson, in doing so Prynne had “challenged Caroline culture at its heart, attacking as decadent and unchristian the genres in which the court read itself” (Censorship and Interpretation 171).
production of these pirated versions and to publish instead an authorized edition of
the incomplete New Arcadia, followed by a collection of Sidney’s religious
writings.139 Despite efforts to prevent the pirating of Sidney’s writings, however,
unauthorized editions continued to appear through the end of the sixteen century. In
addition to the corrupt version of Astrophil and Stella produced by Thomas Newman
in 1591, a pirated edition of the Arcadia appeared in 1599. In 1595, two competing
editions of Sidney’s defense of poetry were published. According to Woudhuysen,
William Ponsonby’s edition, titled The Defence of Poetry, was an authorized edition:
Ponsonby had a long-term relationship with the family, printing both Sidney’s and
Herbert’s texts over a period of many years, and it was Ponsonby’s edition that
provided the base text for the version that appears in the 1598 collection of Sidney’s
works (233). The other 1595 edition, titled An Apology for Poetrie, was published by
Henry Olney. A cleaner text, it nonetheless infringed on Ponsonby’s prior registry,
and the competing claims were resolved in Ponsonby’s favor (Van Dorsten,
Introduction to A Defence of Poetry 65-66).140

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139 Woudhuysen reprints two versions of Greville’s letter to Walsingham as Appendix 3 of Sir Philip
Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts (416-17). The first is a verbatim transcript, while the second
is an edited and modernized version following Rebholz (The Life of Fulke Greville, First Lord Brooke
76). Woudhuysen has identified what he describes as “minor but significant errors” in previous reprints
by Ringler and W. W. Greg (416).
140 Ponsonby’s initial entry in the Stationer’s Register is recorded as The Defence of Poesie
(Woudhuysen 232), but the title page of this edition makes use of the current standardized spelling of
the word “poetry.” According to Van Dorsten, the most correct title of the text appears in the De L’Isle
manuscript at Penshurst. The cover bears Robert Sidney’s signature, and the title reads “Defence of
Poetry” with no prefatory article. However, as Van Dorsten points out, in the first paragraph Sidney
uses the phrase “a . . . defence of . . . poetry” (as qtd. in Van Dorsten’s Introduction to A Defence of
Poetry).
The first of Greville’s proposed volumes, which was based on Sidney’s revised text and was titled *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*, appeared in 1590. However, from this point Herbert took control of Sidney’s texts, with far reaching consequences not only for the Sidney literary legacy but more broadly for British cultural history. Herbert’s dissatisfaction with Greville’s 1590 version, which was edited by him with the assistance of Dr. Matthew Gwinne and John Florio, led to the second edition of the *Arcadia*, which appeared in 1593 under the same title as the previous edition.141 This volume notoriously completes the *New Arcadia*, which breaks off in Book 3, with a truncated version of the *Old Arcadia*, which supplies a conclusion to the work by appending part of Book 3 and Books 4 and 5. This version was prepared under Herbert’s direction by her and her staff including the family secretary, Hugh Sanford, and possibly the poet Samuel Daniel (Woudhuysen 229-30). The Preface to the edition attests to Herbert’s extensive personal involvement in the process, claiming that it occurred “most by her doing, all by her direction” (59). The 1593 edition of the composite *Arcadia* was followed in 1598 by a collection of Sidney’s works that brought together Herbert’s version of the *Arcadia*, the *Defence of Poetry*, *Certaine Sonnets*, *The Lady of May*, and the first complete text of *Astrophil and Stella* (69). While it is uncertain who prepared the 1613 edition of the collection for the press, Woudhuysen observes that the knowledge and care with which it was prepared, as well as the access to manuscript materials, suggest that “the Countess is

141 For evidence that Gwinne and Florio helped prepared the 1590 edition of the *Arcadia*, see Brenman, *Literary Patronage*, p. 56; Godshalk, p. 174; and Woudhuysen, p. 315.
the obvious candidate for editorship” (239). When a second gathering of Sidney’s works was published in 1621, an effort was made to bridge the gap between the New Arcadia and the last two books of the Old Arcadia with a supplementary narrative written by Sir William Alexander (Evans 12-13). The text from the 1621 edition was the version of the Arcadia widely known to the public for the three centuries prior to Bertram Dobell’s recovery in 1907 of the Old Arcadia, which was first published in 1926 as volume 4 of Feuillerat’s edition of the Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney.

Herbert’s commitment to print is first evident in 1592, when she either published or permitted publication of her translations of Robert Garnier’s Antonius and Philippe de Mornay’s Discourse of Life and Death. Publication of her own work preceded the edition of the Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia that she brought to press in 1593. Given the “stigma of print” alluded to above, Herbert’s readiness to publish her own and Sidney’s writings was surprising, and it indicates the extent to which her strategies for achieving her objectives differed not only from Sidney’s but from most contemporaries who had attained or who aspired to elevated social status. As Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan assert, “We should not underestimate Pembroke’s boldness in permitting the publication of two secular translations and an original pastoral dialogue under her own name, without apology for her subject or her gender” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 24). Herbert’s choices helped determine the focus of the Sidney legend and how his legacy would be construed for centuries to come.

According to Woudhuysen: “With the publication of the 1598 volume Sidney’s canon was established: it presented, in part, his public, literary image for the next century or
so" (210). Ringler observes that prior to the 1590s Sidney was known as a courtier and a soldier, while after the print publication of his work, “allusions to Sidney changed from praising him primarily as a hero to praising him as a man of letters” (“Man and Myth,” 11). Herbert excluded from publication both Sidney’s political and his religious works: his defense of his uncle Leicester and of the Dudley affinity’s management of Irish affairs;¹⁴² his translations of Sallust du Bartas’ La Semaine ou Création du Monde, of Philipe du Plessis Mornay’s De la Vérité de la Religion Chrestienne, and of the first 43 psalms. Of the religious writings, only the psalm translations have survived.¹⁴³ Publication of Herbert’s writing would have been an anomaly; according to Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan, “such presentation of a non-royal woman author was unprecedented in England” (Collected Works 22). While it is possible that some other agent was responsible for bringing her translations to the press, Herbert appears to have made no effort to suppress the edition of A Discourse of Life and Death and the Antonius, which bore her name on the title page. This suggests that Herbert at the very least did not oppose the texts’ public dissemination, as she did unauthorized versions of Sidney’s works. Both Hannay and Joel Davis have argued that Herbert’s texts participate in a tradition through which sensitive

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¹⁴² Sidney’s extant prose works can be found in the Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney. In addition to A Defence of Poetry, they include his Discourse on Irish Affairs (8-12), A Letter Written . . . to Queen Elizabeth, Touching her Marriage with Monsieur (46-57), and Defence of the Earl of Leicester (123-141).

¹⁴³ The edition of De la Religion Chrestienne supposedly begun by Sidney and finished by Arthur Golding has been excluded from the canon by Duncan-Jones (Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose 155) and Woudhuysen (225). Doubts that any part of Sidney’s translation survives in this edition date from Greville’s November 1586 letter to Walsingham regarding the unauthorized publication of the Arcadia. Woudhuysen says that “Golding’s claim to have collaborated with Sidney in the work was untrue and probably a device to promote sales of the book” (225).
political issues are covertly addressed through parallels (Davis 423-25; Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 126-129); ¹⁴⁴ Davis claims that in publishing her translations Herbert was pursuing a strategy to link her writings to Sidney’s even prior to publication of her edition of the *Arcadia*. Herbert’s willingness to have her work appear before the public in print suggests not only her active involvement in promoting the interests of her family affinity, but also her agency and initiative. It demonstrates that in her efforts to affect contemporary events by shaping public opinion of them, she decided to employ strategies that fundamentally differed from her brother’s.

Until recently, Herbert’s decision to displace Greville as Sidney’s literary executor has most often been attributed either to aesthetic or affective motives. Woudhuysen offers four possible reasons for Herbert’s intervention: first, that she wished to regain control of her brother’s texts; second, that she was displeased with Greville’s editing practices; third, that she wished to emphasize Sidney’s courtly and literary attributes in a way that conflicted with Greville’s representations of him; fourth, that she had “the leisure” to edit Sidney’s texts and Greville did not (228). Hannay also cites Greville’s editing practices as a probable source of dissatisfaction with the 1590 edition (*Philip’s Phoenix* 72-73), and she postulates as well Herbert’s proprietary interest in the text: “The Countess of Pembroke naturally assumed that the work originally written for her, named for her, and dedicated to her was hers to

¹⁴⁴ In “Out of the Closet, Out of the Mausoleum: Cleopatra in Mary Sidney Herbert’s *Antonius and Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra*,” Melanie Ried argues that parallels with contemporary English political issues influenced Herbert’s decision to translate Garnier’s *Marc Antoinus*. According to Ried, “Herbert selected a text that addresses the timely issues of civil war and the Protestant cause through the depiction of an intelligent, articulate, and—most importantly—female monarch defending her morality and her personal and political decisions” (5).
publish as she saw fit” (73). In 2004, however, Davis moved beyond the limitations associated with the biographical frame and the single author paradigm to suggest that the editorial conflict over the Arcadia could be construed as a series of complex political maneuvers with the object of appropriating the cultural capital associated with Sidney’s posthumous positioning as an Elizabethan mythological figure (“Multiple Arcadias 401-31). Arguing that a text’s reception can be affected by editorial as well as authorial intention, Davis claims that “scholarship on its textual and reception history has downplayed how both the reception of the Arcadia and the idea of Philip Sidney as its author depend on the editorial work that shaped the Arcadia’s first two printed editions in 1590 and 1593” (401-02). According to Davis, Greville’s chapter divisions, summaries, and marginal notes impose an interpretive lens on the Arcadia, guiding the reader toward a specific kind of didactic reading: one that forges connections between narrative events and the Tacitean Neostoic philosophy closely associated with Greville’s new patron, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. In the 1590 edition of the Arcadia, Greville sought to appropriate on Essex’s behalf Sidney’s ethos as a Protestant martyr and the personification of Elizabethan chivalry.

Work by Alan Hager and Dominick Baker-Smith effectively demonstrates the extent to which the Sidney legend has influenced readings of his texts.¹⁴⁵ Sixteenth-

¹⁴⁵ Hager’s own practice at times exemplifies ways in which the myth of Sir Philip Sidney continues to affect constructions of him. For example, Hager’s well-intentioned efforts to “deconstruct” Sidney’s image are undercut by his suggestion Sidney is somehow prescient of the dangers and ironies of his own posthumous identity, as well as reactions to it: “Sidney is aware, and attempts in his own life (and
and seventeenth-century hagiography enhanced the level of authority attributed to the Sidney texts, elevating them to semi-divine status. Hager contends Sidney’s writings have been interpreted “to suit that all too attractive image” (58). The point is well taken: an audience that constructs the meaning of Sidney’s writings as received wisdom from the apotheosis of Elizabethan chivalry is more likely to discover profundities in them than the audience that, during his own lifetime, while evidently valuing his learning and abilities and his family’s history of close personal service to the Crown, may well have perceived Sidney as a courtier who had made a number of egregious errors in his relationship with his monarch and who had predictably accrued few material rewards. The body of interventions made by self-interested parties into the way Sidney was perceived and his consequent reification as an Elizabethan icon altered irrevocably the way in which his words would be read, not only during the Elizabethan period but in succeeding centuries. Indeed, as interpretations and re-interpretations of Sidney’s works proliferated, the effect on later reading experiences was heightened until, as Baker-Smith observes, Sidney was to function in later British culture as “the Protestant martyr-hero whose gesture to a dying man at Zutphen would serve a later imperialism as the defining note of Christian chivalry” (x).

 works) to make us aware, of the ironies of being identified with such a role: indeed he sets out to expose the dangers of the very idealism with which he has been identified” (59, 46). I make these points to illustrate the degree of difficulty Hager and other critics experience in attempting to contravene the effects of what he aptly describes as the “cult of Sidney” (55).
In “The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney’s Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader” (1989), Hager describes the process through which the Sidney legend was initially constructed and the objectives it served. Because of his military service and his role as governor of Flushing, Sidney was closely identified with the ill-fated English campaign to support Protestant revolt against Spanish government in the Netherlands. Efforts to transform a moderately successful courtier into an icon of Protestant militantism and Elizabethan chivalry began shortly after Sidney’s death on October 17, 1586, from an infection caused by injuries received at the Battle of Zutphen. Through a campaign that included print publication, graphic representation, and social display, members of the Dudley affinity, including Leicester and Walsingham, successfully positioned Sidney as a Protestant martyr. Sidney’s body returned to England by ship November 5, and after sitting for months in storage, was interred February 16 at St. Paul’s in one of the most spectacular

146 Three collections of commemorative verse were published in 1587, or within a year of Sidney’s death. Of the two books produced at Oxford, one was dedicated to Leicester and one to Pembroke. The third miscellany was published by scholars on the continent (Wallace 398). George Whetstone’s Sir Philip Sidney appeared in the same year, as did Edmund Molineux’s account of the Battle of Zutphen, which was published in Holinshed’s Chronicles (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 59). Theodore de Bry produced a thirty-two plate engraving of the cortège for Thomas Lant (reproduced in Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 308-339), while William Byrd composed musical settings for some elegies (305).

147 Why Sidney’s body remained so long in storage before the funeral is a matter of debate, but both Hager and Baker-Smith suggest that financial problems may have contributed to the delay. Baker-Smith points to the cost of Sidney’s funeral (ix), which was borne by Walsingham without assistance from either Elizabeth or Leicester, while Hager cites the chaotic condition of the Sidney estate following the deaths, within six months, of Sidney and both his parents: “The initial delay of the interment was caused by Walsingham’s slow liquidation of his son-in-law’s debts. Perhaps by a legal oversight, Sidney had attempted, through his will, to pay off debts by the sale of mortgaged lands” (53).
memorial services in early modern British history. Baker-Smith suggests that the elaborate funeral and the books of eulogies followed continental, rather than English, funerary conventions; he contends that “even the commemorative miscellanies issued by the two universities were a novelty and reveal signs of careful political orchestration” (x). Through Sidney’s funeral and the other tributes to him, Leicester and Walsingham attempted to generate continued support for and demonstrate commitment to the Protestant cause on the continent. Baker-Smith describes Sidney’s splendid funeral as “a public enactment of resolve against the threat of Catholic Spain” (ix), thus continuing Sidney’s own resistance to the threat posed by Elizabeth’s proposed marriage to a member of France’s Catholic royal family.

While Sidney’s apotheosis as the figure of Elizabethan chivalry benefited his associates’ cause by increasing the value associated with his loss, his elevation to mythic status evidently served the Queen’s interests as well. Hager observes that Sidney’s death and obsequies were roughly contiguous in time with the trial and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, and he cites suggestions by Michel Poirier, Berta Siebeck, and Neville Williams that Elizabeth and her ministers made use of the ceremonial mourning period for Sidney and his public funeral to deflect public

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148 According to Wallace, there were 700 members of the funeral cortége (394); he claims that “No subject of an English sovereign had ever been interred with comparable magnificence,” while Hager claims that the funeral was “the last on its scale before Admiral Nelson’s” (53).

149 Hager describes Leicester, Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth, and Fulke Greville as the architects of the Sidney legend; despite Mary Sidney Herbert’s extensive involvement in editing, revising, completing, and publishing her brother’s writings, Hager does not address either her motives or the impact of these significant interventions on the Sidney legend.
attention from the Crown’s endorsement of an act of regicide.\textsuperscript{150} The Sidney legend also became part of the machinery through which Elizabeth and her councilors managed her anomalous status as a reigning woman prince. While in England royal or aristocratic blood could and did authorize the exercise by women of what were most often considered men’s prerogatives, Elizabeth’s gender heightened her susceptibility to challenges to her authority and to charges that she was unfit to rule. One of the threats to her ascendancy was the assumption that the throne was an appropriate object of male conquest. Strategies to stabilize the Tudor hegemony in the face of these and other dangers included positioning Elizabeth as the unattainable object of her male subjects’ courtly devotion and identifying her with Christian and classical deities—a process that Strong identifies as “the cult of Elizabeth.”

Over the long reign, as the Queen’s courtiers were encouraged to express their devotion through participation in elaborate court pageantry and entertainments, these social forms came to serve a variety of functions. Montrose describes these as promulgating state ideology and government policy; concealing the ruthless self-serving behind political maneuverings; and defusing potential political subversion through the “play-forms of aristocratic culture” (“Celebration and Insinuation” 30). This last was of vital importance: Sidney was only one of the many younger courtiers who, during the last two decades of Elizabeth’s reign, were unable to attain the political offices and financial rewards to which they believed they were entitled.

\textsuperscript{150} See Michel Poirier, \textit{Sir Philip Sidney: Le Chevalier Poète Elizabethan}, p. 269; Berta Siebeck, \textit{Das Bild Sir Philip Sidneys in der englischen Renaissance}, p. 72; and Neville Williams, \textit{Elizabeth, Queen of England}, p. 293.
through birth, ability, and education. Montrose describes Elizabeth’s efforts to contain their anger and redirect their ambition as “one of her most pressing domestic problems” (21). As Tennenhouse has demonstrated, England’s idiosyncratic adaptation of Petrarchanism also became the primary medium for the distribution of patronage (34). Cultural forms and court events provided young men seeking patronage with opportunities for theatrical self-representation, a crucial component in proferring their suits to the Queen and other powerful court figures. Berry suggests that such self-representations could and did function as extensions of the social self-construction; he argues that “the entire system of literary ‘courtship’ depended on an assumed continuity between the literary and social persona, the success of the former bringing favour to the latter” (5).

It was in this complex concatenation of political, economic, social, and cultural interactions that the living Sidney participated as a courtier, scripting The Lady of May, running in the Accession Day Tilts, and attacking the Fortress of Perfect Beauty; in death he was assimilated into Elizabethan iconography as the Shepherd Knight, a designation he uses in the revised Arcadia for his literary persona Philisides. But if during his lifetime Sidney’s theatrical self-representations did not succeed in their rhetorical objective, which was to convince the Queen that he was a suitable candidate for the kind of post for which he had been so carefully prepared, in death he became an invaluable asset to her. Sidney’s posthumous positioning as a chivalric ideal not only enhanced her court’s reputation abroad, but set a standard that her courtiers could neither meet nor exceed. Hager claims that, having defined
Sidney’s loss “as the sudden and irreparable loss of perfection, Elizabeth could set up a competition in her court to try to fill the ensuing vacuum” (“Exemplary Mirage” 51).

Although these constructions of Sidney as a Protestant knight and an Elizabethan chivalric ideal served the self-interest of those who promulgated them, the legendizing process to this point also engaged larger issues of governance, such as maintaining domestic stability and supporting foreign policy initiatives. The conflict between Essex’s following and the Pembroke household over the appropriation of the cultural capital associated with the Sidney legend was more narrowly self-interested and most likely involved a re-assessment of those interests, which following the deaths of Henry Sidney in May 1586, Leicester in September 1588, and Walsingham in April 1590 could no longer be conceived along the same lines. The Dudley affinity was part of a larger affiliation that, as Hannay points out, by the mid-1590s was largely defunct: “the men of the powerful alliance of Leicester’s own generation died within ten years . . . . By the end of 1595, only the failing Pembroke was left of those great Protestant earls” (Philip’s Phoenix 68). While Sidney had once been considered Leicester’s heir, even prior to Sidney’s death Leicester had been grooming his stepson, Essex, to take on Leicester’s role at Elizabeth’s court (MacCaffrey 462); in 1587, Essex assumed Leicester’s long-term position as Master of the Horse. According to Williams, “When Leicester died, in 1588, his faction disintegrated, and shortly afterwards his stepson, Essex, became the leader of a powerful party at Court” (281). Essex was well situated to capitalize on Sidney’s posthumous honors. His
relationship with Sidney was almost grotesquely overdetermined, even for an era in which social, political, and professional affiliations were normatively constructed and affirmed through blood and marriage. Both of his sisters had at different points in time been considered as Sidney’s potential marital partners, while substantive biographical evidence indicates that Penelope Rich, Essex’s sister, may well have been the love of Sidney’s life. Essex had fought with Sidney in the Netherlands and received the symbolic bequest of his best sword, and in 1590 he married Sidney’s widow, Frances Walsingham. In a contemporary account of the court pageantry associated with the 1590 Accession Day tilts, George Peele interprets Essex’s self-representation as a tribute to Sidney. According to Hager, the Earl’s black attire was designed not only to commemorate his friend, but to position Essex as the “new” Sidney—in some ways an ironic designation, since the living Sidney had neither the wealth, power, nor status Essex aspired to. Citing a letter to Elizabeth from Sir Francis Bacon, Hager claims that Elizabeth accepted Essex’s self-representation as “the inheritor of the mantle of the perfect Shepherd Knight,” and that Essex’s involvement in such social display was encouraged with the conscious political objective of “keeping him in check” (“Exemplary Mirage” 51). Through his adept practice of the arcane arts of English Petrarchanism and theatrical self-representation, Essex acceded in the historical dimension not to Sidney’s monetary debts, nor to the expenses of the funeral that impoverished Walsingham—but to the idealized Sidney’s

151 This account appears in Polyhymnia, which was published in 1590 and which has no pagination (as cited in Hager, “Exemplary Mirage” 51).
cultural capital which, through his theatrical self-representations, Essex himself had also helped to create.

Although in “Multiple Arcadias” Davis for the most part focuses on the conflict between Herbert and Greville, it seems likely that in reprehending Greville’s appropriation of the Arcadia, Mary Sidney Herbert quite deliberately and consciously opposed Essex as well. While clients did at times act independently in their efforts to serve their patrons’ interests, Essex’s earlier use of a similar strategy to enhance his family’s public standing may indicate his involvement in Greville’s effort to more closely associate him with the Sidney legacy. According to Paul Hammer, the Devereux family and their retainers transformed the death of Essex’s father, Walter Devereux, from dysentery, into Protestant hagiography through publication of his funeral sermon and an account of his last days (Polarization 17-18, 21-22). Upon his matriculation at Cambridge in 1577, Essex distributed copies of this document to his fellow students (21). Despite some critical claims to the contrary, tensions between the Herbert and Devereux families may have existed for a very long period of time: while Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan claim that relations between the two families remained cordial through 1596, Williams’ account differs, suggesting instead that conflict over control of patronage in Wales dates from Henry Sidney’s tenure as President, although Leicester managed to hold these animosities in check (285). By

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152 As support for their contention that tensions between the Herbert and Devereux families arose subsequent to their conflict over Norwood Park in 1597, Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan cite contemporary correspondence, including an undated letter from Herbert to Essex (Collected Works, v. 1, pp. 288, 347). However, this evidence of rapprochement does not preclude intermittent tensions over competition for control of patronage in Wales, and may instead constitute efforts to reconcile family differences.
1595, however, Rowland Whyte was writing to Robert Sidney to report open hostility between Essex and Pembroke (Williams 287). If, as Williams contends, Essex and his followers had been engaged in a consistent expansion of the Devereux interests in Wales dating from as early as 1580 and no later than 1587, then long-term tensions between the two affinities are not only possible, but probable. Despite the connections between the Devereux and Herbert families cited by Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan, a credible case can be made for Herbert’s active involvement in combating through her edition of the Arcadia what she and her husband may well have perceived as attempts by Essex and his following to appropriate resources, both cultural and material, that the Herbersts believed to be the prerogatives of their own extended family.¹⁵³

Herbert’s claim to a directive role in Sidney’s literary production is widely publicized in print from 1590 through the letter that serves as a dedication to the different editions of the Arcadia published during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Sidney’s letter, which is addressed to Herbert, establishes her control over the text by multiply defining her relationship to it and to himself as writer: through her role in its production as Sidney’s Muse, primary reader, and literary patron; through the bonds of familial relationship and affection; and through an appeal to Herbert as the text’s protector. After addressing her as “My dear lady and

¹⁵³ Davis suggests Herbert’s publication of her translations of Robert Garnier’s Antonius and Philippe de Mornay’s Discourse of Life and Death prior to her edition of the Arcadia was a strategy designed to associate Sidney’s work more closely with her own affinity. According to Davis, “Through these translations, Mary Sidney Herbert established a Sidney family tradition of publishing works influenced by continental Neostoicism and so began to reclaim her brother’s intellectual legacy for her family” (421).
sister, the Countess of Pembroke,” the letter begins by presenting the work to her:

“Here now have you (most dear, and most worthy to be most dear lady) this idle work of mine” (The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia 57). This address is followed by two claims: first, that the work has been written at Herbert’s request: “you desired me to do it, and your desire to my heart is an absolute commandment”; second, that the text is Herbert’s sole property: “it is done only for you, only to you.” The dedication asserts Herbert’s control over access to the text on the grounds that “for severer eyes it is not,” and asks that she restrict its readership: “keep it to yourself or to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of goodwill.” The letter not only places Herbert at the site of the text’s inception, but implicates her in every step of the writing process: “You yourself can best witness the manner, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence; the rest in sheets sent unto you as fast as they were done.” The text is figured as a child whose inadequacies will be tolerated and whose safety will be assured because it bears “the livery” of Herbert’s name. After describing the text as “this child which I am loth to father,” Sidney says that “his safety shall be the not walking abroad; and his chief protection, the bearing livery of your name, which (if much much good-will do not deceive me) is worthy to be a sanctuary for a greater offender” (57). By instantiating Herbert’s role in conceiving the text and appealing to her to protect it, the letter positions her as the text’s co-parent; by representing the text as a series of “loose sheets” integrated by

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154 The text of Sidney’s letter is cited from the 1977 edition of The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia edited by Maurice Evans.
their committal to her, the writer suggests that it is only through her that the disparate
elements of the text become a whole, attaining their status as a corpus, or body of
work. In addition to overdetermining Herbert’s relationship to the text, the letter also
overdetermines her relationship to the writer: she is at once his lady, his sister, his
Muse, his patron, his partner, his fellow parent, and “a principal ornament to the
family of the Sidneys” (58). The letter is an act of courtship within a context of
aristocratic social play, and it draws on a number of Petrarchan topoi and
conventions. The writer claims that he is inspired by the addressee and humorously
deprecates his gifts, both personal and literary, in deference to her. In the span of
about one page of text, different forms of the word “desire” are used twice, “love”
three times, and “dear” four times; in all cases the terms construct the relationship
between the speaker and the addressee. Although the language, especially when
directed to a sibling, may seem excessive to twentieth- and twenty-first century tastes,
according to Brennan it is appropriate within the context of the tradition in which it
was written. Dedications, Brennan says, were “designed as graceful and attractive
literary artifacts in themselves . . . the lavish vocabulary and archly-rhetorical
formulation of dedicatory panegyrics were regarded as a ritualized tribute in which
the author was expected to cultivate a deliberately heightened style” (Literary
Patronage 3). Yet another act of eroticized social play, the letter establishes Herbert’s
role as Sidney’s patron in part through the livery image, which playfully suggests that

155 Brennan says that Sidney appears to have considered Herbert his “closest literary associate” in the
period during which he was writing the Old Arcadia (Literary Patronage 44).
the book has been entered into Herbert's service, and will in return be taken into her household and provided by her with the means of sustenance, food as well as clothing. But in addition to situating Herbert as his patron and the object of his courtly devotion, Sidney's letter also implies the writer's integration through his audience. In my reading, it is through Herbert's maternal presence that Sidney is capable of re-constructing the disparate pieces of himself as a coherent whole.

Hannay claims that Herbert prominently used her brother's colors, "the Sidney blue and gold," in her theatrical self-representation as she entered London in November 1588 for the post-Armada Accession Day festivities (Hannay, Philip's Phoenix 59). According to the report of the Spanish ambassador, Herbert's procession included more than forty gentleman on horseback and forty servants on foot: the gentlemen were dressed in gold chains, while the servants wore blue livery (as qtd. in Hannay, Philip's Phoenix, pp. 59-60). Hannay's reading suggests that in dressing her servants in Sidney's colors, Herbert inverted the process Sidney humorously described in his dedication to the Arcadia: she reciprocates Sidney's request that she grant his writing "the livery" of her name by "covering" her servants with his colors. By doing so, she extends her own identity by appropriating his; reciprocally, she evokes his continued presence in and through his identification with her. Hannay has compared Herbert's social display on this occasion to Sidney's participation in court pageantry (59), but the grandiloquent gesture could also be read as inverting yet another process: Sidney's funeral procession, which advanced through London to St. Paul's, and which consisted of about 700 people (Wallace 394). In this interpretation,
it is Sidney who becomes Herbert’s phoenix as she effects his rebirth through the medium of identification and representation.\textsuperscript{156}

After Sidney’s death, Herbert enlarged her role in public discourse not only through her own writing and translations and by editing, revising, and publishing her brother’s work, but also through her further exercise of patronage, supporting and directing the literary activities of her household staff at Wilton as well as encouraging those writers who eulogized her brother. Lamb identifies two groups for whom Herbert served as patron: the first consisted of members of her household staff at Wilton, the second of writers who were or who claimed to have been associates of Sidney’s (“Pembroke’s Patronage,” 1982, 167). Among those members of her household staff who received her patronage and celebrated her role as the guiding light of the “college” or “little university” at Wilton were Thomas Moffett, Samuel Daniel, and the Pembrokes’ secretary and tutor, Hugh Sanford (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 72). There is considerable evidence that Herbert played an active role in directing a number of these writers’ projects. Moffett’s Nobilis, or A View in the Life and Death of Sidney and Lessus Lugubris was written for Herbert’s son William and presented to him in 1593 as a New Year’s gift. Hannay claims that the work was written “at the request of his mother” (Philip’s Phoenix, 80), a highly credible supposition in the light of the book’s purpose, which Moffett describes as to narrate

\textsuperscript{156} Herbert’s identification with Sidney and her appropriation of his identity is indicated as well by her use of the closed S to signify “Sidney” in her signature, the use of the Sidney phoenix in her seal (Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan 1: 20), and her self-designation in one of her letters as “the Sister of Sir Philip Sidney” (1: 295).
Sidney’s life in such a way as to provide a model for his young nephew. Daniel specifically cites Herbert’s directive role in the composition of his Tragedie of Cleopatra: “Lo here the work the which she did impose,/ Who only doth predominate my Muse” (23); Lamb asserts that “Daniel’s play was explicitly written at the countess’s request” (Gender and Authorship 133). Herbert’s authority in directing these projects was derived in part from her brother’s earlier positioning of her as the patron of his literary coterie, in part from her own initiative in writing and publishing her own work through print and manuscript circulation, and in part from the Herbert and Sidney families’ history as literary patrons. Lamb has argued that the importance of Herbert’s patronage has been exaggerated, in part because many of her clients produced literature of mediocre quality; according to Lamb, “The system of patronage, as it operated at Wilton, too often produced literature of low quality, plagiarized, or trivialized for a feminine audience” (“Pembroke’s Patronage,” 1982, 163). However, while Herbert through her own writing and through her influence on writers like George Herbert improved the quality of versification in English, it is questionable whether her objective as a patron was to increase the production of high-quality English verse. Lamb and others observe that the writers who dedicated their work to Herbert excessively praise her, and in terms of her goals for herself and her

157 In his Critical Study of Herbert’s works, Waller describes Herbert’s influence on seventeenth century poets such as George Herbert and John Donne (Critical Study 198, 200, 226-29).
family, the public acclaim and celebration of her own and her brother's roles as important literary figures was probably more to the point.  

The process of "writing Mary Sidney Herbert" is one that has taken place over many centuries, during which contemporary understandings have often been predicated on a legacy of unexamined values and assumptions. The preceding analysis of critical representations illustrates the importance of deconstructing even those by critics who, like Hager, self-consciously engage in deconstruction. In addition to considering individual biases, responsible practice can benefit from rigorous consideration of the extent to which previous critical constructions have been shaped by anxieties about gender roles and subjectivity, and in what ways they reflect historically situated understandings about the circumstances in and conditions under which marginalized populations, including women, can attain agency. To construct Herbert's maturation as an outcome of Sidney's death and her intellectual and political activities as a replication of his is to interpret archival information through a narrative lens that re-inscribes history as "his story": men as subjects and women as objects, men's roles as central and women's as peripheral. The all but ubiquitous biographical narrative in which Herbert is constructed as a trembling acolyte transformed by Sidney's death into an autocratic and even aggressive figure is not the only possible or even the most credible one; a case can be made for a biographical representation in which Herbert is well prepared for her position in life.

158 Lamb's dissertation provides detailed information about the members of the "Countess of Pembroke's Circle" and the texts produced by them. See "The Countess of Pembroke's Patronage," 1976.
and in which she emerges or has already begun to emerge in 1577-79, when critics variously posit the start date for Sidney's composition of the *Arcadia* and the inception of the Wilton coterie, as a strong, capable, and accomplished young woman. In 1577, she was 15, an age that in early modern England was associated with transition to adult responsibilities. According to Ilana Ben-Amos, "in the late sixteenth century, parish listings show 60 per cent or more people in the age category of 15-24 living outside their parental homes" (2). Herbert had received an excellent humanist education, including instruction in French, Italian, and Latin (Waller 12; Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan 1: 3); and she had access to excellent libraries both in her childhood homes and at Wilton. She had benefited from having strong women as literary role models, including her mother, who was known for her eloquence; the Queen, whom May credits with "the most imaginative use of poetry in either language [English or Latin]" during the early years of her reign (47); and her mother's close friend, Mildred Cooke Cecil, who was renowned as a writer, a patron, and a scholar. With such a background, it is entirely possible that Herbert might have pursued an interest in writing and literature even if she had never developed a literary partnership with Sidney. As Natasha Distiller points out, there is no reason to dismiss

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159 Ringler gives late 1577 as the probable start date for the composition of the *Old Arcadia*; Katherine Duncan-Jones says 1579; and Waller dates the activities of the Wilton coterie from 1578 on the basis of the traffic mentioned above (Critical Study 44).

160 Hannay cites Aubrey's description of the Wilton Library from his *Brief Lives*; she suggests that Herbert may have developed it (48). Aubrey says: "At Wilton is a good Library, which was collected in this learned Lady's time" (139).
the possibility that Herbert might already have begun to write prior to her brother's death in 1586 (113).161

Despite Herbert's youth in 1577, she was already familiar with public life and the courtly roles and behaviors associated with it. Because of her father's political appointments as Lord Deputy of Ireland and President of the Council of the Marches of Wales, Herbert had traveled widely within Britain, spending much of her youth and childhood in formal settings such as Dublin Castle in Ireland and Ludlow Castle in Wales (Hannay Philip's Phoenix 20, 31-32; Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan 1: 3).

At the Queen's invitation, she had joined the court in the spring of 1575 (Hannay, Philip's Phoenix 32), and she had participated in the ceremonial court entertainments that were such an important part of Elizabethan court life; this is confirmed by accounts of the festivities at Woodstock, where the fourteen-year-old Mary Sidney, as one of the ladies attending the Queen, was presented with a bouquet and complimentary verses (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 101; Hannay, Philip's Phoenix 35). At least two accounts testify to the respect and esteem in which she was held by her contemporaries in 1575; one is the set of verses described above, which read:

“Tho yonge in yeares yet olde in wit, a gest dew to your race; If you holde on as you begine who ist youle not deface?” (35).162 The other is the Queen's letter to Henry

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161 A number of critics have suggested that the extant body of Mary Sidney Herbert's writing is only a portion of what she actually wrote. Herbert's biographer, Frances Berkeley Young, says that "what we have left of Lady Pembroke's original poetry, and of her translations, probably belongs to the period between 1590 and 1600. One cannot help believing that she produced more than these, but such a belief is still unsupported" (55).

162 Hannay observes that "Mary's first notice from a poet appropriately stressed her lineage and her intelligence" (Philip's Phoenix 35). She notes as well that the reference to Mary Sidney's family line
Sidney inviting Mary to attend the court. After attempting to console Sidney for the recent loss of his older daughter Ambrosia, Elizabeth offers a positive assessment of Sidney’s surviving daughter, claiming that God “hath left vnto you ye comfort of one daughter of very good hope” (31). The Queen undertakes to “haue a speciall care of her” and “to make furder demonstration in her” of the royal favor already shown Henry Sidney. It seems unlikely that the Queen would have proffered the invitation or committed herself to advancing the young woman’s prospects if she had not received reports affirming her good character and her aptitude for courtly behavior.

Although Mary Sidney’s age at her marriage April 21, 1577, to Henry Herbert would be very young in a twentieth and twenty-first century cultural context, it was well within the accepted range for early modern women of her background and social status. It was not unacceptable for women to marry at much younger ages; for example, in 1597, Henry Herbert attempted to arrange a match between his son William, who was then seventeen, and Burghley’s granddaughter Bridget, who was then thirteen (Young 64-65). Herbert would most likely have been carefully prepared to fulfill her responsibilities as Pembroke’s wife in her social milieu. Expectations for the role Herbert would play in Tudor society would have been shaped by family tradition: both the Sidney and the Dudley families had a history of serving the Crown at high levels. Herbert’s grandfather, Sir William Sidney, had during the reign of Edward VI held the positions of steward and chamberlain in the royal household,

implies that the verses cited above were written specifically for her, while the aptness of the compliment, which is directed to her wit, validates this interpretation.
while Herbert’s father had served as one of the four principal gentlemen of Edward’s Privy Chamber (Young 4-7). Despite his involvement in efforts by his father-in-law, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, to displace Mary Tudor from the succession, Henry Sidney held public office during her reign, and he was appointed Justice and Governor of Ireland by Elizabeth during the first year of her reign (8). 163 Herbert’s mother, Lady Mary Dudley Sidney, also held an important position at court: she was committed to Elizabeth’s service from her accession (Adams 134). Elizabeth Brown describes Mary Sidney as a “prominent” member of the Queen’s Privy Chamber and asserts that these women “participated in an elaborate network of influence and political interconnection based primarily on kinship relations” (132). Herbert’s uncle Robert Dudley was appointed Master of the Horse not long after Elizabeth’s accession (134), while his brother Ambrose became Master of Ordnance. Referring to these appointments, Adams claims that “The Dudleys were thus at the centre of Elizabeth’s Court from the first days of the reign” (134). With so many members of her family closely engaged in the nation’s political life and the careful training that prepared her brothers for public roles, it is likely that Herbert too had been well prepared for the role she was to play in family alliances. 164 Parental expectations for the Sidney children were demanding, and meeting those expectations cannot have

163 Henry Sidney served three terms as Lord Deputy of Ireland. At his death, he still held the post of President of the Council of the Marches in Wales.
164 Henry Herbert’s father, William Herbert, the first Earl of Pembroke, had been Mary Sidney Herbert’s godfather. This relationship suggests the importance on both sides of the alliance between the two families.
been easy for any of them. However, Herbert's history indicates that she was entirely capable of performing the difficult tasks her privileged life held in store for her.

As Hannay and Lamb have observed, it was in part Herbert's privilege, which included not only her political and social status, but also her subject position as a member of the Sidney family, that made it possible for her to engage in public discourse despite the gender restraints imposed on women during the early modern period. While Lamb observes that "for his sister, daughter, niece, and an anonymous poet in his family or circle, Sir Philip Sidney's name provided a competing discourse enabling authorship" (Gender and Authorship 21), I argue that Herbert herself played an important role in writing the Sir Philip Sidney whose name authorized their entry into public discourse. Herbert's privilege also included her status as Lady Mary Sidney's daughter, which meant acceding to cultural capital that included a reputation for eloquence that to some extent licensed her daughter's and to the kind of saintliness that functioned at this point in time to relieve some cultural anxieties about women's public speech. Mary Dudley Sidney's reputation for saintly behavior was founded on her humility and devotion both to her husband and to the Queen. Her service in nursing the Queen through the smallpox had resulted in her own disfigurement and retirement from active participation in court life. In addition, she was known to have made a "good death," which in the sixteenth century encompassed a set of behaviors that included courage in extremity and exhorting bystanders to consider their own mortality, and which contributed one of the few heroic roles open to women. Neither Mary Dudley Sidney nor her husband was perceived as having
been adequately recompensed for their service to the Queen, and this increased sympathy for their surviving children as well. Their deaths in the same year that their son died fighting for the Protestant cause in the Netherlands in turn increased the aura of saintliness, service, and sacrifice associated with the Sidney family during the late 1580s.

While family ethos was a major factor in Herbert’s ability to engage in public discourse during the late sixteenth century, it was through her rhetorical strategies that she was able to augment and make use of the cultural capital associated with that ethos in order to maintain her family’s cultural weight and presence and to advance their social and economic interests. Through a complex and interrelated set of strategies and objectives, Herbert used her own and her brother’s texts to validate the oppressive social hierarchy that privileged her social class and to establish her family’s centrality to Britain’s elite cultural tradition. Herbert’s comprehension and careful negotiation of both gender restrictions and social privilege made it possible for her to accomplish her rhetorical objectives while circumventing the stigma associated with women’s public speech. Critics like Ringler who have interpreted Herbert’s interventions into Sidney’s work as an appropriation were correct in doing so. Herbert appropriated not only Sidney’s writings but his identity in order to construct a public persona through which she could successfully negotiate gender restrictions. Because Herbert carefully presented her literary identity as subsumed by Sidney’s, and her projects as continuations of his, she was able to extend the limited
boundaries of the restrictions against women’s participation in public discourse. It is these rhetorical strategies that are the focus of the succeeding chapter.
Chapter 4
Mary Sidney Herbert’s Textual Self-Representations, 1590-1599

If until recently most critics have represented Mary Sidney Herbert’s writing, translating, and editing activities as an outcome of her relationship with her brother, Sir Philip Sidney, there are a number of factors that have contributed to this narrative construction of her role as a writer. As I argue in previous chapters, these factors include sexism and the depreciation of Herbert’s activities as an editor and translator within a value system that privileges the single-author paradigm over other aspects of textual production. Yet another determinant is the heavy emphasis on biographical contextualization in both Sidney and Herbert studies. As I demonstrated in chapter 2, the Sidney legend has greatly affected reception of his texts, influencing not only his near contemporaries, but succeeding generations of British readers.\textsuperscript{165} Since the increase in critical attention to Mary Sidney Herbert took place during the twentieth century when a tradition for Sidney studies was already well-established, Sidney

\textsuperscript{165} While biographical and cultural contexts are often construed as providing “background information” for single-author textual studies, there is considerable variation in critical practice, with narrative biographical constructions at times supplementing investigations into the text(s) and at others assuming the foreground in such a way that the texts become secondary to the biographical lens through which they are constructed. The degree to which the text is read through the biography or the biography is read through the text may not even be the subject of critical awareness; however, the degree of variation in critical approaches may be illustrated by comparing ways in which different literary figures have been conceptualized. For example, the long-term popular and critical appeal of the Shakespeare texts may have provided the impetus behind posthumous constructions of the writer as culture hero, while constructions of Sidney as culture hero profoundly influenced reception of his texts. It would be difficult or impossible to trace the inception and mutual influence of these factors as part of the developmental process that determines a literary figure’s place in the British cultural tradition; however, the degree and significance of possible variation in the process may be illustrated through reference to texts for which there is little available information about the production process. One example is Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, whose production is attributed to a construct known simply as “the Gawain poet.” See Marie Boroff’s Introduction to her verse translation of the poem for an example of a literary figure conceived almost entirely through internal textual evidence.
scholarship provided a foundation for Herbert studies. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that the over-emphasis on biographical “context” associated with Sidney studies characterizes much or most Herbert scholarship as well. But although the privileging of a biographical approach may have significantly affected critical constructions of both Sidney and Herbert, assumptions about gender profoundly influenced ways in which that approach was applied. The cultural narratives through which Sidney’s biography was constructed were heroic and hagiographic, while for the most part Herbert has been represented in accordance with traditional notions regarding women’s roles, capacities, and value systems.

In “‘Philip’s Phoenix?: Mary Sidney Herbert and the Identity of the Author” (1998), Natasha Distiller takes issue with a critical tradition she believes overemphasizes the importance of Sidney’s influence on Herbert’s self-constructions as a writer. Distiller argues that much Herbert scholarship maintains that “Mary Sidney Herbert’s sense of herself as a writer was fundamentally predicated on Sidney’s death in ways that highlight the ‘private,’ domestic nature of the writing” (113). Citing literary criticism by Elaine Beilin, Jonathan Goldberg, Mary Ellen Lamb, Louise Schleiner, Gary Waller and, despite some caveats, the Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert edited by Margaret Hannay, Noel Kinnamon, and Michael Brennan (112-14), Distiller sets out to counter this tradition, arguing that “the need

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166 One example of Waller’s tendency to view Mary Sidney Herbert as Sidney’s surrogate is a description of her work as an “attempt to continue her brother’s ideals” (English Poetry 151). I have discussed Waller’s characterization of Herbert’s role in the Wilton coterie as primarily domestic in my chapter 3, “Contexts and Constructions of Herbert’s Patronage and the Countess of Pembroke’s
to contextualize the literature of early modern women should not be an excuse to domesticate these writers further than their culture already did” (114). Distiller tends to oversimplify the positions she critiques, and she does not acknowledge the value and complexity of critical approaches that read biography as text. Maureen Quilligan’s “Sidney and his Queen,” for example, enlarges critical understanding of early modern English political ideology and rhetorical practices by applying tools developed for textual analysis to contemporary reports of historical events. None of this, however, invalidates Distiller’s contention that studies of Herbert and other early modern women writers tend to emphasize the biographical in ways that deflect attention from the text in its broader implications as a historical and cultural artifact. I

Circle.” Although consistently emphasizing the importance of Herbert’s work and the extent of her agency, Hannay is equally consistent in articulating her belief that Herbert’s entry into sixteenth-century public discourse in response to Sidney’s death and that Herbert’s work is motivated primarily by devotion to him. At times, the juxtaposition of one set of claims has the effect of undermining the other. For example, Hannay suggests that Herbert inherits “a mission” from Sidney along with his “best jewel with diamonds” (Philip’s Phoenix 60). Hannay cites Sidney’s will as the source for the sentence in which she categorizes Herbert’s “mission” as one of two bequests made to Herbert by Sidney (60, n. 7). While Sidney does indeed state in his will that he leaves “to my most dear sister the Countess of Pembroke my best jewel beset with diamonds” (Miscellaneous Prose 149), he makes no mention of any “mission” or other, more symbolic legacy. Hannay’s claim is perhaps influenced by the traditional interpretation of Sidney’s bequest of his best sword to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, as indicative of a larger, military legacy (Hager, Dazzling Images 23-25). In both these claims, the critic’s construction of the putative symbolic gesture serves to interpolate the recipients into heroic narratives. Hannay’s narrative may well support Herbert’s self-constructions; however, arguments for Herbert’s agency are better served by criticism that foregrounds the extent to which she defined her own mission within the context of family alliances. As I have argued elsewhere, Sidney’s “mission” was defined by the senior members of the Dudley clientele, and the object of Herbert’s marriage, which was arranged by Leicester, was to strengthen ties between the Herbert family and the Dudley affinity (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 42). It would perhaps be more accurate to say that rather than inheriting a mission from Sidney, Herbert had shared with him from birth a mission determined by family affiliations. And while Sidney’s bequest to his sister may well have engaged symbolism, deliberate or inadvertent, his description of her in the dedication to the Arcadia as “a principal ornament to the family of the Sidneys” suggests that the bequest to her of his “best jewel beset with diamonds” might credibly be interpreted as figuring the extent to which he personally valued her and/or the extent to which her position and her public persona served the interconnected social and political interests of the Sidney family (The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia, 1977, 3).
share Distiller's belief that Mary Sidney Herbert and her texts are particularly susceptible to this treatment and that the critical preoccupation with biographical contexts for Herbert's writing, as Distiller says, "results in a reading of her work that is framed by her brother's death" (115). Whether the critical practices Distiller describes arise because a significant portion of Herbert's body of work collaborates with or is allied to Sidney's, because of interest in him as a culture hero, because of long-standing scholarly investments in Sidney and in the body of criticism associated with him, or because of masculinist anxiety, the consequence is that critics have often stopped short of recognizing the extent of Herbert's agency and the political and literary significance of her writing and editing activities.

Yet another reason critics may fail to recognize the quality and the cultural importance of Herbert's work is that her self-constructions in two of the three or four "original" poems attributed to her consistently denigrate her writing and downplay her role in textual production. These two poems, known as "Even Now That Care" and "To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Phillip Sidney," preface the manuscript copy of the Sidney Psalms prepared for presentation to Queen Elizabeth during her projected visit to Wilton in August 1599, a visit which never took place.  

The two dedicatory poems constitute one-third to one-half of Herbert's known extant "original" work, as opposed to her translations and versifications, and they

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167 For more information on this visit and possible reasons for its cancellation, see Brennan, "The Queen's Proposed Visit," p. 27.
168 In addition to "Even Now That Care" and "Angell Spirit," Herbert's known extant "original" work consists of "A Dialogue Betweene Two Shepheards, Thenot, and Piers, in Praise of Astrea" and
represent two of the chief primary sources for Herbert’s self-constructions. For these reasons, these two poems have been influential in shaping critical perceptions about Herbert and, in more recent criticism, her self-presentation. As Lamb observes, “in the common representation of the countess’s literary activities as motivated entirely by her love for her brother, critics are drawing on a perception that she herself was partly responsible for conveying” (Gender and Authorship 115). The first of these two poems, “Even Now That Care,” addresses Queen Elizabeth; it constitutes an appeal to the Queen for her continued support and patronage at a time when the Herbert family had experienced a diminution in its influence at court. The second poem, “To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Phillip Sidney,” dedicates the psalm sequence to Sidney, crediting him with both its inception and its completion. In the first poem, Herbert establishes a polar relationship between herself and her brother, characterizing herself as the “poorei’ of two subjects who offer the poems to the Queen, and her brother as the “richer” (Collected Works 1: 102). In the second

possibly “The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda.” This last appears in a section of Spenser’s Colin Clout’s Come Home Again titled Astrophel. Spenser’s lament for Sidney incorporates elegies by Sidney’s associates, including Lodowick Bryskett, who for the most part are not identified in the text. The arguments for and against Herbert’s authorship engage the structure of the text as an anthology and Spenser’s apparent attribution of “The Dolefull Lay” to Clorinda, whom he identifies as “The gentlest shepherdesse that lives this day: / And most resembling both in shape and spright / Her brother deare” (Astrophel 212-14). Herbert’s authorship has been questioned by Ernest de Selincourt, Charles Osgood, and Herbert Rix, and accepted by Bellis, Buxton, Hannay, Goldberg, Klein, Lamb, and Waller (Herbert, Colleeted Works 1: 128). May argues that the use of archaic diction marks the poem as Spenser’s, since Herbert’s deference to her brother’s literary values would preclude her use of diction he explicitly rejected in the Defence of Poetry (344-45). May offers as an example of the use of the archaic diction he considers more characteristic of Spenser the phrase “reft from me my loy,” (“The Dolefull Lay,” line 50). Herbert uses the word “reft” in “Even Now That Care” (22), a poem for which the attribution to her is not in question.

For alternate readings of these two poems, see Distiller pp. 115-18 and 125-27; Schleiner, Cultural Semiotics, Spenser, and the Captive Woman, 166-76; Wall, Imprint of Gender, pp. 311-19; and Waller, Critical Study, pp. 96-97.
poem, Herbert attributes her own achievements to Sidney's divine inspiration, and she maintains that if her brother had survived to complete the sequence, it would have been of the highest quality instead of a "halfe maim'd pesseract" (110). Lamb, Hannay, and others have suggested a number of reasons for Herbert's minimizing representations of her role as an author and of the quality of her work in comparison with Sidney's. The simplest, perhaps, is that she is following sixteenth-century literary convention by making use of the modesty topos (Hannay, "Livery" 12-13). Other reasons include authorizing public discourse that breached gender boundaries (Lamb, Gender and Authorship 115); promoting Herbert's own public image by foregrounding her family connections (Hannay, "Livery" 13); advancing political agendas associated with Sidney's (Hannay, "Admonitory Dedication" 156); and emphasizing Herbert's contribution to the Protestant cause through the loss of her brother (Distiller 116). Criticism that interprets Herbert's work on the basis of her own claims about the quality of her work and about her role as an author is both limited and limiting. It is limited in that it presupposes Herbert's transparency as a rhetorician, and it is limiting because acceptance of her minimizing statements about her modest ability as a writer precludes critical investigations into her use of rhetoric and versification. While use of the modesty topos by Philip Sidney and other prominent male writers of the sixteenth century is unlikely to be taken by critics at face value, for some scholars an uncritical acceptance of the topos when used by early modern women writers approaches the normative.
How transparent is Herbert’s rhetoric? A close reading of the two dedicatory poems demonstrates her dexterous use of early modern literary and philosophical traditions to influence her audience through her self-constructions, her constructions of others, and her representations of the historical, political, and personal contexts for the poems. In addition to Neoplatonism, Herbert appears to be making use of the strain of number symbolism most closely associated with the “Cabalist-Neopythagorism” of Elizabethan magus John Dee. Herbert’s poems are further complicated by the contradictions that occur on multiple levels, including the literal, the symbolic, and the technical. This last category is taken to include the interactions of meter; rhetorical schemes and figures; grammar, including syntax and word choice; and the concomitant subjective construction of the sonic effects associated with these interactions. The poem’s indeterminacy appears to operate at different points both within and beyond the scope of conscious intentionality, suggesting conflicted perceptions, values, and desires. As Gerald Graff explains, “in order to say something about any subject we presumably repress some of our thoughts and feelings about it, but what we are repressing is betrayed by our words in a way that will be readable by analysis” (171). For this reason, Herbert’s conflicting accounts of her own and her brother’s roles in textual production and of her relationships with her brother and

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170 I take this term from Yates, who assigns considerable importance to the influence of Christian Cabalism on Dee’s thought (Occult Philosophy 81, 95).
171 In the New Book of Forms, Lewis Turco assigns poetry four levels: typographical, sonic, sensory, and ideational. His chapter on the “sonic level” classifies prosodies and types of rhyme; the OED Online defines “sonic” as “Of or pertaining to sound or sound waves, esp. within the audible range.” Here I use the term “sonic effects” to denote any and all poetic effects arrived at through the considered manipulation of sounds and their typographical representation.
Queen Elizabeth should not be read either as ineptitude or deliberate misrepresentation.

Herbert’s accounts of her role in textual production, as well as many of those written by clients or other associates who speak for her and/or under her direction, evidence similar characteristics. In the two poems named above, she displays her grief for her dead brother, expresses her devotion to him and, while presenting herself as deferring to him and the authority of his texts, assumes the foreground as the speaking subject. Similarly, although most of the dedications written to Herbert eulogize Sidney, her rhetorical positioning as the recipient of the dedications and her construction as Sidney’s legatee ensure that she remains their primary focus.

Herbert’s rhetorical strategies, as well as those adopted by other writers in their efforts to please her, made it possible for her to develop, direct, and make use of the cultural capital associated with the Sidney legend while defusing potential criticism of her for violating not only the gender boundaries associated with sixteenth-century textual production but also the boundaries associated with intellectual property.172

172 While Jonathan Hope, Jeffrey Masten, and Charles Cathcart have argued that critical practices that position individual authorship as normative are particularly ill-suited to the early modern period, and Schleiner claims that virtually “any ‘original’ Renaissance literary text” contains “occasional passages of allusive, paraphrastic translation” (Captive Woman 57), these contentions do not preclude active policing of intellectual property by sixteenth-century writers, editors, printers, and booksellers. Examples of such policing include Fulke Greville’s suggestion that Arthur Golding’s publication of a translation of Philippe de Mornay’s De la Verité de la Religion Christiane supposedly begun by Sidney and completed at his request was “mercenary” (qtd. in Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 251-52); Thomas Watson’s complaint in the preface to Meliboeus that Abraham Fraunce in his Lamentations for the Death of Phillips had failed to acknowledge his use of Watson’s neo-Latin poem Amyntas (Lamb, Gender and Authorship 33); Greville’s letter warning Sir Francis Walsingham of an attempt to publish a pirated edition of the Arcadia (Davis 404); and Herbert’s successful efforts to supersede Greville’s 1590 edition of the same work partly in order to dissociate it from the Essex circle (421). In Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist, Lukas Erne counters the tradition that Shakespeare had little
The mechanics of this “appropriation” are visible in “Even Now That Care,” where Herbert presents herself as the lesser of two subjects occupying the polarized positions “richer” and “poorer.” In the absence of the “richer” subject, who has been “reft away,” the “poorer” is to represent both. In stanza 3 of the poem, in a brief narrative that imaginatively dramatizes the Queen’s receipt of the psalm cycle, Herbert writes:

Cares though still great, cannot bee greatest still,
Busines most ebb, though Leasure never flowe:
Then these the Postes of Dutie and Goodwill
shall presse to offer what their Senders owe;
Which once in two, now in one subject goe,
The poorer left, the richer reft awaye:
Who better might (O might ah word of woe.)
have giv’n for mee what I for him defraye. (17-24)

interest in publishing his plays, arguing instead that he wrote both for publication and for performance (244). According to Erne, theatre companies’ strategies for marketing plays may well have included promoting performance through publication (91).

I problematize the use of the term “appropriate” because, while it does in some ways accurately describe Herbert’s use of her brother’s work to promote her own status as a literary icon, it also implies a specifically twentieth and twenty-first century value judgment which is anachronistic in this context. Without wishing to evade the issue (or seeing any reason to), I contend that this sixteenth-century “appropriation” should be viewed not only in the context of contemporary prohibitions against women’s public discourse and their efforts to circumvent them, but also in terms of Herbert’s use of a Christianized development of Plotinus’s representation of spiritual fulfillment as unification with the One. The extent to which Herbert’s imagery and versification appear to participate in this tradition is addressed in greater detail below.

Quotations of Herbert’s poetry are taken from the **Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke** (Collected Works).
From Herbert’s use of the relative pronoun “which” in line 21 (“Which once in two, now in one Subject goe”), it is unclear whether the pronoun has as its referent the subjects’ offering (the poems, figured here as “the Postes of Dutie and Goodwill,” and later as “Cloth,” and “liverie robe”), their indebtedness (“what their Senders owe”), or both. The blurring of relationships at the grammatical level in lines 19-24 accords with the blurring of the relationship between the two subjects, who with the absence of the “richer” subject are now somehow conjoined by what they share: their indebtedness, the “Postes” that “defray” that indebtedness, or both. The identification or interchangeability of the two subjects, who like their debt, “now in one Subject goe,” is established on the literal level by the statement just cited and by the speaker’s claim that her counterpart “better might (O might ah word of woe.) / have giv’n for mee what I for him defraye” (23-24). These claims are supported at the grammatical level by the shift from the plural to the singular form for nouns used to represent Sidney’s and Herbert’s personae (from “Senders” in line 20 to “subject” in line 21), and by the use of parallelism and chiasmus in the second quatrain of stanza 3. The phrases “once in two” and “now in one” are parallel, as are “the poorer left, the richer reft”; the use of the internal rhymes “left” and “reft” emphasizes the parallel

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175 Brenman hypothesizes that Herbert in the late 1590s was contemplating publication of her and her brother’s version of the psalm cycle, and suggests that during the Queen’s expected visit to Wilton, Herbert intended to seek an exception to patents granting Richard Day and Thomas Morley the rights to print metrical versions of the psalms (“Queen’s Proposed Visit” 44-45). Brenman interprets Herbert’s use of the extended cloth and clothing metaphor in this context, claiming that the cloth that figures the psalm sequence is “presented to the queen to be made into a livery robe (34), which she may then disseminate as she so pleases (i.e. whether in manuscript or print)” 49-50).

176 For a gloss on Herbert’s use of specific words and phrases, see Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brenman, “Commentary: ‘Even Now That Care,’” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 320-22).
construction. However, the inverse placement of the closely related word forms “once” and “one” in these parallel phrases also gestures toward the chiasmus of the final line, where “for him defraye” inverts “giv’n for mee.” The movement from parallelism to chiasmus first posits as equal and then reverses the roles of the two subjects. 177

By focusing on their roles as the Queen’s subjects, Herbert elides not only the gender difference between the two characters in the poem that figure her and her brother, but also their status as separate individuals. The text does not name the characters; instead, Sidney’s absent presence in the poem is evoked by the explicit decision not to name him: “How can I,” asks the speaker, “name whom sighing sighes extend, / and not unstop my teares eternall spring?” (25-26). The effacement of the individual subject in relation to the Queen functions in the poem as a compliment to her, gesturing toward her elevated status in the continuum of the divine and mundane social hierarchies. However, the elision of the boundaries between the two subjects also has the effect of subordinating the identity figured by the persona that represents Sidney to the narrator, who assumes the task of representing both characters. In addition to using the nouns “Senders” and “subject” and the adjectives “poorer” and “richer” to identify the personae that represent her and her brother in the poem, Herbert also uses relative and personal pronouns. After attributing the role of initiating the sequence to the persona that figures Sidney in the line “but hee did

177 The technical term for use of the words that derive from the same root is polyptoton; in the commentary on this poem, Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan describe Herbert’s use of polyptoton and of polyptoton and chiasmus as “typical” (Harbert, Collected Works 321, n. 5, 38, 54).
warpe, I weav'd this webb to end;" (27). Herbert allows his individuated persona to drop out of the poem, subsuming it within a communal identity that is figured by her own persona as speaker and that is denoted by the first person pronouns. The speaker's assumption of the role of figurehead for the communal identity is explicitly articulated in line 33, where she says: "I the Cloth in both our names present."

In the sixth stanza, or at roughly the mid-point of the twelve-stanza poem, the focus shifts from the act of presenting the offering to the glorification of the monarch. The balance of representation of Sidney's and Herbert's individuated personae and of their dual identity can be approximated through her use of personal pronouns: to refer to her brother's persona, Herbert uses different forms of the third person masculine pronoun twice (24, 27) and the relative pronouns "who" and "whom" once (23, 25) for a total of four references. From line 27 in stanza 4, Herbert does not use the third person masculine pronoun again, but instead uses the first-person pronouns "I," "me," "my," "us," "we," "our," and "ours." She uses the plural first- and third-person pronouns to refer to the communal identity twelve times (twice in lines 28, 36, 37, and 41, and once in 20, 29, 33, 38), and the first-person singular pronouns to refer to her own persona ten times. In sum, Sidney's persona, though valorized, is briefly introduced and then is subsumed into a communal identity. The narrator, as the sole

178 Wall interprets Herbert's construction of her brother's role in textual production in these lines as primary, her own as secondary: "Through the metaphor of weaving, she names her role as perfunctory, his as imaginative. She further effaces her authorial role by lauding Philip as the true source of the translations" (313). However, Wall also observes that Herbert's use of the weaving metaphor to figure the text's composition associates the process of with "a craft that is decidedly aristocratic, domestic, and female" (Imprint of Gender 317). Wall's use of the term "domestic" is anachronistic. See my discussion of the private/public distinction in chapter 3, "Contexts and Constructions of Herbert's Patronage and the Countess of Pembroke's Circle."
surviving representative of this communal identity, triumphantly presents the joint offering to the Queen. The subjects’ work or offering, figured as a piece of woven cloth, goes through a similar representational process: the speaker asserts through extension of the clothing conceit the work of Sidney’s persona in initiating the project, but then in two sequential clauses presents his work as subsumed within her own: “but hee did warpe, I weav’d this webb to end” (27). Just as the male persona’s identity is subsumed into the communal identity, so the work of Sidney’s persona in warping the loom is subsumed into the completed product or “web” (27). Herbert’s use of the word “but” to introduce this first clause suggests that it responds to the rhetorical question which precedes it, establishing the speaker’s reason for naming him whom she cannot name without extended lamentation (25-27). Considered in conjunction with line 28, “the stuffe not ours, our worke no curious thing,” however, the word “but” also functions to limit the importance of the work of both personae. In accordance with the modesty topos, they are represented as having “denizened” the work of “the Psalmist King” (29-30) in English, rather than having produced
something “curious” of their own “stufte.” In this context, “but” may be interpreted as “only.”

Herbert’s production of multiple complementary meanings opens the text up to such alternate readings, as does her extensive use of inversions and elisions, which requires the reader to take an active role in constructing the syntax. In one such alternate reading, the word “but,” inverted with the words “hee did,” acts as a modifier for the word “warpe.” In this reading, “but” functions not only to limit the importance of versifying these time-honored canonical texts in general, but also to limit the importance of the role Sidney’s persona played in producing the text: he did “but warpe” the loom. Herbert’s use of alliteration and consonance across the caesura to link the two clauses suggests not only the continuity but the parallel nature of tasks. The correct term to use in order to constitute the speaker’s role in completing the cloth as parallel to that of Sidney’s persona would be “weft” or “woof,” which denotes the crosswise threads. However, this is not the term Herbert selects.

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179 Here Herbert appears to be using the word “curious” to mean “Deserving or exciting attention on account of its novelty or peculiarity; exciting curiosity; somewhat surprising, strange, singular, odd; queer,” which the OED Online describes as “The ordinary current objective sense.” Although no sixteenth-century instance of this usage is given, it fits the context, in which Herbert is at pains to delimit the contribution she and Sidney make to the biblical tradition in order to demonstrate the culturally appropriate humility and reverence with regard to the sacred texts. Sixteenth-century usage for the word “stufte” included “material to work with or upon, substance to be wrought, matter of composition.”

180 Distiller mentions the minimizing effect of the use of the word “but” on Herbert’s description in line 28 of Sidney’s role in initiating their versification of the psalm sequence (117). According to Distiller, “the fact that she uses the word ‘but’, which can also mean ‘only’, to describe Sidney’s contribution to the ‘warpe’ of the text emphasizes that she ‘weav’d this Webb to end.’”

181 Definitions of sixteenth-century weaving terms are paraphrased from the OED Online. Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan claim that “the metaphor of warp and woof in 27 implies a sequential composition” (Herbert, Collected Works, pp. 321, n. 21). However, as I mentioned above, the word
Instead, she has the speaker say that she "weav'd this webb to end." As Distiller observes, this phrase receives greater emphasis than the first (117). The emphasis is achieved through Herbert's use of assonance, consonance, and other sound devices to create a contrast in the flow of the two partial lines. The short words "but" and "did," with their consonantal rhyme, accelerate the two-foot partial line that describes the work of Sidney's persona. The caesura between the two partial lines creates a pause, and the pace of the second half line is further slowed through the interplay between a number of different sound devices: words that must be articulated more slowly because of long vowel sounds ("I," "weav'd," and "to"), labials (b, m, w), and the aspiration that accompanies the sibilant in "this" and the stop consonants in "webb" and "end."

The regular iambic rhythm, the mid-line caesura, the alliteration across the caesura, and the contrasting pace of the two partial lines create a rhythmic movement in the poem that at once suggests the rocking of a shuttle, the two characters' collaboration in creating the verse, and the sequential nature of that collaboration. It simultaneously constructs the two characters' tasks as parallel and therefore perhaps equal, while at the same time undermining that construction through the greater length of the partial line devoted to the speaker's contribution to the task, which contains three feet, as opposed to two, and the emphasis created through the use of the sound devices listed above. In this manner the versification gestures toward the

Herbert uses to complete the weaving metaphor is "webb." The word "woof" does not appear in the poem.
tension created by two contradictory claims: one that on the basis of Sidney’s superior skill and status as the work’s originator presents the role of his persona in creating the offering as primary, and another that presents his production as subsumed within the totality of the “webb” which the speaker has “weav’d to end.” The second claim does more accurately describe Herbert’s contribution to the sequence, which consists of versifying 107 psalms, completing or revising several of Sidney’s forty-three, composing the two dedicatory poems, circulating the poems, and directing the production of the manuscript copy for the formal presentation. The tension between the two claims perhaps reflects as well Herbert’s recognition that despite her use of the modesty topos, her technical skill in the psalm versifications surpasses Sidney’s. According to Rathmell, this assessment had been endorsed by a number of different critics as early as 1963, the publication date of his edition of their work, The Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke.

Furthermore, by “weaving” the piece “to end,” or providing the versifications of psalms 44-150 that bring the sequence to its rightful conclusion, Herbert has salvaged what had been left in a fragmentary state at Sidney’s death and brought it to completion. Her statement in the subsequent poem, “Angell Spirit,” that if it had not

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182 In the introduction to The Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke (Garden City, NY: Anchor), Rathmell claims that “Sidney’s share in translating the Psalms, most critics have agreed, is decidedly inferior to that of his sister, if only on stylistic grounds” (xxvi). He goes on to describe “stylistic grounds” as “a dangerous guide.” Because the work consists of translations and versifications of previously existing texts, however, it would seem that “stylistic grounds” would be significant criteria for any evaluative comparison.

183 Wall attests that the Sidney “Psalms went on to become highly public texts, circulating widely enough to be read by Donne, Lanyer and Herbert, and surviving to be disseminated in the next centuries” (“Our Bodies/Our Texts?” 53). Wall’s use of the cognomen “Herbert” here refers not to Mary Sidney Herbert but to the seventeenth-century poet George Herbert.
been for Sidney's death and his consequent inability to finish the cycle himself "This halfe maim'd peece had sorted with the best" (18), is undermined by the reader's awareness that it is through Herbert's agency that the sequence has been completed and therefore can no longer accurately be described as a "half maim'd peece." As the preceding analysis demonstrates, Herbert's use of the modesty topos in regard to her own performance and her representation of Sidney on the literal level of the poem as the dominant partner in the collaboration is undercut on the technical level by her own use of grammar, syntax, versification, and rhetorical schemes and figures. As Schleiner points out, Herbert's "difficult syntax and strained elisions" are characteristic of her later writing, and it would be inappropriate to construe these aspects of her style as "basic incompetence" (Tudor and Stuart Women Writers 58). Schleiner points out that these grammatical constructions "were sometimes deliberate structures, part of an effort to convey intellectual complexities." This reading of lines 19-24 of "Even Now That Care," in which the indeterminacy of the pronoun referent serves in part to help efface the boundaries between the two individual identities, illustrates Schleiner's point.

With the presentation of her offering complete in stanza 5, the speaker moves on to identify Queen Elizabeth first as the most appropriate patron of all English "Wit" and "Art" in general (line 47, stanza 6), and then, in her role as England's monarch, of this Englished version of the Psalms in particular (stanza 7). In stanzas 8 and 9, Herbert supports her contention through a series of comparisons between David and Elizabeth. While most of these comparisons construct the Queen as
David's equal, some suggest that she surpasses him. As in Herbert's constructions of the personae that represent her and her brother, her use of word choice, syntax, and rhetorical schemes and figures at times undercuts statements made on the literal level in ways that invert the patriarchal standard in order to subordinate the male monarch.

In stanza 7, Herbert represents Elizabeth on the literal level as David's peer: in some ways Herbert's use of grammar and rhetorical figures accords with this construction, and in other ways undermines it. On the literal level, Herbert claims that Elizabeth is a "meet" patroness "for Authors state" and "writings argument" because her state is kingly and her history in many ways recapitulates David's (51-52). In the final quatrain of the stanza, Herbert employs a number of different rhetorical devices, setting up a series of analogies by balancing related words and phrases against each other:

A King should onely to a Queene bee sent.

Gods loved choise unto his chosen love:

Devotion to Devotions President:

What all applaud, to her whom none reprove. (52-56)

The effect of most of these lines is created by restating in the second half in reference to Elizabeth what was stated in the first half in reference to David. Herbert's use of

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184 See Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan for background on the tradition associating English monarchs with David and for a detailed explication of ways in which contemporaries perceived his and Elizabeth's reigns as parallel (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 96-100). The editors claim that "Davidic comparisons for Tudor monarchs were ubiquitous" (96).

185 Schleiner observes that one of Herbert's techniques is to structure her Davidic comparisons as logical oppositions: "winning is not identical to 'not losing': though winning implies not losing, not losing (a concept including stalemate) does not necessarily imply winning" (Captive Woman 175).
many different figures to create similar effects in these four lines reinforces the point she is making. The differences between the two characters, “King” versus “Queen,” are figured through differences in word choice and syntax and then resolved by using these elements to create similar meanings.

In stanza 8, as Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan observe, Herbert again uses “the clothing metaphor of 25-34” for the psalm cycle, concluding that while the “garments” that figure the psalms apply to all, “they fit perfectly only Queen Elizabeth” (322 n. 54); in stanza 9, Herbert draws a series of historical parallels between the two reigns. She explicitly constructs Elizabeth’s reign as surpassing David’s in line 71, where the speaker says “Hee with great conquest, thou with greater blest.” Herbert opens stanza 10 by reasserting the equality of these two otherwise incomparable figures, which walk “hand in hand” (73). To increase the distance between the two monarchs and the other two elements of the rhetorical triangle, the speaker and the audience, Herbert shifts briefly from the second person pronouns used as a form of address throughout most of the poem to the third person plural pronoun: “Thus hand in hand with him thy glories walke: / But who can trace them where alone they goe?” (73-74). The pronoun shift serves to elevate the monarchs, and more particularly Elizabeth, who is now so far “above” the speaker that she can no longer be addressed as “you.” In lines 75-76, Herbert elevates

While the comparison just cited positions Herbert as superior to David, Schleiner points out that Herbert’s use of a similar construction—“what all applaud, to her whom none reprove” (line 56)—can be interpreted as calling into question history’s judgment of the Queen, should she fail to fulfill her divinely appointed role as defender of the faith both in England and on the Continent.
Elizabeth still further by pointing to another area in which Elizabeth surpasses David:

"Of thee two hemispheres on honor talk, / and Lands and seas thy Trophees jointly showe." 186 In stanza 11, Herbert moves beyond David to implicitly compare Elizabeth to God, who in the Neoplatonic tradition is identified with the primum mobile: "one moving all, herselfe unmov’d the while" (84). 187 Similarly, in lines 77-78, Herbert gestures toward according Elizabeth divine powers over the natural world, then quickly draws back from the implication. She says: "The very windes did on thy partie blowe, / And rocks in armes they foe men eft defie." The topical allusion in the poem, as Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan observe, is to the attack of the Spanish Armada in 1588 (Herbert, Collected Works 322, n. 77-78), when the rout of the invading army occurred not as a result of military action, but primarily due to a great storm that destroyed the Spanish fleet; these events were construed as divine intervention. In representing the earth and wind as taking Elizabeth’s part, Herbert is drawing on the intellectual tradition that assumes a universe in which God’s will controls events in the material world through what Foucault describes as conventia:

... by the linking of resemblance with space, the 'convenience' that brings like things together and makes adjacent things similar, the

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186 I follow Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan in their interpretation of these lines. In reference to David, they claim that “Elizabeth surpasses him in the extent of her realm” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 99).

187 As Isabel Rivers explains, traditional early modern cosmology synthesized a few key ideas derived from Greek texts to develop an account of the universe that accorded with Christian theology (72). Rivers explains that in the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology, "The Aristotelian Unmoved Mover, who moves the cosmos because he is an object of love becomes the Christian God, who moves the cosmos through his active love of his Creation" (74). Yates points to J. Case's 1588 publication Sphaera Civitatis as an explication of the analogic construction of God as the prime mover of the Heavens and Queen Elizabeth as the prime mover of the sphaera civitatis (Astraea 64-65).
world is linked together like a chain. At each point of contact there begins and ends a link that resembles the one before it and the one after it; and from circle to circle, these similitudes continue, holding the extremes apart (God and matter), yet bringing them together in such a way that the will of the Almighty may penetrate into the most unawakened corners. (Foucault 19)

Herbert closes stanza 10 by reproaching her muse for overstepping her bounds, effectively constructing a mythological alter ego onto which she displaces the fault of the near blasphemy. She says: “But soft my muse, Thy pitch is earthly lowe: /
Forebearn this heav’n, where onely Eagles flie” (77-80). Thus at several points in the

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188 The source for this quotation is “The Prose of the World,” a chapter in Foucault’s The Order of Things which has long been the subject of critique. Ian Maclean, for example, severely criticizes both Foucault’s model and his method, arguing that the research base Foucault draws on in constructing a taxonomy of “similitudes” that he claims are fundamental to early modern intellectual is far too narrow in his essay (“Foucault’s Renaissance Episteme Reassessed: An Aristotelian Counterblast”). Maclean’s caveats are warranted, and most especially in regard to the breadth and inflexibility of the claims Foucault supports with one or two anomalous examples. Nonetheless, this description of a well-known early modern conceptual model helpfully elucidates Herbert’s use of it in this passage.

189 Both Distiller and Wall associate Herbert’s muse in “To the Angell Spirit of Sir Phillip Sidney” with her idealized dead brother (Distiller 118-19; Wall, Imprint of Gender 314-15). Distiller identifies the muse of “Even Now That Care” with both the “Parnassian muse” and with the Queen, adding that Herbert’s use of her muse is “complex, sometimes verging on the convoluted” (118). However, I cannot agree that the muse in these poems is identified either with Sidney or with the Queen. Herbert’s speaker in “Even Now That Care” repeatedly admonishes her muse to show greater humility (79-80, 87-90), and such admonishment would appear to conflict with the extraordinary reverence accorded both Sidney and the Queen in these two poems. Queen Elizabeth is elevated to divine status in “Even Now That Care,” while the representation of Sidney in the second poem as an “Angell Spirit” is developed not only through imagery but also, apparently, through numerology. Despite Herbert’s extension of the modestly topos to the persona that figures Sidney in the first five stanzas of “Even Now That Care,” it would be difficult to reconcile representations of Sidney and the Queen as divinities with admonishments to show greater humility. Efforts to construe Sidney as the speaker’s muse in “Angell Spirit” lead to similar difficulties. In this poem, the speaker contends that her muse “dares” to “combine” itself with Sidney’s (5). But if Sidney were the speaker’s muse, then Herbert would be claiming that he had somehow united with his own muse on her behalf. It is far more credible that in the first dedicatory poem Herbert’s speaker addresses the muse as an extension of her own writerly persona and that the mild reproof serves as yet another display of the speaker’s extreme deference toward the Queen.
poem (lines 71, 75-76, 84, 77-78), Herbert disrupts the continuum of the divine and mundane social hierarchies by representing Elizabeth as superior to David and similar to God. Herbert's flattery, though extravagant, is in keeping with other contemporary celebrations of the Queen that associate her with classical and Christian figurations of divinity, including the Virgin Mary (Yates, Astraea 78).

What is most striking about the poem "Even Now That Care" from a feminist perspective, however, is that it represents an interchange between two women, the Queen and the speaker, in which King David is given to one woman by another in order to strengthen the alliance between them. As such, the exchange symbolically inverts the patriarchal interaction in which men exchange women in order to make and reinforce homosocial alliances. To return to the series of analogies in lines 53-56, Herbert effects this reversal by objectifying David, who is metonymically identified with the versified psalm cycle as its putative author, and constructing him as an offering: "A King should onely to a Queene bee sent" (53). Herbert's use of anastrophe, inverting the word order of the sentence to place part of the verb phrase ("bee sent") after the prepositional phrase "to a Queene," emphasizes at the technical level the inversion of gender roles taking place at the literal level. Through her use of the passive verb form "should . . . be sent," through which "the King" is constructed as a passive rather than an active subject, depriving him of the almost all-powerful level and degree of agency most often associated with his subject position as both a man and a monarch. Taken together, the series of analogies in lines 53-56 make up a

heaping figure, or catalog, which four times restates the relationship between the two
monarchs. The four clauses that make up the heaping figure are governed by the verb
phrase “should . . . be sent,” which appears in line 53, but has been elided in lines 54-
56. Line 53, as Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan observe, is a chiasmus, which the
editors suggest is “used to demonstrate Elizabeth’s equality with David as a divinely
appointed monarch” (Collected Works 1: 322, n. 54); however, through Herbert’s use
of zeugma the elided verb phrase continues to construct David as an objectified
offering in the three remaining clauses of the heaping figure. As in her constructions
of her own and her brother’s personae and labor in lines 20-28, Herbert’s use of
syntax in these lines does not entirely accord with the explicit statements made on the
literal level. In lines 53-56, her sentence structure can be said either to undermine the
claim of parity between the two monarchs through the series of analogies and
rhetorical devices, or to make a conflicting claim in which David is subordinated not
only to the Queen, but to the speaker of the poem, who offers him up as a gift. The
gender hierarchy is further destabilized in stanza 11, where, as Hannay, Kinnamon,
and Brennan observe (100), Herbert explores the paradox of a woman’s reign:

    Kings on a Queen enforst their states to lay;
    Main=lands for Empire waiting on an Ile;
    Men drawne by worth a woman to obay;
    One moving all, herself unmov’d the while: (81-84)

In this quatrain the claim made in line 71 that Elizabeth, a woman monarch, has
exceeded David, a male monarch, in the specifically male domain of martial conquest
is enlarged to comprise a general inversion of the gender hierarchy in which kings rely on a woman to preserve their states and men are “drawne” to accept a woman’s leadership (83); this reversal is precipitated in part by that woman’s worth (83).

In the final stanza of the poem, Herbert not only returns to the glorification of the monarch, but in this context depicts the idealized relationship that she is attempting to establish between the two women through her presentation of the psalm cycle to the Queen. The poem, like other dedicatory poems, is an appeal for patronage; its purpose as such is indicated at a number of different points in the text. These include Herbert’s explicit construction of Elizabeth as patron of all English “Wit” and “Art” in stanza 6 and as the ideal patron for the specific text Herbert wishes to present in stanza 7; Herbert’s reference to the Queen’s “favors” and, according to Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan, Herbert’s family’s poorly rewarded service in stanza 5 (Collected Works 1: 322, n. 40); Herbert’s emphasis on her brother’s loss in stanza 4, which Hannay claims serves as “a reminder that he died in Elizabeth’s service” (“Admonitory Dedication” 151); and Herbert’s idealized depiction of herself as the Queen’s handmaiden in stanza 12. Herbert’s construction of her and her brother’s relationship with the Queen in stanza 5 is positively feudal:

191 Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan gloss this stanza as follows: “The poem thus ends with the same admonitory flattery with which it began, reminding the Queen of her religious duty” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 100).
192 Waller describes “Even Now That Care” as a “conventional encomium” (Critical Study 97); Hannay describes the poem as admonitory flattery designed to further the Protestant cause (“Admonitory Dedication” 156); and Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan claim that Herbert uses the David comparison “to flatter and admonish the queen” (Collected Works 98). Although all describe the poem as “dedicatory,” none of these critics pursue the implication that in its role as a dedication, the poem is also an appeal for patronage.
Herbert represents them as figuratively tilling “those nighe feelds where sow’N thy favors bee” (39) in order to produce a “small parcel of the undischarged rent, / from which nor paines, nor payments can us free” (35-36). Taken with her claim in stanza 6 that everything she and her brother produce is by definition the Queen’s, since “What English is, by many names is thine” (42), Herbert appears to be referring to the obligations of feudal tenure, which, according to Adams, had become obsolete in the preceding century. He explains that there was “a final severance during the fourteenth century of land held in feudal tenure from any meaningful obligations of service; thus the crown was forced to reward the service of those who were nominally its chief tenants” (72). Herbert’s sentimental appeal to the feudal relationships of the previous era reinforces her claim to the Queen’s patronage while mystifying the associated economic implications. The poem is marked as an appeal for patronage as well by its excessive flattery, which is consistent with the genre. According to Brennan, “the lavish vocabulary and archly-rhetorical formulation of dedicatory panegyrics were regarded as a form of ritualised tribute in which the author was expected to cultivate a deliberately heightened style” (Brennan, Literary Patronage 3). Herbert’s studied humility in this poem is similar to the stance she adopts in a letter to the Queen dated 1601 (Collected Works 1: 290-92).193 In the letter Herbert compares Elizabeth to the

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193 Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan characterize the letter as an “appeal for the queen to take William into her service” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 349), and Queen Elizabeth did indeed welcome Herbert’s son to court in 1599, extending him favor “for the sake of her who bare him” (qtd. in Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 163). In a later essay, “The Queen’s Proposed Visit to Wilton House in 1599 and the ‘Sidney Psalms,’” Brennan argues that Herbert’s letter to the Queen was most likely written in 1599, and he describes it as “offering thanks” to the Queen for her kindness to Herbert’s son, rather than as soliciting favors for him. Brennan suggests that the letter “may be regarded as a kind of prose
sun, saying that she herself remembers "how in my youngest times my selfe was
grased by the same heavenly grace, the same sumn which evermore hath powre to
perfit the greatest imperfection by the rarest exemple of all perfection" (291). In
keeping with the sun motif, Herbert describes the Queen in the last few lines of the
letter as "that purest light" (292); the associations with the divine suggested by the
phrase "the purest light" are heightened by Herbert's previous attribution to the
Queen of "heavenly grace."

The relationship between the two women as depicted in stanza 12 is mediated
by the muse that Herbert introduces in stanza 10. Here Herbert again constructs the
speaker as part of a dual identity; however, this dual identity incorporates not her and
her brother, but two different aspects of her own carefully crafted self-representation:
self as writer, here identified with her muse, and self as the Queen's servant. In this
last stanza of the poem, Herbert addresses her own muse, referring to the Queen in
the third person. The speaker describes the gift she is presenting to the Queen solely
as the speaker's work: "Her handmaids taske" (90). It is worth noting yet again that
there is no further mention here of the communal identity for the personae established
earlier in the poem for Herbert and her brother, or to her brother's participation in the
handmaid's "taske." This is not to suggest that Herbert's love for and devotion to her
brother are not genuine or have somehow dissipated in the course of writing the
poem; rather that reference to him at this point no longer serves Herbert's purpose,

counterpart" to "Even Now That Care" (47-48). Either way, the letter addresses the Queen in her role
as Herbert's patron, and like the poem, its object is the furtherance of that relationship.
which is to strengthen the relationship between herself and the Queen. The muse functions as an intermediary in this relationship because it is the muse who makes the speaker’s offering visible to the Queen: “Thy utmost can but offer to hir sight / Her handmaids taske” (89-90). Through the use of the word “handmaid,” with its Biblical associations, and the depiction of the muse as presenting the offering to Elizabeth, Herbert conjures up a quasi-religious, quasi-mythological scene reminiscent of Renaissance paintings in which one figure kneels before a divinity while a servant presents a gift on the suppliant’s behalf. Although Herbert has had the speaker direct all but the last two lines of the first ten stanzas of the poem to the Queen through her use of the pronoun “you,” the narrator addresses the muse for much or all of the last three stanzas (79-80 and 87-92), while the Queen is positioned as an auditor. Herbert’s designation of the muse as the intermediary who presents the offering and use of the third-person pronoun to denote the Queen are both devices that serve to elevate her in relation to the personae that figure the poem’s author, as well as to emphasize the importance and the formal nature of the occasion.

In the lines immediately preceding the depiction of the presentation as a kind of literary tableau, Herbert makes an oblique claim for the value of her service to the Queen specifically in her role as a writer through wordplay on the terms “subject” and “object”: in admonishing her muse, the speaker says, “Let subject bee of some inspired stile, / Till then the object of her subjects joye” (89). It is through the office of the speaker’s muse that events which have been the “object” of discussion will be translated to the “subject” of heroic or mythological verse. In conjunction with the
summative statement “Let subject bee of some inspired stile,” the speaker lists appropriate topics for her verse:

Kings on a Queene enforst their states to lay;
Main=lands for Empire waiting on an Ile;
Men drawne by worth a woman to obay;
one moving all, herselpe unmov’d the while:
Truthes restitution, vanitie exile,
wealth sprung of want, war held without annoye,
Let subject bee of some inspired stile,
Till then the object of her subjects joye. (81-86)

The implications here for Herbert’s trajectory as a writer can be interpreted in more than one way: considered within the limiting context of critical perceptions of the Psalms as Herbert’s last major literary project, these admonitions to her muse could be taken to indicate no more than a shift in subject matter within the poem. However, there is no way of verifying that the Psalms was Herbert’s last project, or that at this point in time she intended it to be. 194 Therefore, the speaker’s address to the muse might also indicate that Herbert is gesturing toward her future services to the Queen as a writer and that it is her intent to address in later works heroic and mythological

194 Hannay cites as possible evidence of lost work Herbert’s own letters to Edward Wotton and Tobie Matthew (Collected Works 1: 286-87, 298-301) and claims made in a 1694 text titled The Ladies’ Dictionary (Philip’s Phoenix 140-41, 256, n. 150). Distiller observes that Herbert may well have been writing before her brother’s death in 1586 and after her husband’s death in 1601, though no known extant work has been attributed to these two periods. It is quite possible, as Distiller suggests, that additional texts may have been lost when the house burned in 1647 (113); Hannay reports that “only part of the east front and the Holbein porch survived” (Philip’s Phoenix 47).
subject matter such as that alluded to here: “Truthes restitution,” which may refer to Elizabeth’s identification with Astraæa, the goddess of justice, and “war held without annoy” (86), which may allude to the defeat of the Spanish Armada. In the last quatrain of the poem, Elizabeth is portrayed as having exceeded the standard set by David, who has now become a downward comparator for the Queen: although he had been presented as equal to her at the beginning of stanza 10, where their “glories” were portrayed as walking “hand in hand” (73), in the last two lines of the poem, the court and the kingdom are represented as participating in the wish that “In more then hee and more triumphant yeares” (95), Elizabeth will continue to “Sing what God doth, and doo what men may sing” (96).

Much of Herbert’s three or four pieces of undisputed extant original work appears to have been written for the same occasion: the projected visit from the Queen to Wilton in August 1599. This visit did not take place, whether due to the

195 In Astraæa: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century, Yates describes the development of the English tradition associating Elizabeth with the classical virgin goddess of justice (29-87). According to Ovid’s Metamorphoses, Astraæa fled the earth during the Iron Age, when humans became corrupt (Ovid: Metamorphoses 20). Astraæa’s return was associated with the coming of a golden age, just as Elizabeth’s reign was associated by Protestant theologians with “a golden age of pure religion, peace and plenty” (Yates 47). In the Metamorphoses, Astraæa’s withdrawal is specifically tied to Truth’s departure, and Arthur Golding’s edition, published in 1567, explicitly makes this connection: “then Fayth and Truth were faine / And honest shame to hide their heads” (Ovid’s Metamorphoses 7). So whether Herbert read the Metamorphoses in Latin, in Golding’s English translation, or both, she would have been familiar with the close association in the poem of Truth with Justice. Yates argues that another of the poems Herbert wrote most probably in expectation of a visit from Elizabeth, “A Dialogue betweene Two Shepheards, Thenot and Piers,” also alludes to the Queen’s identification with Astraæa and the golden age associated with her (Astraæa 67).

196 Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan interpret Herbert’s injunction to Elizabeth to “Sing what God doth” as an allusion to Queen Elizabeth’s translation of Psalm 13, which was published in 1548 by John Bale. See 1: 322, n. 96 of Herbert’s Collected Works.

197 Composition of “A Dialogue betweene Two Shepheards, Thenot and Piers, in Praise of Astraæa” is attributed to 1599, while the sole manuscript source for “Even Now That Care” and “Angell Spirit” is also dated 1599 (Collected Works 1: 82). However, “Angell Spirit” may have been composed much earlier. See p. 170 for a more detailed account of the poem’s genesis.
length of the journey and Queen’s advanced age, the ill health of the host, Henry Herbert, or the threat of a second Spanish invasion (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 165). However, Herbert’s composition of two or three original poems and her commission of an elaborate presentation manuscript for the occasion suggest that self-representation as a writer was an important part of her plans for the Queen’s entertainment. Brennan states that “it seems clear that the Countess of Pembroke planned to mark Elizabeth’s proposed visit to her house with the gift of a selection of her own literary works” and that “a presentation manuscript of the ‘Sidney Psalms’ seems to have been intended as the central gift to be offered to the Queen” (“Queen’s Proposed Visit” 29, 49). Brennan concludes that the purpose for this emphasis on Herbert’s literary activities was “to draw attention to her (and her brother’s) long-term commitment to producing an attractive and useable metrical version of the Psalms of David in the vernacular” in the interests of facilitating its publication (29). Herbert may well have seen the visit as an opportunity to expand her own public role and reputation as a writer, legitimizing through royal acceptance or approval future and perhaps more extensive literary writing.

Herbert’s marriage supplies an important biographical context for the contention that “Even Now That Care” has as its primary purpose affirming Herbert’s status as the Queen’s servant in pursuit of her further patronage. In 1577, Mary Herbert, then Mary Sidney, was contracted at the age of sixteen to Henry Herbert,

198 See James Shapiro, A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare, pp. 173-187, for an account of the events of summer 1599, including the defensive preparations for an attack that never materialized.
Earl of Pembroke, who was at that time in his mid-forties (Hannay, Philip's Phoenix 38). Hannay observes that “Mary Sidney’s marriage tightened the alliance between the Dudley/Sidney family and the Herberts” (42), while Duncan-Jones asserts that “The Queen was well aware that a new Sidney-Dudley axis had been formed with the Herberts in Wiltshire, awkwardly far away from her direct control” (Courtier Poet 189). The match was arranged by the bride’s uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who was seeking to securely tie Henry Herbert to his own militant Protestant court following. In addition to his great wealth and his estates in Wiltshire, Henry Herbert owned property in Glamorgan (Williams 276), while Leicester’s power base included North Wales, where the Queen had granted him lands, including Denbigh (Adams 384-85). Wales was believed to be both militarily vulnerable and politically sensitive for a number of different reasons: vulnerable because it made part of a possible route for a Spanish invasion conducted from Ireland (Williams 115-16);199 politically sensitive first because Wales provided a major recruiting ground for troops serving in Ireland and a convenient base for military actions directed at that country; second, because the council presidency was a major government appointment with its related potential for patronage and its associated revenues. Leicester was able to maintain a certain amount of control in the region both as a property holder and through his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Sidney, who was appointed to the presidency of the Council

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199 Awareness at the Elizabethan court of Wales's military vulnerability would have been heightened by the role it played in the establishment of the Tudor dynasty. As Williams points out, it was at Milford Haven that Henry VII landed his army and launched his campaign to unseat Richard III (115-16).
of the Marches of Wales in 1559 (Adams 162), ceding the office only at his death in 1586. According to Williams, however, the Devereux family at different times contested the council president’s authority and most particularly his influence over the disposition of lucrative offices. For example, in 1572 Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, opposed Sidney’s nominees for sheriff, claiming that Sidney had selected inappropriate candidates for the most part because they were his own clients (Williams 121). Maintaining control of the Council and the patronage associated with it may have been one of Leicester’s motives in arranging his niece’s marriage to a magnate with interests and a considerable amount of clout in the region. Henry Herbert’s father, William Herbert, had served two terms as Council president in 1550-53 and 1555-58 (Brennan, Literary Patronage 34), and Herbert himself had been appointed to the Council “around” 1576, where he proved to be a staunch supporter of Sidney and Leicester (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 157). On Henry Sidney’s death in 1586, Henry Herbert replaced him as Council president, a succession that kept the office safely within the purview of the extended Sidney, Dudley, and Herbert families.

That Mary Sidney Herbert’s marriage was made primarily to facilitate an alliance between Henry Herbert and Leicester is supported by evidence of the closer relationship that developed between the two men subsequent to the ceremony. Hannay reports reciprocal visits between Kenilworth and Wilton in 1577; she prints as well a transcript of Mary Sidney Herbert’s response in 1578 to a letter from Leicester in which he evidently berated her for not relaying news of his “sone” Henry
Herbert’s improved health (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 43). Although Mary Sidney Herbert was Leicester’s niece and not his daughter, he evidently considered Herbert his son-in-law, and Leicester refers to Herbert as such in his will (43). In this construction Leicester, as the head of the Dudley family, subsumes his sister’s identity in order to assume her role as Mary Sidney Herbert’s parent. In keeping with what appears to have been a normative sixteenth century English cultural practice, he elides any distinction between the subject positions “son” and “son-in-law” as well. In positioning his own near contemporary as his son, Leicester may have ascribed to him some of the duties and obligations associated with that role during the early modern era. In any case, the mutually beneficial and closer relationship between the two men was predicated on Leicester’s proffer of his niece. Arguably, the marriage benefited Leicester more than it did the rest of the Sidney family, at least prior to the end of the sixteenth century. The large dowry Leicester promised Henry Herbert seems to have staggered Henry Sidney. Although obligated to do so, Sidney was unable to pay it for almost a year after the ceremony. This dowry was one of the

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200 Another instance of this locution appears in a 1569 letter from Henry Sidney to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, negotiating a match between Philip Sidney and Burghley’s daughter Anne. In this letter, Henry Sidney refers to Anne as his daughter (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 22, 219 n 38). The marriage never took place.

201 In a letter to Leicester dated February 4, 1577, Henry Sidney says that he will have to borrow in order to pay his daughter’s dowry, and points out tactfully that Leicester, who is familiar with Sidney’s financial status, should be aware that he is putting his brother-in-law in a financial predicament. Sidney writes: “I am poore; myne estate as well in lyuelod and moueable is not unknown to your lordshyp, which wantyth much to make me able to equall that, which I knowe my Lord of Penbrook may have” (Hannay, Phillip’s Phoenix 38-39, 224, n. 26).
major losses and expenditures that left the Sidney family in straitened circumstances for much of the rest of the sixteenth century.202

Mary Sidney Herbert’s inversion in “Even Now That Care” of the patriarchal custom that supports male alliances through an exchange of women and her pursuit on her own behalf and in her own voice of a relationship designed to secure the Queen’s favor and future patronage represent a strategic re-negotiation in a representational medium of the cultural conventions that determined her own lived experience as an object of exchange. While her subversion of this patriarchal tradition could not be realized except on a symbolic level, her representation invited and served as a model for reversals by other women writers of oppressive patriarchal cultural constructs. One example is Aemilia Lanyer’s landmark reversal in Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum (1611) of the Christian mythological narrative that validated the suppression of women’s public discourse on the basis of their culpability in the original sin through their supposed descent from Eve.203 Lanyer’s re-reading of the passage in Genesis that describes the Fall contests Eve’s guilt, attributing her act instead to a profound innocence that made her incapable of recognizing the serpent’s

202 For a fuller account of Henry Sidney’s financial difficulties, see Duncan-Jones’s report of Sidney’s accounting to Sir Francis Walsingham prior to Philip’s marriage to Walsingham’s daughter Frances (Courtier Poet 225-27). In addition to Sidney’s unrecompensed expenditures in his posts as Lord Deputy of Ireland and President of the Council of the Marches of Wales, the family suffered a loss of £500 of clothing, jewels, and household goods in 1556 when a ship carrying them sank in the Irish Sea (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 32).

203 Lamb explains that early modern women were barred from public discourse because it was Eve’s persuasion that moved Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, violating God’s commandment and precipitating the fall of man. According to Lamb, “This Renaissance re-reading of the Fall located guilt not in a human desire to possess forbidden sexual knowledge but in the failure to limit the effects of women’s speech” (Gender and Authorship 5). Lamb identifies as other key Biblical passages cited in support of prohibitions against women’s public speech two passages from St. Paul’s letters: 1 Cor.14:34-35, and 1 Tim. 2:11-15.
guile (103). Lanyer writes: "For had she knowne, of what we were bereav’d / To his request she had not condiscended" (p. 84, lines 771-72). Playing on the patriarchal construction of the terms “man” and “woman” as oppositional and hierarchical, Lanyer assigns the blame for the Fall to Adam, who as the embodiment of the privileged term in each of the gendered binaries “strong/weak,” “active/passive,” and “mind/body” is constructed as the less fallible and more responsible of the two parties. She says, “But surely Adam can not be excusede, / Her fault though great, yet hee was most too blame; / What Weaknesse offered, Strength might have refused” (p. 85, lines 777-79). In her reading, Lanyer reverses the traditional alignment of the binary terms guilty/innocent within the gender hierarchy, assigning the privileged term “innocent” to the less valued gender. Lanyer’s indebtedness to Herbert as a precursor is acknowledged in one of the nine dedications to women patrons that preface the poem. These addresses, as Jacqueline Pearson observes, ascribe a specifically female readership for a work that, as she contends, has as its purpose “to celebrate and legitimize women’s roles as both writers and readers” (45). The dedication to Mary Sidney Herbert is the sixth in the series; according to Barbara Lewalski, it is given special prominence by its length, verse form, and position in the sequence (209). This distinction accords with Herbert’s role as an exemplar: “The poem is well conceived, well made, and charming, testifying by its length and art to the importance of the Countess of Pembroke as model for Lanyer’s conception of herself as learned lady and poet” (210). Lanyer’s construction of Herbert in this dedication employs yet another reversal: in contrast to contemporary constructions of
Herbert, including her own, as either the "poorer" of the binary terms "Herbert" and "Sidney" or as a Sidney surrogate, Lanyer claims that Herbert exceeds Sidney:

... a Sister well shee may be deemd,
To him that liv'd and di'd so nobly;
And farre before him is to be esteemd
For virtue, wisedome, learning, dignity. (p. 28, lines 149-52)

Here again Lanyer inverts two hierarchically constructed terms as Herbert does in "Even Now That Care."

Another important biographical context for Herbert's poem can be supplied by a brief account of the status of the Herbert family's court relationships at the end of the sixteenth century. In 1599, Herbert had urgent reasons to attempt to secure the Queen's continued favor and future patronage in her own right. Henry Herbert had been complaining of poor health as early as 1589 (Hannay, Philip's Phoenix 263, n. 89). His physical well being, along with his emotional equilibrium, continued to deteriorate throughout the 1590s. According to Williams, from 1598 to his death in January 1601, Pembroke was seldom well (288). In September 1599 he nearly died (Hannay, Philip's Phoenix 167), and it was at this point, according to Brennan, that Herbert took on a larger role in managing the estates and other family responsibilities ("Queen's Proposed Visit" 46). It is to her efforts and her credit with the Queen that Brennan attributes the Herberts' success in establishing their son William at court, citing a letter from the Queen which declares that she welcomes William "for her sake that bare him" (46-47). That the Queen would direct her good will specifically
toward Herbert rather than to her husband is not surprising, since as early as 1595 Henry Herbert had managed to alienate both the Queen and his supporters on the Privy Council through bad temper and a lack of decorum. Engaged in a conflict over the tenure of Norwood Park with the Queen’s favorite, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, Herbert was unable to contain his anger despite the Queen’s promise that any financial loss on his part would be recovered by him (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 154; Williams 287). According to Robert Sidney’s secretary, Rowland Whyte, Herbert wrote a letter to the Queen so “passonat” that his secretary Philip Massinger refused to deliver it on the grounds that “it would well be his Lordships overthrow” (Whyte, qtd. in Philip’s Phoenix 154). Other Herbert associates, including Anne Russell, Countess of Warwick, declined as well. This episode so badly damaged the earl’s credit, according to Williams, that “Pembroke in fact was isolated at Court. He had angered the queen; he had quarrelled with Essex; and he had alienated whatever friends he had once had” (287).

Norwood Park, however, was only the beginning of Herbert’s difficulties with Essex. While the struggle between the Devereux family and the allied Sidney, Dudley, and Herbert families for control of the offices and revenues associated with the Council of the Marches of Wales had ended with Walter Devereux’s death in 1576, the cessation of hostilities was only temporary (Williams 281). At his father’s death, Robert Devereux was only ten, and with Leicester’s marriage to Devereux’s mother in 1578, he had spent many years under his stepfather’s guidance and control. As Williams says, “Pembroke and Sidney were also, of course, Leicester’s followers,
and although this did not prevent them from disagreeing with Essex, it did prevent a major conflict while Leicester was alive" (281). After Leicester’s death in 1588, however, the contest for control of Council patronage in Wales was again to become a major source of tension. Hannay reports that by 1598 the conflict between the two earls had “deteriorated into well-defined factions in Wales, with Pembroke and Essex vying to place their own servants in power” (Philip’s Phoenix 155). Henry Herbert further alienated the family’s supporters, both in Wales and at court, through his irascible mismanagement of relations with the lawyers of the Council of the Marches of Wales and with members of the Privy Council (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix 155; Williams 290-94). Despite Essex’s botched 1599 campaign in Ireland,²⁰⁴ his disastrous attempt to intervene on his own behalf with the Queen (McCoy 96), and the effective terminus to his career in summer 1600 following the Queen’s refusal to renew his lease on sweet wines (MacCaffrey 529), Essex’s faction continued to wield considerable power in Wales until his failed uprising in February 1601 (Williams 288, 296). In the meantime, however, the Privy Council had moved in 1600 to reduce Herbert’s authority over the Council of the Marches of Wales, including its constituents, appointments, and finances (293). Henry Herbert’s failing health and declining influence at court are significant historical contexts for his wife’s appeal to the Queen in “Even Now That Care” for her continued favor and patronage. In a poem most probably composed for ceremonies attending the Queen’s visit to Herbert

²⁰⁴ For an account of Leicester’s failed Irish campaign and subsequent loss of favor, see Wallace MacCaffrey, Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588-1603, chapters 21 and 26 “The Failure of Essex” and “The Fall from Grace” (418-30; 514-36).
family seat at Wilton, Herbert skillfully directs her audience’s attention away from the writer’s identity as a Herbert, focusing instead on the Sidney family’s long history of service to the monarch and her own literary self-construction as Philip Sidney’s partner and the heir to his cultural capital. Herbert’s presentation of the psalm sequence to the Queen within the context of the poem paradoxically establishes Herbert’s title to the text. The value of the gift enhances the status of the donor as well as the recipient and validates Herbert’s self-construction as the Queen’s favored “handmaid” (90). Like her allusions to feudal tenure in stanza 5, Herbert’s Biblical allusions here serve to mystify her relationship with the Queen and to deflect attention from the nature of the benefits she seeks from the Queen, which include the opportunity to both exert political influence and to reap economic rewards.

Another major concern for the Herbert family in the late 1590s was the status of their children and their children’s property should Henry Herbert die before his oldest son and heir, William, came of age. If Henry Herbert died before William’s twenty-first birthday, William would have come under the control of the Court of Wards. This was alarming for a variety of reasons. A court-appointed guardian was entitled to any profits from the portions of the ward’s estate controlled by him; he might manage the property in his own interests or, alternatively, mismanage it to such an extent that it yielded little profit (Houlbrooke 219). A guardian was also authorized to arrange the ward’s marriage and therefore the disposal of his or her property through marriage. If a minor’s property included land held in tenure, the right to the wardship was determined by the ultimate ownership of that property. If even a small
portion of the ward’s lands was held in tenure from the Queen or from another individual who in turn held it in tenure from her, control of the wardship came to the Queen and her appointees. The sale of wardships had been common since the thirteenth century, and the practice had become even more widespread during the sixteenth century (220). Despite the fragile state of Henry’s health and the severity of the possible consequences to the Herbert family, however, efforts to arrange William’s marriage prior to Henry’s death were not successful. A match planned for William and Burghley’s granddaughter, Bridget de Vere, would have circumvented some of the dangers associated with William’s wardship. However, the marriage negotiations were broken off, whether because of Henry’s demands for dowry, the tensions between the two families, or both (Hannay, Philip’s Phoenix, 161; Herbert 1: 348-49). The failure to ally themselves with the powerful Cecil family, as well as the Privy Council’s decision to limit Henry’s authority over the Council of the Marches of Wales, suggests that the Herbert family’s interests had increasingly been put at risk by declining influence in the center of governance. In this context, it is probable that Herbert’s plans for the Queen’s visit, including the formal presentation of the completed psalm sequence, were part of an ongoing effort to restore the family’s status at court.

If “Even Now That Care” is an appeal for the Queen’s patronage, the second prefatory poem in the presentation manuscript of the Sidney Psalms maintains quite

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205 Evidently Robert Cecil was alienated by reports that Henry Herbert had opposed Cecil’s elevation to Viscount Cranborne. In 1597, Mary Sidney Herbert wrote Cecil seeking to convince him that her husband had said nothing that would affect Cecil’s accession to the title (Collected Works 1: 290).
a different focus on both the literal and the technical levels. "To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Phillip Sidney" establishes Sidney's divinity and Herbert's claims to be associated with it. Although "Angell Spirit" may have been written much earlier than "Even Now That Care," Herbert uses versification and numerology to link the two poems in such a way that the second affects the reader's response to the first by setting up a contrast between them, positioning "Even Now That Care" as an artifact of the temporal or lesser sphere, while "Angell Spirit," with its aspirations to the celestial, consistently attempts to transcend the mundane. In "Even Now That Care" Herbert's self-constructions are directed to the Queen; in "Angell Spirit," Herbert associates herself with the divine in ways that will redound to her greater credit with a wider audience. Drawing on literary traditions that constitute death, loss, and suffering as the exceptional contexts in which women were thought to be capable of performing heroic acts, Herbert establishes herself as Sidney's partner in the heroic tradition. Through rhetorical strategies that amplify Herbert's grief in order to emphasize the extent of her loss and that underscore Sidney's worth in order to dramatize the extent of her suffering, Herbert contributes to constructions of herself and her brother as cultural icons. In the process, Herbert succeeded in establishing a

206 A variant of the Tixall Manuscript version of "Angell Spirit" was found among Samuel Daniel's effects after his death, mistakenly attributed to him, and published in the 1623 edition of his collected works (Herbert, Collected Works 1:303-04). Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan describe the variant as "an early version" (325). In his essay the "Queen's Proposed Visit," Brennan suggests that "Angell Spirit" may have been drafted as early as 1594, the approximate date Samuel Daniel left Wilton, and that "Even Now That Care" may have been "added only when the queen's visit to Wilton House in 1599 seemed likely" (44).
reputation for nobility of character that has rarely been questioned, either by contemporaries or by successive generations of Anglophone readers.

Herbert’s efforts to publicly associate herself with legendary women heroines dates at least from 1592, when her translation of Robert Garnier’s neo-Senecan closet drama Marc Antoine was first published. While Antony’s moral corruption and corresponding physical debilitation are often attributed to his association with Cleopatra, who is thought to have effeminated him, early modern literary traditions also encompass her construction as a heroine whose suicide can be construed as an act of self sacrifice motivated by her devotion to the beloved. According to Ferguson, Garnier’s play represents Cleopatra as a courageous, honest, and loyal figure whose behavior within the context of the play accords better with Stoic ideals than Antony’s, while Sidney’s translation preserves the textual features of Garnier’s play that establish this characterization. Both texts “invite admiration for the eloquent Cleopatra as she takes responsibility for her mistake, laments it, remains steadfast in her love for Antony, and finally resolves on suicide rather than become Caesar’s captive” (Ferguson, “Sidney, Cary, Wroth” 487). Ferguson observes that “several recent critics” attribute Herbert’s decision to translate Marc Antoine to a partial identification with Cleopatra as Garnier portrays her (“Sidney, Cary, Wroth” 490). A number of other critics represent the Antonius as yet another response to Sidney’s

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207 Herbert’s Antonius was reprinted by William Ponsonby in 1595 under the title Antonie (Ferguson, “Sidney, Cary, Wroth” 487). The reprint attests to continued interest in Herbert’s work as well as to contemporary recognition for her abilities as a writer.

208 For a more detailed account of this literary tradition, see Hannay, Kinsman, and Brennan, “Antonius: Literary Context” in Herbert’s Collected Works 1: 140.
death, either as an act of homage to him or an expression of grief for him. These studies perpetuate the practice of constituting women’s writing as an expression of subjectivity rather than as political discourse. Conversely, Danielle Clarke construes the translation as a critique of Elizabethan governance (150); Clarke claims that the “decision to translate a text closely linked to political critique and religious crisis in France in the 1570s can be seen as something other than a private act devoted to mourning her brother” (151). Davis also looks beyond Herbert’s emotional life to suggest that the Antonius, as well as the translation of de Mornay’s Discourse de la vie and de la mort published with it, were part of a strategy that countered Greville’s attempt to appropriate the Arcadia on behalf of the Essex faction. Davis claims that Herbert’s published translation links Sidney’s text instead to the French Neostoic tradition with which his family had long been associated. Through her publication of the Antonius and A Discourse of Life and Death, Davis argues, “the countess constructed a literary genealogy leading backward from Sidney’s Arcadia to the Continental allies of the Sidneys” (421).

A second literary text through which Herbert associated herself with traditional notions of women’s heroism is Petrarch’s Trionfo della Morte. Like the Sidney Psalms, Herbert’s translation of The Triumph of Death was not available through print publication for centuries after her death; however, its inclusion with

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209 Herbert’s The Triumph of Death was first published in 1912. The translation appeared that year in two versions: as an appendix in Young’s biography, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke (209-218), and in PMLA 27.1 (March 1912): 52-75. For further detail on the translation’s publication history, see Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan (Herbert, Collected Works 1:318).
three of Herbert’s psalm versifications in a letter from Sir John Harington to Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 316), suggests that Herbert’s *The Triumph of Death* was subject to some manuscript circulation amongst contemporary readers, and that this translation also may have contributed to Herbert’s effort to publicly associate herself with women’s heroic roles. Petrarch’s *Trionfo della Morte* is the third in a sequence of six poems collectively titled *I Trionfi*, each of which celebrates the triumph of a literary figure or a personified abstraction over another abstraction or literary figure. In *The Triumph of Death*, Death takes Petrarch’s beloved Laura, leaving him grief-stricken (Herbert 1:276, lines 115-144). In “Sixteenth-Century Women Petrarchists and the Legacy of Laura,” Cox establishes Laura’s status as a moral exemplum, explaining that her chastity and self-denial constituted a kind of heroism for early modern readers (586-87).

In “The Countess of Pembroke and the Art of Dying,” Lamb suggests that Herbert’s translations of *Antonius, A Discourse of Life and Death*, and *The Triumph of Death* indicate her larger interest in the early modern tradition that associates women’s heroism with the art of dying well. Lamb observes that dying well was one of the few forms of heroism available to women of the medieval and early modern periods, and the deathbed one of the few sites where women’s preaching and proselytizing was considered appropriate. Concluding that Herbert made use of the

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210 Hannay, Kinnamon, and Brennan describe the narrative line of *I Trionfi* this way: “Love triumphs over the poet, but Chastity triumphs over Love when Laura will not yield, Death appears to triumph over Chastity when Laura dies, Fame triumphs over Death as she is celebrated, Time appears to triumph over Fame, but is finally conquered by Eternity” (Herbert, Collected Works 1: 256).
ars moriendi tradition in her self-constructions as a writer in order to legitimize literary activities that might otherwise be condemned as a violation of gender boundaries, Lamb says that Herbert’s “representation of her various literary activities as an extended elegy for her famous brother enabled her writing at a time when the boundaries were tightly drawn around women’s public speech or public words” (Gender and Authorship 115). Lamb explains that contemporary ideology exempted dying women from St. Paul’s injunctions against women’s public discourse out of the conviction that their imminent demise acquitted of them any further intent to control men. For this reason, passages that suggest Herbert was eager to emulate her brother’s death were perceived by contemporary readers as absolving her of complicity in “transient concerns such as illicit sexuality or other forms of control over men” (119). Although in her chapter “The Countess of Pembroke and the Art of Dying” Lamb participates in the critical tradition that construes Herbert’s writing as the outcome of Sidney’s death, the contention that Herbert’s use of the ars moriendi tradition is central to her self-constructions elucidates her practices by identifying the key cultural tradition through which she associates herself with legendary heroines and contemporary moral exemplars. As Hannay observes, Herbert’s mother, the Lady Mary Sidney, had been enshrined as an exemplar of the ars moriendi tradition in Holinshed’s Chronicles of England Scotland, and Ireland (Collected Works 1: 211), which incorporated an account Mary Sidney’s death written by Edward Molyneux. In presenting herself as a heroine in the ars moriendi tradition, Herbert not only draws
on her mother’s cultural capital, but also builds on contemporary expectations that succeeding generations of a family will display similar familial traits and behaviors.

In her poem “Angell Spirit,” Herbert makes use of explicit statement, imagery, versification techniques, and numerology to establish Sidney’s divinity and to closely associate herself with it. As in “Even Now That Care,” Herbert also constructs a communal identity.211 Drawing on the synthesis of theology and Ptolemaic cosmology through which early modern Christians conceptualized the universe,212 Herbert addresses Sidney, contrasting her situation in the sublunar sphere to his in the celestial: “thou are fixt among thy fellow lights: / my day put out, my life in darkenes cast, / Thy Angells soule with highest Angells plac’t” (Collected Works, 1: 111, lines 57-59). Despite their separation, however, Herbert describes her persona in the poem as joined to her brother’s through the conjunction of their two Muses: “So dar’d my Muse with thine it selfe combine, / as mortall stuffe with that which is divine” (p. 110, lines 5-6), and she expresses her desire to die so that she may “mount thy highest sphere / presuming so just cause might meet thee there” (p. 112, lines 89-90). Similarly, her writing is not only “inspird” by Sidney (4), but takes place through a mysterious transference of his “secrett power”: “what is mine / inspird by thee, thy secrett power imprest” (4). In addition to deflecting criticism of her for violating gender boundaries by completing the sonnet sequence, the communal identity Herbert constructs in the poem establishes her access to and participation in the divinity she

211 Quotations from “Angell Spirit” are taken from the text of the Tixall Manuscript as it appears in the Collected Works unless otherwise indicated.
212 See Rivers, pp. 72-79, for an account of Christian use of Ptolemaic cosmology.
attributes to her dead brother. For example, in line 7, Herbert explicitly describes his
angelic glory devolving on her and her translations through the medium of their
shared work. After asserting the union of the two Muses and associating her own
persona’s with “mortall stuffe,” Herbert claims that Sidney’s “lightning beams give
lustre to the rest” (p. 110, line 7).

Through her use of numerology and versification, Herbert sets up a contrast
between the two prefatory poems to the Psalm sequence, associating “Even Now That
Care” with the terrestrial world and “Angell Spirit” with the super-celestial while
simultaneously asserting the unity of the numerical patterns through which these
different worlds are structured. In accordance with a tradition that associates some
even numbers with the material world and some odd numbers with the divine, the
form of “Even Now That Care” consists of twelve eight-line stanzas and “Angell
Spirit” of thirteen seven-line stanzas. Thus, “Even Now That Care,” with its twelve

\[\text{In “Ficinian Elements in Selected Poems of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke,” Elizabeth Tilyou suggests that Herbert makes use of Marsilio Ficino’s conception of the vinculum mundi to figure a cosmos in which Herbert can achieve a spiritual union with her dead brother’s “Angell spirit.” According to Tilyou, the vinculum mundi is “part of Ficino’s neoplatonic cosmological principle of the unity of all things” (52). Identifying the operation of the “lightning beams” identified with Sidney in line 7 as the means through which Herbert’s persona achieves this spiritual unity, Tilyou argues that “Philip’s divine thought was like lightning that struck her and is thus conducted through her into the verse.”}

\[\text{Yet another model for Herbert’s symbolic use of number may be Salluste de Bartas’ creation poem, La Semaine ou Création du Monde, which Sidney is believed to have translated, although this translation has not survived (Duncan-Jones, Courtier Poet 251). Greville refers to this translation in his November 1586 letter to Walsingham (Woodhuyse 416). According to Anne Prescott, “Du Bartas insists upon similar patterns in the cosmos, the four of the elements, seasons, humors, winds, the seven planets, ages, ‘days’” (175).}

\[\text{Vincent Hopper suggests that odd numbers are closely associated with the divine, while even numbers, which can be divided by two, are subject to dissolution, like the creatures and substances of the sublunary sphere: “Odd numbers were universally considered more godlike, more perfect, and (in magic) more powerful than even. This was apparently one of the most widely known of Pythagorean principles” (101).}
eight-line stanzas, addresses human bonds, like the patronage relationship, and earthly activities, like warfare and discharging rent, while "Angell Spirit," with its thirteen seven-line stanzas, evokes associations with the celestial sphere, where there is no corruption. While Pythagorean number theory had been worked out in a bewildering variety of ways by early modern Neoplatonic philosophers, the internal evidence of Herbert's dedicatory poems suggests that she may well be making use of the Christian Cabalist tradition, with its implications for English imperialism, as formulated by Elizabethan magus John Dee.\footnote{Yates identifies Pico, Marsilio Ficino, Francesco Giorgi, and Cornelius Agrippa as important sources for Dee's number theory (Occult Philosophy 80, 82-84).} If so, Herbert may also have been working with a tradition that, according to Yates, influenced Spenser's form in the The Shepheardes Calendar and The Faerie Queene; his structure of the Foure Hymnes as an ascent and descent through the terrestial, celestial, and super-celestial worlds; his characterization of the many mythological characters who figure the Queen; and his vision of Elizabeth's role in religious and imperial reform (Occult Philosophy 96, 104).

According to Yates, one of Dee's central beliefs was the accessibility of the super-celestial world through number. He not only believed that it was possible to conjure angels, but claimed to have done so (87). A client of the Earl of Leicester, he is described by Yates as "particularly close to the Dudley family" (80), and he tutored both Leicester and Sidney at different points in time (Hannay, "Pembroke and Elizabethan Science" 112; Yates, Occult Philosophy 80). He also had close ties to the
Herbert family as well. The Herberts retained a chemist, Adrian Gilbert, at Wilton; Gilbert was the half brother of Sir Walter Ralegh and, according to Hannay, “an intimate of the astrologer John Dee” (Philip’s Phoenix 130). Duncan-Jones observes that in 1577, Dee “had long enjoyed the favour and protection of the Queen” (Courtier Poet 116), whom he served in his capacity as an astrologer. Dee was the prophet of a projected British imperialist expansion, which he believed was both destined by and legitimated through the legendary Tudor descent from Brut by way of Arthur (85). In Dee’s vision, Arthur had been, and Elizabeth would be “the chief religious and mystical exemplar of sacred British imperial Christianity.” Dee associated the Queen with one of two key symbols of his system of thought: the monas, which according to Yates, “consisted of a combination of the signs of the seven planets, plus the symbol for the zodiacal sign, Aries, representing fire,” as well as a Christian cross (83-84). The monas perhaps influences Herbert’s symbolism in the dedicatory poems through her use of numbers twelve and seven, which have both temporal and immortal associations: twelve with the signs of the zodiac and the months of the year, and seven with the number of days in the week and the number of the planets in the celestial sphere. Similarly, Spenser uses the number twelve in the calendrical organization of The Shepheardes Calendar, and each month was

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217 After his return from Prague in 1589, Dee was largely discredited, and the Queen withdrew her patronage. According to Yates, this occurred partly because Dee’s occult activities were no longer countenanced; partly because Elizabeth, in the aftermath of the expensive and unsuccessful English military intervention in the Netherlands, now firmly rejected the imperial role Dee envisaged for her (84-85, 87-89).
illustrated with a woodcut that features the zodiacal sign.218 Yates points out that in a letter to Ralegh, Spenser indicates that his plan for *The Faerie Queene* initially called for twelve books (101). Another parallel between Herbert’s “Angell Spirit” and Spenser’s poetry is the connection between the terrestrial and super-celestial spheres figured by Herbert through the “lightning beames,” the “secret power” with which the speaker of the poem has been “imprest,” and the union of the “mortall” and “divine” Muses (p. 110, lines 7, 4, and 6), and by Spenser in the *Poure Hymnes* as an ascent and descent through the terrestrial, celestial, and super-celestial worlds.

Yet another important symbol that Yates associates with Spenser’s poetry is the triangle, which she discusses in the context of his description of the House of Alma:

The frame thereof seemed partly circulare,
And part triangulare, O worke divine;
Those two the first and last proportions are,

218 *The Shepeardes Calendar* was dedicated to Sidney; it was published in 1579, when Spenser was in contact with Sidney and Dyer through his service at Leicester House and his involvement in the quantitative experiments. Connections between the three men’s poetry are discussed at length in my chapter 3. Herbert may well have been in contact with Spenser c. 1594-95, when he memorialized the Dudley affinity in *The Ruines of Time* and celebrated Sidney in *Astrophel*. Herbert figures in *Astrophel* as Clarinda in “The Dolefull Lay,” and the sequence of elegies is dedicated to her. Whether or not Herbert wrote the poem, both *Ruines* and *Astrophel* serve in part as appeals for her patronage, and she would most likely have known them. These multiple connections between Herbert and Spenser, while not meaningful in themselves, provide a context in which a conversation between Herbert’s and Spenser’s poetry, similar to Sidney’s with Greville’s and Dyer’s, becomes credible. The third poem Herbert wrote for Elizabeth’s visit, “A Dialogue Betwenee Two Shepheards, Thenet and Piers, in Praise of Astrea” makes use of the names of two characters that appear in *The Shepeardes Calendar*, and alternates seven- and eight-syllable lines. Hannay, Kimmamon, and Brennan report that a character named “Piers” appears in both the “May” and “October” eclogues, where he invites Cuddie to praise Eliza. “Thenet” appears in the “Aprill” and “November” eclogues, and he too requests encomia (Herbert, *Collected Works* 1: 84-85). “Astrea” is an encomium praising Queen Elizabeth.
Yates contends that this passage describes the three worlds through its use of geometrical figures: "The cube, or quadrate, is the elemental world of the four elements; the seven is the celestial world of the seven planets; the nine is the supercelestial world of the nine angelic hierarchies, which form into the triangle of the Trinity. All three worlds are present in man as well as in the universe" (Occult Philosophy 97-98). If Yates's analysis of number symbolism may be applied to Herbert's poetry as well as Spenser's, then the "cube" or "quadrate" could be associated with the eight-line stanza of "Even Now That Care" and the number seven with the seven-line stanza of "Angell Spirit," while the triangle, with its figuration of the Trinity, can be associated with the number of lines in the latter poem. There are ninety-one lines in "Angell Spirit," and ninety-one is considered a triangular number because when it is represented in triangular form as an array of points, it equals the sum of the aliquot parts, with a base or array of thirteen (Fowler 185-86). Arranging numbers in this manner is a practice that dates to Pythagoras, who believed that everything in the universe was manifested by number, and who associated the tectractys, a triangular array representing numbers one through ten, with the sacred. Plato associates the tectractys with the soul (Raybould 12).
In her few extant "original" poems, Herbert makes use of Neoplatonism, Neopythagorean Christian Cabalism, the *ars moriendi*, and other complex literary and philosophical traditions to convincingly associate herself and Sidney with Elizabethan aristocratic ideals. Late twentieth-century criticism by Lamb, Hannay, and others has drawn attention to the very considerable skill with which Herbert evades restrictions on early modern women's participation in public discourse. However, analysis of her poetry that focuses on the literal level and that accepts her statements about herself and her brother at face value may not adequately represent the strategies through which she enhanced and appropriated the cultural capital associated with Sidney's posthumous construction as a Protestant martyr and the model of Elizabethan chivalry in part by deflecting attention away from her appropriations and minimizing her own considerable achievements as a writer. Herbert's literary sleight-of-hand for the most part passed undetected by Sidney scholars, who failed to recognize that the literary figure they revered and whose iconic stature helped determine their interpretations of his texts was in part his sister's invention. Through her skillful use of social display, literary conventions, syntax, and versification, Herbert helped ensure that her extended family would reap the financial and political perquisites denied her brother despite the family's long-term history of service to the monarch, and her cultural legacy continued to influence the ways in which Anglophone readers constructed themselves and interpreted their subjective experience for many centuries to come. It was only with the advent of postcolonial theory, cultural studies, and the late twentieth-century reassessment of humanism and the intellectual legacy of the
Romantic period that critics began to examine figures like Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert and to explore not only the ways in which their texts had been used to promote political, social, and cultural agendas, but also how their status as cultural icons has affected the ways in which those texts had been read and interpreted. These cultural and theoretical interventions have revitalized approaches to interpretation and teaching, provided the critical tools for studies like this one, and demonstrated the importance of the ongoing examination of scholarly projects and the interests they serve. On the other hand, the late twentieth-century debate about literature has also led to the devaluation of the imagination and of literature’s role in society. In the following pages, I would like to turn to the arguments that deeply affected me in my studies and to situate my own critical practice in this context.
Epilogue

The Single-Author Paradigm and the Late Twentieth-Century Debate about Literature

As a graduate student with a concentration in English literary studies during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, my learning experience and scholarly training have been significantly affected by a number of major shifts and changes in academic values, beginning with feminism and extending to the attack on the humanities. I would like to address some of these issues in order to contextualize my own project in regard to them: as Robinson stipulates, feminist criticism must carefully consider what interests it serves ("Dwelling in Decencies" 888). For some, criticism that focuses on elites like Herbert and Sidney implicitly participates in the values they espouse in their self-constructions. Herbert was a member of a privileged class, and as such, her success in breaching the gender barriers associated with early modern discourse communities may well be as much a consequence of her social status and her family relationships as it is of her strategic use of literary and social conventions. Her writing, editing, and publishing activities are as deeply committed to the process of justifying and promoting a social structure that privileges one class at the expense of others as they are to expanding the range of Anglophone versification, high-culture art, and moral philosophy. For this reason, it would be inappropriate to idealize her. But although Herbert's early modern belief system is in many ways incompatible with the ideals of a significant number of Western academics, and although the very act of literary analysis confers a certain degree of
importance on specific texts, to analyze the cultural interactions and use of language in high-culture art is not inevitably to serve the interests of oppressive hierarchies or to valorize the art and the historical figures who produced it. Herbert will continue to be of interest to feminist scholars, in part because of her role in the process through which women's voices and perspectives have been accepted into the canon, and in part because her writing is useful to those who seek to achieve their objectives through the use of words. However, the supposition that to teach, read, or write about high-culture art forms is to replicate the value systems with which they are imbued is one of the concerns that precipitated the attack on the humanities, and more specifically, on literature.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, it became commonplace in the American academy to question or even to explicitly deny the value of the humanities in general and of literary studies in particular. This theoretical position was in part the legacy of the postcolonial era. The deliberate use of the literature of the colonizer to displace and devalue other cultures in the interests of subordinating indigenous populations led some to believe that literature had been contaminated by the uses to which it had been put, and others to argue that literary form was inherently oppressive. In Decolonising the Mind (1986), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o explains his decision to write in Gĩkũyũ and Kishwahili instead of English by arguing that the

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219 The tradition that associates literary form with political repression considerably antedates the late twentieth century; the connection is also made during the Romantic period when, according to the Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms, some writers "emphasized the importance of freedom from all traditions (from aristocracy to the restraints of classicism and neoclassicism in art)" (Murfin 416).
most devastating effects of colonialism are not the outcome of economic imperialism, but of efforts to denigrate and supplant native languages and cultures, a process he describes as a “cultural bomb.” “The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves . . . It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples’ languages” (3). In Masks of Conquest (1989), Gauri Viswanathan describes the development of British literary studies by colonial authorities in India as a means of subordinating native culture and identity in the interests of consolidating the colonial hegemony; and in Culture and Imperialism (1993), Edward Said explores connections between British literature and British imperialism, concluding that even texts as politically reticent as Jane Austen’s comedies promote the imperialist agenda: in light of his analysis, he claims, not only Mansfield Park (1814) “but pre-imperialist novels generally will appear to be more implicated in the rationale for imperialist expansion than at first sight they appear to be” (84). More specifically, Said contends that in Mansfield Park, Jane Austen promulgates attitudes towards “continuity, hierarchy, authority” that lay the conceptual groundwork for imperialism (84). Along with other formative

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220 Said’s argument relies in part on the parallels he believes exist between Sir Thomas Bertram’s management of his household and of his Antigua plantations. While these parallels are not explicitly developed in the novel, Said contends that they can be assumed: “There is nothing in Mansfield Park that would contradict us, however, were we to assume that Sir Thomas does exactly the same things—on a large scale—in his Antigua “plantations” (87). See “Jane Austen and Empire,” pp. 80-97.
postcolonial manifestos and investigations, Ngugi’s denunciation of cultural imperialism and his account of African resistance to it, Viswanathan’s research into the origins of British literary studies, and Said’s characterization of pre-imperialist British literature as the incubator of the imperialist ethic have helped underscore the need to reconsider the cultural effects of literature, including its role in colonial and postcolonial geopolitics.

It has been difficult for me to resolve these issues in a way that validates the further study of literature as literature. I struggled to reconcile what I learned from Ngugi, Viswanathan, and Said with my love of literature and my belief that to de-emphasize its use in the classroom, or to limit the focus to its culpability in promulgating sexist, classist, and racist ideology, is to impoverish intellection at the university level and beyond. For me, the value of literature includes (but is not limited to) access to the subjective understanding of the lived experience of other cultures and of alternative ways in which to construct and understand the self; understanding of the practices of rhetoric, both as a practitioner and as the object of those practices; assimilation of sentence, paragraph, and larger textual organizational patterns; stimulus that promotes imaginative and generative thinking; and last but not least, aesthetic pleasure. While it is not my object to undertake a full-scale defense of literature, I would like to review the limitations and ultimate failure of the attempt to

221 Other foundational postcolonial texts include Franz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks (1952) and The Wretched of the Earth (1961), Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart (1958), Barthe’s Writing Degree Zero, and Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978) and Culture and Imperialism (Guggenburger 581).
222 This project is the subject of Michel Foucault’s the Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-82. Trans.
displace it: first, in order to counter arguments against teaching literary works except as exempla of racist, classist, and sexist cultural constructions, and second, as a means of illustrating the inadequacies of the single-author paradigm as a dominant or primary critical approach for some texts. Through an analysis of the controversy about the testimonio as a replacement for literature and the process of textual production for its exemplar, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, I hope to demonstrate that a critical approach that focuses on the roles played by different individuals and the representatives of social, political, economic, and government entities in textual production can facilitate investigations into social, political, and economic investments in specific texts, as well as the uses these different organizations or communities make of works and bodies of works to promote the interests of particular classes, companies, or states.

Herbert, the writers and editors of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, and the British colonial authorities all made use of the second-order semiological system Barthes describes to promoted self-interested ideological agendas. Herbert and the British colonial authorities appropriated works and bodies of works to promote the interests of elitist social and political hierarchies, while the writers and editors of *I, Rigoberta Menchú* appropriated an indigene’s oral narrative to promote the agendas of feminist communities and a militant anti-elitist revolutionary organization. Despite the differences between the social and political populations that benefited from the use of

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223 For an explanation of Barthes’ use of the term “second-order semiological” system, see Chapter One, pp. 14-15.
the literary or quasi-literary texts as signs in the promulgation of cultural myths, the operations and effects of this process were similar. In each case, agents appropriated narratives developed by others and deployed them in ways that affected social and political behaviors and outcomes. Through their use of literary works as signs in a metalanguage referencing a previously existing linguistic system, Herbert and the British colonial authorities succeeded in constituting or perpetuating the constitution of some subject positions as privileged and others as marginal. However, British subjects' acquiescence in the hierarchical class system imposed on them in part through the operations of cultural myth was facilitated by their investment in nationalism, which promoted a construction of British citizenship as a kind of privilege, while the British colonial authorities imposed British culture and language on indigenes, superseding native cultures and languages with the devastating effects on subject construction described by Ngũgĩ. Social outcomes included internalization by marginalized populations of the value system that constituted them as marginalized; political outcomes included perpetuating the operations of an oppressive state. In the case of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, the appropriation of an indigene’s oral narrative by writers and editors authorized the continuing participation in Guatemala’s political processes of a military organization that deliberately positioned the Mayans as a target of state violence; a second appropriation of the text by self-interested North American academics seeking to displace literature and the humanities as a central focus for undergraduate education resulted in a decrease in status and funding for the humanities in the North American academy.
John Beverley’s *Against Literature* (1993) is one of the major landmark studies to participate in the late twentieth-century critical reassessment of the value and purposes of literature, and as such, it had a profound effect on my studies. In a number of the essays in his book, Beverley questions whether literature should still be taught; if so, how it should be taught; and if not, whether imaginative writing should be superseded by alternative textual genres such as the *testimonio* (xiv, 1, 46).224 Linda Marie Brooks attributes the shift in values and perspectives that occurred in the North American academy during the last few decades of the twentieth century largely to the claims made for the *testimonio* by Beverley and others; she asserts that “the genre . . . has spearheaded the ongoing challenge to Western-based humanities education” (181). Beverley’s own position on the appropriate role for and value of literature varies: in one essay he proposes a “radically historicized concept of literature” (“From Literature to Cultural Studies” 22); in another, a “transformation of its dominant forms” (“Ideology of the Literary” 46); and in a third, a process of “beginning to read against literature itself” (“Second Thoughts on Testimonio” 99). In the essay “The Politics of Latin American Postmodernism,” Beverley acknowledges one such shift in position, observing that he has come “full circle” from the “critique of the literary in the name of the subaltern” to a “re-invocation” of “the literary text as a model for new forms of revolutionary or progressive social agency” (122).

224 Beverley defines *testimonio* as follows: “a novel or novella-length narrative in book or pamphlet (that is, graphemic as opposed to acoustic) form, told in the first person by a narrator who is also the real protagonist or witness of the events she or he recounts” (*Against Literature* 70). A more carefully considered and detailed description of the genre appears on pp. 41-43 of Mary Louise Pratt’s essay “I, Rigoberta Menchú and the ‘Culture Wars’.”
In “The Formation of the Ideology of the Literary (from Garcilaso to Greenblatt),” Beverley examines the role and impact of the colonizer’s literature in South America with particular attention to sixteenth-century poet Garcilaso de la Vega’s influential sonnet 23, “En tanto que de rosa y azucena” (28, 32-8). Citing Roland Greene’s claim in an unpublished paper that Petrarchism was “the original colonial discourse in the Americas” (29), Beverley contests the notion that early modern European humanism, which is closely associated with the Petrarchan tradition and with an educative program that emphasized literary learning, can accurately be described as a progressive movement (30). He suggests instead that the object of European humanism was constitutively and self-consciously to construct an elite. In Beverley’s words, “The humanists themselves, with their foundation in the revival of classical rhetoric, were always aware that the purpose of their pedagogy was to produce the subject-form of a ruling class” (31). Building on Viswanathan’s questions and arguments, Beverley illustrates the pervasive effects of the colonizer’s literature on indigenous discourse communities, citing Viswanathan’s contention that British colonial education in India resulted in the inception of a Westernized modern secular discourse shaped by it, with the result that “even subsequent forms of Indian nationalism . . . have had to pass through the discursive filter of English literature”

225 Greene’s paper is titled “For Love of Pau-Brasil: Petrarchan Experience and the Colonial Americas”; he presented it at the 1990 English Institute.
Having established literature’s role in effecting both the “subject-form” of the oppressor and a cultural disconnect similar to that described by Ngũgĩ in *Decolonizing the Mind*, Beverley concludes that “literature itself has to change” (46).

Although in his preface Beverley indicates that his use of the term “literature” should be construed not as “literature in general” but instead as “the historically specific form it assumes between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries with the formation of the European vernacular languages” (viii), he nonetheless makes a number of claims like the one cited just above that apply the term more broadly. And although Beverley acknowledges that his own interest in literature was inspired by the work of the “socially dissident” Beat poets (25), he often does not appear to recognize that politically progressive work can be and has been written in forms like poetry and the novel. For example, in the essay “‘By Lacan’: From Literature to Cultural Studies,” Beverley denies that writers like Gabriel García Márquez have served “liberatory” goals. While he acknowledges that the literary movement with which García Márquez was associated gained academic recognition for a specifically Latin American literature, a literature that “allowed for the expansion of the global audience for Latin American literature and its reprioritization as a field in the European and North American university system, where it had traditionally been overshadowed by Spanish literature,” Beverley contends that this literary movement, known as the “Boom,” and the “idealization of literature” that accompanied it, “was

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226 Beverley’s approach has much in common with Said’s as well as Viswanathan’s; in the Preface to *Against Literature*, Beverley acknowledges the parallels with *Culture and Imperialism*, which he explains appeared as he was correcting proofs for *Against Literature* (xiii).
simply reactivating an element of Latin American colonial and oligarchic culture” (3). Nor in this essay does Beverley acknowledge that both words and literary forms are susceptible of appropriation and redeployment by members of any ethnicity in a number of different ways—by writing with the form, writing against the form, altering the form, or combining forms—a point that has been amply demonstrated by African-American artists for decades, not only through the sampling techniques used in hip-hop, but also through the redefinition of and social policing of the word “nigger.” Instead of recognizing that politically progressive work has been and can be done by indigenes in traditional literary forms—for example, by Chinua Achebe in Things Fall Apart—Beverley proposes the supersession of literary forms by other more “authentic” genres like the testimonio. His purpose, as he explains it, is “to produce a negation of the literary that would allow nonliterary forms of cultural practice to displace its hegemony” (1). By 1996, however, Beverley was backing off from his earlier claims for the testimonio. In “The Real Thing,” he categorizes Rigoberta as literature instead of as its successor and suggests that it be read as an “oedipal bildungsroman” (271, 268). He denies the continuing viability of the testimonio form, which he says has been shorn of its context. Since it is no longer an “adjunct to the armed liberation struggle in Latin American and elsewhere in the Third World in the sixties,” he explains, the form “loses its special aesthetic and ideological power” (281). Beverley attributes its epitaph to Javier Sanjinés C, whom

227 Along with the other works of theory and criticism listed above, Achebe’s novel is described by the Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism as one of the founding works of postcolonial discourse (581).
he paraphrases: “His point is that testimonios like *Let Me Speak!* can no longer be
considered an adequate representation of subalternity in relation to domination . . .
new forms of political imagination are needed” (281-82).\footnote{228}

The series of contentions that moves from the acknowledgement that literature
has been, is being, and will be a site for the formation and negotiation of power
relationships to the conclusion that literature is inherently oppressive is riddled with
fallacies. In his claims that literature is “implicated” in and “complicit” with political
oppression (xx, 69), Beverley comes perilously close to ascribing agency to a social
practice put to different uses not only in dissimilar cultures but within the same
culture; not only in different time periods but within the same time period. To argue
that teaching literature is inappropriate because of the uses to which it was put in
India and Latin America is also to fail to recognize—or at least, to acknowledge—
how many works of literature have played major roles in exposing and fomenting
opposition to the systematic abuse of marginalized populations. A close look at the
critical history of *I. Rigoberta Menchú*, the text Beverley and others have put
forward as the exemplar for the testimonio form, substantiates a point that should, perhaps,
have been self-evident: it is human agency that is to blame when literary texts become
the tools of oppression, and not the forms in which they are written.

\footnote{228 David Stoll’s response to Beverley’s essay is that “Beverley had defined testimonio as a first-person
narrative by a person who is a protagonist or witness. If he was right about his definition and if I was
right about Rigoberta not being a witness, then the most widely read testimonio was not a testimonio.
This was indeed a problem, which Beverley and his colleagues solved by redefining the genre”
(“Battle of Rigoberta” 401).}
Even prior to the publication of Against Literature, Beverley’s claims for the testimonio as an alternative to literature and for I, Rigoberta Menchú as an exemplar of that alternative had been seriously undermined by questions about its historical accuracy. One of the most widely recognized and highly regarded representatives of the genre, I, Rigoberta is an oral history recorded, edited, and introduced by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray.\textsuperscript{229} The text purports to recount Menchú’s personal and family history, which is said to include exploitation as itinerant agricultural workers as well as involvement in small-scale entrepreneurial farming. Menchú’s narrative describes in agonizing detail her own and her family’s sufferings at the hands of plantation management, the Guatemalan army, and ladino farmers.\textsuperscript{230} Harvard anthropologist Kay Warren attests to the political impact of I, Rigoberta by observing that it “kindled the international scrutiny of Guatemala’s abusive military and its wartime torture and killing of tens of thousands of civilians during the late 1970s and 1980s” (198).

Menchú’s narrative, however, was highly prized by many North American academics not only for its political importance but also because it was spoken by an indigenous woman, and the text’s “authentic” voice was thought to validate its truth claims in a manner incompatible with literary writing. As the testimony of a Mayan woman to

\textsuperscript{229} Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, who was married to Régis Debray when I, Rigoberta was first published, has since divorced and has since taken the surname Burgos (Beverley, Testimonio). From this point in the text, she will be designated accordingly.

\textsuperscript{230} According to the glossary in I, Rigoberta, the term ladino can be defined as “any Guatemalan – whatever his economic position – who rejects, either individually or through his cultural heritage, Indian values of Mayan origin. It also implies mixed blood” (249). Stoll describes Menchú’s depiction of relations between the indigenous Mayans and ladinos this way: “I, Rigoberta Menchú presents a titanic struggle between two opposed groups: her own indigenous K’iche’ people and the ladinos (of European or mixed descent) who have subjugated them” (All Poor Guatemalans 16). He adds: “the distinction is ultimately cultural rather than biological.”
human rights abuses and political oppression she herself experienced, the text was associated by many academicians with the voice of the subaltern, a theoretical construct introduced by Antonio Gramsci in his prison diaries and closely associated with the work of Gayatri Spivak, who characterizes the subaltern as inevitably disenfranchised: capable of speaking, but not of being heard. First published in 1984, *I, Rigoberta* had become a standard text in North American postcolonial studies courses by 1992, when Menchú received the Nobel Peace Prize.

According to journalist Octavio Martí, it was in the late 1980s that Burgos was alerted to possible factual discrepancies in Menchú’s account: that her brother Nicolás, whom Menchú claimed had died of malnutrition, was still alive; that Menchú had never worked as a maid in Guatemala City (79-80). As early as 1990, anthropologist David Stoll began to publicly question not only the historical accuracy of Menchú’s narrative, but its disinterestedness. In his book *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of all Poor Guatemalans* (1999), Stoll argues that Menchú misrepresents a number of her own and others’ life experiences. He says it is unlikely that she worked either as an itinerant agricultural worker or as a maid in Guatemala City (24-5), and he claims that Menchú distorts the contexts for her father’s struggle to retain farmland, which Stoll says involved members of Menchú’s own extended family and

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231 Spivak develops the concept of the *subaltern* in the essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (271-313).
232 For Menchú’s claims about her brother Nicolás’s death and about her work as a maid in Guatemala City, see *I, Rigoberta*, chapters VII and XIV respectively. Menchú’s response to accusations that she made false claims about her brother Nicolás’s death is that she has had two brothers with this same name, and that one is deceased while the other lives (Aznárez 112). In “The Battle of Rigoberta,” Stoll amends his contention, noting that Menchú did have two brothers named Nicolás, but that the first died before Menchú was born (407, n. 14).
not, as she claims, predatory large-scale ladino property owners (All Poor Guatemalans 26-7, 29-31). Stoll’s research establishes Menchú’s literacy and her access to formal education (159-66), undermining her association with the subaltern. Stoll also contests Menchú’s characterization of the political violence that resulted in the deaths of other family members; as New York Times correspondent Larry Rohter says in his review of the book, Stoll concludes that “Ms. Menchú drew on experience common to others in Guatemala and ‘drastically revised the prewar experience of her village to suit the needs of the revolutionary organization she had joined’ and on whose behalf she was touring Europe when she dictated her life story to Ms. Burgos” (Rohter 64; Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans x). Most significantly, Stoll contests Menchú’s claim in L Rigoberta to represent the political values of Guatemala’s indigenous population, arguing that both her activism and her narrative served the interests of that revolutionary organization, the Guerilla Army of the Poor, or EGP, which Stoll claims was not a “deeply rooted popular movement” (All Poor Guatemalans 6, 241; “Battle of Rigoberta” 393-4). He argues instead that it jeopardized Mayans through a strategy of temporarily occupying and operating from their communities, which then became targets of state violence. Stoll compares the situation of the Mayans in Menchú’s home department of Quiché to that of farmers

233 For Menchú’s account of her family’s struggle to retain their land, see L. Rigoberta, chapter 15, “Conflict with the Landowners and the Creation of the CUC” (102-16).
234 An exceptionally clear account of Stoll’s position on Ixil Mayan involvement in the Guerilla Army for the Poor, or the EGP, appears on pp. 393-4 of his essay “The Battle of Rigoberta,” published in The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy. Here Stoll says that it was EGP infiltration that triggered the slaughter of Ixils by the government army. According to Stoll, “Ixils said that the army had done most of the killing but blamed the guerrillas for being the first to show up in uniform with guns” (393).
from a nearby county: “my Ixil sources tended to lump soldiers and guerrillas
together as threats to their lives” (All Poor Guatemalans 8). In the essay “Menchú
after Stoll and the Truth Commission,” former left-wing activist Mario Roberto
Morales supports Stoll’s account of the EGP’s role in inciting state violence against
the Mayas. He explains:

Perhaps without realizing all the implications, the EGP conceived of
the indigenous masses of the western highlands as instruments who
would be put into violent confrontation with the army, in order to
exacerbate repression and raise mass consciousness of the guerrillas as
defenders of the people against the state. (359)

I, Rigoberta, one of the texts that Beverley promotes as a pedagogical means of
“interpellating our students in a relation of solidarity with liberation movements and
human rights struggles” (“Second Thoughts” 87-88), valorizes a revolutionary
organization that positioned an indigenous population as targets for government
violence in order to build a stronger power base.

As Stoll explains his position, his primary concern is not that Menchú
fictionalized details of an account that accurately portrays the persecution and
massacre of thousands of Guatemalan indigenes and that generated the leverage
needed to bring the Guatemalan government to the negotiating table. He says, “There
is no doubt about the most important points: that a dictatorship massacred thousands

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235 Morales’s title refers to the commission established at the signing of the peace accords in 1996 by
the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG), which was
composed of three revolutionary organizations, including the EGP (Morales 352, 358).
of indigenous peasants, that the victims included half of Rigoberta’s family, that she fled to Mexico to save her life, and that she joined a revolutionary movement to liberate her country” (viii). In drawing international attention to inconsistencies in Menchú’s narrative, Stoll maintains, his object is rather to demonstrate the importance of attending to other, less well publicized indigenous perspectives on the violence, including those that demand that the guerilla organizations be held accountable as well as the government forces (12); to act as a corrective to romanticized notions about guerilla organizations, indigenous people, and relationships between the two (xv); and to query the claims made by North American academics for the incontrovertible authority of the testimonio. While Stoll says that he had made his reservations about Menchú’s historical accuracy available to Beverley by spring of 1991 (239), or two years prior to the publication date of Against Literature, Beverley’s only mention of Stoll in that collection is a note referencing Stoll’s article “‘The Land No Longer Gives’: Land Reform in Nebaj, Guatemala” (Against Literature 156, n. 14).

The issues raised by Stoll’s research were addressed by Beverley and others with the publication in 2001 of The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy, edited by Arturo Arias. The collection consists of statements in a variety of genres, including essay, review, and interview, from Latin American, Spanish, and North American
anthropologists, journalists, literary figures, and academics. These essays provide a wealth of information about the historical, political, and cultural contexts for *Rigoberta*, as well as about the process of textual construction and the roles played by different participants in that process. Some of these essays, including Beverley’s, express concern that the larger truths about the economic exploitation, political oppression, and slaughter of Guatemala’s native inhabitants may have gotten lost in questions about whether Menchú received six years of formal education, or more, or none, and about how and where the Guatemalan army killed her brother Petrocinio (65-7). In his response, Beverley claims that the purpose of Stoll’s work is to undermine Menchú and her cause. Beverley argues that Stoll’s concern is not so much the political outcomes associated with Menchú’s narrative, but rather that an indigene has achieved both agency and voice, a status that undermines Stoll’s own role as an anthropologist. According to Beverley, “The argument between Menchú

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236 The *Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* includes accounts by Stoll, Beverley, and Menchú; however, Elisabeth Burgos, who played a crucial role in the textual production of *Rigoberta*, is not among the contributors.

237 Stoll questions the accuracy of Menchú’s account of her level of formal education and her brother’s murder by the Guatemalan army on pp. 159-66 of *All Poor Guatemalans*. In *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*, Menchú responds to some of Stoll’s queries about her accuracy in an interview with Juan Jesús Aznárez (109-117). Other contributors to the collection who express concerns about the political and social consequences of Stoll’s critique for oppressed Latin American indigenous populations are Margarita Carrera, Eduardo Galeano, Carolina Escobar Sarti, and Arturo Taracena, who arranged Menchú’s first meeting with Elisabeth Burgos.

238 For Beverley’s attack on Stoll, see “What Happens When the Subaltern Speaks: Rigoberta Menchú, Multiculturalism, and the Presumption of Equal Worth.” This essay appears both in the *Rigoberta Menchú Controversy* and in a book that appeared in 2004, *Testimonio: On the Politics of Truth*, in which Beverley republishes his essays on the testimonio. These include the two essays on the testimonio from *Against Literature*, “The Margin at the Center: On Testimonio” and “Second Thoughts on Testimonio,” which were in turn reprinted from *Modern Fiction Studies* 35.1 and *boundary 2* 2.18 respectively, and “The Real Thing” (1996), which first appeared in *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*. 
and Stoll is not so much about what really happened as it is about who has the authority to narrate” (81). For Stoll, however, the controversy is the outcome of naïve claims made for the testimonio as a genre by literary scholars who, he says, do not understand oral storytelling as a social practice. According to Stoll, “Beverley and his colleagues have been promoting testimonio in a way that does not allow questioning its reliability” (242).

If claims for the inherent authenticity of the testimonio form were undermined by Stoll’s research, the supposition that those associated with its construction were somehow immune from self interest suffered as well when Menchú contested Burgos’s authorship of the narrative and claimed that she had never sent Menchú her share of the royalties. It seems clear that no one involved in the early stages of the project recognized its potential: that twenty-four hours of tape-recorded oral narrative could be shaped into a text that would be translated into thirteen different languages, sell more than 500,000 copies, and through the work of some North American literary critics, undermine confidence in the value of humanities-based education (Burgos, “Story of a Testimonio” 54, 63; Reid 20). Initially, the plan was to publish a brief interview in a European journal. A few months after the interview sessions, Burgos completed and published such an interview: “Guatemala: Voyage au bout de l’horreur” appeared in the Novel Observateur and was later reprinted in other major European newspapers (Burgos, “Story of a Testimonio” 54). It was only after Menchú had left Paris for the next destination on her itinerary that the idea of using the interview material as the basis for a book arose (Burgos, “Story of a Testimonio” 54-
Burgos says that from the first she considered the book a collaborative project and that she never intended to profit from it: "let me affirm here that I never considered the book my individual project; indeed, I decided on my own without any prior conditions before undertaking writing, that all of the eventual royalties would go to Rigoberta Menchú" ("Story of a Testimonio" 59). However, Menchú has publicly accused Burgos of withholding money from her (Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans 188; Taracena 88). Burgos explains that in the mid-1980s, when Menchú was still at risk for reprisal and did not maintain a bank account, she and Burgos had agreed that the money would reach Menchú through the Mitterand Foundation ("Story of a Testimonio" 59). Stoll, who says that he has seen the receipts from these transactions, verifies Burgos’s allegation that she forwarded Menchú’s royalties to the Foundation (Stoll, "Silence"119). In 1993, Menchú asked Burgos to legally renounce authorship so that Menchú could make her own financial arrangements with publishers. However, after learning that she would be liable for breach of contract, Burgos refused to do so. Alienated by her exclusion from the Nobel campaign and angered by the aspersions on her character, Burgos discontinued the payments (Burgos, "Story of a Testimonio" 58-9; Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans 188).\footnote{Stoll cites as another example of Menchú’s efforts to exclude Burgos from authorship Menchú’s curriculum vitae for the Nobel Prize, in which Menchú lists herself as the sole recipient of the Casa de las Américas award, when, according to Stoll, the award “actually went to Elisabeth as editor” (All Poor Guatemalans 188).} Questions about the authorship of I, Rigoberta are more complex, and they arise in part because neither the single-author paradigm nor the testimonio form, as
Beverley has conceptualized it, can adequately account for the process through which the text was constructed or the different investments people had in it.

That these investments are neither disinterested nor transparent is evidenced in part by the conflicting accounts of the text's genesis provided by those who participated in it. The discrepancies in these accounts are not fortuitous, but fundamental: they indicate some of the investments in the text, both those that the participants wish (or have wished) to foreground, and those that they wish (or have wished) to conceal. These discrepancies include who initiated textual production, who participated in it, and who was present during Burgos's first meeting with Menchú. In the introduction to *I, Rigoberta*, Burgos claims that it was a third-party intermediary who first suggested publishing an account of Menchú's life:

> Early in January 1982, Rigoberta Menchú was invited to Europe by a number of solidarity groups as a representative of the 31 January Popular Front. The idea of turning her life story into a book came from a Canadian woman, a friend who is very sympathetic to the cause of the Guatemalan Indians. Never having met Rigoberta, I was at first somewhat reluctant, as I realized that such projects depend to a large extent on the quality of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. . . .

> As soon as we met, however, I knew that we were going to get along
together [sic]. The admiration her courage and dignity aroused in me did much to ease our relationship. (xiv)²⁴⁰

Here Burgos positions Menchú as the proximate cause for textual production, since it is her arrival in Paris that provides the occasion for the text and her “life story” that provides the subject matter. This point is reinforced by what follows: a dramatization of the women’s first meeting, when, according to Burgos, Menchú appeared at her door one cold January night, unaccompanied and in traditional dress.

In “Story of a Testimonio,” an essay she wrote much later, Burgos substantiates one of her previous statements by identifying the intermediary who brought her and Menchú together as “Marie Tremblay.” In the same essay, however, Burgos contravenes her earlier claim that Menchú arrived alone, saying instead that it was Tremblay who first brought Menchú to Burgos’s home. Neither of these statements, however, agrees with the account of the initial meeting or of the impetus for the project provided by Arturo Taracena, a representative for the EGP in Paris with whom Menchú had been staying up to the point when the interviews took place (Aceituno 83; Burgos, “Story of a Testimonio” 54). According to Taracena, Burgos had already decided to publish the testimony of an indigenous Guatemalan woman prior to meeting Menchú or knowing of her, and it was this determination that led

²⁴⁰ It would appear that Burgos repeated much the same story in a 1995 interview with Stoll, and he recounts it in All Poor Guatemalans with additional detail, naming “Marie Tremblay” and mentioning Arturo Taracena. Evidently, Burgos did not at that time acknowledge to Stoll Taracena’s active involvement in textual production (184-5).
Burgos to ask the intermediary to help identify an appropriate interview subject.

Taracena gives this account of the initial contact:

I was approached by the representative in Paris of ORPA (Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms), a woman then known as Marie Tremblay, a Canadian psychiatrist whose real name is Cécile Rousseau. She told me that Elisabeth Burgos, whom I had met in Paris in 1975, was interested in publishing a testimony by a Guatemalan Mayan woman. Marie told Elisabeth that there was a very interesting young woman named Rigoberta Menchú Tum in Paris at the moment giving her testimony . . . . (82-3) 241

If Taracena’s account is more accurate than Burgos’s, then the selection of Menchú as the interview candidate was secondary to the political objectives, which appear to have been to generate international resistance to human rights abuses in Guatemala, to present the EGP’s role in the conflict in a positive way, and to substantiate the organization’s claim to represent the indigenes. Taracena’s involvement validates Stoll’s claim that Menchú’s narrative was framed in accordance with EGP goals and objectives; according to Stoll, Menchú “focused all the blame for the violence on government forces. Never did she criticize her old comrades” (All Poor Guatemalans 7). Stoll’s claim is substantiated as well by Burgos’s admission that she had maintained a close friendship with the founder of the EGP, Richard Ramírez, and his

241 Stoll says that the interview was initiated by Rousseau (All Poor Guatemalans 178, 180), which agrees with Burgos’s account in the introduction to 1. Rigoberta xiv).
partner, Aura Marina Arriola, since 1966, or sixteen years prior to the interviews with Menchú ("Story of a Testimonio" 53). Burgos categorizes her first meeting with Ramírez and Arriola at the Tricontinental Conference in Havana as one of those “encounters that lay out and determine the course of a life” (54),242 and she acknowledges that she sent Menchú’s narrative to Ramírez for his approval before publishing it (58).

In his account of the interview process, Taracena says that it was he who brought Menchú to Burgos; that the initial meeting took place on a Sunday morning; that the three of them together drew up the outline for the initial session; and that for three of the days in the week-long process (Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday), he either shared the role of interviewer with Burgos or worked with Menchú independently (Aceituno 82-3). Yet in the introduction to I, Rigoberta, Burgos never mentions him. According to Taracena, he and Burgos together arrived at the decision not to reveal his role in textual production: “From the beginning, she planned to eliminate any mention of me in the text so that there would remain no trace of my participation, and I agreed to it” (84). The reason for this erasure, Taracena says, was that knowledge of his participation in the text’s production might affect its reception: “I agreed not to participate so as not to politicize the book. So that it wouldn’t look like a teleprompted work, which is more or less how certain sectors in Guatemala think it was done.” Taracena claims that he decided not to participate in the interview

242 Both Burgos and Stoll identify Taracena as Arriola’s nephew ("Story of a Testimonio" 54; All Poor Guatemalans 186).
process for a period of three days (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) for two reasons. First, he says, because as the EGP representative in Paris he thought that his political affiliation might affect Menchú’s testimony (84), and second, he explains, because there was some concern that his gender might affect the conversation: “It was suggested that a conversation between two women might flow more easily.” Taracena also claims that he arranged and raised the money for the transcription of the interview tapes, that he worked with Burgos to edit the transcription into a publishable text, and that he supplied the glossary (85). Burgos validates this last statement (“Story of a Testimonio” 56).

These more recent accounts of the text’s genesis imply that Burgos had already conceptualized the text and some of its purposes prior to meeting with Menchú or hearing of her, and that in planning, interviewing, and editing, Burgos may have been more interested in positioning Menchú as representative of certain subject positions (Maya, indigene, woman, subaltern) than as an “individual.” This supposition is borne out by Burgos’s rhetorical strategies in the introduction to Rigoberta, where she collapses the native discourse communities of all three Americas into one representative figure, claiming that Menchú “speaks for all the Indians of the American continent. What she tells us of her relationship with nature, life, death and her community has already been said by the Indians of North America,

\[\text{243 I wish to contextualize my use of the term “individual” by acknowledging that it is a problematic cultural construct, though perhaps no more so than others like “subject position” and “population.” Each of these terms is imbued with the values and assumptions of specific ideologies associated with different historical periods.}\]
those of Central America, and those of South America” (xii). Menchú’s objectification is suggested as well by Taracena’s account, in which textual production is dependent on identifying and obtaining the cooperation of an interview subject with a set of requisite attributes, while in the statement from the introduction to *I, Rigoberta* cited above, Burgos’s involvement in recording and editing Menchú’s oral narrative is the outcome of a third-party invitation that Burgos at first hesitates to accept. The locution Burgos uses in this context to describe her role in editing Menchú’s narrative—“turning her life story into a book”—implies that there is a stable pre-existing entity known as Menchú’s “life story” that can be reconstituted in textual form, and the choice of phrase complements other rhetorical strategies Burgos employs in the introduction to establish the narrator’s “authenticity,” to idealize her, and to make truth claims for the text with which she is so closely associated. Burgos’s supposed hesitance to take on the project, which is overcome only after she has met Menchú and has come to admire “her courage and dignity,” models the response Burgos elicits from the reader, which is the “willing suspension of disbelief” commonly associated with fiction.

In the introduction to *I, Rigoberta*, Burgos moves from her account of the text’s inception to a long and detailed depiction of Menchú, whom Burgos says arrived wearing a hand-woven, ankle-length skirt, or “corte,” an embroidered blouse, or “huipil,” and a hand-woven “fuchsia and red” scarf. The Quiché terms are of course italicized to indicate that they are from a different language, and Burgos’s use of these terms and the textual conventions that set them apart from the rest of the text
helps to establish Menchú’s status as the “Other.” Burgos provides a description for six different items of clothing she says Menchú was wearing at their first encounter, including details about their color, manufacture, and ornamentation. This series of “facts” and the simplicity with which Burgos presents them gestures towards a specific set of textual values, suggesting that she and Menchú are about to present a series of straightforward and uncomplicated “facts” about Menchú’s life and the status of the indigenous population she is said to represent. This expectation is reinforced by Burgos’s description of Menchú’s features: “The first thing that struck me about her was her open, almost child-like smile. Her face was round and moon-shaped. Her expression was as guileless as that of a child and a smile hovered permanently on her lips. She looked astonishingly young” (xiv). The characterization of Menchú as “guileless,” “child-like,” and “young”—Burgos uses four such closely related descriptive terms in as many sentences—emphasizes Menchú’s age in a way that evokes long-term cultural associations of youth and of indigenity with innocence. Through the repeated use of these terms, Burgos establishes Menchú as a reliable narrator. Menchú’s truthfulness is implied as well through Burgos’s attribution to her of “an enormous necklace of red beads and old silver coins with a heavy solid silver cross hanging from it” (xiv). The cross suggests that Menchú participates in a set of Christian religious beliefs that include a commitment to veracity; silver is associated with purity and justice; the word “solid” connotes reliability; and the coins imply value. From the point in Burgos’s narrative at which she reports having met Menchú, Burgos most often refers to her by her first name (at least twenty-four times in pages
xiv-xv of the introduction), and this practice not only reinforces the characterization of Menchú as young and child-like, but signals their intimacy and the writer’s status as an authority on her. The insistence on Menchú’s youth, choice of locution, and use of descriptive detail are among the rhetorical and literary strategies Burgos employs to convince the reader that the text is as “guileless” and “child-like” as Menchú is purported to be. Burgos’s putative reluctance to undertake the task of textual production until she has met Menchú and ascertained her “courage and dignity,” the representation of her life story as a pre-existing entity that embodies her and that she embodies, and the putative elision of the EGP representative’s participation in textual production all are or would be strategies that serve to conceal aspects of the text’s construction in the interests of those who constructed it.

Burgos’s literary and rhetorical sleight of hand, however, does not conflict with her own textual values as she states them both in the introduction and in her later essays. Burgos does not aver Beverley’s investments in the testimonio form, nor does she position it in opposition to literary writing. In the introduction to I, Rigoberta, Burgos does not even refer to the text as a testimonio, using instead the terms “story,” “life story,” and “narrative.” In “Testimonio and Transmission,” Burgos describes I, Rigoberta as “oral literature” (86), and in “Story of a Testimonio,” where she describes the process through which she edited Menchú’s oral narrative into the final text, Burgos says that she combed through the transcripts in search of literary language: “sentences or words deferred for later examination, lost in the middle of debris that must be eliminated so that spoken language will continue to transmit a
voice and at the same time be readable—that is, something that is not boring, that
reads like fiction” (55). Burgos demonstrates her affinity for the literary qualities of
fiction in her description of that first meeting with Menchú, where she paradoxically
both undermines and confirms her own authority as a narrator by employing a
locution that signals to the reader that she may be revising her memories as she
writes. “I remember it as being a particularly cold night;” she says, “in fact I think it
was snowing” (I, Rigoberta xiv). In a gesture of literary sprezzatura, she pushes the
limits of her readers’ credulity still further: “Rigoberta was wearing no stockings and
no coat. Beneath her huipil, her arms were bare.” The effect of Burgos’s imagery is to
demonstrate at once the solitary figure’s vulnerability and her strength. Like Stoll,
Burgos attributes the controversy about I, Rigoberta’s “authenticity” and historical
accuracy to the inappropriate expectations generated by North American literary
academics. “The critics,” she says, “have mixed their scholarly calling with their
political beliefs, in the process converting oral literature—the most supple of genres
and the most subject to personal invention—into an almost religious canon, bordering
on the absolute” (“Testimonio and Transmission” 86). Burgos dissociates herself
from these textual values, arguing that they apply to oral narratives criteria she
considers more appropriate to legal testimony (86).

Burgos can hardly be faulted for failing to adhere to textual values that she
does not espouse, that were attributed to I, Rigoberta years after the book’s initial
publication, and that were formulated by literary critics from another culture. It would
be wrong, however, to readily dismiss Menchú’s claim that her “testimony” was
"taken away from her" (Aceituno 89). Although she has articulated her claims in different terms at different times and in different venues, overall Menchú's statements indicate that she believes she has been defrauded of a number of the perquisites and emoluments associated with a valuable textual property. Her losses, as she describes them, extend not only to the distribution of royalties (Burgos, “Story of a Testimonio” 59; Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans 188; Taracena 88); sole authorial attribution (Burgos, “Story of a Testimonio” 58-9; Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans 187-8); and the publishing rights (Burgos, “Story of a Testimonio” 59; Crossing Borders 114; Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans 188); but also to the opportunity to revise and expand the text in a way that delimits its role in public discourse. In Crossing Borders, Menchú explains that her goal is to reclaim the text of I. Rigoberta as

244 In an essay published in 1993, Alice Brittin and Kenya Dworkin cite Menchú as raising the issue of the authorship of I. Rigoberta in these words: "what is effectively a gap in the book is the question of the right of the author, right?" (as qtd. in Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans 187; 302-3, n. 15). In Beverley's essay "The Real Thing," these words are translated differently: "What is in fact an absence in the book is the author's rights... Because the authorship of the book, in fact, should have been more correctly indicated, shared, no?" (268). Stoll quotes Menchú from a 1997 interview in El Periódico as saying that I. Rigoberta "does not belong to me morally, politically or economically. I have respected it greatly because it played an immense role for Guatemala... But I never had the right to say if the text pleased me or not, if it was faithful to the facts of my life. Now my life is mine, therefore I believe that now it is opportune to say that it is not my book... Anyone who has doubts about the work should go to [Elizabeth] because, even legally, I do not have author's rights, royalties or any of that" (as qtd. in All Poor Guatemalans, 178, 300 n. 1). In Crossing Borders, Menchú claims that the book was Taracena’s idea; she is nonspecific about textual production, although she emphasizes Taracena’s role and de-emphasizes Burgos’s, whom she says was involved because “we needed someone with a reputation and an entrée into the academic and publishing world” (113). Burgos says that Menchú has provided a number of conflicting accounts of the text’s genesis: “First she claimed that ‘Elizabeth Burgos had been somewhere nearby at the time of the interviews’ but that it had been she herself who wrote the book in Mexico ‘with the help of comrades.’ Then she spread the rumor that I had interviewed various indigenous people and synthesized the story into one, taking her as the sole persona” (“Story of a Testimonio” 58). In 1993, Menchú asked Burgos to renounce her claims to authorship, leaving Menchú with sole attribution (59). In his interview with Luis Aceituno, Taracena reports that “There was a lot of bitterness between Rigoberta and me. She didn’t understand why, after she had trusted in me, I let her testimony be taken from her. But the truth is that I was as naïve as she was about these things” (89). For a more complete account of the different and at times conflicting statements Menchú has made in different venues, see Stoll, All Poor Guatemalans 301, n. 8.
Guatemalan history, adding to it accounts of human rights activism and the names of those who participated in it:

My dream is to recover the rights to *I, Rigoberta Menchú* and to expand it. I want to give it back to Guatemala and the coming generations as part of their history. I took out names, above all names of family and neighbours, because, although I assumed they were dead, there was always a tiny doubt in my mind. Giving their names away in a book could have had them killed.

I also left out the details of my life in the Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC). It was there that I learned to fight, as a woman, for women’s rights, and for fundamental human values. I also met a number of people in organizations working for justice, democracy and human rights, and for the respect of our indigenous identity. All these experiences and struggles should have been in my book. (114)

Menchú’s concerns, which appear to include the way in which the text is framed, raise complex questions about relationships between writers, sources, and subject matter. Arguably, both Burgos and Taracena appropriated Menchú’s narrative for their own purposes, some of which most probably accorded with hers, and some of which most probably did not. In doing so, they re-inscribed the discourse of colonial appropriation and exploitation of the Other into what has been seen by many as the prime exemplar of the postcolonial alternative to literature. Taracena’s investments in
Menchú’s narrative through his role as the EGP’s representative in Paris have been adumbrated above, but Burgos’s appear to have been more complex.

In “Story of a Testimonio,” Burgos openly admits that her choice of topics for the interviews reflected her own concerns and interests at that time, although she claims that Menchú’s were congruent with them: “Naturally there is a subtext in which traces of my own autobiography are implicit, as there is also in the form in which the book was published and in which its launch took place” (56). The rift between the two women, however, which Stoll dates from the mid-1980s and Burgos from the early 90s (All Poor Guatemalans 186; “Story of a Testimonio” 57), perhaps indicates that Menchú’s investments in the text were not as transparent as Burgos seems to have believed they were when she wrote that “Rigoberta’s desire to express her own personal experiences and issues in my own life coincided” (56). A testimonio is by definition a mediated narrative: the editor/interviewer’s values and perspective inevitably affect her interpretation of the subject’s words. As Stoll says, “At worst, an intermediary can take so many liberties that she becomes the author” (All Poor Guatemalans 182). What were Burgos’s issues, and to what extent did they lead her to appropriate Menchú’s narrative in her own interests? Did Burgos’s concerns shape the text in a way that blurred distinctions between her roles as “editor” and “interviewer” and Menchú’s roles as the interview “subject” and the text’s “narrator”? From her statements in the introduction to I, Rigoberta, it would appear that Burgos’s investments include feminism (xv-xvi); human rights advocacy (xiii); solidarity with indigenes and valorization of their cultures (xii); ladino guilt (xii-xv);
and a yearning to connect with the “Other” (xvi).²⁴⁵ Burgos’s concern for Menchú as a woman, an indigene, and an individual is exemplified by this statement from her 1995 interview with Stoll: “They had her cooking in Mexico. Even the Guatemalans didn’t take an interest in her because she was indígena. She was anxious and didn’t have the least idea of where she was . . . . I think it was a pleasure for her to talk with someone who took an interest in her” (All Poor Guatemalans 184).

However, in her confidence that she understands Menchú in a way that others do not, in her claims for an intimacy that extends to considering herself Menchú’s “double” (xx), Burgos risks appropriating the persona through which she constructs Menchú within the confines of the text and perhaps at times of ventriloquizing her as well. Burgos lays herself open to this charge at a number of different points in the introduction, especially where she interprets Menchú’s acculturation in terms of her political strategies and objectives, in this context comparing her to Latin American ladinos and Parisian indigenists in a way that idealizes Menchú and derogates the others (xvi-xvii). It is in the process of explaining why she deleted the interview questions from the edited text that Burgos characterizes herself as Menchú’s “double”: “By doing so I became what I really was: Rigoberta’s listener. I allowed her to speak and then became her instrument, her double by allowing her to make the transition from the spoken to the written word” (xx). Here Burgos blurs the

²⁴⁵ Burgos’s feminist investments are evidenced by the anecdotes of cooking and sharing food through which she constructs a women’s community (xv-xvi); by Taracena’s statement that for several days he absented himself from the interviews because “it was suggested that a conversation between two women might flow more easily” (Aceituno 84); and by Burgos’s claim that her editing approach was taken in part from the well-known French feminist Hélène Cixous, with whom she studied in the early 1970s (“Story of a Testimonio” 55).
boundaries between the two identities, and although she characterizes herself as Menchú’s “listener,” she is speaking as she makes the claim, and she is in the process of constructing Menchú as she speaks. Whatever her rationale, by deleting the interview questions Burgos effectively masks the different voices at play within the text. If we accept Taracena’s claim that he participated in the interview process, that process was affected by his participation; if we credit his statement that Burgos “from the beginning . . . planned to eliminate any mention of me in the text so that there would remain no trace of my participation” (Aceituno 84), then it is likely that these erasures are yet another rhetorical strategy, one that foregrounds Menchú’s role as narrator while at times ventriloquizing her.

Who is the author of I, Rigoberta? As Stoll says, this question has become a focus for scholarly debate (All Poor Guatemalans 182). Burgos figures as the author on the title pages of some editions, though not of the English-language version: there no attribution is given. Instead, Burgos is identified as editor and credited with authorship of the introduction only. In “Story of a Testimonio,” Burgos defends her claim to authorship of the entire text, citing as models publishing practices for two French testimonio series, Gallimard’s Témoins and Jean Malaurie’s Terre Humaine (56). Taracena, however, describes I, Rigoberta as a “collective construction” and puts forward his own claim for collaborative authorship: “I did most of the dirty work, the work of hard editing. It’s interesting how the Guatemalan press has insisted that Elisabeth Burgos was the one who wrote the book, because Elisabeth Burgos never wrote the book; she edited it, and she edited it with my help” (Aceituno 85).
Arguing that in anthropology the definition for *testimonio* authorship encompasses the interviewer and the editor as well as the narrator, Taracena identifies four authors: himself, Menchú, Burgos, and the transcriber, Paquita Rivera (Aceituno 85, 90). While Burgos and Taracena are relatively univocal in their claims and the support they give for them, Menchú has taken so many different positions on this issue that listing them would decrease rather than enhance the lucidity of this synopsis; suffice it to say that her positions range from repudiating the text to attempting to establish sole rights to it.

These arguments reveal more about the various definitions of authorship applicable in certain professional contexts than they do about the investments in this text; specifically, in whose interests the reader has been so skillfully manipulated through the use of narrative, imagery, rhetoric, and syntax. While authorship is a crucial determinant for property issues like publishing rights and the distribution of royalties and may affect the professional and economic status of those who participated in textual production, a critical focus on authorship is not likely to add much to Stoll’s analysis of the text’s impact on political processes in Guatemala or on course content in English departments across North America. As he explains in “The Battle of Rigoberta,” Stoll learned of Taracena’s claims to extensive involvement in textual production and to collaborative authorship only with the 1999 publication of Taracena’s interview in *El Periódico* (118-120), which Stoll dates as subsequent to
publication of his book *Rigoberta Menchú and All Poor Guatemalans*. Evidently, Stoll was able to come to his conclusions about EGP interventions in the text without needing to know exactly who held the pen(s).

In addition to its usefulness as a property marker, authorship has traditionally been construed as an important source of information about the text. At different times, the author’s ethos, biography, and subject position have all been assigned varying degrees of critical relevance, and despite the advent of more recent theoretical concepts such as “deconstruction” and “intertextuality,” metaphorical constructions of the author as the text’s “source” or “fountainhead” persist. Without contesting the value of single- and multiple-author studies as one source of information about the text, I would like to point to the fallibility of some assumptions about authorship; for example, that the author’s ethos and/or subject position necessarily indicate the nature of the investments in the text. The artful construction of Menchú as an indigenous icon and the erasure of the interview questions that mark the presence of other voices in *I, Rigoberta* direct the reader’s attention to Menchú as author/narrator while deflecting attention away from other participants in textual production. From Taracena’s account of an altercation between him and Burgos, it would appear that the two of them at one point engaged in a power struggle over whether Menchú’s cultural capital would be invoked primarily on behalf of feminist

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246 Stoll’s book is copyrighted 1999, the same year as Aceituno’s interview with Taracena, but the publication date Stoll gives in “The Battle of Rigoberta” is 1998. Although Stoll does cite Menchu’s statements attributing a significant role in textual production to Taracena in *All Poor Guatemalans*, Stoll does not appear to give these statements much credence. See “David Stoll Breaks the Silence,” pp. 118-19, for Stoll’s account of his efforts to interview Taracena prior to the book’s publication.
or military interests. According to Taracena, this argument occurred shortly after the publication of the first edition:

Marie Tremblay let me know that, in her introduction to the book, Elisabeth had removed all references to Rigoberta’s role as a militant for the CUC and presented her as an indigenous feminist. I quarreled with her about this issue, and then she corrected the introduction to make Rigoberta look like a militant girl from some indigenous peasant movement in Guatemala. (Aceituno 89)

This statement indicates that those who initiated textual production—Taracena, Tremblay/Rousseau, and Burgos—conceived Menchu’s representation in the introduction as a means of shaping reader reception.

The moral authority that these different agents wish to appropriate for different purposes derives only in part from the status accorded Menchu within the text as an indigenous icon. In part, moral authority devolves upon her as a victim of human rights abuses through the process of dualistic thinking which, according to Derrida, characterizes Western intellect (Murfin 92). Through a system of hierarchical paired terms, in which one of the paired terms is privileged, Menchu as an oral narrator is associated with the term “phonocentrism” (which is privileged over “logocentrism”), with the “oppressed” in the paired terms “oppressed/oppressor,” and in turn with the related term “innocence” in the paired terms “innocence/guilt.” Through the EGP’s self-construction as the military champion of the oppressed Mayans, in part through the military strategies described above and in part through
Menchú’s narrative, for some time after publication of I, Rigoberta that organization successfully dissociated itself with the term “oppressor” and aligned itself with the term “innocence.” Menchú’s innocence is invoked in the introduction to I, Rigoberta as a means of concealing EGP guilt, just as she is constructed as the speaker and Burgos as her listener in order to deflect attention from the fact that it is Burgos who is speaking and Menchú who is being constructed by Burgos’s words. “Author,” like “narrator,” is a persona, and it too is subject to construction in ways that affect the text’s reception. The single-author paradigm provides an inappropriate critical focus for textual analysis of I, Rigoberta because authorship cannot adequately account either for the different investments in the text or for the interventions on behalf of these interests. Another example of such an intervention is the review of the text by another member of the EGP, Gustavo Méoño, who later became the president of the Menchú Foundation (Aceituno 87). Méoño’s review resulted in the elision of three passages from Rigoberta’s narrative, including one that claimed that children had been used as couriers between members of the EGP and the civilian population (92). Interventions like these have major impact on the text. It is my belief that an

247 Stoll claims that I, Rigoberta succeeded in generating worldwide support for a guerrilla movement that had already lost its support base in Guatemala, partly because they had already been defeated (All Poor Guatemalans 6) and partly for the reasons given above (see pp. 10-11). He says, “This is the use to which Rigoberta’s story was put, to prop up at the international level a guerrilla movement that had lost its credibility at home” (All Poor Guatemalans 278). If, however, I, Rigoberta temporarily succeeded in valorizing the EGP despite its role in both committing and provoking human rights abuses, the publication of the 3,000-page report of the Comisión del Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH) served as a corrective, holding the guerrilla organization responsible for its share of the deaths and atrocities and validating Stoll’s claim that the organization is indirectly responsible for the decimation or eradication of many indigenous communities. This section of the CEH report is cited in Morales, pp. 359-60.
analytical approach that complements single and multiple-author studies and focuses on the roles played by different individuals and organizations in textual production would helpfully focus critical attention on investments that may not be associated with authorship and yet significantly affect the text. Such an approach is not only appropriate to recent collaborative texts like _I, Rigoberta_, but also to the early modern texts like those that are the primary focus of this dissertation.

_I, Rigoberta Menchú_ does not live up to the claims made for the _testimonio_ form by Beverley and others and on the basis of which they promoted its teaching as an alternative to literature. As a text, _I, Rigoberta_ is immune neither to self-interest nor to factual inaccuracy. Those who participated in textual production were not above appropriating native oral literature and a native voice to promote the interests of individuals and organizations from other cultures. And while the text achieved its “liberatory” objective, which was to focus international attention on human rights violations in Guatemala in a way that would force the government to negotiate with the guerrilla organizations and to put an end to the violence, it is not only through the truth of Menchú’s claims about human suffering in Guatemala that the text achieved its purpose. The book’s impact is due as well to the skillful use of literary effects, including Burgos’s vivid representation of Menchú as an indigenous icon and Menchú’s mesmeric storytelling, imagery, and narrative voice. Stoll argues that the book’s dramatic power derives precisely from the fictive elements for which Menchú has been criticized, and most especially from her claims to have participated in or to have witnessed events that she has heard about rather than experienced (“Battle of
Rigoberta 392). In addition, he claims, the number and the variety of experiences Menchú describes add to the “breathless, action-packed quality of her story” (All Poor Guatemalans 177). According to Stoll, “The first-person nature of the story provided an immediacy and credibility that no other narrative style would have achieved. That is why the book has been so effective in spreading interest in Guatemala to wider circles, especially in colleges and churches” (“Battle of Rigoberta 392). The process through which an appealing historical figure is transmuted into the legendary “face” of a cultural history is specifically literary, and is closely associated with mythology and with legendary histories.

In 2005, arguments promoting testimonio as an alternative to literature on the basis of its authenticity and “unimpeachability” came full circle in Brooks’s essay “Testimonio’s Poetics of Performance,” in which she defends the teaching of I, Rigoberta and other representatives of the genre on the grounds that the testimonio is itself a form of literary writing. Brooks recurs the controversies of the last eight years and describes the situation in which educators have found themselves in the aftermath of Stoll’s discoveries. After asserting that the testimonio “still dominates much of literary study,” Brooks goes on to suggest that academics are “caught in the crossfire” created by the debate and that they “waffle between hiding Stoll’s book from students, and combining Stoll, Menchú, and an unconvincing slew of Menchú apologists” (181). Brooks argues that the use of fictional elements in testimonio is characteristic rather than exceptional, and she identifies a number of the literary conventions associated with the genre: “staging; acting; storytelling performance; and
dialogue” (184). The description of Menchú’s supposed arrival at Burgos’s home, at night, unaccompanied, attired in traditional garb, and apparently unaffected by the cold, constitutes the testimonio’s staging; the effect, according to Brooks, is to present Menchú as a “timeless Mayan” in order to enact one of the testimonio’s key scenes: “the editor’s-first-encounter-with-the-Other” (186, 188). Like Stoll and Burgos, Brooks rejects definitions of the testimonio that insist on its “authenticity,” at least in so far as that term is associated with Western-style truth claims (182).

In retrospect, late twentieth-century aspirations to a textual kind spoken by authentic voices, inspired by disinterested motives, and characterized by a less slippery relationship to the truth seem a bit naïve, particularly in the related assumption that literary form lends itself to human mendacity, self interest, and the lust for power in ways that other textual genres do not. In the aftermath of the North American “culture wars,” reading lists are more inclusive, both L. Rigoberta and the Tempest qualify as literature, and literary and cultural studies approaches are taught not only in the same departments, but at times by the same professors. Sadly, the sense that the humanities in general and literary studies in particular are somehow tainted lingers on. But if literature itself is not “complicit” in uses to which it has been put, either by the British colonial authorities or the “interpretive monopolies” that overshadowed its teaching prior to the advent of multiculturalism (Pratt 34), and if to study and write about literature is not automatically to be implicated in the colonial enterprise, Viswanathan’s carefully documented findings highlight the importance of constant vigilance. Examinations into the purposes for and the assumptions behind
each act of literary research, analysis, criticism, and instruction must be ongoing. Although it has been destructive in many ways, the debate about the value of literature and the testimonio as an alternative to it has also contributed to the discipline by contesting its boundaries and by problematizing the value of the single-author paradigm as the primary or dominant approach to literary criticism.

This is not to say that single-author studies are no longer useful and relevant, although some of the anachronistic assumptions associated with the single-author paradigm may well be. While it is in part the prevalence of the single-author paradigm that has had the effect of re-inscribing the exclusion of women and other marginalized groups from early modern discourse communities in the work of some critics, the approach may be usefully complemented by critical perspectives that foreground other aspects of textual production or that view the text, as critics like Barthes, Foucault, and Kristeva have suggested, as the artifact of a culture rather than as the product of a single individual. These perspectives need not be constructed as mutually exclusive; in the post postmodern intellectual climate of the early twenty-first century, it is acceptable to practice bricolage, making use not only of a variety of critical approaches, but of value systems as well. The advantages of viewing texts from a variety of critical perspectives are illustrated by my analysis of the effects of Herbert’s, Burgos,’ and Taracena’s use of the second-order signifying system to rewrite cultural and political history in ways that benefit specific interest groups at the expense of others. The dominance of any one critical approach may well leave
readers and audiences vulnerable to manipulations that would be visible from another perspective.

If one of the great intellectual endeavors of the sixteenth century was the development of vernacular languages and literatures, for me one of the great ongoing enterprises of the twenty-first century is the re-constitution of literary studies as an enterprise characterized by an intellectual integrity that will outlast synchronic values and assumptions. This means not only developing new and more inclusive ways of conceptualizing and teaching literature, but also rethinking traditional critical approaches. At its best, the discipline can contribute to further understanding of the operations of different cultures, the role literature plays in societies and, last but not least, the ways in which skilful writers devise effective sentences, paragraphs, and expository and narrative structures. A commitment to historical accuracy and a refusal to interpret events or historical figures solely in the light of a political agenda will contribute to the goal of attaining a responsible critical practice, as will a refusal to idealize literary figures, whether the values associated with them are heroic, feminist, or "liberatory." An ability to move beyond dualistic thinking and to recognize that the targets of oppression, as well as those who oppress them, can be motivated by self-interested as well as humanitarian interests, may lead to more sophisticated literary and cultural analysis. Literary criticism has and will continue to benefit from the emphasis on inclusion, and from inventing, adopting, and making use of a range of analytical approaches that offer viable ways of constituting scholarly understandings of literature and the roles it plays in different societies. The ongoing
debate about literature has enriched scholarly understandings of textual production while re-affirming its importance in conceptualizing and negotiating inner life, by which I mean not only the subjective interpretations of intellectual, emotional, political, and spiritual experiences, but also the “golden worlds” created through the power of the imagination that make it possible to envisage not only more equitable societies but the means to attempt to achieve them.
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