

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

CRITICAL CONTEXTS OF ASTROPHIL AND STELLA
AND AMORETTI

by

Janet Heather MacArthur

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CALGARY, ALBERTA

SEPTEMBER, 1988

© Janet MacArthur, 1988

Permission has been granted to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author (copyright owner) has reserved other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her written permission.

L'autorisation a été accordée à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur (titulaire du droit d'auteur) se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation écrite.

ISBN 0-315-46616-2

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Critical Contexts of Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti" submitted by Janet MacArthur in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Ronald B. Bond

Dr. B. Bond (Supervisor)
Department of English

Saad El-Gabalawy

Dr. Saad El-Gabalawy
Department of English

Hermine Joldersma

Dr. H. Joldersma
Department of Germanic and
Slavic Studies

Roger Peattie

Dr. Roger Peattie
Department of English

John Willinsky

Dr. John Willinsky
Department of Curriculum and
Instruction

Linda Woodbridge

Dr. Linda Woodbridge
The University of Alberta

88-09-29

ABSTRACT

This study is a reception history of two Elizabethan sonnet sequences--Sir Philip Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and Edmund Spenser's Amoretti. Since the Renaissance, the idealist notion that man is the source of meaning, of action, and of history has gained increasing authority. However, this conception has been subjected to a number of challenges, particularly in the twentieth century, as materialist accounts of the human and of reality displace essentialist ones. Each of the five Anglo-American criticisms considered here--romantic expressivism, modernism, reader-response criticism, new historicism, and feminism--represents a different position on or challenge to Western humanism. How changing conceptions of man and the human affect the reception of Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti will be the subject of this study.

Chapter One is an examination of Sir Sidney Lee's preface to Elizabethan Sonnets published in 1904. Lee upholds the sincere expression of the intentional author, the informing premise of romantic expressivism, in his critique of the sonnet sequences. Chapters Two and Three examine two modernist critical approaches to poetry. Chapter Two, an analysis of J.W. Lever's The Elizabethan Love Sonnet (1956), locates Lever's use of the evaluative

criterion of T.S. Eliot, the New Critics, and other modernists. His study is in the tradition of what Frank Lentricchia terms "aesthetic humanism." The numerological critics whose discoveries after the publication of A.K. Heatt's Short Time's Endless Monument (1960) are examined in Chapter Three are also part of this tradition. They represent its formalist tendencies. Both of these modernisms appeal to a notion of universal rather than individual subjectivity.

Chapter Four is an investigation of dialectical reader-response criticism. Reader-response criticism initiates the process of questioning the essentialist-humanist account of literature, although it retains a conception of transhistorical subjectivity. Chapter Five focusses on the cultural materialist and new historical critique of the sonnet sequences. These criticisms are influenced by postmodern language theories and other postmodern philosophies. So, too, are some of the feminist approaches to Renaissance poetry examined in Chapter Six. Cultural materialism, new historicism, and feminism participate in the postmodern revision of literary history produced by the deconstruction of the human. This study investigates the shift from modernist to postmodernist literary criticism, locating some of the ideological underpinnings of the major Anglo-American critiques of Renaissance poetry in the twentieth century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Department of English at the University of Calgary for their generous financial support. I would also like to acknowledge the fine scholarship and critical acuity of my supervisor Dr. Ronald Bond as a major part of my "invention."

Here, I would also like to draw attention to the inspirational importance of my grandparents--Rose C. Smith, my only living grandparent, and Arthur W. Smith of Innisfail, Alberta; and Malcolm A. MacArthur and Lillias Henderson MacArthur formerly of Red Deer. Thanks are also due to my parents, Donald and Lorene MacArthur, whose home is always mine; to my brothers, Douglas and Gregory, who didn't need a degree in English to develop a comprehensive sense of irony; and, finally, to my very generous boyfriend Peter Nicolson, who helped me escape the winter and the sixteenth century in a few Florida sojourns, and who thinks he is going to ride my coattails to fame on a piece of microfiche.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the late Dr. Charles R. Steele, who, I am sure, is still devoted to the students at The University of Calgary and has read this study: I would never have made it without the inspiration of his strong heart.

This study is dedicated to the memory of my uncle

GARY WAYNE SMITH

Born June 18, 1945
at Innisfail, Alberta

Died October 16, 1985
at Calgary, Alberta

...per speculum in aenigmate
(I Corinthians 13:12)

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....1

CHAPTER ONE.....14

CHAPTER TWO.....33

CHAPTER THREE.....66

CHAPTER FOUR.....93

CHAPTER FIVE.....129

CHAPTER SIX.....168

CONCLUSION.....193

WORKS CITED.....203

INTRODUCTION

In the Defence of Poetry, Sidney promotes poetry as a form of knowledge, the purpose of which is "to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying of his own divine essence" (104). Interpreters of Sidney's oration have often tended to view the author and speaker as identical, to overlook the Defence's rhetorical features, and to use it as a testament to Sidney's idealism. Of late, however, generally skeptical commentators oppose materialism to idealism, suggesting that idealism is dependent on notions of human or divine essence "which somehow transcend and operate (indeed, cause) the social system, and are not constructed in this system" (Coward and Ellis 2). In postmodern thought, human subjectivity is viewed as a product, function, or effect of the material conditions and ideology of a culture at a particular historical moment.

By contrast, the human being was formerly viewed as an entity derived from and invested with a universal divine and human spirit that was said to pre-exist human life, time, and conditions. As idealist beliefs about transcendence and essence are called into question, the more discursive features of Sidney's Defence have become evident. It has therefore become possible to argue that the Defence undercuts its own essentialism: Sidney often portrays the truth and reality purveyed by the

philosopher, historian, and poet-speaker of the Defence as a product of their discourse rather than an essence which pre-exists it.¹

Since the Romantics, the idea that human rather than divine essence informs literature has dominated our view of it. "Man"--"the origin and source of meaning, of action, and of history" (Belsey 7)--is often invested with authority as a collectivity which transmits its universal sentiment through the gifted individual. This is the humanist account of literature and history that gains authority during the Renaissance. The nineteenth-century historian Jacob Burckhardt made the highly influential claim in The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy that the Renaissance saw the advent of "individuality", and that the great poet-scholars Dante and Petrarch best represented its essence (81). This has become the master narrative of Anglo-American literary theory.

Many commonplace attitudes bequeathed to twentieth-century criticism are established by contemporaries of Sidney and Spenser. From the margins of The Shepheardes Calender, EK insists on Spenser's difference from the "rakehellye route of our ragged rymers" (Spenser 417). EK sees Spenser as a poet within a great tradition whose "worthiness [will] be sounded in the tromp of fame" (416). With a "dewe observing of Decorum everye where" (416), his verse is "round without roughnesse, and learned wythout hardnes, such indeede as may be perceived of the leaste,

understoode of the moste, but judged onely of the learned" (417). In his dedication to Amoretti, Spenser's publisher William Ponsonby comments on the poet's "gentle Muse" and his "sweete conceited Sonets" (Spenser 562).

For critics of later generations, as for his contemporaries, Spenser is a practicing poet, rather than the occasional versifier that Sidney presented himself as.

Spenser's distinctive, sweet, and gentle style is also what endears him to the Romantics. For them, The Faerie Queene is an important pre-text. Since then, it has become a central symbol in the tradition for the detached, golden world created in imaginative art. "If Ariosto transports us into the regions of romance," William Hazlitt concluded, "Spenser's poetry is all faery-land. In Ariosto, we walk upon the ground, in a company, gay, fantastic, and adventurous enough. In Spenser, we wander in another world, among ideal beings" (1). To Wordsworth, "Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven/ With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace" was a "gentle Bard", a creator of extraterrestrial dream visions (Prelude 3.278-81). Coleridge praised the "sweetness and fluency" ("Lecture" 11) of Spenser's verse and the "feminine tenderness and almost maidenly purity of feeling" ("Lecture" 15) of his "imaginative fancy." According to Coleridge, Spenser's writing "is in neither the domains of history nor geography; it is ignorant of all artificial boundary, all material obstacles; it is truly in land of Faery, that is of mental space. The poet

has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep" ("Lecture" 13). Here Spenser is the creator of a substanceless world of aery-faery dreams--the "poet's poet" as Charles Lamb reverently described him.

This view of Spenser has had negative effects, especially on Amoretti because it tends to disallow the connection between Spenser's poetry and existential reality. There is a criticism of longstanding, less sanguine than that of the Romantics, which contends that the poet's poet has had more effect on ivory tower aesthetes than common readers in the world of experience. For instance, the nineteenth-century commentator James Russell Lowell describes the Amoretti as "somewhat artificial" (356) and the Epithalamion as expressive of a "purely impersonal passion" (386). Twentieth-century criticism therefore begins with three established assumptions about Spenser: he is a poet in the laureate tradition, the poet's poet; a notable promoter of chastity; and an idealist rather than a realist.

On the other hand, Sidney's life--and the manner of his death--have always exemplified the vita activa. In forewards to the unauthorized 1591 edition of Astrophil and Stella, both Thomas Newman and Thomas Nashe appeal to the memory of the dynamic Elizabethan hero. Nashe elegizes him as Astrophil: "Dear Astrophel, that in the ashes of thy love livest again like the phoenix" (Rollins and Baker 324). With the suggestion that the ashes of Sidney's

feelings are apparently his sonnets, Nashe implies a connection between Astrophil and Sidney that generations of readers will ponder. For Nashe, as for many twentieth-century critics, the sequence is highly dramatic--a "tragicomedy of love" (Rollins and Baker 324): "the chief actor here is Melpomene the argument cruel chastity, the prologue hope, the epilogue despair" (Rollins and Baker 324).

Sidney's first biographer Fulke Greville implies that Astrophil and Stella was of little consequence to the Protestant hero; indeed, Sidney, it seems, would have consigned these "vanities" to dust. Greville claims that Sidney's intent was to turn "barren philosophy precepts into pregnant images of life" (Gouws 10). However, on his deathbed, he made a general retraction out of fear that his literary works were "more apt to allure men to evil than to fashion any goodness in them. And from this ground, in that memorable testament of his, he bequeathed no other legacy but the fire to this unpolished embryo" (Gouws 11).

Sidney was a realist, not a dreamer, in the literary criticism of the Romantic age. Charles Lamb also locates reality in Astrophil and Stella:

. . . they are not rich in words only, in vague and unlocalised feelings--the failing too much of some poetry of the present day--they are full, material, and circumstantiated. Time and place appropriates every one of them. It is not a fever of passion wasting itself upon a thin diet of dainty words, but a transcendent passion pervading and illuminating action, pursuits, studies, feats of arms, the opinions of

contemporaries and his judgment of them. An historical thread runs through them, which almost affixes a date to them; marks the when and where they were written. (254-55)

It was the spirit of Sidney's life rather than of his poetry that fascinated Shelley who depicted him as "sublimely mild, a spirit without spot." As William Sessions recently noted, "not the complex actuality of [his] works but the identity of the hero would gradually shape the literary imagination" (1). This was the aristocratic life of a courtier, not of a "commonwealthsman", as Lamb pointed out. And, as with many Renaissance poets, readers have often judged his poetry according to their partiality to one or the other.

In the nineteenth century, Astrophil and Stella was allowed, through editorial intervention, to transcend reality. Sidney's demure editors and biographers, Sarah M. Davis (1839), H.R. Fox Bourne (1862), and A.B. Grosart (1873) added sonnets renouncing love that Sidney had not included in Astrophil and Stella. Grosart even suggested a reordering to protect Sidney's reputation:

. . . upon the dates of these Sonnets and Poems is our verdict of shame or praise; and shame has been too readily pronounced. E.g. there are Sonnets that, though placed onward, seem to belong to a very early period, while 'Stella' in heart and hand was still free and to be wooed.
(xxxv)

Criticism of Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti is often based on oppositions mobilized between Sidney and Spenser: courtier vs. professional poet, soldier vs. aesthete, knight vs. shepherd, lover vs. scholar, realist

vs. idealist, youth vs. age. In terms of English sonneteering, their sequences represent two different attitudes to life and love. Depending upon whether or not criticism defends or attacks realism, artifice, aestheticism, originality, drama, form, rhetoric, imitation, subversion, myth, integration and so on, their fortunes change. Criticism of these poems is therefore a sensitive barometer of changes in critical perspectives, and of the ideological and political investments of different twentieth-century critics.

In a number of important revisions, the literary criticism of Renaissance poetry in this century consolidates but then questions and sometimes even rejects this humanist version of literary production. In the five important moments in Anglo-American literary theory examined in this study--romantic expressivism, modernism, reader-response criticism, new historicism, and feminism--the extent to which critics either retain, abandon, or deconstruct the humanist account of literature and of history will be a major focus. The transition from the modern to the postmodern, which involves the shift from essentialist to materialist views of literature and the human, will therefore be explored in this study.

How changing notions of man and the human affect the reception of Sidney's Astrophil and Stella and Spenser's Amoretti will be the subject of this investigation. It will trace the epistemological shifts registered in twentieth-century literary criticism. As the first

chapter makes clear, critics at the turn of the century possess a firm confidence in literature as the intentional activity of an autonomous subject. Modernist criticism, examined in Chapters Two and Three, is more concerned with the internal economy of the literary order or the literary text. It brackets or downplays (though never dispenses with) the intentional author with an appeal to the universal rather than individual subjectivity informing literature. Though the reader-response criticism discussed in Chapter Three still owes much to modernist assumptions about literature, it initiates the process of questioning the expressivist or aesthetic humanist account of literature. The concern with context, audience, and rhetoric foreshadows a "revisionist" literary history which begins, according to Gary Waller, about 1977 (English 289) with the induction of theories and philosophies such as Marxism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, and semiotics into Anglo-American literary criticism. Chapters Five and Six will examine the revision of the humanist critical tradition in the new historicism and feminism respectively.

Like many contemporary critiques and thorough deconstructions of earlier critical moments, this study takes for granted their contributions. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the romantic-expressivist enthusiasm of Sir Sidney Lee and his early twentieth-century colleagues, the subject of Chapter One, was put into the

service of establishing a respectable disciplinary status for English literature. Critics of Lee's generation were often called upon to justify the study of English texts which were seen as far inferior to the Classics. They invest their criticism with appeals to Beauty and Truth in order to invest English poetry with inviolable essence. While their enthusiasms are later rejected, they establish a foundation for the discipline.

The modernists have often been accused of favouring a- or anti-historical analyses of poetry, as the chapters on their criticism will indicate. But they firmly establish a main line of English authors resurrecting some formerly marginalized figures, and they bring considerations of a tradition to their analysis. This is part of a systematizing of the study of English as an academic discipline. In some modernists' attempts to make literary criticism scientific and objective, the techniques of close interpretation that continue to do service for literary critics today are established. The modernists work out definitions and distinctions that make literary criticism today the work of experts, not dilettantes. Chapter Two examines this history.

Moreover, the spectacular discoveries of the numerological formalists, whose ideological parameters are probed in Chapter Three, would not have been possible without the thoughtful and painstaking scholarly example of the "old" literary historical critics. While some modernists tended to lose sight of the cultural

specificity of Renaissance poetry, others insisted on careful research. Numerological criticism therefore retains its highly respectable status today in spite of a general ambivalence about some of its thematics. Even though postmodernist critics are uneasy with the ahistorical tendencies of formalism, "formalism retains its operative power because in the face of mounting indifference, it holds firm in its stubborn allegiance to the intrinsically literary, stressing the autonomy of the language arts" (Newman 109). It is an autonomy that the literary institution has no desire to dismantle completely. Moreover, the formalism of the New Critics and others still guides the interpretive methods of most literary specialists even with their newly found self-reflexive historicity.

Another direction in which old historical scholarship directed criticism was toward the rhetorical motives of the Renaissance poet. Many kinds of reader-response criticism, one of which is examined in Chapter Four, resulted in a contextualization of poetry. Today, our sense of the sixteenth-century audience and of the material conditions in which literature was written and disseminated is far more comprehensive than it was in earlier decades.

Chapter Five is a discussion of some of the postmodern approaches to the sonnets in the new historicism and cultural materialism. These critical

methods have foregrounded the role of the present in our interpretation of the past. Furthermore, new historicism has championed the literary text's creative role in the production of history.

Feminist analysis of Renaissance poetry, the subject of Chapter Six, has recovered many lost and "marginalized" voices of the past, and has been instrumental in the publication and analysis of the literary works of women of the Renaissance. Feminist critiques of literary discourse have also drawn attention to the gender-specific features of a purportedly universal humanism.

Like Sidney's Defence, the following study takes into account the dialectic between essentialism and materialism. As ruthlessly and perhaps with more subtlety than many of the most thoroughgoing deconstructors, Sidney undercuts the historiographer, the philosopher, and the poet-speaker, all of whom are "lifted up with the vigour of [their] own invention" (100). Yet he extolls the virtue of their Daedalian wits. In the end, Sidney refuses to resolve this dialectic to the satisfaction of the profane wits on either side. Though this study focusses on some inconsistencies and investments in modern and contemporary critical theory, it applies the techniques and sometimes the enthusiasms developed in many of them.

In the following chapters, expressivist, modernist, and postmodernist critical approaches are examined with a view to questioning some of their strong arguments, in the same way that Sidney's speaker locates some of the

problems with the strong arguments of Pugliano, the zealous horseman in the Exordium of the Defence. The speaker looks critically at Pugliano's claims:

Nay, to so unbeliev'd a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a prince as to be a good horseman. Skill of government was a pedanteria in comparison. Then would he add certain praises, by telling what a peerless beast a horse was, the only serviceable courtier without flattery, the beast of most beauty, faithfulness, courage, and such more, that if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wish'd myself a horse. (95)

Pugliano represents the myopia sometimes induced by partisanship. "Self-love is better than any gilding," the speaker notes, "to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves are party" (95). This unavoidable reality is confirmed in many of the ensuing discussions.

Note

¹ Elizabeth Story Donno has argued that Sidney's purpose was to show the existence of literary conventions in the Defence and in historiography: "While not, in fact, opposing history (or even philosophy), he adapted the configuration of [Jacques] Amyot's Preface [to his study of history] in order to underscore his own forensic performance . . ." (298). Moreover, Ronald Levao contends that Sidney speaks as a rhetorician and poet who upbraids the philosopher and the historian because they refuse to recognize that the techniques of the literary artist form a basic part of their practice. Thus, the Defence proves that "any attempt at rational communication leads to fiction making. Our only choice is whether or not to acknowledge the pretense" (229).

CHAPTER ONE

In 1904, the biographer and Shakespearian scholar Sir Sidney Lee, who succeeded Sir Leslie Stephen as the editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, published in their entirety fifteen Elizabethan sonnet sequences including Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti. Lee provided a comprehensive preface to his edition that positions Sidney and Spenser in a Petrarchan tradition originating in the genius of Petrarch and culminating with the genius of Shakespeare. Shakespeare's sonnets are not included in the collection, however.

Lee's preface is an apt starting point for an analysis of twentieth-century literary criticism of the sonnets because it is interfused with a nineteenth-century romantic ethos. It is against the lively enthusiasms of Lee and others that later critics attempting a more systematic analysis will react. Nevertheless, romantic expressivism provides the essential foundations for the modernist criticism that follows it.

Lee's preface is also written at a time when the study of English, formerly in the shadow of the Classics if anywhere at all, is being established as an academic subject. Lee's generation of scholars includes George Saintsbury, Arthur Quiller Couch, Sir Walter Raleigh, W.J. Courthope, Henry Newbolt and others who, in the early twentieth century, attempt to champion English as a

humanizing enterprise. In their discussions of the value of English literature, these men employ the highly-charged and emotive terms used extensively by the Romantic poets. In the nineteenth century, these terms had become firmly established.

With industrialization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the "human" had become increasingly degraded and beleaguered. For the Romantics, art was a refuge where what was unique, valid, spontaneous, imaginative, and creative in human feeling could be preserved. As the authority of religion started to be eroded in the nineteenth century by a growing faith in the scientific truth, some of the metaphysical authority of religion was transferred to art. Matthew Arnold articulates the new status bequeathed to culture in Culture and Anarchy published in 1869. Here, culture, specifically art and literature, is opposed to the anarchy of lived experience, and culture is viewed as something that can replace the lost matrix of religion.¹

Lee and other commentators therefore develop what has been described as a "humanist hagiography" (Waller, Author 413) of English authors. In Lee's discussions of both literature and biography, he assumes that the great poets are also exemplary individuals, whose work embodies the best in human sentiment. In Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century, Lee characterizes his exemplars--More, Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare--as men of

action. Their literary works are described as a "series of exploits" (3) in literary entrepreneurship, the breath and finer spirit of the time. They reflect its "intellectual restlessness and recklessness . . . its literary productivity and yearning for novelty and adventure" (3). Lee ranks the desire to produce a national literature of unprecedented quality high on the cultural agenda of Renaissance England, as spirited an enterprise as the projects created by the new learning or by the rewards offered on the spiritual and material frontiers of the new world. His emphasis on novelty and originality, which will deeply affect his response to the "derivative" sonnet sequences he discusses in the preface to Elizabethan Sonnets, originates, to a large extent, in this patriotic conception of the English Renaissance. The perceived lack of original expression, the debt to France and Italy, in Sidney's and Spenser's sonnets puts them outside of the enterprise of the English literary Renaissance.

For Lee and others at this time, English Renaissance literature is also seen as the incipient expression of the goals of empire. Their promotion of the presence of spirit, feeling, and universality in Renaissance poetry partakes of the rhetoric of British capitalist imperialism.² On the occasion of the establishment of the Oxford School of English Literature and Language at the turn of the century, W.J. Courthope identifies a role for literature in British civilization: "it should

surely . . . be the object of all patriotic endeavour to strengthen the established principle of authority in matters of taste, and to widen its base so as to meet the necessities of our imperial society" (29). Foremost among these necessities are the process and progress of civilization. Lee also insists that the purpose of biography (and for him biography and literature are closely related) is to transmit an individualism that will meet these needs. In Principles of Biography (1911), he states that "the aim of biography is, in general terms, to hand down to a future age the history of individual men and women, to transmit enduringly their character and exploits" (8).

In Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century, Spenser's and Sidney's lives exemplify both triumph and failure. Of Spenser, Lee writes, "he knew the vanity of political ambitions. But opportunities of quiet contemplation away from the haunts of politicians, opportunities for cultivating in seclusion his great literary genius, were not what he asked of those who had it in their power to fashion his line of life" (156). Indeed, "he deliberately engaged in business which lay outside Parnassian fields" (156). But it "was only as a poet that he won happiness and renown" (156), and only "in an ideal world that he found the objects of his worship" (156). This is clearly Charles Lamb's poet's poet. Spenser's "splendid poetical triumphs" (156) rather than

his "vain political endeavours" (156) have endeared him to posterity.

So, too, Sidney gave his political ambitions priority, but, in contrast to Spenser who had more time to manifest his poetic genius fully, he paid a higher price for this misdirection of energy. Lee suggests that Sidney's "boy-like impatience" (111) and "a lack of balance in his constitution" (111) account both for his unfulfilled poetic gifts and for the rash behaviour that resulted in his early death.

In his account of the two poets, Lee reveals the romantic's subordination of a real world to the world of aesthetic contemplation. Art, not life, provides the best rewards. In the criticism of T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis, and I.A. Richards, the generation of critics who follow Lee and establish the modernist critique of literature, the same separation of word and world will be maintained. In contrast to the modernists, however, Lee views history as progress, as an evolution culminating in England's world-wide hegemony.

Though Renaissance literature embodies an English spirit that pays dividends in Lee's pre-World War I world, Lee has strong misgivings about the Elizabethan sonnet sequences. As the following section will make clear, the placement of Amoretti and Astrophil and Stella in relation to Shakespeare's sonnets in his preface to Elizabethan Sonnets corresponds to his placement of them in Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century:

The poets Sidney and Spenser, who preached with every appearance of conviction the fine doctrine that the poets' crown is alone worthy of the poets' winning, strained their nerves until they broke in death, in pursuit of such will-o'-the-wisps as political or military fame. Shakespeare, with narrow personal experiences of life, and with worldly ambitions of commonplace calibre, mastered the whole scale of human aspiration and announced his message in language which no other mortal has yet approached in insight or harmony. Shakespeare's career stands apart from that of his fellows and defies methods of analysis which are applicable to theirs. (Great 15)

That Lee is a romantic humanist is evidenced throughout by his emphasis on the informing individual psyche. Convinced that "the Elizabethan sonnet, as it multiplied, travelled further and further from personal emotion and experience" (Elizabethan lii), he looks for personal authenticity and candour as the hallmarks of true poetry. Meyer Abrams describes this as expressivist poetics where poetry is defined "in terms of the imaginative process which modifies and synthesizes the images, thoughts, and feelings of the poet and authorizes the artist himself [who] becomes the major element generating both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged" (Abrams 22). This means that the poet does not seek primarily to imitate objects external to himself or an intelligible world manifested in the world of objects, for example, but to represent his own state of mind with sincerity. Abrams suggests that the authorization of the individual psyche by the Romantics

drastically effaces the importance of the audience. He also notes that this eventually leads John Stuart Mill to assert later in the nineteenth century that poetry is in the nature of a soliloquy, not heard but overheard (Abrams 25).

The poet's sincere expression is said to figure forth the "real." And that which is real or true is also beautiful, as Keats insisted. Yet it is a perception of the world available only to the extraordinary individual, to him who is "possessed of more than usual organic sensibility" (Wordsworth, "Preface" 597). Catherine Belsey notes the contradiction implied by this concept of "expressive realism" (Critical 7-14).³ Furthermore, the poet's expressivity is considered spontaneous, immediate, and original. These words reoccur in romantic expressivist criticism. Moreover, that which is neither sincere nor original is viewed not only as bad poetry, but also as ingenuine and hence immoral.

Lee therefore has little respect for the Continental or for the Elizabethan sonneteers because their work lacks "genuine passion or substantive originality" (lii). His preface is therefore an explication of "degenerate Petrarchism" (xx). Sidney's and Spenser's poems participate in this decline. An imitative quality "is visible throughout Sidney's ample effort, and destroys most of those specious pretensions to autobiographic confessions which the unwary reader may discern in them" (xliii). The biographical resonance in Astrophil and

Stella which will later provide a site for New Critical discussions of personae or post-modernist prosopopoeiac elegies, is not engaging to Lee since he concludes, possibly under the constraints of Victorian propriety,⁴ that Stella is not really Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich: "The dedication of Astrophel [Spenser's elegy for Sidney] to Sidney's wife deprives of serious autobiographical significance his description in the sonnets of his pursuit of Stella's affections" (xlili.n1).

Writing "under the glamour of Petrarchan idealism" (xlili), Sidney's habit was "to paraphrase and adapt foreign writings rather than literally translate them. But hardly any of his poetic ideas and few of his 'swelling phrases,' are primarily of his invention" (xliv).. Like many twentieth-century readers, Lee equates invention with something novel, unique, and unconditioned, but as later scholars more sensitive to the Renaissance notion of "invention" will point out, "feigned or pedantic or lifeless art does not find its opposite, then, in the natural feeling of the heart, rebelliously bursting through the trammels of form" (Tuve 39) for poets at this time. Invention could include searching the heart, the sonnet mistress' local habitation according to courtly love convention, or it could involve perusing others' works, finding matter logically rather than emotionally. Personal experience of love was not the only criterion for "invention."

Spenser is also censured for lack of originality:

"despite all his metrical versatility and his genuine poetic force, the greater part of Spenser's sonneteering efforts abound, like those of his contemporaries, in strained conceits, which are often silently borrowed from foreign literature without radical change of diction" (xciv). There is a suggestion of the clandestine in this description of Spenser's sonneteering, though Lee is careful to indict Spenser and Sidney only by implication, reserving his most strenuous vituperation for the Continental sonneteers and less notable Elizabethans. The only Amoretti which appeal to Lee are "autobiographical statements" (xciii) addressing Spenser's friends or his wife.⁵

Lee is particularly intolerant of manner. Because he assumes, like the neoclassicists, New Critics, and formalists who come later, that form and content are identical in true poetry, he is extremely disdainful of the Elizabethans' formal experiments and adaptations. Their "correct formality" is "grotesque" (xx) to him for he expects poetry to be "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" (Preface 596) as Wordsworth conceived of it. The original publisher of Amoretti described the sonnets as "sweet" and "conceited." Lee can only interpret this dubiously: "Such warnings prepare the reader for the knowledge that most of them illustrate the fashionable vein of artifice, and are founded on Italian models" (xciii). Lee is significantly enervated by his editorial task. He depicts Petrarchism as a wearisome procession of

conventional tropes and a tiresome excess of artificial, derivative language, "tedious and repugnant to true lovers of poetry" (xxv). For Lee, artifice cannot be art without true feeling. Indeed, for many nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers; artifice is superficial embellishment on essence. As I.A. Richards notes, the Renaissance poet, unlike the twentieth-century writer, was taught to amplify rather than contract his subject ("The Places" 78).

Lee's dislike of artifice can be better understood in terms of Raymond Williams' suggestion that the subordination of form in romantic poetics registers widespread disaffection with the mechanistic impositions on European societies as a result of the industrial revolutions of the late eighteenth century. It is in part "a major affirmative response, in the name of an essentially general human 'creativity', to the socially repressive and intellectually mechanical forms of a new social order" (Marxism 50). Because of the apparent disjunction between form and content, words and feelings, Lee portrays Sidney's and Spenser's sonnets as mechanistic rather than "organic." Their source is in other works rather than in what Wordsworth described as the "more than usual organic sensibility" ("Preface" 597) and spontaneous genius of the poet.

Formulating a distinction between allegory, manifested in referential, discursive language, and symbol, manifested in poetic language, Coleridge was one

of the most notable promoters of literary works as forms sui generis--unique and self-contained.⁶ Thereafter, "contrasting the spontaneous work of genius with the formal imitative work bound by a set of rules is a central tenet of Romantic theory" (Williams, Culture 37). Coleridge's distinction prejudices many toward Spenser's "allegorical" style, for allegory is given secondary status to the universal symbol. By legitimizing some sonnet sequences with uniqueness, universality, and authenticity, Lee's preface lays the groundwork for the appeal of later critics to a notion of organicism. It also articulates a longstanding ambivalence about allegory that will continue to prejudice critics against Spenser.

The imputation of illegitimacy and immorality to many sonnet sequences underwrites Lee's analysis. Most sonneteering after Petrarch and before Shakespeare is seen as a warped development, a body of poetry deformed by its illegitimate conception: "the art [of sonneteering] as it was ordinarily practiced in England was a bastard product" (lxxxvii). The Elizabethans are viewed as interlopers-- "literary pirates" xxiv) who made "raids" (lxiv) on their precursors and who quite candidly disregarded Petrarch's title to poetic devices and images. Because he co-opts so much, the sonneteer Thomas Lodge, sporting "borrowed laurels" (lxvi), "sinks deepest into the mire of deceit and mystification" (lxvi). Similarly Spenser incurred "a manifest debt" (xciv) to his Italian master.⁷ Once again, the belief in the individual poet as the source of original

conceptions produces Lee's sense that some poets have proprietary rights: "The whole country that was to be occupied by the sonneteers was mapped out by [Petrarch]" (xviii). While the English sonneteers acknowledge him as a master, they also appropriate Continental models at two or three removes from him: "Most of them pitched their tents in France, making occasional excursions into Italy" (lii). Lee's interpretation assumes and reinforces the notion of the poet as author and authorizer of, rather than practitioner within, the discourse he produces.

Shakespeare alone manages to escape attachment to a set of lyric conventions, or what contemporary theorists call "intertextuality", but not without contradiction. Lee sidesteps the issue of whether Shakespeare's sonnets are derivative, insisting on the extent to which his poetry rises above that of his contemporaries. Only Petrarch's and Shakespeare's sonnets manage a "sustained flight in the exalted regions of poetry" (x). Thus, he has left Shakespeare's sequence out of his edition; it deserves "a place apart" (ix) though its absent presence should inform the reader's experience of the works of the "wallowers in the bogs that lie at the foot of the poetic mountain" (xi).
8

As the only blithe and solitary spirits sounding the "spontaneous note[s]" (xxiv) of true poetry, Petrarch and Shakespeare are poets of genius--Petrarch is the master and Shakespeare is his legitimate heir. The origin of

their genius is prior to history, while other poets' works originate in history. Again, Coleridge provides an early articulation of the ahistorical imperative of romantic critics: "There is this difference, among many others, between Shakespeare and Spenser:--Shakespeare is never coloured by the customs of his age" ("Lecture" 9). By suggesting that Shakespeare's work echoes Barnabe Barnes' "in fuller tones" (lxxvi), and that many earlier sequences "give a cue to Shakespeare's noblest poems" (cx), Lee legitimizes Shakespeare's borrowings and predisposes the reader to view these sonnets in the shadow cast by Petrarch. What is legitimate in Shakespeare is illegitimate in Sidney and Spenser. Their work foreshadows the "mature genius" (xciv) of Shakespeare. Lee's romanticized notion of legitimized literary inheritance, full of references to crowns and laurels, implies that most of the sonneteers lay false claim to the Petrarchan genius, but Shakespeare's sonnets, which convert the "base ore" (cx) of other sonneteering ventures "into gold" (cx), ultimately perform a redemptive function and "set a glorious crown" (cx) on Elizabethan sonnet literature.

Lee possesses tremendous confidence in this version of literary history as development. His is a liberal view: individuals make history, and individual poets make literary history. Readers are liberated and humanized when poets express sincerely their extraordinary perceptions. Poetry is therefore a form of knowledge.

World War I reveals some incoherences in this notion of literature and literary reception. After the war, Lee and other teachers and scholars of his ilk are forced to defend English studies. However, they respond to the charge that English merely purveys high- and soft-minded liberal-humanist sentiment with more of it. "The War," Lee states in an address delivered to the English Association in 1918, "has brought to light some rifts in our intellectual armour" (Perspective 4). Lee's speech articulates a deep anxiety in British culture. The progressivist version of history, the notion of a rationally achieved state of civilization that had gained increasing authority since the Enlightenment, not only failed to account for World War I, but was also forced to shoulder some of the blame for it. A general purgation of humanist sentiment from the educational system, and the installation of more rigorous and scientific studies was called for. Lee opposes this "demystification" of the curriculum, of course, and argues strenuously for English as "the constant, the energetic, the unresting ally and companion of whatever other studies the calls of national enlightenment and national efficiency many prescribe" (Perspective 5).

Much of the discussion of literature's place that ensues at this time appeals to the authority of Shakespeare. The Newbolt Report of 1921 on education in England, for instance, which describes literature as a remedy for the

"morbid condition of the body politic" (Cited by Longhurst 151), insists on Shakespeare as a purveyor of the universal. Here, universality, which becomes a key term in professional criticism of this century, has subsumed earlier expressivist notions of spontaneity, originality, genius and feeling. In response to the charge that the liberal arts can no longer adequately prepare citizens for the modern technological world, literature, with Shakespeare as exemplar, is offered as a repository of universal human values. Discussions of English literature produced after World War I, then, offer a refuge from the nightmare of history rather than a solution to it. This does not change in modernist criticism.

However, romantic expressivist analyses of literature are rejected by the modernists. Indeed, the romantic expressivist critic--seen as a dilettante possessed of vague notions of taste, spirit, and feeling manifested in belletristic prose--becomes a figure of contempt. A new generation seeks something beyond individual subjectivity, something more systematic and even scientific and objective in producing a discourse on English.

The idea of individual human sensibility catalyzing human progress is also revised by the modernists. Notions of individual action and exploit seem rather effete after the horrors of 1914-18. The modernists therefore demand something larger than the individual as the wellspring of art. Their response to this particular nightmare of history is different from Lee's, and results in the most

extensive revision of twentieth-century conceptions of English Renaissance poetry. The effect of this revision on Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Notes

1

George Saintsbury's essay on Shakespeare's Grand Style indicates the extent to which the language of religion has been transposed to turn-of-the-century literary criticism:

The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, that this Grand Style is not easily tracked or discovered by observation, unless you give yourself up primarily to the feeling of it. You cannot tell how it arises, and you will often have some difficulty in deciding why it goes. It is the truest, precisely because it is the most irresponsible, of the winds of the spirit--no trade wind or Etesian gale, but a breeze that rises and falls, if not exactly as it listeth--as the genius of the poet and the occasions of the subject list. (169)

2

George Saintsbury makes universality specific in the following statement. Shakespeare "is nothing if not English, except that he is also universal" (158).

3

She suggests that a contradiction is implied by upholding the poet's vision as reality, when he is said to perceive something that others do not: "The facts of nature are there for everyone to see and to be plainly expressed; some people (high and solitary minds) perceive these facts more keenly and, if they are artists, portray them invested with a nobility not apparent to everyone, represent them differently; this different representation is also accurate" (Critical 9).

4

Questions of decorum have always had a place in biographical criticism. In her biography of Sidney in 1931,

Mona Wilson sets limits on speculation about amorous elements in his sonnet sequence: "To me it is unthinkable that Sidney should have continued to address impassioned verse to Penelope Rich after he had made Frances Walsingham his wife."

5

Similarly preoccupied by biographical verity, critics of Lee's generation establish the identity of the lady in Amoretti as Elizabeth Boyle rather than Lady Carey, one of Spenser's patrons. See I. Gollanz, "Spenseriana," PBA 3 (1907): 99-105. Gollanz reports his possession of Spenser's personal copy of The Faerie Queene with the first sonnet of Amoretti written on the fly leaf and inscribed to Elizabeth Boyle. The identity of the lady is further probed by J.C. Smith, "The Problem of Spenser's Sonnets," MLR 5 (1910): 273-81.

6

See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Organic Form," Romantic Poetry and Prose, eds. Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling (New York: Oxford UP, 1973): 655-56.

7

Lee is not the only man of his time to view literary borrowing as part of the National Debt as the title of a contemporaneous book by Thomas G. Tucker suggests: The Foreign Debt of English Literature (London: George Bell, 1907).

8

Shakespeare remains the lodestar or benchmark used to structure many twentieth-century discussions of the English sonnet. In English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1963), Douglas

Bush states that "Shakespeare as well as lesser men clings to the humanistic principles of order. He stands in the centre, not on or beyond the margins of the moral and ethical" (36). In Hallett Smith's discussion of the sonnets in Elizabethan Poetry (1952), Shakespeare's sonnets are at "the height and climax of the Elizabethan quest in the Petrarchan sonnet tradition" (176). Similarly, Patrick Cruttwell puts Shakespeare in the highest position in his study The English Sonnet (1966). In a metaphor that figures forth Shakespeare's decisive superiority, his sonnets flutter atop the pinnacle: "But all the talk about Elizabethan sonnets, like all talk about Elizabethan drama, is a pattering around the lower slopes of a mountain; when you start on the real climb, you soon find how different the air is" (22).

9

See Derek Longhurst on the Newbolt Report in "'Not for all time, but for an Age': an approach to Shakespeare studies." Longhurst notes that "the Report...tacitly admits that the teaching of English language and literature is a political matter 'involving grave national issues'...while at the same time asserting that 'literature' has nothing to do with politics, with 'the social problem', that it should be valued as a 'source of pride', a great 'bond of national unity'" (151).

CHAPTER TWO

Though its definition and dates continue to vex commentators, modernism is a term applied to a movement that revolutionized conceptions of art and history. The reception of Renaissance poetry was thoroughly transformed by modernist literary theory. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane locate modernism within the decades between 1890-1930, although its effect on literary criticism begins to be felt after World War I. Modernist assumptions, as this chapter will suggest, are strongly in evidence well into the 1950's. Indeed, modernism provided a conception of art that still has wide currency today.

Ricardo Quinones suggests that modernism redefines the notion of time and history as progressive linear development that was introduced during the Renaissance and consolidated thereafter (25). Sir Sidney Lee's writings reveal this longstanding conception. But the modernist critics who follow him challenge aspects of this "bourgeois, liberal and scientific world picture" (Quinones 16). Many of them view history as decline, not development: living amidst crass commercialism, individuals are degraded and individuality diminished by a modern world viewed as chaotic, fragmented, and philistine. These conceptions recall Matthew Arnold, in some ways the father of modernist poetics. For the

modernist, art becomes a refuge from the world, a place where lost unity, like Arnold's lost matrix of religion, can be recuperated. Supporting this pessimistic view of historical process and modern life, modernist criticism tends toward ahistorical, and sometimes even anti-historical analysis.

After 1920, alternatives to romantic expressivist readings of literature and literary history start to be offered in the critical writing of T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis, and I.A. Richards. Their evaluations of Renaissance authors and texts are widely accepted and institutionalized, not only in England but also in America. The American New Critics John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, W.K. Wimsatt, Monroe Beardsley and others support and extend the analysis of the British modernists, especially their conclusions about metaphysical poetry. The study examined in this chapter, J.W. Lever's The Elizabethan Love Sonnet, is informed by both major modernist moments.

In contrast to the liberal impulses of romantic expressivism, modernist literary theory tends to be conservative. Instead of independent originality, Eliot, for instance, insists that innovation in art must occur within a tradition. To him, the tradition or mind of Europe supersedes the individual poet's expression. In fact, he claims that a classic is produced only by subjecting the personal to the crucible of the tradition. Instead of a spontaneously conceived poem, Eliot

recommends a rational process of apprenticeship undertaken by study of the ordered tradition.

One of the conservative features of Eliot's criticism is a disdain for the personal. This is, in part, a response to the romantic expressivist critic's reliance upon standards of personal "feeling" and "taste." Eliot recommends the abnegation of self in the name of a totalizing sensibility. This is similar to F.R. Leavis' emphasis on "Life"--whole and unified--which can be located in the concrete and vivid experience of a literary work.

Even so, modernist literary theory often reifies the intentional author. For example, Leavis claims that D.H. Lawrence's work represents "a vital capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before life, and a marked moral intensity" (17). And in Eliot, the seventeenth-century metaphysical poet is said to be in possession of a unified sensibility which makes him capable of remarkable syntheses. Individual thoughts and feelings often become universals in this criticism.

I.A. Richards brackets the intentional author, too, and dwells on poetry per se. He claims that poetry organizes impulses within the mind. Coherent and integrated, unlike reality, poetry is "capable of saving us; it is a perfectly possible means of overcoming chaos" (Science 82-83). Richards' discussions help bring about the formalist focus of the New Critics and others.

Moreover, Richards seeks a practical, quantifiable, phenomenological analysis of poetry's nature and function, thereby capitulating to, rather than resisting, the prevailing positivist norms. Attempting an objective, technical study of literature, and creating poetry as an object of study is a major direction modernist literary theory takes in its bid to make English a body of knowledge worthy of being researched. After the modernists, literary criticism is no longer a game for amateurs. This "scientizing" of the discourse culminates in Northrop Frye's systematization of literary genres in Anatomy of Criticism (1957). In this study, he posits a transcendent and unified order of works.

The modernist overcomes fragmentation in a unity beyond the concerns of the individual and above the chaos of modern life in an aesthetic realm or within the autonomous art object. Nevertheless, however remote this art becomes from the world in modernist theory, it is still given social and moral authority. A poem provides a concrete experience, a concrete universal, or a vivid, dramatic reality that is said to have transformative or recuperative powers.

Modernists such as Eliot locate this intense, dramatic reality in metaphysical poetry, seen as ultimately organic and universal. The universal expression in this body of work is said to transcend the expression found in the more public genres, closely associated with time and place, such as the epic.

Consequently, Leavis and Eliot roundly reject Milton from their revised canon. Again, a vestigial expressivism haunts the modernist critique which so vehemently opposed it: those works with individual, personal voice are most engaging.

As the ensuing discussion will suggest, the elevation of the intense short lyric profoundly affects the reception of Elizabethan poetry. To Eliot, Leavis, D.H. Lawrence and other modernists the dramatic lyrics of the Renaissance reflect the organically unified society of the time. Modernist nostalgia for a perceived Renaissance environment of social and spiritual integration results in the elevation of less radical, more royalist and middle-of-the-road Anglo-Protestant poets. As David Norbrook suggests, this reflects the modernist contempt for liberalism, especially evident in Eliot (1). Eliot reserves some of his strongest vituperation for "Whiggery."

The next two chapters investigate the effects of modernist criticism on Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti. This chapter will examine J.W. Lever's The Elizabethan Love Sonnet; Chapter Three examines numerological-formalist readings of the sonnet sequences. The critiques investigated in both chapters assume that literature is autonomous and organic; that meaning is integral and univocal, belonging to the closed, organic art object or literary order; that the expressivity of a poem is.

universal; that art is unified and whole; and that poetry's unity and integration are opposed to what is found in reality. These are the salient features of modernist criticism.

In the preface to his 1956 study The Elizabethan Love Sonnet, J.W. Lever claims that his is the first attempt at a "wider critical estimate" (v) of this poetry since Sir Sidney Lee's commentary of 1904. Lever suggests that the indifference to the sonnets in the twentieth century has been engendered by a "late-romantic antipathy to form and convention caused by the assumption that poetry should provide emotional self-revelation" (v). His study explicitly rejects Lee's view that the apparent lack of originality and sincerity in most of the English sonnets bars them from serious consideration (97). It is, however, very important that poetry give voice to "a total attitude to life" (3).

Lever locates this total attitude in Shakespeare's sonnets but not in the work of the other sonneteers whose writing, he suggests, remains, for the most part, too expressive of the personal. As in Lee's Elizabethan Sonnets, Sidney and Spenser are subordinated to Shakespeare, not because they are insincere, however, but because they do not achieve Shakespeare's universal vision. This assessment places Lever firmly within a well-established modernist critical tradition. The fact that The Elizabethan Love Sonnet is published in 1956, at

least thirty years after some of the modernist literary-critical manifestos were published, suggests the lasting impact of these modernist critiques on the discipline. That the modernist desire for unproblematic unity and transcendence is still alive after World War II suggests that the desire to escape life in art is a compelling one in the twentieth century. It also suggests the reinforcement of the modernist critique in American New Criticism.

Lever's study pivots on the notion that there is an instinctive dualism in the English psyche that made it difficult for English poets writing in the tradition of Continental Petrarchism. The "Latin" cultures of Italy and France naturally accept the existence of a reciprocity between spirit and nature. Echoing "the primeval convictions of Mediterranean peoples" (9), that the "magic of sex and fertility" (7) inheres in woman, the Canzoniere achieves a singleness of vision wherein spirit and nature, inner and outer worlds are interwoven. This constitutes what Lever views as the integrated romance tradition which provided these cultures with a therapeutic monism, one which was inadequate, however, for the complex needs of the English. The English sonneteers gradually rewrite Petrarchism. Shakespeare's sonnets find an ultimate solution to the problems that the other English sonneteers cannot quite overcome. Thus, Shakespeare achieves a new synthesis, doing for the English psyche what Petrarch did

for the Italian.

Lever contends that the dualistic Anglo-Saxon psyche, unlike the integrated Latin one, perceives a hostile and transitory natural world and defines itself in opposition to all that it associates with nature, including hetererotic love. Germanic cultures such as this desire a transcendence of the material. They achieve oneness with God by a rejection of material reality. English poets usually align themselves with a heavenly Father who is associated with virtue and morality opposed by the Germanic mentality to the sensual and material. Lever suggests that God is conceived of differently in England than in Italy. In detailed chapters on Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare, Lever examines how the generally phlegmatic Anglo-Saxon collective unconscious affects the form and content of the sonnet. Wyatt, Surrey, and Sidney are fledgling romantic expressivists whose partial achievements are overgone by Shakespeare who transcends individual preoccupations. The thematic development of The Elizabethan Love Sonnet therefore represents the critical shift from romantic expressivism to modernism.

According to Lever, a nascent individualism in early modern England demanded some mode of expression. Wyatt was the first to realize that the sonnet, "a form devised to express complex personal experience" (35), could answer this need. Forced to accommodate his vision to structure, Wyatt struggles with a rhyme scheme and verse

form alien to English speech patterns and modes of thought. He eventually produces the staple Elizabethan sonnet form, consisting of three logically rather than "intuitively linked" quatrains followed by an epigrammatic final couplet that often completely reverses the development of the sonnet or "bangs the door on the whole argument" (26).

Wyatt significantly transforms the sonnet, appropriating it to "the great 'line of wit' that runs through from Sidney to Donne and the cavalier poets of the seventeenth century" (31). Where Petrarch martyrs himself to the divine Laura, Wyatt ultimately rejects and dismisses his "fals" and fickle lady. In fact, Lever states that "Wyatt's best love poetry was really out-of-love poetry" (31). Wyatt's cynical and rebellious tone is viewed as the pragmatic, realistic English ego of the self-absorbed Tudor amorist, chafing against the dreamy, illusionary features of the romance vision. Wyatt's formal innovation moves the English sonnet toward its greatest moment in Shakespeare.

Similarly, Surrey is seen to reject the romance tradition as his poetic career develops. His experiments with verse form give the sonnet a logical linking pattern suited to contrasts and apposition (46), and to explicating narrative or descriptive development (44). In his poems, Surrey is a detached onlooker, a "realist" rather than a transcendentalist, observing and recording

what he sees without being implicated in any mystical union with the natural world. Again, Lever asserts the masculine character of the English poet's work: the robust persona, the logically balanced rhyme scheme, and the martial quality of the metre. Lever also proposes that Surrey gave the English sonnet structure a potential for point, clarity, and objectivity that would later be exploited by the Elizabethans. In this chapter, Lever presents Surrey's empiricist sonneteering not only as a rejection of an outmoded medieval world view, but also as part of a significant development in the evolution of Western thought, a development accompanied by the abandonment of ineffectual romance themes and carnal love. Surrey also effects changes that will result in Shakespeare's totalizing transformation of European sonneteering.

Sidney also prefigures Shakespeare. In Astrophil and Stella, Sidney provides the first comprehensive objection to the orthodoxy of courtly love. Lever views this poem as the fullest articulation in the sonnet genre of the conflicts experienced by the self-absorbed English personality, who, like Wyatt and Surrey, is unable to countenance the premises on which the therapeutic monism of the Latin vision is based. Courtly love is rejected in a dramatization of its limitations and its negative impact on the English psyche.

In this discussion, Sidney appears to have portrayed a modern temperament in Astrophil, "a highly critical

modern ego" (70). Unlike his precursor's personae, his speaker is concerned with psychology. As a good British empiricist, he relies on common sense and observation rather than on metaphysics and intuition. He explores character, personal relationships, individual action in the social environment, and, most importantly, the ego.

In Lever's analysis, Astrophil and Stella is endowed with aspects of the modern novel. It becomes an expressive realist text, expressive of the personal rather than the universal, however. Sidney uses everyday speech rhythms in the sonnets (86); his sonnets rely on causal development of narrative, made possible by the logical structural features of the English sonnet; he depicts love as a physical phenomenon; he portrays mythological figures as motivated characters in a middle-class domestic drama. Focussing on character, he brings the sonnet mistress down to earth. Stella--"drawn from life" (75)--emerges as a heroine rather than a goddess out of Sidney's "determination to remain true to the facts of experience even at the cost of reducing [her] pre-eminence" (72). Personification is the salient figurative device, used to embody psychological aspects of Astrophil's "very real" (84) emotional dilemma. Indeed, Lever argues that Astrophil, in a prolepsis of English Romanticism, projects his ego onto mute, insensate objects in nature. This prepares the way for the Shakespearian synthesis which will achieve "a stereoscopic focussing of the inner and

outer panorama within a single line of vision" (86) and provide "a more complete integration of the destinies of nature and mankind" (86) than was hitherto afforded by the Italian mythopoeic genius. Even if it does not comprehend a fused sensibility as does Petrarch's Canzoniere, Lever feels Astrophil and Stella plays a large part in the rejection of Latin "romance illusions" (95) for realism.

The poem is viewed not only as an intermediate stage in the evolution of literary forms, but also as a part of the rejection of the ideology of Catholic Europe. Here, the Protestant ethic plays a role in the renewed spirit of Petrarchism in English poetry. Used to steering a sober course between asceticism and dissolution, Sidney--with "nothing in him of either 'monk' or 'libertine'" (78)--was "a good Protestant" (78) who could not countenance the excesses of courtly love's "violent infatuation" (78). For the quintessential English poet, "whose creed laid its main stress upon the individual conscience and practical morality" (79) and whose "creative expression operated in more organic accord [than did Petrarch's] with intellectual principles" (79), sensual love could have no "serious claim upon the intellect" (78). Lever implies that morality, like the Anglo-Protestant cast of mind, is intellectual and rational; the "line of wit" more virtuous than Mediterranean mythopoeism.

Like Lever, Yvor Winters prefers the plain-speaking, realistic poetic voice which he locates in the poetry of

Gascoigne, Raleigh, and others, but not, however, in the English sonnet sequences. In a famous article published in 1939, Winters states that Sidney and Spenser were "more concerned with rhetoric for its own sake" ("Sixteenth" 82). Their sonnet sequences do not represent the "native strain" which Winters describes as direct, honest, and matter-of-fact (77). Lever also supports the superiority of the plain, realistic voice, but locates this native strain in the main line of sonneteers.

Moreover, Lever associates the native strain with Protestantism. Sidney's Astrophil and Stella emerges from this discussion as a refutation of Petrarch's vision in the name of Protestant morality: "Here are the Protestant teachings [in Sonnet V] that the godly life is also the true 'life according to nature', and the cult of courtly love a mere pagan heresy" (78). The conclusions Lever later arrives at concerning Shakespeare's exalted status in the hierarchy of Renaissance sonneteers are vested in his analysis of Sidney's sonnets as an evolutionary stage in the development of Renaissance poetry. Petrarch's Canzoniere are given intermediary status, occupying a position half-way between pagan heresy and the supreme moment of Protestant truth. This occurs in Shakespeare's sonnets which effect a complete reformation of the Renaissance lyric tradition.

Yet according to Lever's criterion for great poetic achievement--Shakespeare's integrated, universal vision--

Sidney fails, for Astrophil is too self-regarding to achieve any fusion of inner and outer worlds. Lever describes him as a philosopher with a toothache, "an Elizabethan John Tanner" (70), who fights a losing battle "against the biological urge in his own psyche which interferes with his intellectual self-sufficiency" (70).

While love distracts rather than unites spirit and sense in Astrophil and Stella, Amoretti reintegrates them by conjoining love with sacramental marriage. As the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, marriage validates love as a cosmic force. In contrast to Italian dependency on "the transcendental powers of the soul" (136), the Spenserian genius employed the virtues associated with the Protestant conscience and anti-monasticism to integrate nature and spirit. Thus, the Spenserian synthesis utilizes middle-class morality to legitimize romantic love while rescuing it from the counterproductive frustration of unrequited courtly love and from the alienated ego of Astrophil.

Lever presents Spenser's career objective as the attempt to transform love as found in romance epics by making it the visible signifier of ultimate truth instead of the allegorical representative of the "vanities of sense." In his great epic, Spenser meets with success (95). When Spenser turns to sonneteering, he continues in this vein, relying on the cultural authority of Neoplatonic idealism to further the process of legitimization. Bound together by "mental esteem" (109),

the lovers in Amoretti present an instance of amor rationale leading both toward ultimate virtue and truth. According to Lever, Spenserian love is moral, not erotic; any apparent instances of the erotic in Amoretti are dispensed with as merely allegorical "manifestations of the unseen divinity in nature" (111). References to the body are "denaturalized symbols" (113), metaphysical attributes that exist only in the realm of thought (113). For the speaker in Amoretti, the "natural piety" (109) of the lady functions as the ultimate seduction. The poem is grounded in the stasis of philosophical idealism rather than in the vertigo of sensual desire. Unlike the sonnets hitherto produced by the English poets, the Amoretti are speculative and metaphysical.

Born of the happy conjunction of Protestant matrimonial love and Neoplatonism, the Amoretti achieve what Lever suggests is a "unity of thought for which he [Spenser] has rarely been given due credit" (113-14). One might therefore expect Lever to give pride of place to the unification achieved by Spenser. The Anglo-Protestant marriage of true minds proposed in the poem appears to provide a way out of the dilemma of English dualism. But for Lever, Spenser's synthesizing ingenuity is an anachronistic interlude in the development toward dramatic, realistic work in the English line of wit. Many of the qualities Lever attributes to Amoretti are those he previously assigned to the Latin sensibility; hence, the

Spenserian synthesis, characterized as sublimated, Platonic, speculative, philosophical, and transcendental is largely retrogressive and cannot provide the ultimate solution to the problem Lever has identified.

Here, Lever reinforces a modernist preference for immediacy and drama in the lyric, something which critics seldom locate in Amoretti. In Patrick Cruttwell's The Shakespearian Moment published a few years after Lever's study, Amoretti is said to lack the "bedroom reality" (17) of Donne's love lyrics. Cruttwell uses the sequence as an example of the moribund state of Elizabethan poetry before the dramatic Shakespearian moment which prefigures Donne:

In the last years of the sixteenth century a new mentality was emerging, critical, dramatic, satirical, complex, and uncertain: with it, and part of it, came a new style in poetry to give it expression. This is the true style of the Shakespearean moment. We can call it "metaphysical" or "mature Shakespearean" as we like: in essentials it is the same style, however varied be the subjects, forms, or purposes which employed it. The first thing to make clear is that Shakespeare himself was well aware that something new was emerging, and aware of its nature. (39)

Lever's preferences emerge in the comparison of Amoretti with Astrophil and Stella. Lever takes note of the traditional distinction between the "passion, wit, and gallantry" (96) of Sidney's poem and Spenser's "calm, more domestically approved brand of love-making" (96), and develops his own modernist criticism of Amoretti on this basis. The homely domesticity of many of the poems, indeed, even their depiction of legitimized love, works against their poetic merit, for it robs the sequence of

drama and passion. Lever also proposes that the poem is a pastiche of sonnets written throughout Spenser's career and therefore lacks structural coherence. In the 1596 edition of Amoretti and Epithalamium, there are "unmistakable signs of haste and botching" (101). This allows Lever to set aside eighteen sonnets which he suggests belong to an earlier period and jar with the dominant tone. Furthermore, Spenser's preference for allegory over the newly established vogue for metaphor and personification is outmoded. Allegory gives the sequence the dream-like quality of the Latin romance vision, radically at odds with the embryonic realism in Wyatt, Surrey, and Sidney.

Spenser's well-refined allegorical technique creates characters who are emblematic rather than "drawn from real life." Allegory is an obstacle to self-expression, the reason for the English poets' eagerness to employ the sonnet form in the first place. Here again is the Coleridgean prejudice against allegory. David Norbrook gives the following explanation for modernist suspicion of allegory:

Leavis and his followers . . . tended to prefer either private, lyric poetry, or public verse which had a strong personal voice; the explicitly public forms of epic and political allegory fell from critical favour. Allegory was seen as marking a dissociation, a split between form and content, between public rhetoric and individual voice. The true poetic unity was 'organic' or 'symbolic', reflecting an indissoluble union between tradition and individual talent. (2)

In the next section of this chapter, the influence of Eliot's notion of this indissoluble unity on Lever's criticism will be examined more closely.

Lever suggests that Spenser paid a high price for attempting to use the sonnet for something other than what it was designed for: Amoretti is marked by "aesthetic incongruity" (136) and "conventional irrelevancies" (136). In addition, Spenser shows a "retrogressive tendency" (137) to use alliteration and archaic language. Lever also dismisses the innovative interlaced rhyme scheme of the Spenserian sonnet which "weakened the capacity of his verse-form to suggest apposition, contrast, or logical correlation" (134), the hallmarks for Lever of the newly-evolved English sonnet. The changes wrought by Spenser's "individual genius" (137) are thus dispensed with for the sake of preserving the status of Lever's modernist notion that the fledgling self-expression of Wyatt, Surrey, and Sidney marks an evolutionary stage in the "main line" (137) development of English, indeed Renaissance, poetry. Like T.S. Eliot, Lever locates the development of a unified vision in the Renaissance.

Spenser shunned the paths of sense perception (137) that later Elizabethan poets were compelled to follow: "In their work the phenomenal world was unconditionally accepted as the true field of the sonnet, and no limits were set to the scope of their discoveries or their modes of formal expression" (137). They foreshadow "a contemporary vision of reality" (138), while Spenser is

backward looking. The evolving sensibility of the English poet produces "a hyperacute curiosity concerning all forms of phenomenal behaviour...an eager desire to experience all knowledge upon his own nerve endings" (140). Lever depicts these poets as the harbingers of Renaissance humanism, as poetical adventurers and entrepreneurs boldly entering new poetic territory to explore human personality and the human microcosm. Humanism's finest moment is beginning to emerge as distinctively English: "In the last decade of the sixteenth century the Renaissance ferment of ideas and emotional responses would seem to have reached its climax in England" (160). Under the aegis of the Protestant virtues--"psychic discipline and virtuous exercise of the will" (141)--the Elizabethans are moving toward a resolution of the "universal antinomies" (141), an integration of nature and spirit in "the little world of man" (141). The Elizabethan love sonnet finally achieves the ultimate thematic transformation of Shakespeare whose poetry will draw "the intellectual vigour and the intuitive sensibility of the age into a great imaginative synthesis" (161).

In this manner, Lever's discussion of the English sonneteers prepares the reader to accept Shakespeare's sonnets as the cynosure of Renaissance humanism. The evolution into self-consciousness, traditionally viewed as coterminous with the development of Renaissance anthropocentrism, is portrayed as an English moment in

cultural history. And the development of universal consciousness is attributed to Shakespeare. As the repository of universal themes, the "unalterable liturgy" (259) of Shakespeare's verse creates a "universal redemption" (272). With a "leap of imagination" (264) rather than faith, Shakespeare immortalizes the Friend, man the measure of all things.

Like many other canonical projects of the first half of the twentieth century, Lever's analysis reflects specifically British concerns. It tends to be somewhat elitist and at times chauvinistic in its attempt to establish the cultural superiority of the English Renaissance poets and establish their place within a tradition. Lever's greatest debt is to T.S. Eliot's conception of the tradition. He co-opts the terms of reference which established the hegemony of the metaphysical lyric for his analysis of the sonnets. The next section will examine his attempt to use Eliot's critical vocabulary and evaluative criterion to resurrect critical interest in the sonnets.

In the twentieth century, the reevaluation of the metaphysical lyric was initiated in 1921 by the publication of H.J.C. Grierson's Metaphysical Lyrics and Poetry of the Seventeenth Century and endorsed by T.S. Eliot's famous essay "The Metaphysical Poets", a review of that anthology. This movement established the lyrics of Donne and others as the height of Renaissance poetic achievement.¹ To Eliot and Grierson, the metaphysical lyric had a "psychological interest" (Grierson 113), "something permanently valuable, which subsequently disappeared but ought not to have disappeared" (Eliot, Metaphysical 1062). In Eliot's "impersonal" view of poetry which establishes the hegemony of the metaphysical lyric, the expressivist quality of these lyrics will be put into the service of the "mind of Europe." Eliot's ideas inform The Elizabethan Love Sonnet.

By 1947, critics like Rosemond Tuve had begun to notice "a growing tendency to forsake Elizabethan for Jacobean poets" (Tuve 6). In the opening pages of Lever's study, he also observes that aureate Elizabethan poetry has been eclipsed by enthusiasm for metaphysical poetry. Labelling this a "distortion of perspective" (v), he reminds readers that "the very qualities for which metaphysical verse is mostly admired led on to the Augustan sundering of individuality and tradition" (v). Echoes of Eliot's famous essay "Tradition and the

Individual Talent" are present here. Eliot's belief that a productive blend of thought and feeling in the unified sensibility of the Renaissance was lost in the English tradition in and around the time of Milton and Dryden is also represented in Lever's study.

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot asserted an "impersonal" theory of poetry as an escape from personality and emotion (58). The poet becomes a medium or receptacle which catalyzes the tradition and his own talent thereby producing mature art. Endorsing Eliot's notion that it is only in "the traditional patterns of thought and feeling that the distinctive personality of the poet [becomes] integrated with society's estimate of the individual" (Lever 57), Lever uses Eliot's ideas to establish the superiority of Shakespeare's sonnets. Lever's Shakespeare is an "impersonal genius" (Lever 168) who effaces his personality sufficiently to contribute to the greater glory of his culture. He is Eliot's exemplary poet--"the highest point of consciousness" (Eliot, Use 15) of his time--his mind a repository able to "digest and transmute the passions which are its material" (Eliot, "Tradition" 54). With "an alert mind and heightened sensibility" (Lever 206), Shakespeare makes the definitive cultural statement: "the English genius speaks through Shakespeare's sonnets as surely as the Italian genius speaks through the sonnets of Petrarch" (Lever 276). Lever's modernist analysis retains the concept of a genius

from romantic expressivism, though this genius supersedes the individual.

The Shakespearian sensibility is more alive to the "deepest concerns of the age" (167) and finds a site for the expression of them in the Poet's Friend who is man the measure of all things. Neither Sidney nor Spenser achieves the necessary balance between tradition and their talent to become the great vatic sonneteer: Sidney does not move beyond personal or psychological concerns and Spenser is too hidebound by the medieval allegorical tradition. Thus, one is adolescent and the other old-fashioned. This assessment also reflects Eliot's analogy between the maturity of a human being or society and poetic maturity ("What" 55). If a poet is too immature or outmoded, he cannot produce classic, universal art: he lacks comprehensiveness, that is, either the emotional control or the ability to balance the tradition with the promptings of his individual genius ("What" 54).

Lever's suggestion that Shakespeare's sonnet sequence transcends the subjectivity of his Continental and English precursors still trapped in the romance tradition, and becomes more structurally controlled as it moves beyond the "psychic disintegration" (167) imaged in the disordered group of poems addressed to the Mistress also makes it a classic poem in Eliot's terms. Eliot stated that great art was achieved by striving "toward a higher and clearer conception of Reason, and a more severe and

serene control of the emotions by Reason" (Cited by McCallum 25). Eliot's classic--described as universal, mature, comprehensive, impersonal, and objective ("What" 69)--possesses those qualities that Western culture would subsume under the rubric of the Rational. Lever suggests that the amor rationale of the Poet for the Friend provides better matter for a classic poem than does romantic love which so unsettles the analytical Anglo-Saxon mind. Unable to express their highly logical vision in the Italian sonnet structure, these poets gradually perfect a form based on a logic of apposition, contrast, and final correlation, the "perfect instrument" for "all those capable of objectivity in their response to personal experience" (50). It ultimately becomes the perfect instrument for Shakespeare's classic, depersonalized poetry.

Eliot believed that classic poetry is produced in a healthy culture, and that the spectacular achievement of the metaphysical poets was the result of an achieved balance between thought and feeling, between tradition and individuality, in the Renaissance sensibility. No doubt inspired by Eliot's assertion that the metaphysicals were the direct heirs of the Elizabethan dramatists, Lever finds the supreme expression of the unified sensibility, the "still integrated personal outlook of Elizabethan England" (Lever vii), in Shakespeare's sonnets. Contending that "no culture can function healthily for long" (57) without a balanced sensibility, Lever views

Shakespeare's unification of the English habit of mind through the agency of amor rationale as a great social service.

The Elizabethan Love Sonnet equates nature and materiality, opposes them to the Rational, and posits them as things to be transcended by Reason in order to produce great art. This does not, however, constitute any departure from the main line of modernist criticism which is marked by the desire for this kind of transcendence in a closed, organic order. In 1949, Cleanth Brooks gives a famous explanation of the organic model and its relationship to the New Critical view of poetry as a special language usage:

if we are to emphasize, not the special subject matter, but the way in which a poem is built, or-- to change the metaphor--the form which it has taken as it grew in the poet's mind, we shall necessarily raise questions of formal structure and rhetorical organization: we shall be forced to talk about levels of meanings, symbolizations, clashes of connotation, paradoxes, ironies, etc.

Moreover, however inadequate these terms may be, even so, such terms do bring us closer, I feel, to the structure of the poem as an organism . . . (Well Wrought 199)

The neoclassical conceptions of poetry in Eliot's criticism are one highly influential manifestation of the modernist desire for organic order, that is, for unity, balance, harmony, self-sufficiency, and resolution in art. In "The Metaphysical Poets", Eliot extolls the virtues of the organically unified structure of the typical metaphysical poem. Lever subsequently finds an "organic

unity" (172) in Shakespeare's sonnets that appears to have much in common with the characteristic design of Eliot's metaphysical poem. The organic unity of Eliot's metaphysical poem depends upon initial disequilibrium. Ensuing dramatic tensions and paradoxes are ultimately resolved, however. The exemplary metaphysical poem amalgamates disparate experience and brings what is chaotic, irregular, and fragmentary into a new unity ("Metaphysical" 1063).

Lever rearranges the order of Shakespeare's sonnets so that they constitute a dramatic narrative. The Poet undergoes a series of conflicts that threaten him with psychological dissolution but they are finally resolved by the humanist vision. In a movement that corresponds in significant ways to the dramatic dislocation and subsequent resolution in Eliot's metaphysical poem, "the great antinomies of life expressed in the structural metaphors of the sequence are resolved and new symbols of integration replace the former patterns of images" (260).

As Eliot discerned the ingenuity of the Elizabethan dramatists in the metaphysical poets, Lever inherits Eliot's critical strategies and seeks aspects of the quintessential metaphysical poem in the Elizabethan sonnets. He repeatedly describes Shakespeare's metaphorical devices as "conceits", seen by Eliot and others as the characteristic feature of metaphysical poetry, used to create sudden contrasts and stunning comparisons. Eliot suggested that a salutary unification

was performed by what Samuel Johnson once described without admiration as the "yoking together" of heterogeneous ideas ("Metaphysical" 1061). Lever also finds that Shakespeare "yokes together" (194) images of natural fertility and human procreation. Following Eliot, who observed that the conceit produced a "telescoping of images and multiplied associations" ("Metaphysical" 1061), Lever remarks on the "telescoping of two images" (193) in two of Shakespeare's sonnets. Similarly, Lever suggests that the similes in Amoretti give the reader a "direct sensuous apprehension" (132) of likeness. This is exactly the phrase that Eliot uses to describe the art of Chapman and Donne ("Metaphysical" 1063). And finally, Lever's discussion of Shakespeare's Sonnet XIII echoes the typical modernist critique of the metaphysical poem:

"Progressively, by juxtaposition, by word-play, and finally through an intuitive penetration to their essential oneness, the seemingly disparate images are made to coalesce" (196).

Seeking unity at many levels--not only in the structure of the sequence and in the dissociated mind of its protagonist, but also in the habit of mind of European Renaissance cultures and in the development of the sonnet genre in England--Lever makes extensive use of Eliot's concepts of unification and dissociation of sensibility. The unified sensibility of the Mediterranean peoples, "where intellectual cognition and sensuous perception have

fully combined" (5), is opposed to that of the English. To achieve an integration of thought and feeling or a unified sensibility appropriate for English culture, Continental Petrarchan form and matter is gradually taken apart in successive permutations by Wyatt, Surrey, and Sidney, and finally put together again in a new unity by Shakespeare who integrates the "intellectual vigour and intuitive sensibility of the age" (161).

In the final section of his study, Lever's use of the concept of unity fully reveals his desire for a closed organic structure. He praises a group of sonnets which he suggests produce "The Immortalization" of the Friend by the Poet. The Immortalization culminates in "a moment of stillness when all the contradictions of life are suspended in the autumnal glow of Love's victory over Time" (267). In his use of upper case letters, Lever essentializes Love. He echoes Shakespeare in a description of "love shining eternally in the black ink of poetry" (252). This love resolves the "antinomies of life" in art. Artistic creation, the product of the "fully human" love between the Poet and his Friend, is privileged over procreation: "It is, of course, a marriage of true minds whose progeny will be immortal verse instead of the physical union the Poet had urged at the beginning of the sequence" (264).

This resolution is achieved in the realm of imagination only: the antinomies of time and space explored throughout the sequence "await their resolution

through the functioning of the Poet's imagination" (208). For Lever, as for Eliot, resolution occurs "outside the world of phenomenon" (Lever 260). Lever represents Shakespeare's sonnets as a monumental work of art privileged to enter Eliot's transcendent ideal order ("Tradition" 50). "Shakespeare proclaimed to the last," Lever states in terms reminiscent of Eliot, "that immortality was conferred on the creation, not its creator; that his monument celebrated not the poet but his theme" (271). But the celebration of Man and the immortalization of the Friend are accomplished in a retreat from the world.

There is a possible allusion to Donne's "The Canonization" in Lever's choice of a title for what he considers the most important group of sonnets. Like Donne's lovers, for whom love becomes a refuge, both hermitage and microcosm, Lever's Poet and Friend share a love which "constitutes its own state independent of the 'state.'" (262). The self-sufficient, aesthetic, Platonic love which is said to produce The Immortalization is described in terms reminiscent of the "profane", legendary of "The Canonization." Whether inadvertent or not, the allusion is perhaps fitting since Donne's poem, esteemed by many modernist critics, was frequently appealed to as the representative dramatic, paradoxical Renaissance lyric. In The Well Wrought Urn, Cleanth Brooks takes his title from one of its stanzas which represents for him an

apt description of the closed organic unity of the quintessential poem.

By portraying the project of English sonneteering as a rejection of romantic love, by suggesting that it produces "fierce inner conflict" (204) antithetical to organic unity, and by asserting that the Poet's "sharp revulsion to the flesh" (225) ends happily, after a "resurgence of traditional morality" (225), in art's "true consummation" (225), Lever's work reflects the modernist desire to escape time, contradiction, and materiality in art. Some critics suggest that this desire, inherited from Matthew Arnold and shared by I.A. Richards, T.S. Eliot, and F.R. Leavis, was motivated by a profound sense of an unresolvable crisis in the socio-cultural milieu (McCallum 97). Gerald Graff notes how the modernist view of the world is reflected in the mechanics of modernist poetics: "In rejecting the rational intelligibility of experience, the modern critic reduces the world to fragments and then is forced to seek a unifying principle in some form of mystical transcendence" (13).

Frank Lentricchia describes this transcendence as a reflex of twentieth-century criticism: "With Kant and Schiller is born the most visible philosophy of poetics down through Frye: aesthetic humanism" (20). What Lentricchia says about Frye would apply equally to Eliot, Richards, Leavis, or Lever:

The key to the "situation" of Frye's own discourse is his vision of an uncoerced self; it is a vision generated by a thoroughly despairing

and alienated understanding of the possibilities of historical life. (26)

Whether it is championed, eulogized, or deconstructed, this concept of the uncoerced self remains important to Anglo-American critical theory in this century. One response to its threatened status in the twentieth century is modernist idealism. Terry Eagleton suggests that the idealism of Eliot and others weakens any claim for the transformative power of art in terms of its alleged benefits for either the individual or the culture "because it usually grossly overestimates this transformative power, considers it in isolation from any determining social context, and can formulate what it means by a 'better person' only in the most narrow and abstract of terms" (Eagleton 207).

Because The Elizabethan Love Sonnet takes its inspiration from criticism which produced disinterest in Elizabethan poetry, it tends to reinforce a commonplace critical distinction between Elizabethan and metaphysical poetry. Against the bias this has created, critics such as Rosemond Tuve, K.K. Ruthven, and Alastair Fowler have affirmed that there is more evidence to bring the Elizabethan and Metaphysical poets together than to suggest that they be distinguished.²

Alastair Fowler is one of the numerological critics whose work is discussed in Chapter Three. The numerological formalists work within an interpretive tradition more aware of the cosmologies that informed the

Renaissance poet's practice. The chapter will focus on modernist features of their criticism.

Notes

1

In articles that appeared in Studies in Philology in 1917 and 1920, Raymond M. Alden contrasted Elizabethan and metaphysical conceits, and set the stage for a widespread critical practice largely indifferent to all Elizabethan poetry, except Shakespeare's. In a recent issue of the John Donne Journal, critics reassess the view that Grierson and Eliot were the originators of the preference for metaphysical poetry. See John Donne Journal 4 (1985): passim.

2

See Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery, passim; K.K. Ruthven, The Conceit, 61-64; Fowler, Conceitful Thought, 87-89.

CHAPTER THREE

In spite of the modernist emphasis on autonomous literary forms,¹ an historically contextualized criticism of Renaissance poetry never completely capitulated to rigorous formalism. Many literary critics and literary historians, including Rosemond Tuve, Douglas Bush, A.S.P. Woodhouse, Helen Gardner, and E.M.W. Tillyard, insisted upon the importance of historical context.² During the 30's and 40's, the Variorum editions of Spenser and Milton were produced. In addition, the relocation of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes in London during World War II encouraged a more interdisciplinary, historicized literary analysis through the combined efforts of iconographers, art historians, philologists, and historiographers. The unifying force of the archetypes and myths in Western culture also became a critical focus, particularly after the publication of Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism in 1957. Like Lever, Frye worked and continues to work in the tradition of Arnold and Eliot; his study was the culmination of Anglo-American aesthetic humanist literary theory.

Many Renaissance scholars educated after World War II therefore brought their knowledge of larger cultural structures to literary studies. They combined formalism and historicism, the two major and often diametrically opposed approaches to Renaissance poetry. Focussing on

the systems of symbol and myth present in the signifying systems of mankind, they were more aware than some formalists of those which most engaged the Renaissance poet. Yet they retained the formalist belief in poems as universal constructs.

Because of the hegemony of the metaphysical lyric, Elizabethan poetry was still overlooked in the 1950's and 1960's, however. Even as late as 1975, Alastair Fowler sadly noted that the "neglect of the Elizabethans has become almost total" (Conceitful 87). Elizabethan poetry, the sonnet sequence in particular, did not seem to offer the dramatic, intense, compacted experience of the metaphysical poem. Yet though Eliot had convinced many that the genius of metaphysical emotion, often opposed to that of the hyperconventional sonnet, grew out of real life, he had also alerted some to a Renaissance mind accustomed to amalgamating what moderns perceive as a heterogeneous reality. Eliot's nostalgia for poetry in an age of belief not only produced the notion of the unified sensibility, but also foregrounded the Renaissance conception of a unified creation. Ironically, this would set the stage for the redemption of the manner and matter of the Elizabethan sonnet.

Critics such as Joseph Mazzeo writing in the 1960's suggested that the seventeenth century lyricists derived a "poetic of correspondence" (Ruthven 9-16) from their belief that everything in the microcosm of this world has an occult connection with everything else. This notion of an

analogical universe was supported by the earlier work of E.M.W. Tillyard, whose The Elizabethan World Picture describes the Elizabethan conception of an integrated universe. In this, as in so many other things, the Renaissance Englishman is the heir of classical antiquity. It was St. Augustine, as K.K. Ruthven points out, who detected God's wit in the organization of the microcosm:

It was commonplace in the Renaissance to speak of the world as "a universal and public manuscript" (Religio Medici 1643, I xvi) containing sermons in stone and books in running brooks, accessible to anybody with Browne's erudition and the patience of a cryptologist. God himself could be imagined as the archetypal conceitist who created a world which St. Augustine calls an exquisite poem (De Civitate Dei, xi 18), a poem full of occult correspondences enigmatically impenetrable to undistinguished minds but an immensely rich hieroglyph to connoisseurs of the recondite. If God made poets in his own image they were bound to be conceitists who would hold up the mirror to nature and subsequently load their poems with conceits either copied directly from those in the universe around them or constructed analogously. (9-10)

Hence, critics armed with an awareness of the structures of myth and symbol, and with a new appreciation of the immense significance that the far-fetched comparison may have had for its seventeenth-century creator began to look for a more enigmatic Renaissance poetry, a poetry imperceptible to promoters of expressive realism or full-blooded formalism.

The numerological critics of the 1960's and thereafter, the heirs of Eliot, Frye, and the New Critics, produce an esoteric and scholarly criticism. They combine historicism and a reverence for archetype and myth with New Critical

close reading techniques, and apply them not only to image patterns and obtuse metaphor in individual lyrics, but also to the larger poetic structures like the sonnet sequence and the epic. With an appreciation of a radically different world picture from our own, they begin to read the Elizabethan sonnets as representations of the Renaissance conception of a unified and structured reality manifested in a hyper-acute awareness of numbers, time, and myth. Attempting a more objective analysis than their forebears, they establish a formalist criticism for "connoisseurs of the recondite."

This criticism is written at a time when the presence (or absent presence) of Shakespeare's sonnets ceases to inform the study of those of Sidney and Spenser. Indeed, Shakespeare's debt to Sidney is adumbrated in a number of studies.³ Furthermore, intertextual analyses of international Petrarchism reveal that the Italians and French were much more prolific in this genre (Prince 165). Shakespeare is just one of a vast number of poets working with the same conventions. Moreover, Alastair Fowler, one of the few numerological critics to see mannerist numerological arrays in Shakespeare's sonnets, cannot claim greater finesse for Shakespeare than for Sidney or Spenser. Indeed, the evidence of numerological finesse is far more compelling in Amoretti. The following section will assess the analysis of Fowler and others, and the new focus on manner rather than matter.

Many critical projects have been generated by the desire for order often satisfied by the ingenious construction of individual sonnets but, for many, not by the sonnet sequence itself. Perhaps the long-standing assumption that a group of sonnets should be structured--should be a cycle or a sequence--is built into the critical vocabulary itself.

For instance, Stephen Minta's definition of the sonnets seems to demand a specific kind of order. One can infer from his discussion that these expectations have created a critical enigma:

By a sequence, one means a collection of poems that has been arranged with the aim of conferring some degree of unity on the work as a whole. The fact that many sequences do not display more than a very superficial sense of unity, and the fact that most sequences contain a proportion of poems that were probably composed before the idea of attempting a sequence had entered the poet's head, is immaterial. (15)

In English Literature of the Sixteenth Century, C.S. Lewis declares that the sonnet form exists for the sake of prolonged and desultory lyrical meditation, warning critics that "the first thing to grasp about the sonnet sequence is that it is not a way of telling a story" (327). In 1978, Carol Thomas Neely emphasizes the "elastic" nature of the sonnet sequence, a "broad and loose" development that is nevertheless the product of painstaking arrangement and rearrangement. Her article calls attention to the different formal conceptions of Renaissance writers and modern critics:

Sonnet sequences do not "tell a story" if to do so implies straightforward narrative progression from sonnet to sonnet throughout. Neither are they "prolonged lyrical meditation," collections of random poems on related themes. They are something in between. The sonneteers' sense of structure and purpose seems larger and more flexible than that of later critics. (362).

Critics often seem reluctant to relinquish the search for tight structure, however. Those accustomed from close readings of the Renaissance short lyric, particularly the metaphysical poem, to intricate structural patterns achieving ultimate unity, have continued to be perturbed by the apparent disorder of the sonnets. Consequently, the search for structural principles has produced many biographical disclosures and discoveries of authorial intention, a wealth of speculation about Elizabethan publishing practice and malpractice, and a number of fruitful meditations on the effect of chance and creeping time.

In the critical quest for order, Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti have not been passed over. Critics have long been curious about the apparent structural incoherence and indeterminate ending of Astrophil and Stella at the 108th sonnet. Many, including Lever, supported a nineteenth-century editor's addition of two of Sidney's Certain Sonnets to the sequence. Both poems renounce romantic love. But as William Ringler concludes in his authoritative edition of Sidney's poetry in 1962, critics append the 109th and 110th sonnet to the sequence "without any evidence beyond their own desires" (423). The close reading habits and critical

acuity of scholars such as Ringler therefore supported a poem of 108 sonnets.

Still nettled by disorder and indeterminacy, however, and bolstered by Kenneth Myrick's discovery of the architectonic complexity of the Defence, many continued to seek after the structural principle that would unify the sequence, making various divisions and groupings depending upon their thematic emphasis. This project has added much to our appreciation of Sidney's subtle artistry, his skill with versification, rhyme scheme, rhetoric, imagery, and irony, his subtle manipulation of personae, and his deft realization of sprezzatura.⁴ Yet the problem of structural indeterminacy persisted. In an article published in 1969, A.C. Hamilton offers a tripartite structure in an attempt to read Astrophil and Stella as a "single, long poem rather than a miscellany of 108 separate sonnets" ("Sidney's" 59). He nevertheless concedes,

In asking whether any collection of sonnets composes a sequence, however, one must allow that each individual sonnet resists external ordering. Whether as a moment of meditation, outburst of passion, or merely an exercise in praise or witty compliment, it stands complete within itself, neither deriving from the preceding sonnet nor preparing for the next. (59-60)

Finding unity in Amoretti has also been a preoccupying critical task, although most accept that Amoretti and Epithalamion are one poem. Early in this century, John Erskine found the Amoretti "the truest sequence of this

decade [1590's]. There is a progression in the story and in the poet's moods, from beginning to the end, and each sonnet has its inevitable place" (153-54). The marriage hymn provides the perfect resolution to the first "connubial rather than courtly" (Smith 17) sequence. But even this general unity did not redeem the Amoretti for many modernists. For example, Lever rearranged the order of the sonnets, suggesting that some were probably written earlier and therefore do not belong in the sequence.

Other structural features of Amoretti have baffled critics as well. For example, Sonnet 35 seems to have been accidentally repeated as Sonnet 83, making it appear as though each sonnet does not have its inevitable place. And the Anacreontic verses at the end of the sonnets appear to have no function at all. In an essay presented to the English Institute in 1960, Louis L. Martz states that he has "only one solution to offer for the intervening Anacreontics: ignore them" (152). Giving up on unity in Amoretti but not on Spenser, Professor Alexander Judson put forth a theory later endorsed by A. Kent Hieatt and other Spenserians that Spenser was prevented by "hasty accidents", as he seems to indicate in Epithalamion, from completing and unifying his sequence (Hieatt 55). In 1969, G.K. Hunter recommended that critics give up on trying to explain the repeated sonnet and the haphazard Anacreontics, or of finding a simple sequential order. He concludes that "a higher proportion of casual elements is of the essence [of the Renaissance sonnet sequence], and . . . it is a vanity

of human pride to try to make them disappear" (125). In his article, Hunter admits to being "unimpressed" (144.n2) with the varieties of numerological analysis that had come into prominence in the 60's. Yet, for many, numerology appeared to have at last provided the key with which to unlock the mysteries of sequential order in Elizabethan sonnet cycles.

Numerological criticism was ushered in with the publication in 1960 of A. Kent Hieatt's Short Time's Endless Monument, a tribute to careful scholarship. Hieatt argued with considerable proof that temporal numerology structured Spenser's Epithalamion. Hieatt's study was a monumental piece of detective work: he was the first to notice that the 24 stanzas represent the 24 hours of the wedding day, and that the 365 long lines represent the earth's annual progress with the envoy providing the corrective for the earth's incomplete yearly revolution. Soon after this, critics began to focus on the structural symmetries produced by the Renaissance poet's apparent devotion to the relationships among time, numbers, and divine and human reality.

Alexander Dunlop also found an "intentional" (Unity 155) calendrical structure in Amoretti. Each of the sonnets at the heart of Amoretti corresponds to a day in the Lenten season of 1594 ("Unity" 155). In Triumphal Forms, Alastair Fowler endorses Dunlop's analysis but within the context of a much larger poetic scheme which includes Amoretti, the Anacreontics, and Epithalamion. Alert to

mannerist organizational patterns, Fowler finds a number of symmetrical arrays and, hence, multiple axes of symmetry within the broad parameters of the poem so defined. For Fowler, the nearly exact repetition of Sonnet 35 of Amoretti as Sonnet 83 signals just one of the symmetries within the larger grouping that is composed of smaller symmetrical arrays including Dunlop's.

Following up on Adrian Benjamin's discovery that the number symbolism in Astrophil and Stella is based upon the Penelope game, Fowler also finds a highly mannered structure in Sidney's poem. This game was played with 109 stones, 108 of these representing the suitors of Odysseus' faithful Penelope. Whichever hit the 109th or Penelope stone was the winner. Fowler suggests that the absence of the 109th sonnet-stone in Sidney's sequence constitutes a "most delicate compliment" (Triumphal 175) to Penelope Devereux,⁵ Lady Rich, whose virtue was formerly not highly rated. In light of Benjamin's finding, the addition of the "renunciatory" 109th and 110th sonnets would not only destroy Sidney's "Penelope game" but would also doubly impugn Lady Rich, something the author never intended.

Seeking mannerist "asymmetrical symmetries" (Triumphal 176) within the fixed order of the 11 songs and 108 sonnets of Sidney's sequence, Fowler finds that, though the work lacks a sole centre, it possesses central axes belonging to each of its multiple patterns. According to Thomas P. Roche, this signals the disorder

produced by Astrophil's obsessive, unfocussed passion:
 "He has become demented; he is no longer in control of his
 desires . . . the flagrant logical and moral
 inconsistencies of his words push him closer and closer to
 the despair that finally engulfs him at the end of the
 sequence" ("Astrophil" 178).

These impressive structural readings bring to light a
 mannerist agenda and account for a radically different
 Renaissance cosmology. Nevertheless, the numerological
 formalists bring their own cultural predispositions to their
 "objective" criticism and their explication of numerological
 significance. They participate in the conservative
 literary-critical tradition of aesthetic humanism with its
 emphasis on authority of the text, the author, or the
 reader; on the transcendent aesthetic realm; and on
 the organic monuments of literary art.

To Fowler, the poet has authority over his creation.
 This signals a departure from some New Critical analyses
 which rejected any discussion of the author's intention and
 insisted on devotion to the text. Confident of having
 discovered an intentional content through historical
 research, Fowler is able to venture into speculation not
 formerly sanctioned. The text nevertheless remains a stable
 object for him, as it is for most modernists; here it is a
 reflection of the author's fixed identity and mannerist
 finesse.

The numerologists, more aware than less historically

grounded critics of the popularity of sprezzatura to the Renaissance courtier or poet, interpret it to support their notion of the poet's finesse. Sprezzatura is "an easy facility in accomplishing difficult actions" (Rebhorn 33), or an attempt to hide the conscious effort involved in art. It figures in Fowler's account of the poetic connoisseur:

The Elizabethan connoisseur would take pleasure in asymmetry in the placement of an inlaid symmetry, in complexity of overlapping groupings that eluded any single viewpoint and in effortless overcoming of difficulty. To keep two symmetrical patterns going simultaneously with an elaborate system of astronomical number symbolism was a demonstration of art, of precisely the kind most valued in the age of mannerism. (Triumphal 106)

Capable of mannerist finesse, Fowler's Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare are portrayed as geniuses whose wits match those of the "archetypal conceitist." They hide art in their Petrarchan hieroglyphs. The sonnet sequence is given new respectability in this criticism, for it is said to possess the "most subtle and conceited of all numerological patterns" (Triumphal 174). That they are the most "mannered" of Elizabethan literary forms works in their favour for a change.

Hieatt's Spenser is an "eclectically philosophical, vastly syncretic, and literal-minded poet" (78), a creator of subtle, monumental enigmas. He fulfills the Renaissance ideal of sprezzatura with spectacular success. According to Fowler, Epithalamion "carries off a combination of doubled symmetrical schemes with an elaborate pattern of temporal number symbolism, yet gives so little impression of strain that the effort at times has gone entirely unnoticed"

(Triumphal 103).

Moreover, a "cool deliberation" (Triumphal 174) informs Astrophil and Stella, too. Behind Astrophil, there is the fixed identity, finesse, and rationality of Sidney. Both Fowler and Roche oppose the artistic control and superior virtue of Sidney to the instability of Astrophil his creation. Their conclusions owe much to the New Critical discussions of persona, which detached the poet or writer from the emotion expressed by his speakers.

The authority of the author is also guaranteed by the numerologist's location of meaning. They seek an "integral" meaning below the surface of discourse. Confident that he has uncovered Spenser's meaning in Epithalamion, Heatt insists that "the mode which Spenser follows requires before everything else a pursuit of integral meaning, integrally expressed, below the surface of discourse" (81). The authority of the critic who locates integral meaning is also guaranteed in this analysis.

Authority for the critic is secured, as it was for the New Critics and the historical critics, by the belief in verifiable content. Locating meanings believed to be embedded or encoded in the text is part of the objective practice of the responsible critic, opposed to the subjective fabrications of the uninformed reader. Consequently, Fowler displays a paranoia similar to that of the New Critic about "affective fallacies" and repeatedly emphasizes the validity of his objective commentary. Believing that they have

located integral meaning, the numerological critics feel that they avoid what New Critics defined as the intentional fallacy and the affective fallacy.

In setting the agenda for numerological criticism in Triumphal Forms, Fowler predicts that it will make possible a "more fully intelligible descriptive analysis" (xi) that will bridge the gap between form and content (xi). Here, again, is the assumption of a self-identical form and content in great literary art, a content authorized by the creator and the critic who locates it. Though modest about what attention to structure can accomplish, he is nevertheless confident of its superiority over expressivist bombast and "learned affective fallacies" (204): "the structural approach, though limited, may yet arrive, if it is made with care, at firmer results than can be imagined from the heights of speculation commanded in fantasy by the analogist of ethos and unsubstantiated impression" (91).

In response to his detractors, he concedes that students of numerology have sometimes failed "to set adequately stringent standards of objectivity" (203). However, numerological criticism can only fulfill its mandate if it provides a verifiable descriptive analysis and avoids "inventing unintended patterns" (204). In this way, Fowler believes that it will succeed in resolving some aspects of the ambiguous relationship between structure and meaning. In spite of the fact that Fowler asks some crucial questions at the end of Triumphal Forms--"how do we know that any literary constituent is ever significant? How can

we ever be sure that a theme is not of our own making?" (204)--his study rests on a belief in the binary opposition between objective and subjective analysis. He ultimately endorses the notion that validity in interpretation is achieved by steering clear of personal preference and value considerations: "Only through a dialectic of different opinions can we refine a numerological interpretation to the point at which affective fallacies are evaporated off and value inferences precipitated" (203).

Yet even though Fowler's desire is to rid critical discourse of personal values, the numerologists share in the modernist prejudice against the possibilities of historical process, and therefore communicate a deep mistrust of time. The forms defined as triumphal or temporal, for instance, suggest Fowler's attitude to time and materiality.

Fowler finds two major structural patterns in Elizabethan poetry--the triumphal and the temporal. Static, symmetrical, and elaborately centralized (Triumphal 41), triumphal forms reflect the divine and cosmic realms above time and mutability. Temporal forms reflect the sub-lunar realities of the microcosm; line lengths, stanza and canto numbers, for instance, are often based on the 12 months, 24 hours, 52 weeks, 60 minutes, 365 days and so on. The two categories of triumphal and temporal often overlap though, and closure is often imposed on the zodiacal, seasonal, diurnal, or anatomical temporal form by the triumphant divine theme. In Fowler's work, the centre is usually

favoured and the absence of centres is significant, the one boding good, the other ill. The elaborately centralized structure of Amoretti and Epithalamion, with the stable beloved at its still centre, is a monument to the eternal verities of sanctified connubial love; the multiple centres of Astrophil and Stella are a tribute to the monumental monotony of self-centred, unstable, mutable love.

The numerological critics find an archetypal symbolism that endows the centre with prestige:

The center, then, is pre-eminently the zone of the sacred, the zone of absolute reality
Attaining the center is equivalent to a consecration, an initiation; yesterday's profane and illusory existence gives place to a new, to a life that is real, enduring, and effective.
(Eliade 18)

In numerological criticism, the circular, repetitive, numerological structures that produce a poetic monument are based on a desire for "the abolition of time through the imitation of archetypes and the repetition of paradigmatic gestures" (Eliade 35). This implies that the real is not found here: "an object or an act becomes real only insofar as it imitates or repeats an archetype" (Eliade 34). To Heatt and Fowler, the structure of Epithalamion transforms profane space into transcendent space, which is at the centre, and projects concrete time into mythical time. In numerological criticism, this is how the poem acquires monumental status in its formal power to abolish duration in the name of the transcendent, undifferentiated unity of the centre.

This notion of a monument valorizes unproblematic and

static unity, and favours the transcendent over the temporal. Thus, the mannerist designs of the Renaissance poets are interpreted as attempts or failures to achieve transcendence. For example, at the end of Short Time's Endless Monument, Hieatt prescribes a position for the reader. In order to understand "the demand that Epithalamion makes upon its reader" (80),

Spenser asks us . . . to attend to the shimmering surface of his marriage day. But then he asks us to see operations proceeding integrally and at length beneath that dissolving surface....We must think of the substance of the poem as the substance of time itself--duration with its divisions--and we must see a year as a day, as God does. Finally we must see how man and the universe mirror each other, and what paradoxical boon is granted to all of us: that though we may not endure individually, our mortality and the insufficiency of all created things is, by grace, only one aspect of a total situation of which cyclical return is the other face, until such time as time shall cease. (81)

For Hieatt, this poetic monument recuperates what is lost to time and mutability in a pattern of cyclical return which operates in a unified realm beyond history. The circular structure is what allows it to become an endless monument, "a permanent and aesthetically valid possession for all readers" (82). It offers consolation in the stability of its inevitable repetitions, and the reassurance that change is surface. In Hieatt's analysis, short time provides the form for a poem whose content or transcendent essence must triumph over it in order for it to become an "endless monument."

Fowler, too, believes in the monuments of Elizabethan

literature constructed of the expendable commodities of time and human occasion, and for their capacity to supersede mutability. A monument or "literary artifact" (Triumphal 198) is invested with the power to eternize or to make permanent, that is, to transform event into undifferentiated, unproblematic eternity. Through the monumental poem, the Elizabethan could "confer glory and confirm status" (Conceitful 80). In Conceitful Thought, Fowler interprets the circular structure of Spenser's Prothalamion, figured forth in images of corona, garlands, and the cycles of nature and the constellations, as the poet's attempt to confront mortality. An endless monument, the poem "takes its own existence as a guarantee of duration" (80): "the song is a circular one and therefore endless" (80).

It is here that numerological formalism reveals most explicitly its debt to Northrop Frye. Frye's mythopoeic universe which emphasizes the endless cycles of time and nature focusses upon the microcosmic-macrocosmic vision beyond the present. Numerological formalism also shares in Frye's celebration of Spenser's consoling vision of man, "eterne in mutabilitie" (III.6.47), in The Faerie Queene with its emphasis on cyclical repetition, sameness, and transcendent vision which overcomes harsh reality. Frank Lentricchia suggests that Frye's "pecking order" (22) of mythoi consistently denigrates modes which assume externality (such as satire and tragedy) in favour of the more transcendent cycles of romance and comedy (22).⁶

For mythological structuralists, time and event are the surface of the eternal monument. "No-one will enjoy [Prothalamion]," Fowler declares, "who does not appreciate Spenser's entering into the event, his triumphal assimilation and conversion of fact into poetic form" (Conceitful 80). In spite of earlier more modest claims for numerological formalism, there is a suggestion here that poetic form has the power to triumph over time.

The assumption that this is desirable goes unquestioned in all of Fowler's studies. The Faerie Queene is a great poem because it is "the outcome of a personal vision and aspiration above the flux of mutability" (Spenser 257). Number, related on the surface to the temporal and seasonal, ultimately serves the deeper transcendent moral and spiritual structures of divine and cosmic reality. Hence, time and history are subordinated; indeed: "the problem for the interpreter . . . is to know how much of the resuscitated occasion--how much soil about the roots--to include in his synthesis" (Conceitful 86). The interpreter's problem described here also betrays a characteristic formalist pessimism: "We may have to face a cruel paradox, that the monumental ideal made for expendability: for a form uniquely suited to a single unrepeatable occasion" (Conceitful 86). Though Fowler claims that a focus on numerological criticism "need not mean neglect of the moral and historical allegory" (Spenser 256), the exaltation of form denies the

importance of the cultural specificity of the moral or historical. These, too, are on the surface, differences that make no difference.

In fact, Heatt dismisses these considerations outright. For him, the Epithalamion musters a monumental defence against time. Joining forces with other monuments in the ideal order that supersedes all existential claims, it offers an aesthetic shield against those who suggest "that any effort to orchestrate a defense against mortality is simply a bland attempt to insulate us against the truth of experience" (81). Their objections are irrelevant: "But leaving out of the debate those of this latter persuasion (this is not the place to speak of their condition), it may still be pointed out that Epithalamion is in a sense one of the last great monuments to a mode of literary composition dominant through those centuries, just as it is one of the last great literary monuments of the microcosmic-macrocosmic vision" (81).

Like other aesthetic humanists, these literary critics often appeal to the idea of organic order. In Triumphal Forms, Fowler praises Heatt for uncovering the "organic structural system" (163) in the Epithalamion. He distinguishes between lyrics with a numerological organization that "is inorganic, arbitrary and trivial" (Triumphal 5) and those of Shakespeare's, Spenser's, and Sidney's sonnets, for instance, which are "more complex and organic" (Triumphal 5). Spenser's use of numerological organicism, he contends, "constitutes an essential element in the unity of [his]

work. It is internally functional, not externally decorative" (Spenser 255). It is the triumph of moral essence--unified and timeless--that makes the numerological form organic. Sprezzatura also serves a notion of critical organicism: "The better the poem, the more organic and subtle, and therefore also the less obvious, its numerology is likely to be" (Fowler, Spenser 32).

Fowler's conception of mannerism is related to his notion of organicism. An appeal to the decorum of Renaissance art is used as a justification for numerological analysis: "We may see one positive impulse behind it [temporal numerology] in the ready observation of decorum that shaped every formalized social activity of the age" (Triumphal 133). While this is historically accurate, the numerological critics see the number symbolism in Renaissance poetry only as an endorsement of organic unity and monumental order, rather than as a disruption of the decorous ideal for emotional or political reasons.

For instance, for both Roche and Fowler there is ultimate unity rather than an unresolved tension in the mannerist design of Astrophil and Stella. For Roche, ultimate resolution resides in the reader whose mind is more balanced than Astrophil's; this was Sidney's intention. The pattern of asymmetrical symmetries proposed by Fowler "generally contribute[s] to a complex symmetry which remains completely, if obscurely, harmonious" (Cited by Roche 180).

Using evidence of "related multiple axes of symmetry" (Triumphal 180) in the poem, Fowler seeks to confirm mannerism as "complex, intricate and undynamic" (Triumphal 180) rather than "restless and unbalanced, unharmonious and tense" (Triumphal 180).

In Triumphal Forms, the short-lived fascination of the Elizabethans with mannerist asymmetry is explained in aesthetic terms only: it signifies artistic control and finesse that contribute to monumental art, rather than culturally and/or politically determined dislocation or instability. Nor are cultural determinants explored to any extent to explain the return to the simple symmetry of forms with a single centre, in seventeenth-century baroque (118ff). For Fowler, mannerism is mainly an aesthetic question, and the aesthetic realm is unified and whole. Fowler admits, "I prefer Shearman's account of mannerist style, with his stress on complexity and finesse, to accounts like Pevsner's which emphasize emotional disturbance or tension" (Triumphal 90). Statements like this suggest that Fowler may have interpreted rather than described the mannerist structures of the sonnet sequences.

In Short Time's Endless Monument, the unified microcosmic-macrocosmic vision is said to be the fixed essence of Spenser's poem; it is also the essence of art, and it functions to dismiss other readings as fallacious interpretation rather than integral meaning. Other readings are compromised because they consider that which is not germane to the autonomous art object--("this is not

the place to speak of their condition"). They are therefore un-aesthetic according to the standards of critical organicism upheld here. In this manner, numerological structuralism reinforces academic elitism: only certain readings are valid and objective, and only a certain kind of recondite scholarship produces integral meaning. But integral meaning is tied to a belief in universality, and the facts of history are useful to this formalist analysis only insofar as they support this aesthetic. Sanctified by historical research, this historical-formalism ultimately helps to preserve "English" as a separate discourse from "History."

At times, numerological formalists appeal to the lost organic Renaissance past. The epigraph to the conclusion of Short Time's Endless Monument is taken from D.H.

Lawrence:

The old Church knew best the enduring needs of man, beyond the spasmodic needs of today and yesterday. . . . the religious and ritualistic rhythm of the year, in human life. . . . Mankind has got to get back to the rhythm of the cosmos, and the permanence of marriage. (75)

A revived interest in Spenser after the metaphysical eclipse was effected in no small part by nostalgia for his microcosmic-macrocosmic vision, particularly in his representations of eros. C.S. Lewis, for example, celebrates Spenser's epithalamic vision as a source of stability and enduring values in The Allegory of Love:

In the history of sentiment he is the greatest among the founders of that romantic conception of marriage which is the basis of all our love

literature from Shakespeare to Meredith. The synthesis which he helped to effect was so successful that this aspect of his work escaped notice in the last century The whole conception is now being attacked. Feminism in politics, reviving asceticism in religion, animalism in imaginative literature, and, above all, the discoveries of the psycho-analysts, have undermined that monogamic idealism about sex which served us for three centuries. Whether society will gain or lose by the revolution, I need not try to predict; but Spenser ought to gain. What once was platitude should now have for some the brave appeal of a cause nearly lost . . . (360)

To some extent, then, Spenser's "monogamic idealism" provides a guarantee of permanence for the aesthetic humanist resistant to social change.

Numerological formalism is a latecomer to a modernist critical dialogue on poetry of the English Renaissance largely invested in preserving a conservative and often aristocratic rather than radical tradition. In America, however, a shift toward the more republican and liberal features of Renaissance poetry takes place in Stanley Fish's reader-response criticism, the subject of the next chapter. Less focussed on literature as the articulation of national essence, it represents a significant departure from the aesthetics of Eliot, Frye, Fowler, and the New Critics.

Notes

1

In the following New Critical position statement on history's role in literary interpretation, Cleanth Brooks declares that a literary critic must treat a poem as "a work of art and not merely as a grammatical or historical or sociological or political or biographical document" ("Critic" 7).

2

In Dialectical Criticism and Renaissance Literature, Michael McCanles gives a cogent history of the formalist-historicist debate from 1930 onwards (1-13). It is interesting that some of the "old" historicists examined here seem to have a greater awareness of the role of the present in their interpretation of the past than contemporary new historicists sometimes give them credit for.

3

Joan Grundy has this to say about Shakespeare's 84th sonnet: "This is Shakespeare at his most Sidneyan" (195). She suggests that Shakespeare models his "anti-Petrarchanism" (193) on Sidney's. In addition, it should be noted that Lee and Lever are not wholly representative: all is not "bardolatry." In an article published in 1916, Lee revises his former view: "a vast number of Shakespeare's performances [sonnets] prove to be little more than trials of skill" ("Conceits" 55). In "Poetic Styles, Old and New", which first appeared in 1959, Yvor

Winters declares himself more and more disappointed in Shakespeare's sonnets (153). John Crowe Ransom also states that he is unimpressed with Shakespeare's sonneteering in "Shakespeare at Sonnets" first published in 1938.

4

In his article "Astrophil and Stella: A Radical Reading," Thomas P. Roche reviews the twentieth-century critical preoccupation with finding unity in Astrophil and Stella. He cites nine cases where critics have made structural groupings (191.n42).

5

For instance, the Dictionary of National Biography proposes that "Lady Penelope had from the first an attenuated regard for the marriage tie. No sooner had she become Lady Rich than she encouraged a renewal of the attentions of her early admirer, Sir Philip Sidney" (Lee and Stephen 1007).

6

John Fekete insists that Frye's criticism offers no subversion and no program for social change but capitulates to neocapitalism. It is "an orientation built on a fetish of mental labour" (111), the work ethic extended to an educational system designed by consumerism. Fekete bombards the verbal universe as follows:

Oblivious to domination, exploitation, and struggle, to bureaucracy, power, hierarchy, property, the social division of labor, the political economy of the sign, surplus normatization, or revolutionary praxis, that is, to the social structures, social relations, and social collisions of real human history, Frye's conception remains within the existing structures of neocapitalism, and implies no more than, and no conflict with, actual developments in the

integration of mental production and consumption.
(129-30)

CHAPTER FOUR

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, a debate concerning the location of meaning ensued. In Renaissance studies, this debate was often centred on The Faerie Queene, a text that had been gradually redeemed with the rise of mythopoeic structuralism and the decline of New Criticism.¹ The reader's experience of the poem was the focus of A.C. Hamilton's The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene (1961). Hamilton champions the response of the reader enjoying the poem's fiction: "Spenser's allegory need not be read as a complicated puzzle concealing riddles which confuse the reader in labyrinths of error, but as an unfolding drama revealing more and greater significance as it brings the reader full understanding of its complex vision" (43). Affirming C.S. Lewis' similar contention that allegory is not a puzzle, Paul Alpers' book The Poetry of The Faerie Queene (1967) foregrounds the reader's experience of the poem and "the extraordinary degree to which the meanings of The Faerie Queene lie on its surface" (233). Alpers objects to the way Fowler's criticism makes Spenser's epic "a shrine of numerological and astrological arcana" (233) and fails "to make iconographic analysis answerable to the literary experience of reading the poem" (229). Not long after this, Frank Kermode characterizes the numerologists as "the party of darkness" (2) and dissenters from their view

as the "anti-puzzlers" (2).

These dissenters could appeal to earlier historicist work on rhetoric for support. At a time when New Criticism was intent upon fixing meaning within the text, Rosemond Tuve, for instance, had argued for the role of rhetorical efficacy in the production of Elizabethan and metaphysical poetry. Tuve claimed that for the Renaissance poet, "the final determination of efficacy--efficacy upon the affections as generally understood--depended upon factors which did not reside in the poem at all but in the mind which was to read it" (180). The Horatian precept that underwrites Sidney's Defence--the idea that poetry should teach and delight--is a commonplace of Renaissance treatises on poetry.

In The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser (1971), Angus Fletcher tries to mediate the argument among Spenserians between those concerned with preserving form and those in support of affect. The prophetic moment reconciles the dialectic between the "sacred centredness" (15) of the temple--the stable locale of the archetypal universal--and the labyrinth--the unstable, profane space of the fallen world reflected in "the notable indeterminacy of the textural surface of The Faerie Queene" (12). One of the most useful features of Fletcher's synthesis is its categorization of the critical camps:

. . . critics like Tuve and Alpers are particularly expert in the exegesis of the Spenserian labyrinth, and in this respect their work contrasts with those who are biased toward a

"templar" exegesis, for example Frye, Fowler, or even perhaps [William] Nelson...(11 n.1)

But in spite of Fletcher's mythopoeic reconciliation, the literary-critical debate continued.

If Fowler represents the major exponent of a "templar" critical analysis that affects the reception of the sonnet sequences, his contemporary, Stanley Fish, becomes the most important heir of the exegetes of the labyrinth. Fish's commentary of 1972 on Fowler's Triumphal Forms represents the extent to which he can rely on the new confidence in the reader to refute the "templar" critic's reliance on the authority of the text. Numerological structures, he argues, are often not evident to the reader but "only become apparent when a critic who is committed to the theory decides to look for them" ("Recent" 201). For Fish, "an awareness of numerological structure . . . is only possible in the context of a conscious intention consciously recognized, and Fowler has not made a good case for either in his book" ("Recent" 196-97). Thus, Fish, whose concern is with affect rather than with avoiding it, insists on considering the circuit that connects author, text, and reader before meaning can be established.

In an essay that will become his manifesto, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics", he refutes the affective fallacy, arguing that what a work does to its reader is what it means ("Literature" 131). Affirming his conception of meaning as an event ("Literature" 123), Fish provides a definition of what he calls "affective

stylistics", an interpretive method that his supporters will come to view as a firm break with New Criticism.

New Criticism, which dates from 1930 until the 1950's, was America's modernist formalist moment, relying nevertheless on the earlier formulations of T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards. The first New Critics, John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate, were from the southern United States. They also had a version of nostalgia for a way of life being destroyed by industrialization,² and, like their British forerunners, developed an aesthetics of organicism. Though initially outside mainstream literary-critical circles, New Criticism soon became the interpretive methodology in many North American universities. In 1954, W.K. Wimsatt's The Verbal Icon gave the New Criticism its most thoroughgoing articulation. This study contained two important essays first published in 1946 and 1949 respectively, "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy." Written in collaboration with Monroe C. Beardsley, they became New Critical credal statements. It is against the condemnation of affect in the latter that many "anti-puzzlers" will react. Wimsatt and Beardsley insisted that there is a difference between the poem and its results, and that a confusion between them produces the "affective fallacy" ("Affective" 21). In Fowler, the desire to "evaporate" affective fallacies represents his allegiance to this New Critical imperative. The next section will examine the effect that the shift in emphasis from form to

affect has on the reception of Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti.

New Criticism, like the criticism of T.S. Eliot and other earlier modernists, was an attempt in the name of the universal to wrest poetry away from the personal--from the informing individual ego of the poet or from the unsubstantiated impressionism of the reader. Because of the growing cultural authority of psychology, critics from Eliot to Wimsatt to Fowler struggled in theory to keep poetry "aesthetic" or "organic" rather than intentional or expressive or affective. They insisted on attention to the literary object, not on absorption in the emotion that resides on either side of it.

But when called upon to define what was inscribed within the self-enclosed literary icon, the New Critics and others emphasized "experience" or "reality" or "universality" or "being", notions that led back to human subjectivity, however transhistorical or universal. One way of not capitulating the poem's structure of meanings to the author, that is, of avoiding the intentional fallacy, was to employ the idea of the persona. This made expressivity a formal property of the object:

The meaning of a poem may certainly be a personal one, in the sense that a poem expresses a personality or a state of soul rather than a physical object like an apple. But even a short lyric poem is dramatic, the response of a speaker (no matter how abstractly conceived) to a situation (no matter how universalized). We ought to impute the thoughts and attitudes of the poem

immediately to the dramatic speaker, and if to the author at all, only by an act of biographical inference. (Wimsatt and Beardsley, "Intentional" 5)

Through the persona, discussions of human presence were sanctioned.

Critics of Sidney were quick to employ this idea in discussions of Astrophil and Stella. Whether this poem was an expression of Sidney's real feeling or not has always been an interpretive crux, because the poem contains the intentional biographical presence of Sidney and Lady Rich. Speculation about Sidney's dynamic and heroic life has always figured largely in the interpretation of his poetry. Persona helped reconcile the stability of the hero with the "hyperkinetic" Astrophil (McCoy 97), whose mercurial and engaging presence nevertheless betrays a dearth of life skills and provides a speaking picture of lust in action. In Theodore Spencer's famous article on Sidney's poetry published in 1945, for instance, persona is a convention that allows for the impersonal poetry prized by many modernists:

In the sixteenth century this saving loss of personality, this discovery of self through submission to an "other," could be accomplished to a considerable extent through convention. Convention is to the poet in an age of belief what the persona is to the poet in an age of bewilderment. By submission to either the poet acquires authority; he feels that he is speaking for, is representing something different from his own naked and relatively insignificant ego; in both cases he has taken the first step toward universality. (267)

Self-exploration, confined to the persona, participates

in the self-contained dynamism of the work as New Criticism defined it. The meaning of poetry, Allen Tate once declared, "is its tension; the full organized body of all the intension and extension that we can find in it" (cited by O'Connor 56). Tension, wit, irony, paradox, and ambivalence generate what J.B. Leishman, in his succinct definition of a metaphysical poem, calls "the dialectical expression of a personal drama" (18). Furthermore, J.B. Broadbent proposes that the dialectic of metaphysical poetry "springs from the tension that is felt between body and mind, and in a series of other dualities--action and idea, love and law" (1).

Sidney's Astrophil and Stella has been frequently interpreted in these terms. According to a growing critical following in the 1950's and 1960's, Astrophil is caught in a dynamic struggle between wit and will in a fictionalized drama.³ In terms of approval drawn from New Criticism, David Kalstone defines Astrophil's appeal for the modern reader: "Here for the first time in English poetry, an engaging persona governs a whole sequence" (105). Astrophil, he concludes, is "one of the most self-conscious of Elizabethan poet-lovers" (106).

Astrophil is particularly attractive to a mid-twentieth century reader predisposed by psychology to view life and reality as a dialectical process of self-exploration, and a search for stable identity. Lionel Trilling describes as "an essential disposition of the modern mind--our commitment to the dialectical mode of

apprehending reality . . . our characteristic modern intuition that the enlightened and generous mind can discern right and wrong and good and bad only under the aspect of process and development, of futurity and the interplay and resolution of contradictions" (79). This is in sharp contradistinction to Renaissance conceptions. Sidney suggests that truth resides in the erected wit; he does not give the dialectic between wit and infected will as much determining power as Trilling and other moderns do.

The Astrophilian persona has been more engaging for the moderns than the poet-speaker in Amoretti, who is usually seen as unproblematically identical with Spenser.⁴ Even C.S. Lewis grudgingly accepted popular judgements of Spenser. "Spenser was not one of the great sonneteers," he concedes (English 372), but confesses his desire for "a day, an hour, and a mood in which [Amoretti] would be the one book we desired" (English 372). He also notes that Spenser's idea of love "if not the best kind to read about, was a happy kind to live in" (English 372). Other critics have not been quite as generous. John Peter found the Amoretti "maudlin and tedious" (297). Influenced by the New Critical demand that poetry should present rather than record an experience, William Van O'Connor suggests that Spenser does not "work through" the "intellectual and emotional problem" created by a love situation, and therefore does not "earn his attitude." It is

preconceived, "a poetry of exposition rather than of exploration" (560-61). In O'Connor, the demand for a dialectical rather than a pre-established, stable identity is clearest.

Nevertheless, critics have made a number of attempts to adopt Spenser's Amoretti as a New Critical text, seeking drama, irony, and wit. In his apology for Amoretti, Waldo McNeir uses the evaluative criterion of the day to try to convince readers that Spenser's poem possesses "immediacy of dramatic method" (531). That critics writing recently are still making this argument suggests McNeir's limited success.⁵

In 1969, G.K. Hunter pinpoints the reason for the indifferent reception of Amoretti. With great acuity, he discerns differences between the sonnets of Sidney and those of Spenser which explain the exceptional quality of Spenser's work in the English sonnet tradition:

Astrophil and Stella is really an exercise in self-definition: Stella's role is to act as a mirror reflecting Astrophil's emotional states. The poem describes what it is like to go on being aware of oneself as a man and yet to be in love. Spenser's sequence is far more concerned with the relationship and far less with the individual. The lover's "I" or ego is often completely ignored and even where mentioned is usually absorbed into a pattern which aborts self-definition. (128)

The struggle of the fragmented, divided, autonomy-seeking self is absent from Amoretti. The popularity of this view of human subjectivity comes to underwrite not only longstanding critical expectations for both the theme and structure of the Renaissance short lyric, but also a later

criticism more concerned with the experience of the reader.

The shift toward more readerly concerns comes early in Sidney criticism as appreciation for his rhetorical strategies grows. The Defence claims that poetry is full of "virtue breeding delightfulness" (141). Art delivers forth images of a perfect golden world and of exemplary human behaviour which our erected wit recognizes and reaches toward, "yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it" (101). Even so, art is not a feckless pursuit, aery-faery and wholly imaginative. Sidney uses Xenophon's Cyrus, often cited as an exemplary figure by English humanists (Shepherd 157) to argue that art functions "not only to make a Cyrus...but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses, if they [readers] will learn aright why and how that maker made him" (101). Sidney supports what George Puttenham articulated in The Arte of English Poesie (1589) concerning the energia or "forcibleness" (138) of the passion that gives poetry its life. Puttenham believed that this quality--"inwardly working a stirre to the mynde" (Puttenham 155)--was transferred from literature to the reader. For Sidney, this results not just in gnosis but also in praxis which is the fruit of all written discourse. "And how praxis cannot be," he states in a passage usually taken seriously by its interpreters, "without being moved to practice, it is no hard matter to consider" (112).

As early as Theodore Spencer, there is an emphasis on

the reader. He contends that "Spenser's style, compared to Sidney's has two deficiencies: it is rarely pungent and it is almost never dramatic. The reader is soothed, not challenged; enchanted, not awakened to a new reality" (278). In 1958, Richard B. Young considers the Astrophilian persona outside of the confines of the poem:

The function of the identification, then, is not autobiographical revelation. Rather, the identification is a means by which Sidney, the real historical figure, in a sense lends his reality to Astrophel, the dramatic character, as a kind of concrete "existential" value. The poem deals with contrasting modes of existence, and the identification, in this context, has a rhetorical function. It identifies Astrophel with, not as, Sidney. (20)

In 1967, Neil Rudenstine concludes that Astrophil's objective was "not just self-exploration and self-expression as ends in themselves but the expression of personal feeling for the purposes of rhetorical persuasion" (200).

While Astrophil uses tactics to persuade Stella, many critics concluded that Sidney's ideal reader is meant to remain unmoved by Astrophil's arguments. For instance, Ann Romaine Howe has suggested that though Sidney's didacticism is unobtrusive, the Elizabethan reader reading aright would have recognized in the pronouncements against all he held sacred--from Plato to marriage--an image which reveals "in detail the perils of an illicit love ending in what Nashe was to call 'the epilogue despair'" (156-57). As these kinds of observations began to be put into the service of reader-response criticism, critics such as Alan Sinfield have concluded confidently that Sidney's whole project is

devoted to the reader whose erected wit makes him cognizant of Astrophil's self-destructive self-deception ("Astrophil's" 1). How the reader, either sixteenth century or contemporary, responds began to be foregrounded. Sinfield and others claimed that the reader's dis-ease is deliberately cultivated by the poem:

The aim, I think, is that the reader may discover in himself his own propensity to such errors [as Astrophil's] Making the reader identify, to some degree, with the figure who is criticized may oblige him to recognize his own fallibility.
("Sidney" 38)

To Andrew Weiner, "Sidney's strategic ironies . . . constantly figure forth the serious realities behind Astrophil's witty effusions and ensure that the reader, unlike Astrophil, is not deluded into thinking that 'all is well'" (9). In Weiner's analysis, the reader is the object of subversive tactics. "A sonnet sequence," he concludes after his perusal of Astrophil and Stella, "is a series of discreet attacks by the poet upon the imagination of the reader" (22).

This kind of assessment is firmly in the tradition of Stanley Fish's dialectical reader-response. In Self-Consuming Artifacts, Fish defines a good writer as a good physician who tells his patients what they do not want to hear "in the hope that by forcing them to see themselves clearly, they may be moved to change the selves they see" (3). Dialectical writing, as opposed to predictable, rational, satisfying, and reassuring rhetorical writing, is

kinetic (3). It disturbs rather than soothes the reader, upsets his value system, and it can even erode his self-esteem.

A great literary work, seen as an artifact rather than a monument, is self-consuming rather than self-satisfying. It is used up in the reading process. Unlike a monument functioning in a tradition, the artifact is useful for the promotion of individuality. The verbal structures exist mainly for the purpose of stimulating dialectic tension, instability and violent opposition within the reader resulting in his education or conversion. With confidence in his dialectical mode of transcendental consumerism, Fish concludes that "to enjoy the things of this world is to have a rhetorical encounter with them; to use them is to have a dialectical encounter with them" (24). Here, the work as an object tends to disappear; it becomes "the vehicle of its own abandonment" (158). While Fowler modestly proposed that, at most, numerological analysis would "increase appreciation, nothing else" (Spenser 248), Fish expects that a dialectical reading experience can make the reader a better person.

In many of the reader-response analyses of Astrophil and Stella, Sidney is a good physician, and his poems, conducing to the abandonment of Astrophil's confused rhetoric as part of the enlarged praxis of the right reader, are types of the self-consuming artifact. In these readings, Sidney retains his moral distance from Astrophil. Jacqueline T. Miller suggests that Astrophil is not

Sidney's ideal reader because he deliberately misinterprets and distorts Stella's responses to him, and the precepts of virtue and Christianity ("What" 104-05). The self-destructive dialectic belongs to Astrophil; the stability and bemusement to Sidney. Sidney's sequence is still a dialectic expression of a personal drama, as it was for New Criticism, but the site for the dialectic has shifted from the self-contained text to the reader's self.

Conversion after a dialectical reading experience is also promoted in the work of Wolfgang Iser, one of the founders, along with Hans Robert Jauss, of German reception aesthetics. In The Implied Reader (1974) and The Act of Reading (1978), Iser bequeathed to Anglo-American literary criticism a highly influential phenomenological approach to interpretation. Concepts such as the implied reader, the reader's role, the virtual text, Konkretisation, negation, and indeterminacy were compatible with American critical theories like Fish's that had evolved from New Critical work on narration. Just as a text produces various identities through narration and persona, it also creates the identity of its reader through the roles it imposes upon him and in the way it structures certain kinds of reading experiences.⁷ In discussions of the reader by Fish, Norman Holland, David Bleich, Jonathan Culler and many other American critics, the role of reading in the formation and transformation of human identity figures largely.

Like his American counterparts, Iser proposes theories which find easy application in studies of those texts in the tradition which appear to provide a "dynamic" reading experience, one which disrupts or unsettles the reader's preconceptions. The act of reading involves the negation of successive formulations about meaning. Basic to reader-response interpretations of Astrophil and Stella is Iser's notion of the reader's role. His role is to occupy the text's shifting textual perspectives, but the reader ultimately formulates his own vantage point which is generally not offered by the text (Act 33). In fulfilling his role, the reader becomes entangled in the text's gestalt (Implied 291) disallowing him the satisfaction of his familiar value system, and ultimately helping him restructure himself. To Iser, the "dialectical structure of reading" (Implied 291) allows us "to bring to the fore an element of our being of which we are not directly conscious. The production of the meaning of literary texts . . . does not merely entail the discovery of the unformulated . . . it also entails the possibility that we may formulate ourselves and so discover what had previously seemed to elude our consciousness" (Implied 294).

Reader entanglement in Sidney's poetry has been examined by Alan Sinfield. He suggests that Sidney employs reader-centred strategies derived from Luther and Calvin. They believed that reader entrapment constituted the intention of the creator of the Psalms. In their

reader-response exegesis, the Reformers suggest that reader self-examination is motivated by involvement in the rebellion and despair of the Psalms ("Sidney" 38-39). Richard Helgerson has also noted that this reformationist aesthetic may explain the strategies of entrapment present in the Old Arcadia (Elizabethan 136-41).

As in formalist analyses, Sidney remains a figure of control. Here, however, reverence for the text, for the things of this world, is disdained. Frank J. Warnke has noticed a widespread disposition to puritanism among American literary intellectuals: "Some of the assumptions of the lowercase puritan literary intellectual are: if the literary work doesn't give you a sound moral experience, there's something wrong with it; if it doesn't hurt, it's not good for you; if it's frankly and cheerfully 'aesthetic', it's corrupt" (51).

Fish's dialectical reader-response model is, at any rate, severely dualistic. Where Wimsatt, Fowler, and other formalists tend to favour a more iconographic view of the text, here the material reality of the text is totally transcended or abandoned. This may also explain why Spenser's Amoretti is not an important site within Renaissance poetry for reader-response analysis. Indeed, there is little reader-response analysis of Amoretti⁸ perhaps because the tradition to which Warnke suggests reader-response belongs is particularly partial to notions of autonomous, unmediated selfhood. Ultimately, Amoretti

has little to offer an analysis that defines the unsettling, dislocating literary pilgrimage as a means of freeing the individual and formulating new subjectivity.

Spenser's poem, leading steadily toward the integration of spirit and sense, lacks and even avoids dualistic dynamism. Robert S. Miola has suggested that the Anacreontics reveal Spenser's bemused attitude to the entire Petrarchan enterprise, capturing and perhaps trivializing it in a mythological metaphor:

The deliberate element of self-parody in the picture of Cupid flying about "In angry wize" and threatening all "with corage stout" shows us the poet gently joking at his own expense, at the spectacle of a middle-aged courtier in love, or more probably, at the breathless hyperbole of the Petrarchan tradition. (57)

It is a poem that does not rely as much on self-definition--of either the poet, speaker, or reader--as a process of entanglement, opposition, or tension, nor do tensions in this work require an abandonment of the former self (or the lady) to achieve resolution.

Both Louis L. Martz and Reed Way Dasenbrock have contended that Spenser's project involved the representation of an assured, stable, and temperate selfhood (Martz 168) much like the stability achieved in the Canzoniere, after Laura's death, in divinity. Spenser is deliberately unconventional, however, incorporating this stability within the non-transcendental confines of heteroerotic love (Dasenbrock 45-46). While his conception of eros is in some ways more like Petrarch's than Astrophil's, "He replaces Petrarch's passionate but.

unconsummated love by marriage, presenting that union as the sacred harbor of stability" (Dasenbrock 47). O.B. Hardison notes the departure this represents not only from Petrarch but also from the earlier stil novisti:

"Spenser's concept of 'Eros sanctified' enabled him to use the stil novo motifs while avoiding the drastic either/or attitude that made the death of the lady the price of love's fulfillment" (215).

Reader entrapment became particularly interesting to criticism of Astrophil and Stella after the discovery of the Juel-Jensen manuscript reported by Jean Robertson. This de-stabilized Sidney yet again. The manuscript contains an account given by George Gifford, the physician who attended Sidney on his deathbed. In the final days of his suffering, Sidney apparently wanted to come to terms with his past, and described as the source of lingering guilt, "a Vanitie wherein I had taken delight, whereof I had not ridd myself. It was my Lady Rich" (Robertson 297). Though Sidney's exemplary image did not suffer any significant setback from this, critics had to accept that the impulses and sentiments of Sidney and Astrophil were not always mutually exclusive. Alan Hager has even argued convincingly that "noble Sidney", the faithful shepherd-knight, was to a large extent a creation of Elizabethan image makers who were eager to promote loyalty to the queen (1-16).

In 1972, Richard Lanham took particular relish in

bedevilling the entangled readers of a more demure critical tradition who had separated upright Sidney from his fallen persona. He argues that Astrophil's desire and "impure persuasion" of Stella are also Sidney's ("Astrophil" 103), and not mere lyrical meditations, as C.S. Lewis once suggested (English 327), within the self-contained art object.¹⁰

The reader-response critics of Astrophil and Stella did not concern themselves with Sidney's participation in impure persuasion and desire, however. Instead, they used the biographical discoveries as more evidence for the entangled reading experience. The biographical puzzle contributes to the poem's dynamism:

Sidney's aim, it seems, is deliberately to combine shifting levels of fiction, requiring us to hold the story of Astrophil and Stella, several layers of metaphor, an awareness behind that of a creating poet and an occasional glimpse of actual people. The poem sets out to unsettle the reader by resisting his attempts to bring the speaker into focus. (Sinfield, "Sidney" 36)

For Gary Waller, biographical indeterminacy in Astrophil and Stella puts the reader to work, inviting him to become a producer of meanings, "thus requiring its fulfillment in successive readers' readings and lives" ("Acts" 24). Formerly a "biographical problem",¹¹ the facts of Sidney's life have become Iser's "negations", "gaps" or "indeterminacies" (Act 180-231), the necessary constituents of a dynamic act of reading. Iser's indeterminacy initiates the active reader's "ideational activity" (Act 36), forcing him to formulate meaning and to participate in the communicative act. Waller

concludes, "our reading [of Astrophil and Stella] necessarily becomes a dynamic interaction between the text and ourselves, our activity both demanded and generated by the gaps and indeterminacies of the text by which Sidney directs us back to our own experiences, and by the specific ways we write ourselves (or are written into) the world" ("Acts" 32).

Compared to Astrophil and Stella, Amoretti is a happy kind of text to live in. Unlike a self-consuming artifact, it does not "default on its promises" (Fish, Self-Consuming 75). On the other hand, it lets the reader rest easily within the textual venues offered by the poem. Nor does it force the reader to destroy the gestalt structured in his mind by the text. The reader is encouraged to accept the thematic closure offered by the text. Nor is the reader's experience negated or "defamiliarized", at least not in the Astrophilian manner. It offers a cumulative rather than the retroactive reading experience favoured by Fish. As Martz, Dasenbrock, and others have shown, Spenser is anti-Petrarchan. But his "defamiliarization" of Petrarchism is, in twentieth century terms, conventional.

Iser's ultimately salutary but initially disconcerting reading experience is said to be achieved by the process of "defamiliarization." This idea, taken from the Russian Formalists, plays a seminal role in reception theory. Defamiliarization or "making strange" is the term used by Viktor Shklovskii to refer to "a particular

relationship between reader and text that removes the object from its normal perceptive field" (Holub 15). The reader's familiar world is therefore not reproduced but negated in the text. Modernism, which enshrined the drastically "defamiliarizing" avant-garde literary work, influenced the Formalist's literary analysis; they came to view defamiliarization as the constitutive element in art.

That Formalist aesthetics figure prominently in Iser's work is evident in the claim that it is "only when the reader is forced to produce the meaning of the text under unfamiliar conditions rather than his own conditions (analogizing) that he can bring to light a layer of his personality that he had previously been unable to formulate in his conscious mind" (Act 50). This negating of norms initiates the act of reading: "The reader discovers the meaning of the text, taking negation as his starting point" (Implied xiii). Like Lever, Fowler, Heatt, Frye, and many other modernists seeking an organic unity, the reader-response critics seek an integrated meaning in a unified, whole and more wholesome self.

It is obvious that literary analysis in this tradition does not adequately account for a poem like Amoretti. Does it therefore become, in Fish's terms, a self-satisfying text that encourages reader passivity in its affirmations and resolutions of conflict, or in the terms of Formalism and reception theory, a Philistine text, predictable and conventional? Those who would argue that this is so must

confront the poem's unconventional features--its unique rhyme scheme, for instance, or the way Spenser compels Petrarchan and Platonic dualities into unity, not in morte but in life for a change. They need also confront the larger question of the kind of existential and thematic content which critics claim defamiliarizes the reader's experience. In a quest for self-reflexivity in modern and contemporary criticism, it would be useful to contend with an unconventional text of stable identities like Amoretti.

Such a poem does not represent the dialectical transhistorical subjectivity that creates the paradoxical identities of New Criticism, or the deferred identification of reader-response's ideal reader. The reader is not often called upon to assess the distance between the speaker's attitudes and those of the author, nor to assess retroactively the speaker's attitudes and then judge his own; that is, he is not asked to perform a New Critical act of reading on an indeterminate or, in deconstruction's term, "writerly" text. In short, he is not asked to enact the interpretive process of reader-¹² response criticism.

As feminists and others have noted, this act of reading and the selfhood it promotes are culture- and even gender specific. The dialectical process of self-definition valued by Lever, the New Critics, and the reader-response critics depends upon culturally structured oppositions. Helene Cixous orders these oppositions as follows: male/female, activity/passivity, sun/moon,

culture/nature, day/night, father/mother, head/emotions, intelligible/sensitive, logos/pathos (Moi 104). Those associated with activity and reason are generally endowed with greater status and morality, because they are qualities necessary for the maintenance of civilization. This is Western civilization which has defined and created itself as a culture not inscribed within but separate from nature. As the progress of civilization comes to depend on the rational discoveries of science, the intelligible, rational categories gain even more prestige.

Spenser's sonnets and even The Faerie Queene have often been described as lacking a certain veracity or reality.¹³ This imputation recurs with particular frequency in discussions of Amoretti when it is compared to Astrophil and Stella. To a twentieth-century critical audience, Spenser's poem does, indeed, lack verisimilitude for it is grounded in an ultimate Platonic-Christian world. In the Renaissance, the visible and sensitive world, carefully perceived, recorded, and valued by the twentieth-century mind, was subordinated to this other golden world, though this conception was being challenged, for instance, in Bacon's justification for empirical analysis in The Advancement of Learning. New Critics and reader-response critics are probably correct to suggest that Astrophil presents a "reality" like ours: he perceives an "objective" reality, which includes Stella. To him things are outward and visible signs only. Though

Astrophil pays lip service to virtue and reason, desire and the objective vision still win out in many of his self-consuming final couplets. The "reality" of Astrophil's perspective, often praised by twentieth-century critics, would have constituted sin in the sixteenth century.

A full understanding of our objective reality has sometimes not been expected of those associated either in whole or in part with the negative side of Cixous' paradigms. Reality depends on knowledge of, access to, and audience for logos, culture, rationality, activity, etc. There are many individuals who have the education and means for full subjectivity, and some who do not. The point is that reader-response criticism assumes a transhistorical, universal subjectivity, just as modernism assumed the existence of a universally accepted objective interpretation pitted against affective fallacies.

The reality of lyric poetry to many modernists is based on a struggle between the oppositions Cixous identifies. Many of the critics in the aesthetic humanist tradition to which reader-response belongs seek freedom from the negative side of Cixous' paradigms, or they seek to subsume the negative with the positive. Lever, for instance, suggests that the evolving empiricist world view in the English sonnet is accomplished in a movement away from nature, unconscious drives, and physicality into culture, logos, and ego, rather than in the integration of these achieved in the Canzoniere or Amoretti and

Epithalamion. In various ways, all the literary theories examined so far promote poetry as a means of liberating humanity, often of alleviating the demands placed on a human being by those things external to him. This is variously described as transcendence, freedom, autonomy, unity, stability, or integration. Bringing to light a new layer of personality reflects a desire for a stable unity not unlike that found in criticism in search of the organic order of literature. In both cases, literature is seen as a vehicle for achieving human transformation. The new leftist criticisms examined in the next chapter will question these assumptions about the availability and universality of autonomy and transcendence.

In reader-response criticism, the specific parameters of an assumed universal subjectivity are often evident. For example, the subjectivity represented in and appealed to by poetry is often male. Alan Sinfield contends that Astrophil is the "most developed character in English literature since Troilus and Criseyde; he is subject to a passion which most readers experience at some time" ("Sidney" 26). Like many others, Sinfield assumes that readers will identify with and accept Troilus' tragedy rather than Criseyde's as universal human experience. Anthony Easthope observes that traditional criticism--whether author, text, or reader-centred--encourages readers to identify with the Poet as a metasubject, partaking impossibly of both historical author and implied

speaker (140). In this criticism,

Poetry is to be valued because it creates a sense of individual experience, personality, unique voice, what Leavis calls 'the actual quality of experience' and . . . in Jacques Derrida's terms . . . presence . . . This is what criticism finds in the sonnets of Astrophil and Stella On these grounds--'presence'--the reader is invited into empathy with the Poet, to read 'with the same Spirit that its Author writ' . . . in a narcissistic and elitist identification (you too can be Sir Philip Sidney) . . . (140)

However, as Chapter Five makes clear, male and female readers of many ethnic and cultural backgrounds are capable, with some adjustments, of making this identification.

In some ways, then, reader-response criticism does not represent a significant departure from formalism since it retains the aesthetic humanist conception of subjectivity, and a transcendent (though reader-centred) ethos. Nevertheless, its transitional value in Anglo-American literary theory should not be overlooked.

Even though reader-response criticism has been called on the carpet for promoting the reading experience of the autonomy-seeking white liberal reader exclusively, it begins the "democratization" of the interpretive
 14
 community. It also formulates a conception of the reading experience and open textuality that will be accepted by the deconstructive criticisms of the 1970's and 1980's. Roland Barthes, whose career spanned the structuralist/post-structuralist moments, made an enormously influential distinction between "readerly" and "writerly" texts in S/Z (3-6) which clearly defined the

literary work for the new criticisms of the last few decades. Like Fish's self-satisfying text, the readerly text drives toward signification, favouring sequentiality followed by closure. The writerly text, on the other hand, is open, endless, reversible. This is the kind of text Astrophil and Stella, with its deferral of reader satisfaction, has become in contemporary criticism while Amoretti remains a closed, stable work. It is not the "open" text as defined by the reception semiotics of Umberto Eco. Open texts are quite literally "unfinished": "the author seems to hand them on to the performer more or less like the components of a construction kit" (49).

In defining the "writerly" terms in which he analyzes The Faerie Queene, Jonathan Goldberg suggests the extent to which reader-response's text has become deconstruction's text:

The readerly text offers its reader the word as product, an object; the name as a thing, an object of communication. The writerly text defers, demands the "endlesse worke" of play, the discovery of and the dissolving of differences into deferred identity and unity. The writerly text is an "endlesse worke" of substitution, sequences of names in place of other names, structures of difference, deferred identities. It plays upon a void; it occupies the place of loss . . . (Endlesse 11)

As twentieth-century criticism drives toward the indeterminacies of its recent conclusions, the writer, the speaker, and the reader gradually come to conform to the requirements of a rhetorical model. This model has largely displaced the expressivist one popular at the turn

of the century which was concerned with sincerity and authenticity. This, too, has affected the reception of Amoretti.

In 1976, Richard Lanham captures the finer spirit of contemporary critical interest in rhetoric, in which questions of reading and reception figure largely. The Motives of Eloquence provides an articulation of the dichotomous cultural views that have created both the expressivist notion of the "insincere" motives of rhetoric and recent criticism's prevailing sympathy with the production of structured, premeditated literary identities manipulative of the reader's response. Lanham uses the distinction between "homo seriusus" and "homo rhetoricus" to define the terms of this opposition, one which he claims has a long history in Western culture.

Homo rhetoricus is characterized by his overpowering self-consciousness about language: he is "an actor; his reality public, dramatic" (3-4), his identity contingent and in flux. He manipulates reality and views life as a game. Lacking this ludic sense, homo seriusus believes in a soul or a central, unified self, which language reflects rather than creates. He is "pledged to a single set of values and the cosmic orchestration they adumbrate" (5). Lanham's paradigms provide a useful explanation of the critical distinction between the sonneteering of Sidney and Spenser.

New Critical investigations of persona prepared the way for reader-response's preoccupation with strategies of

reader manipulation. These, in turn, became the focus of much contemporary literary analysis fascinated by indeterminate identities, unstable voice, and open textuality, and predisposed to read the speech acts of homo rhetoricus rather than homo seriusus into Renaissance poetry. Thus, historical Sidney, caught between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*, between the roles of courtier and Christian activist, between Petrarchism and Protestantism, has become the exemplar of the indeterminate, dialectical identity of the English Renaissance courtier-poet. While avoiding simple equations between the creator of and the speaker in Astrophil and Stella, recent criticism nevertheless implies that this dialectic is also constructed in the hyperkinetic, vertiginous identity of Astrophil. Hence, Sidney's sequence, with its deferred resolution, sprezzatura, and ludic appeal, has become an important site for homo rhetoricus.

Spenser's Amoretti, on the other hand, struggling in the consolidated shadow cast by the marriage hymn, is often viewed, as Carol Kaske points out disapprovingly, as a "shoddy portico to so noble a temple" (295). The unresolved tensions that do exist in the poem do not provide particularly tempting labyrinths for the critic. The transformation of the self important to reader-response criticism does not seem to take place in this poem, if the silence of reader-response critics concerning it is any indication. Ernest Barker's comment of many

years ago on Spenser's contemplative stylistics may hold the key to the lack of interest in this poem on the part of those seeking seeking robust personae, psychological realism, and reader entanglement and enlightenment:

"Perhaps Spenser, the poet's poet, has made more poets than gentlemen" (153). Today, Spenser at sonnets remains homo seriosus, creating monuments out of the stable components of Christian liturgy and the cycles of nature. With the decline of monuments and monumental studies with new historicism and feminism, the subjects of the next chapter, this conception of Spenser is perpetuated. Sidney's star, on the other hand, continues to rise.

Notes

1

In a retrospective essay published in 1975, Rudolph B. Gottfried declares that he and other Spenserians are "living in a new golden age of Spenserian studies" (73). Also in 1975, S.K. Heninger noted that Spenserians had redeemed Spenser from the New Critics who had ignored him (22) by attempting new directions such as reader-response, numerology, or iconography ("Gloriana" 22-23). Nevertheless, metaphysical poetry held its own in spite of the expansion of the literary-critical industry to include the marginalized Elizabethans: as late as 1975, Walter Davis begs for a moratorium on Donne studies (202).

2

Terry Eagleton suggests that the New Critics were alienated from encroaching modern industrial capitalism, as were Eliot, Leavis, and Richards: "the American movement had its roots in the economically backward South--in the region of traditional blood and breeding" (46), where the young T.S. Eliot had grown up.

3

A critical consensus was reached at this time concerning the oppositions within *Astrophil*: for C.S. Lewis they are Virtue (or Reason) and Love (English 329); for Robert L. Montgomery (Symmetry 103), Hallett Smith (154), and J.W. Lever (84), they are reason and passion.

4

Some investigations of Spenserian persona have been undertaken. Robert Kellogg's "Thought's Astonishment and the Dark Conceits of Spenser's Amoretti" offered the first

comprehensive investigation of persona in this poem. See also Judith Kalil, "'Mask in Myrth Lyke to a Comedy': Spenser's Persona in the Amoretti." Elizabeth Bieman, Alexander Dunlop ("Drama"), and Carol Kaske all treat the voice in Amoretti as that of Spenser's persona. However, many critics continue to ascribe this voice to Spenser rather than the poet-speaker.

5

Elizabeth Bieman contends that readers frequently miss the witty and bawdy features of the sequence because of the sobriety of our conceptions of Spenserian eros (131-32). Alexander Dunlop suggests that the poem is a "dramatization of the poet's experience in love. The plot of the drama is the personal development of the lover as reflected in the poems" ("Drama" 119). The speaker is a "semi-fictional dramatic character interposed between the author and the reader" (107). Carol V. Kaske proposes that critics eliminate tension and flatten structural progressions by reading the "foreknowledge" of the closure provided by Epithalamion into the work (284). For Kaske, "tension is always there in Spenser, but it is in the grand design" (285).

6

Murray Krieger describes Sonnet 35 of Astrophil and Stella as a self-consuming artifact: "As a 'self-consuming artifact' . . . the poem enters the eschatological mode, using language to end language and the very possibility of using words as we normally do; in this one final self-destructive display, language at last

achieves pure presentation" (Poetic 17). In Trials of Desire, Margaret Ferguson suggests that the Defence is a self-consuming artifact, undermining its own rhetorical authority as part of Sidney's attack on the ego of the reader (83).

⁷ Like Astrophil and Stella, Shakespeare's sonnets contain biographical indeterminacies. In terms of their structure, they also have seemed disordered to twentieth-century readers. Consequently, they have become an important site for reader-response criticism. Former "problems" with the sonnets become part of the reader's experience. Gerald Hammond gives a meticulous phenomenological account of the reader's experience in The Reader and Shakespeare's Young Man Sonnets. In An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets, Stephen Booth suggests that the variable and apparently unstructured sequence provides "the experience not of recognizing the mutable nature of the human condition but of participating in an actual experience of mutability" (59).

⁸ Elizabeth Bieman makes one of the few attempts in her article in Spenser Studies 4 (1983). She uses Renaissance rhetorical theory to prove that Spenser uses not only what the influential Renaissance theorist Peter Ramus called the Natural style but also the Prudential style. The Natural style, clear and direct, is roughly analogous to Fish's self-satisfying mode; the Prudential style, proceeding by various strategies of indirection, to Fish's self-consuming mode.

I find that the dominant "natural" method has, as its author may indeed have expected, outweighed for a public audience the naughty suggestiveness "prudentially" hidden in the wordplay of Amoretti. We should be encouraged, therefore, to take note of our anticipations as raised by Spenser's language, even when the progress of the discourse cancels them out. (133)

John Webster notes that Fish's self-satisfying vs. self-consuming categories are like the Natural and Prudential discursive methods. These also correspond to what Bacon described in The Advancement of Learning as the magistral method of well-ordered discourse, and the probative method, which proceeds by indirection and conduces to new insights. In the Renaissance, both had their merits depending upon the audience and the purpose, and, indeed, they were often combined. Webster contends that Fish's "precariously hybrid categories" (42) are too exclusive. Just as Bieman suggests that critics have missed the prudential features of Amoretti, Webster argues that Fish's categories do not account for the combination of methods in Astrophil and Stella.

9

Jacqueline T. Miller has proposed that in English Renaissance literature, the loss of personal and artistic identity seems to be demanded by both poetry and love (secular and divine). Spenser is unique in not surrendering his personal identity to these demands: "While Herbert painfully and with frequent resistance surrenders to this demand [in The Temple], and Sidney boldly pretends to [in Astrophil and Stella], Spenser accommodates [in Amoretti] it

without compromising himself" ("Love" 557).

10

Maintaining the demure spirit of Mona Wilson into the 1980's, Thomas P. Roche suggests that Sidney's "Vanie whereof I had not ridd myself" was not his impure sexual desire for Lady Rich, but "the triviality he had allowed Astrophil to make of real life and of the insidiousness of the 'mery glee' he had allowed himself to perpetrate" ("Autobiographical" 227).

11

This is what Jack Stillinger considered it in his discussion "The Biographical Problem of Astrophel and Stella" in 1960. He makes a New Critical recommendation to critics to focus on the poetry not the love story (639).

12

Arguing for tension in the grand design of Amoretti, Carol V. Kaske observes that tension is duly perceived in the sonnets of Petrarch, Shakespeare, and Sidney because "their paradoxical emotion co-exists in a single sonnet or even line" (285). This observation could suggest why a New Critical or phenomenological close reading technique like Fish's or Iser's misses the tension that does exist in Amoretti. Likewise, in Stephen Booth's reader-centred edition of Shakespeare's sonnets, the aim is "to provide a text that will give a modern reader as much as I can resurrect of a Renaissance reader's experience of the 1609 Quarto Both my text and my commentary are determined by what I think a Renaissance reader would have thought as he moved from line to line and sonnet to sonnet in the Quarto" (ix). Ironically, this notion of the reading experience, with its clear antecedents in New Critical

close reading, provides a twentieth-century rather than a sixteenth-century reading experience.

13

S.K. Heninger notes how changes in epistemology since the Renaissance have hurt Spenser: "The rapid change in ideas and attitudes during what has come to be called the scientific revolution very quickly rendered Spenser obsolete" ("Aesthetic" 79).

14

In Is There A Text In This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities, Stanley Fish gives his reader a bit more specificity. He is a member of an academic community. Reader-response criticism was at first greatly feared as a populist trend destined to destroy academic interpretive priority. This work clearly suggests that reader-response has retained the special status of the professional critic from formalism.

CHAPTER FIVE

A new generation of critics comes of age after the 1960's, a decade which produced a number of radical social critiques, particularly in France. A more materialist analysis of the conditions of literary production gains ascendancy after this, most emphatically in Britain in the work of the cultural materialists whose ranks include Alan Sinfield, Jonathan Dollimore, Catherine Belsey, and Terry Eagleton. Their counterparts in America, the new historicists, include Gary Waller, Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Adrian Montrose, Arthur Marotti, Stephen Orgel, Jonathan Goldberg, and Frank Whigham. Simultaneous with and often situated within these new historical approaches to Renaissance literature is a feminist critique. The debt of these "rewritings" of literary history to Europe is indicated in Jonathan Dollimore's description of their influences and pretexts: "That work includes the considerable output of [Raymond Williams]...and, more generally, the convergence of history, sociology and English in cultural studies, some of the major developments in feminism, as well as continental Marxist-structuralist and post-structuralist theory, especially that of Althusser, Macherey, Gramsci and Foucault" (Dollimore and Sinfield 2). This chapter will examine the impact of revisionist criticism, specifically, the new historicism, on Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti looking

closely, first of all, at its antecedents in postmodern thought.

Reader-response criticism and reception aesthetics, in their more reflexive modes, draw attention to the historicity of reading. Stanley Fish's latest book Is There A Text in This Class? is a study of the historical specificity of interpretive communities. For Iser's colleague, Hans Robert Jauss, works of literature are received within the "horizon of expectations" of a particular reading public.

Reader-centred criticism created a shift in critical perspective so that notions of the rhetorical "frame" within which Renaissance sonnet sequences were conceived and received started to be considered. The effect of print technology, for example, which occurs simultaneously with and is the material condition of the rise and dissemination of Petrarchism, has been recently examined¹ by William Kennedy. For a Renaissance poet used to the verbal immediacy of the spoken voice, the "closure of print" (7) offered new challenges to the ideas of voice and address that constitute the rhetorical frame of sonneteering. The focus on frame mitigates the question of hyperconventionality with which critics have often been concerned:~

The frame is important in the development of Petrarchan rhetoric, and it is even more important than the characteristically Petrarchan figures and tropes embedded within it. To

reverse this order of importance implies that Petrarchan rhetoric is no more than a compendium of figures and tropes, a piecemeal assemblage of individually conceived parts. (Kennedy 8)

In addition, Kennedy sees the apparent structural incoherence perceived by some twentieth-century readers as an attempt to simulate the spoken voice of an oral text which is open, flexible, and mobile (10).

Critics such as Rosemond Tuve, Kenneth Burke, and Walter Ong prepared the way for an enlarged understanding of the repertoire of rhetorical strategies at work in Elizabethan writing. In the 1970's, the analysis of Renaissance rhetoric is placed in the context of European structuralist and post-structuralist developments in language theory. Critics start to view Renaissance rhetoric as a pervasive semiotic or signifying system, not just confined to art but important in courtly life as well. George Puttenham's The Arte of English Poesie, which articulates the connection between the tropes of poetry and the tropes of courtliness, is often invoked. The subtitles Puttenham gives to many of the figures he thereby personifies suggest their usefulness in arch and dissimulative courtly interactions. Most notable and oft-quoted is "the Courtly figure Allegoria, which is when we speake one thing and thinke another, and that our wordes and meanings meete not" (196). Puttenham claims that the use of this figure is so large that no man--neither common courtier, counsellor, nor prince--can thrive and prosper without it.

Daniel Javitch's Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England makes clear the kind of "artistic self-fashioning" (15) that occurs on the stage of courtly life. Self-fashioning is also the subject of Stephen Greenblatt's seminal study Renaissance Self-Fashioning, devoted to the art of identity formation. Sidney, with a copy of Castiglione's The Courtier "ever in his pocket when he went abroad" (Whigham 30), becomes a new symbol of the Elizabethan poet. His sincerity irrelevant, he has become a rhetor rather than confessor. Furthermore, Petrarchism has become a vast Renaissance intertext within which individual sonnet sequences and individual performances participate. In postmodern discussions, the focus has shifted from individual author, text, or reader, to language and discourses.

Structuralist and post-structuralist theories of language, which have provided new perspectives on the signifying system of Renaissance rhetoric, developed from Saussurian linguistics. The Saussurian view of language as a non-referential system, as a system of difference rather than a nomenclature of things, begins to find support in Anglo-American criticism in the 1970's. The major contribution of this view to Western thought is that language is even more highly creative than was formerly assumed, even in the strongest arguments of the most vehement apologists for poetry. Language is now seen as constitutive of reality.

For Jonathan Goldberg, an important postmodern critic

of Renaissance poetry, "language subsumes writing, discourse, literature" (James xi). It is a system of difference in which some terms are given value by virtue of the others which are not; that is, one term is clear and transparent because the other grounds it. According to Jacques Derrida, the major opposition for Western humanism is between the self and those things external to it, or "other." Self and other are the two fundamental categories of human thought. In this differential network, identity or the truth about the self is endlessly deferred by language. Poetry is therefore "endlesse worke"--a perpetual attempt to find a "presence" that language promises but can never deliver. The Renaissance sonnet participates in this doomed quest.

Among other things, deconstruction has provided the condition for a "dismantling" of humanist conceptions of selfhood established during the Renaissance. For many postmodernists, the human subject is defined within language rather than informed with a pregiven essence or presence which makes him unique, autonomous, and self-sufficient. The belief in identity--outside of textuality--is viewed as a nostalgic mystique of presence which masks the role of language in Western philosophies and in the construction of reality. Thus, the dialectical nature of much Petrarchan poetry is now seen as a search for presence, and, ultimately, as a function of language.

The age of absence, rather than presence, is also figured in the writings of Michel Foucault whose work on "discourse" further consolidates the notion of language's ubiquity. Discourse is language put to use. It can only be conceived of contextually: "The statement made, the words used and the meaning of the words used, depends on where and against what the statement is made" (Macdonell 1). European work on discourse represents a departure from structuralism which tended to "evacuate history" (Macdonell 11) in the name of transhistorical structures underwriting all myths and narratives.

Furthermore, in Foucault's writings, discourses or "discursive practices" are many; they struggle against each other for dominance. They also define reality and power. Whoever controls the discourse on law, religion, or medicine, for instance, has power. Sovereign power, according to Foucault, disguises the fact of its discursivity by appealing to something outside itself, to some transcendent principle. This Foucaultian conception of the Renaissance monarch's power figures largely in Jonathan Goldberg's James I and the Politics of Literature (6), and in Frank Whigham's analysis of the political uses of courtesy literature in Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory (20).

For post-structuralists, the poet contributes to a "discursive formation." He is a creator, to be sure, but of discursive structures by which he and his discourse

have already been defined. He is a medium of language rather than a medium for universal sentiment. As Gary Waller insists, "the writing of Shakespeare, or Spenser, or Sidney, or Milton is not 'free', not created by a uniquely creative sovereign power, the 'genius' reified by humanist hagiography, but by language--the text belongs, finally, to language, which speaks through him" ("Author" 413).

The Petrarchan poet works within Petrarchan discourse and, for the new historicists, this discourse participates in the power politics of the Renaissance court. Used in a variety of public and political as well as private situations, multi-functional Petrarchan discourse contributes to the production of ideology. The Marxist Louis Althusser's conception of ideology is also incorporated into contemporary discussions of Renaissance poetry. Ideology is represented and created in discourse. It is not just a set of illusions under which a duped populace struggles, though this is often how it is construed, but "the imaginary relation of . . . individuals to the real relations in which they live" (Althusser 155). Althusser views the arts, the law, educational system, the media, and the family as Ideological State Apparatuses whose discourses determine individualism. Many critics now agree that literature is ideological; that is, that it has the power to influence our conceptions of reality. Contemporary criticisms often

employ the term "ideology", though the American new historicists are less inclined to make specific their Marxist philosophical antecedents than the British cultural materialists (Howard 33-34).

Psychoanalysis, another important component of the new criticisms, also emphasizes the seminal role of language in identity formation. Language and discourse are seen as manifestations of the Symbolic in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. Lacan proposes that the Imaginary is a preoedipal phase that the subject perceives as a time of unmediated presence with the mother. This awareness occurs after he has entered the Symbolic order of language and culture, thus acquiring subjectivity (Garner et al 21). The Imaginary is associated with that which is other--the female, the Unconscious, the undifferentiated, Nature, and the pre-discursive. After oedipal reality is imposed on the child, he associates the mother with a "presence" forever lost, though often pursued, in representation. The "Other" of the Imaginary enables the "Self" of the Symbolic to signify. Indeed, the other is necessary for the endless work of signification. As in deconstruction, undifferentiated, unmediated presence can never be achieved in the differential system of language.

Deconstruction, Marxism, and psychoanalysis have provided the postmodern theoretical framework for the new historicism, cultural materialism, and feminism. Postmodernists often oppose their practice to that of the

modernists. For instance, where meaning was stable for the modernist, it is radically unstable for the postmodernist. Where the modernist found univocal meaning within the special, closed, organic order of literature, the postmodernist refuses to valorize any essential notion of literature. Where modernism was serious and reverent in its attitude toward the past, postmodernism takes the liberty of rewriting or parodying it. This is the result of the widening of the concept of "culture." For the romantic expressivist and modernist, culture was a specialized term for signs in the realm of the symbolic; for the postmodernist, culture is textual, linguistic, and therefore ubiquitous. Reality is an effect of the historicized rather than transcendental word, a function of the movement of the signified beneath signifiers. Instead of a decaying culture, postmodernists suggest that both loss and presence are always already being offered and taken away. Where modernism fragmented then recuperated history, and repressed time, postmodernism reduces history and time to signifiers within contradictory discourses, past and present.

Postmodernists have deconstructed the elitist and authoritarian aspects of literary-critical discourse as part of their self-reflexive compulsion to see through their own assumptions. The postmodernist nevertheless declines social and moral authority, preferring a specular or, at best, subversive stance induced by today's profound

skepticism. The concept of ideology has replaced the romantic expressivist's Truth and modernist's integral meaning. The next section will examine the new historicist's analysis of the ideologically productive role of poetry in Elizabethan society, and the role of postmodern thought in producing the new historical reading of the sonnets as the story of the self structured by the other.

The notion that Petrarchan love poetry is animated with dialectical dynamism originating within the desiring self is of longstanding. Conceptions of heteroerotic love poetry from Plato to the present day reinforce the idea that sexuality is opposed to rationality, producing conflict and disequilibrium. Though courtly love is an attempt to spiritualize the passions of the body through service and chastity (Lewis, Allegory 1-43), the impulses behind the whole elaborate ritual are adulterous and originate in sexual desire. In The Courtier, Count Lodovico describes the ideological basis for the destabilizing effects of love: "many people consider that it is impossible to reconcile love with reason" (333). Similarly, George Puttenham's description of the structural expectations a sixteenth-century reader would have brought to love poetry derives from these oppositions: "it requireth a forme of Poesie variable, inconstant, affected, curious and most witty of any others, whereof the joyes were to be uttered in one sorte,

the sorrowes in an other" (59-60).

Thus, in the conventional sonnet sequence derived from Petrarch's desultory rime sparse, love is generally a destabilizing, and to some like J.W. Lever, even a pathological force. Germaine Warkentin explains the pathology of Petrarchism as follows: "The scattered and various poems represent the very semblance of the poet's medical and spiritual condition, torn between opposing forces and incapable of establishing a stable centre out of which his 'cure' can emerge" (Warkentin 19).

Petrarchan lyrics are a site where the self of the early modern era, "always in motion still desiring change", as the sonneteer Michael Drayton described him, plays out his anxieties, laments his loss, and articulates his unfulfilled desires.

The dialectical nature of the Renaissance sonnet belongs finally, the postmodernists say, to language. Sonnets are a struggle in a labyrinth of signs, a struggle because signs have no referent; they are empty and can ultimately refer only to themselves. The indeterminacy of the sonneteer's text is a repression of his knowledge of his enterprise's futility: "the composition of erotic lyric is less an exercise of expression than of repression. Its discourse grows out of a productivity founded on negation" (Vance 49).

Like all writers, the sonneteer is compelled to continue regardless. This is particularly true in those

humanist moments when he is experimenting with the idea of putting himself into his signs. One of the most important of these moments occurs in the Canzoniere. It is said to prefigure modern reality.

In John Freccero's "The Fig Tree and the Laurel", one of the most influential articles for postmodern studies of Petrarchan sonneteering, Petrarch's poetics participate in the Renaissance bid to structure an identity based on a human rather than a divine metaphysics. Freccero opposes Augustine's Confessions to Petrarch's Canzoniere. As a type of Christian allegory, Augustine's writing, unlike Petrarch's, is saved from the infinite referentiality of signs, from the "unlimited semiosis" which is the spectre and the reality of post-structuralism. It is grounded in the Logos, God's word, which gives language an ultimate signification beyond history. This makes it idealist, according to deconstruction.

Where Augustine's signs are allegorical, Petrarch's are autoreflexive (Freccero 35), uninformed by the presence of God. They point to Laura, not a flesh-and-blood Laura, a historical referent, but to Laura of the poem, Laura the sign. In Petrarch's poetics, Laura stands for his words, his autonomous literary achievements, belonging to him not to God:

Petrarch makes of it [the laurel] the emblem of the mirror relationship Laura-Lauro, which is to say, the poetic lady created by the poet, who in turn creates him as poet laureate. This circularity forecloses all referentiality and in

its self-contained dynamism resembles the inner life of the Trinity as the Church Fathers imagined it. One could scarcely suppose a greater autonomy. This poetic strategy corresponds, in the theological order, to the sin of idolatry. (37)

Petrarch's poetry, "whose subject matter is its own act and whose creation is its own author" (34), provides deconstruction with an exemplary instance which enacts the "always already" doomed search for presence and autonomy characteristic of what Jonathan Dollimore labels "essentialist humanism" (Radical 155).

As the ascription of ultimate presence in literature starts to be portrayed as false consciousness, contemporary criticism of the English sonnets endorses the main points of Freccero's argument. Astrophil and Stella is more easily read as an allegory of the futile pursuit for presence than Amoretti, a poem which achieves "closure" in the metaphysics of Christian marriage. Like Petrarch, Astrophil enacts the struggle of the self for identity and autonomy, and his poetry represents the same idolatrous desires. Sidney's open-ended sequence therefore stands in the same relation to Spenser's as Petrarch's, at least in vita, does to the Confessions.

Reed Way Dasenbrock notes the division between the instability of Petrarch's sonnets in vita and the stability of the sonnets in morte. In the poems in morte, the poet achieves transcendence of the Petrarchan situation, something Spenser also achieves (41). Both Spenser and Petrarch accept God and find stasis, unlike

the perpetually Protean Astrophil: Astrophil remains a speaking picture of lust in vita. Sidney may have intended this to alienate the right reader, as reader-response critics have argued, so that the reader creates his own resolution beyond the indeterminate text.

In any case, Astrophil's search for identity or presence seems to have put the fear of damnation into Sidney ("a vanitie whereof I had not ridd myself") for the assertion of autonomy outside of God's transcendent order was considered sin in the sixteenth century. Thomas Greene contends that Petrarch also found this troubling:

The radical stasis of the medieval personality was first explicitly challenged by Petrarch who, gazing steadily upon himself, found an altogether different state of affairs. The egoism of Petrarch was so monumental and so acute that it was an event in European intellectual history. What troubled Petrarch about himself was precisely the lack of continuity in his tangled passions, the distractions of his cluttered motives, [his] fatal complexity ("Flexibility" 246)

The monumental ego of in vita and Astrophil and Stella is more fascinating than troubling to many modern and contemporary readers, however.

Astrophil's inability to achieve presence and unity has generated much postmodern commentary. The story of his adversarial relationship to the other has become the story of the decentred self, a postmodernist reality. Relying on Derrida's, Lacan's, Julia Kristeva's, and Mikhail Bakhtin's formulations of the complexities, aporias, dislocations, and radical contradictions of the

discourses by which a subject attempts to define himself, Gary Waller suggests that Astrophil enacts the struggle to locate a reified "I" ("Rewriting" 71). In this poem, a battle between the two master codes of the late sixteenth century--Petrarchism and Protestantism--takes place.

These

put into discourse a historically specific, radically decentered, self, one that finds its only recourse in language, that creates itself only as it is continually drawn into writing, and which discovers that the more it writes, the more it is in fact written, as words interpose themselves as frustrating and perpetually tantalizing yet always negative mediations between the anxious desiring subject and the object of his (or, though very rarely, her) desire. ("Rewriting" 70)

An absent other shapes the text. The other takes many forms; it can be a mistress or a God against or under the aegis of which the work of self-definition takes place. Waller argues that "Petrarchism and Protestantism alike provided complex mechanisms whereby the desiring subject was permitted to speak, put under observation, and articulated in the presence and under the power of an Other" ("Rewriting" 70). Sidney grapples at the site of the Other with the court and religion, Castiglione and Calvin.

The absent other is essential to signification. Waller contends that Stella "is the given gap in the discourse, an absence which is required for the poem in which 'she' appears to be written at all" ("Rewriting" 72-73). Critics are quick to point to the unresolved dialectic between absence and presence in Sonnet 106--"O

absent presence! Stella is not here" (106.1)--near the end of Sidney's open-ended sequence. This dialectic can never be resolved: "if the hoped for correspondence between word and desire were to be achieved or else finally and absolutely denied, then the sequence would end . . . there is no longer any need to signify once presence, either positive or negative, is achieved" ("Rewriting" 73).

The desire which Petrarch, Spenser, and Fulke Greville dispense with by moving "to shift the discourse to a transcendent religious vision, to look at the situation retrospectively, from a perspective beyond the claims of desire" (Montgomery, "Astrophil's" 46) remains in Astrophil and Stella. So, therefore, does the shifting, endlessly displaced "I", a fact of fiction in postmodern thought. Julia Kristeva views the fictive "I" of poesis as a continuous process of displacement:

The "I" ceases to be a localizable, fixed point, but becomes multipliable according to the (different) situations of discourse. "I" is no longer "one"; there are several "I"-s and therefore several "one"-s which are not repetitious of the same "I" but rather of diverse positions By permutation of shifters, fiction multiplies the "one", but does not destroy it, does not foreclose it: it makes of these "ones" a network that holds together. (Cited by Vance 51)

The shifting "I" plays an important role in Stephen Greenblatt's poetics of self-fashioning. In Sonnet 45 of Astrophil and Stella, Astrophil fictionalizes himself so that Stella, who has just been moved by the story of a lovers' tragedy, will take pity on him: "I am not I, pity the tale of me", he begs. Stephen Greenblatt equates the

"I" of this sonnet with Iago's "I"--"I am not what I am." This "I" "is the motto of the improviser, the manipulator of signs that bear no resemblance to what they profess to signify" (Greenblatt, Renaissance 238). It is also the "I" sought in the new historical analysis of Renaissance sonnet sequences, an "I" that is forced into self-fashioning by a hostile other, and that thinks one "can win pity for oneself only by becoming a tale of oneself, and hence ceasing to be oneself" (Greenblatt, Renaissance 238).

Jean E. Howard defines the new historicism as a reaction against the ahistorical tendencies in formalism. It is also a reaction against the "old historicism." E.M.W. Tillyard's The Elizabethan World Picture is the old historical text most often interrogated by new historicism. Tillyard assumes "that history is knowable; that literature mirrors or at least by indirection reflects historical reality; and that historians and critics can see the facts of history objectively" (Howard 18). In the article which first gives a name to the new historicism, Stephen Greenblatt suggests that earlier historical criticism (his example is Dover Wilson) is "monological . . . concerned with discovering a single political vision, usually identical to that said to be held by the entire literate class or indeed the entire population" ("Forms" 5). Instead, new historicism is

self-proclaimed as "more open to [literary] works as fields of forces, places of dissension and shifting interests, occasions for the jostling of orthodox and subversive impulses" (6). Subversion is a key term in postmodern criticism of Renaissance poetry.

Like Fish's reader-response, new historicism is a criticism of confrontation, even subversion, of the benighted criticism of former days. It refuses the first and third of Tillyard's assumptions by an appeal to its reflexivity, to its awareness, in Foucaultian terms, that all history is interpretation, an intervention into the past, and therefore a projection of a present-day "episteme" or world view onto a past that is radically other (Howard 18;21;44). Tillyard's second assumption, that literature reflects reality, is overwhelmed by the new historicist's faith in the power of literary forms to produce reality. This is supported by recent language and discourse theory.

For example, Jonathan Goldberg's thesis in his study of James I is that "language and politics--broadly construed--are mutually constitutive . . . society shapes and is shaped by the possibilities in its language and discursive practices" (xi). In Goldberg's study, words have power and a "complex path" (xii) not only connects authority to writing in a reflexive relationship, but also connects the poet to authority showing the power of poetic language to create and maintain that authority. Louis Montrose's commentary on Renaissance texts is also an

exploration of the ideological "work" done by them.

Spenser's career consisted of

a recurrent attempt to transform language into power, to animate the word as a force in the world, to create the personal and social harmony which, for Renaissance poets and rhetoricians, is figured in the responsiveness of nature to the music of Orpheus. ("The perfecte" 35)

According to Frank Whigham, moreover, courtesy literature, in a world where "the values of wisdom and political subtlety might be presented as orders of poetic cognition" (87), "maintained and altered the status quo" (20).

If words are a force in the world, the new historicist argues, then it follows that literature participates in power politics. When he speaks generally of his concern with the "historicity of texts: the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing" (Montrose, "Renaissance" 8), he is most likely referring to the relationship between the Renaissance poet and royal authority, wherever that is vested. Because Elizabeth I is the cynosure of royal authority in the last half of the sixteenth century, the poet-courtier like Sidney or Spenser uses a particular gender-specific rhetoric to "woo" or "court" power. Montrose concludes that "it is a historical circumstance of immense political and cultural significance that, for the second half of the sixteenth century, England's sovereign is a virgin queen" ("Celebration" 39).

Elkin Calhoun Wilson, Frances Yates, and Roy Strong, whose work on the cult of Elizabeth I was important in

shaping new historical analysis, first explored the panoply of myths mobilized by the Elizabethans. This project involved consolidating the cult of the Virgin Queen in opposition to the Roman Catholic cult of the Blessed Virgin. One of the central myths employed by the Queen and her courtiership was that of Laura of Petrarchan fame, an important image used to create the iconography of the Queen (Yates 112-14). As Yates points out, Jan Van Der Noot's A Theatre for Worldings, which contains Spenser's translations of Petrarch's sonnets, had political uses. It incorporated into Petrarchan themes the Astraea myth of the return of a virgin goddess who ushers in a golden age: "the 'Astraea' of the dedication here introduces a reformed and anti-papal Petrarch, who teaches rejection of earthly love and worldliness, is against religious persecution, and is associated with apocalyptic visions" (113).

For an earlier generation of biographer and scholar such as Sir John Neale and Wilson, Queen Elizabeth's reign was an idyll, and she was idealized by the Renaissance men who surrounded her. Like Shakespeare, she has long represented essential Englishness, England "wedded to its own self-realization" (Wilson 124). This image was useful to the organic Elizabethan world picture in many modernist criticisms. Numerological critics used it to plumb the numerological depths of Elizabethan representation for the monothematic dimensions given her

by her poets and painters.

Her role as Laura to Petrarchan courtiers was similarly unproblematic. In one of the first comprehensive explorations of the political uses for Elizabethan Petrarchism, Leonard Forster praises the acumen with which she deployed her image as an "icon" of Laura: "She was the only Virgin-Queen, who could combine in her own person political sovereignty and ideal dominion over men's hearts. She saw her advantage and she used it" (147).

The image of an orderly, hierarchical macrocosm reflected in the microcosm of equilibrated Elizabethan society, orchestrated by the wisdom and self-control of Elizabeth's authority, is seldom invoked now, however. A Renaissance poetry of monumental design and metaphysical proportion has fallen out of fashion. As Gordon Braden recently observed, the Renaissance that scholars now teach and respond to is one of conflict and paradox rather than of serene and equilibrated order ("Recent" 183).

Louis Montrose adumbrates the image of the Queen in the new historicism:

As a female ruler of what was, at least in theory, a patriarchal society, Elizabeth incarnated a contradiction at the very center of the Elizabethan sex/gender system Queen Elizabeth was a cultural anomaly; and this anomalousness made her powerful and dangerous. By skillful deployment of images that were at once awesome and familiar, this perplexing creature tried to mollify her male subjects while enhancing her authority over them. ("Midsummer" 80)

Powerful, dangerous, and perplexing--these adjectives make

it clear that this historical figure has suffered a major revision. The reasons for this are to be found in new historicism's conception of an adversarial relationship between the self and society.

The new historicists give the "social formation", a term that indicates their direct antecedents in Marxism, a seminal role in the production of subjectivity. Like their British counterparts, the cultural materialists, they rely on Marx's contention that "men and women make their own history but not in conditions of their own choosing" (Dollimore and Sinfield 2), emphasizing the latter in their demystification of the subject. Sonnet sequences articulate what Jonathan Goldberg calls "a discourse of power" (Endlesse 144) conducing to identity formation. Thus, English sonneteering participates in Elizabethan power politics, and what was formerly viewed as the expression of private, heterosexual desire is allegorized as the sociopolitical discourse of the Elizabethan court.

Jonathan Crewe identifies Lawrence Stone's The Crisis in the Aristocracy as the "master narrative" (74) that governs the new historicist argument. Stone first offered the possibilities for reading the poetry of the Elizabethan court as a response to thwarted individualism, an individualism sociopolitically defined. While individualism had been promulgated by humanist ideology and supported by the expanding horizons of the new

capitalist nation-state, a medieval monarchy curtailed the freedom of prominent Elizabethans such as Leicester, Sidney, Raleigh, and Essex.

Because the female is interpreted as Queen Elizabeth, (or a powerful patroness), whose refusal to fulfill male political desire is well-documented, the female in this criticism is usually depicted as a hostile other. In Stephen Greenblatt's Renaissance Self-Fashioning, the valuation of the other as absence or lack is said to underwrite the whole enterprise of the courtier's identity formation. Self-fashioning is "achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other--heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, AntiChrist--must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked or destroyed" (9). In Jonathan Goldberg's Endlesse Worke, a similar notion obtains. From deconstruction, he employs the idea that the text--characterized by fissure, loss, and dislocation--disables a notion of the self. Drawing upon a materialist analysis, he contends that Renaissance literary works locate themselves specifically in social forms, and are contestatory, social practices. Again, the absent Other of psychoanalysis shapes the text, a text which is now seen as public discourse.

In traditional criticism of Astrophil and Stella, the public and private worlds were kept apart. David Kalstone finds in the sequence a "sharply defined concern for the corrosive effects of love upon the heroic life" (100).

Probing the dialectic between autonomy and submission in the poem, Richard McCoy also locates the conflict within the private domain: "Sidney deals with the problem of control and autonomy in purely romantic terms. The politics here are exclusively sexual, and he examines them with a clarity, humor, and assurance lacking in other works" (72). Unlike the Arcadia, it is a poem "freed of all the troubling connections and details of Sidney's political career" (72). Though McCoy gave an apolitical reading of the sequence, he drew attention to the absent presence of history and politics with which the new historicists have been concerned.

In an examination of Sidney's impure rhetorical motives, Daniel Javitch finds that Astrophil and Stella is a display of rhetorical virtuosity for the sake of entry, acceptance and advancement at court. The poem is a supreme example of Sidneyan sprezzatura:

The artistic disinterestedness Sidney cultivates is not authentic detachment but a stylistic ploy valorized by the court's insiders because it helped to preserve their exclusive social status and identity. Pure, detached, and playful as the sprezzatura may seem in Astrophil and Stella, it was governed, like so much of the Renaissance courtier's beautiful conduct, by the desire to assert social superiority and to retain status and privilege at the center of power. ("Impure" 237)

In a like manner, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass write about the politics of the poem. They explore a variety of similarities between the courtier and the Petrarchan lover, endlessly petitioning, endlessly

waiting (64). Stella's despotism is a token of the monarch's. Jones and Stallybrass contend that "fulfillment in the service of Gloriana was as elusive as in the service of Stella" (54). Stella and other sonnet mistresses start to represent far more than private desire, as Jones and Stallybrass's conception of Astrophil's analogies suggests: beloved/lover = prince/courtier = God/worshipper (68).

In Louis Montrose's examination of Sidney's royal entertainments, The Lady of May and The Triumph of the Fortress of Perfect Beauty, Sidney fuses art and life. He uses his art to instruct and test the Queen (Celebration 15); he not only celebrates, he insinuates; and his "lived topical allegory" (26) is a prolepsis of the crisis of the aristocracy (20). Jonathan Crewe has described "competitive display in a male-narcissistic peer group" (73) as the favoured new historical allegory of Petrarchan love. Louis Montrose's description of Sidney and Fulke Greville in action seems to bear this out:

During two days of florid speeches, spectacular self-displays, and mock combats, these young, ambitious, and thwarted courtiers acted out a fantasy of political demand, rebellion, and submission in metaphors of resentment and aggression that were alternately filial and erotic. They seized upon the forms in which their culture had articulated the relationship between sovereign and subjects: they demanded sustenance from their royal mother, favors from their royal mistress. ("Midsummer" 85)

Arthur Marotti focusses the central arguments of the new historicists on the English sonnet sequence in "'Love is not love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social

Order." Marotti notes the similarity between Stella and the Queen, whom Francis Bacon once described as one who "allows of amorous admiration but prohibits desire" (Cited by Marotti 404). At one point in Astrophil and Stella, Stella confounds Astrophil by telling him that he can continue to love her if he banishes desire. Marotti equates the amorous with the political: "In the context of this sequence, amorous courtship is not only fraught with temptations to self-delusion and dangers to self-esteem analogous to those found in the world of politics; it is also, in a sense, the very same reality expressed in different terms" (405). These are terms that Sidney's coterie audience would have recognized at once.

The new historicists are highly sympathetic to the crisis faced by the thwarted courtier. As a member of the ambitious Leicester faction, Sidney was a radical Protestant fiercely opposed to Queen Elizabeth's proposed marriage to the French Duke of Alencon. In an attempt to make words a force in the world, Sidney wrote her a letter advising against it. This effectively put him out of royal commission for the rest of his short life. The incident and its aftermath figure largely in the new history of Elizabethan poetry. It is ranked with other failed Elizabethan "courtships"--that of Leicester himself, and that of his stepson and Sidney's spiritual heir, the rash Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex.

On the night before the Essex uprising in 1601,

Shakespeare's Richard II, a story of deposition and regicide, was staged. The new historicists often invoke this as an attempt at artistic subversion of the social system, as an example of the interaction of literary forms with social order (Greenblatt, "Forms" 3-6). This is what Stephen Greenblatt describes as the "poetics of culture" (The Forms 6) in the English Renaissance.

Another incident important to the new historical imagination concerns the fate of the pamphleteer John Stubbs. Stubbs lost a hand for publishing his strident objections to the Queen's marriage plans. It is possible that Spenser grimly commemorated this event in the story of Bon Font become Mal Font in Book V, Canto 9, of The Faerie Queene. For his effrontery, Mal Font has his tongue severed and nailed to a post. In the new historicism, these headless, limbless, and tongueless allegories, lived or otherwise, become types of what is portrayed as the troubled Elizabethan political unconscious manifested in an equivocal, suspicious, artful courtesy.

Spenser's conception of power and his relationship to authority, reflected in Amoretti, places his sequence outside of the specific "narcissistic narrative" that new historicism seeks in the sonnet sequences. In Arthur Marotti's article, Spenser is less stigmatized than Sidney by print; he is also less the courtier articulating his identity under the shadow of Elizabeth than an aspiring literary hierophant forging a poetic identity beyond her

margins. For Marotti, Amoretti is less a "social transaction" than a conscious attempt to transform personal, private experience (a self-confessed diversion [Sonnet 80 of Amoretti] from the public discourse of The Faerie Queene) into a monument in the order of Petrarch and Dante, offered "as a part of a literary tradition in which aesthetic value was the main criterion of merit" (413). His poem articulates not only the "academic-humanist dream of of aesthetic-intellectual glory" (417) but also a cultural fantasy, given the lack of choice for many Elizabethans over their affective or political destiny, about "amorous mutuality" (416). Spenser's sonnets are political but on a mythic level: they articulate the collective desire to transcend material constraints on freedom. But the poem is not so closely engaged with the intimate political rhetoric of the court as Astrophil and Stella, and not so clearly an appeal to "a world of shared masculine understanding" (Jones and Stallybrass 58). Thus, as the trend to view sonnet sequences as public discourse, as a will to power, specifically, a "will to powerful service" (Whigham 21), develops in the early 1980's, Sidney's sequence appears to possess a more consciously contrived flexible political language than Spenser's, to possess more precise social co-ordinates.

Even so, Petrarchism is a pervasive trope in all of Spenser's poetry, not only in his sonnet sequence. Louis

Montrose draws attention to Raleigh's dedicatory sonnet to The Faerie Queene to illustrate this. Weeping at the sight of the Faerie Queene, the Petrarch of the poem is carried off into oblivion "on Lauras herse" (Spenser 409), as his graces desert him for Spenser. Montrose explores Spenser's use of "intimate Petrarchan terms" (The perfecte 34) to further his public Virgilian career. Petrarchism also plays a role in Spenser's attempt to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (Spenser 407), his expressed motive for writing The Faerie Queene. In Spenser, Petrarchism is employed in the service of personal and vocational desire, rather than vaulting ambition.

Montrose suggests that Spenser's persona, Colin Clout of The Shepheardes Calender and Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, longs for a recreative relationship based on love rather than power ("The perfecte" 54). Montrose splits the sexual and the social, the dual aspects of Petrarchan love, between Rosalind and Eliza of The Shepheardes Calender ("The perfecte" 53). Public desire for laureate fame plays an important role in most of Spenser's works. However, Amoretti and Epithalamion belong only to the private world:

The identification of poet with lover is complete in the Epithalamion; Spenser's own marriage song celebrates the transformation of lady and courtier into wife and husband, and the incarnation of spirit in wedded love. The success of the erotic poet in reconciling tensions within the private world of Amoretti is contrasted to the epic poet's inability to work such a reconciliation within the larger public

world itself Amoretti, LXXX, records the splitting of the synthetic recreative mode; it opposes the "matter of love" that creates joy and refreshment to the "commendation of special personages" that generates anxiety and exhaustion. ("The perfecte" 55)

Even though Amoretti brings the three Elizabeths--wife, mother, and sovereign--together in Sonnet 74, in Montrose's reading, the lady of Amoretti is distinct from the Queen, the "lynch-pin" (Yates 65) of his great epic. While the general intention of Spenser's career was shadowing the glory of the Queen's sovereign self, he leaves her out of the most intensely visionary moments in his art, in Amoretti and Epithalamion, and the dance of the graces in Book VI of The Faerie Queene.

Montrose points out ("The perfecte" 57) that the lady of Amoretti is described as "fit for the handmayd of the Faery Queene" (Amoretti 80.14). But the poet's inspiration "is not the imperial vision of Gloriana but the personal vision at the recreative center of his experience. Ultimately, then, Gloriana owes her enduring glory to the poor handmaid whose praise is placed beneath her feet" ("The perfecte" 58). Similarly, the central Grace on Mount Acidale is "clearly distinguished from and opposed to the idealized imperial type of queen" (57). To Montrose, the personal visions of Epithalamion and Mount Acidale are profound, "but circumscribed, transient, and fragile triumphs" (58). This is so because Spenser is seen to share, however subconsciously, the new historicist's suspicion that "to make poetry a vehicle of

transcendence is tacitly to acknowledge its ethical and political impotence" ("The perfecte" 54). And to acknowledge this is to go against the new historical credo, something Sidney's more engaged exemplary new historical sonnet sequence does not do.

What distinguishes the old from the new criticism of the Elizabethan sonnets is a less contentious and more ennobling conception of Elizabethan courtesy. To critics of former days, courtesy is a virtue conducive to the health of the body politic. In spite of the many blatant attacks on courtesy in Book VI of The Faerie Queene, Spenser depicts it as,

comely courtesie,
Which though it on a lowly stalke doe boure,
Yet brancheth forth in brave nobilitie,
And spreads itself through all civilitie.
(Proem.4)

Courtesy, a hallmark of the courtier's humility, is associated with other virtues as well--with order, chastity, constancy, civilization, and so on. But the generation of the new historicists is suspicious of the motives of civilization. Civilization is associated with colonialism and imperialism which are viewed as the roads to Auschwitz, Vietnam, or South Africa, and "a source of embarrassed guilt" (Pechter 299). Thus, Spenser's relationship to power, his desire to hallow it, in spite of his disappointments in its indifference and even hostility to his efforts, leaves him on the margins of new historical discussions of sonneteering as a contestatory enterprise. Stephen Greenblatt must apologize for Spenser's attitude to

power:

Spenser loves power and attempts to link his own art ever more closely with its symbolic and literal embodiment. The Faerie Queene is, as he insists again and again, wholly wedded to the autocratic ruler of the English state To say that Spenser worships power, that he is our originating and preeminent poet of empire, is not, in the heady manner of the late '60's, to condemn his work as shallow, craven or timeserving. Rather, his work, like Freud's, bears witness to the deep complicity of our moral imagination even in its noblest and most hauntingly beautiful manifestations in the great Western celebration of power. (Renaissance 174)

Spenser is a dutiful poet, rendering the Queen honourable rather than subversive courtesy. Greenblatt suggests that Spenser mistrusts sprezzatura: "indeed, the concealment of art, its imposition upon an unsuspecting observer, is one of the great recurring evils in The Faerie Queene" (Renaissance 189). Moreover, "Spenser's art does not lead us to perceive ideology critically" (Renaissance 192). Spenser has therefore remained the exemplar of those who have retained a more sanguine world picture and cosmology. In Amoretti, critics who prefer love in an orderly universe are still locating its liturgical, Lenten, calendrical, metaphysical, and cosmological dimensions.

In 1978, Robin Headlam Wells makes the connection between chastity and courtesy in his discussion of Amoretti. Genuflecting in the direction of C.S. Lewis who found in Book III of The Faerie Queene the final defeat of courtly love by matrimony, Wells suggests that the Amoretti and Epithalamion record more than just the poet's

own personal and private desire--they constitute a courtship of the Queen ("Semper Eadem" 253-54). This is a devotional rather than subversive undertaking, however, an attempt to worship the moral ideals and steadfastness embodied in the Queen. Amoretti is therefore an attempt to refine personal conduct within a cosmic and moral framework. Similarly, Wells makes the claim that Amoretti is "right" courtesy in another recent article. Though Spenser states he will keep praise for the lady of the sonnets "low and meane/fit for the handmayde of the Faery Queene" (80.13-14), the panegyric terms in which the lady is described suggest that the sequence is addressed to the Queen: "Unless Spenser is deliberately flouting the rule of decorum, we may suspect that in those sonnets which speak of the goddess-like beauty and power of the poet's lady, there is concealed an allusion to some person of the very highest rank, a person who resembled the gods by excellencie of function" ("Poetic" 12).

Though there are disputes about whether Amoretti's lady is the Queen or not, criticism still portrays Spenser's sonneteering as encomiastic. Richard Helgerson proposes that Spenser writes mostly in the service of Gloriana, and that the poet apologizes throughout Amoretti for leaving the "taedious toyle" of his public poetic duty to praise his beloved (Self-Crowned 87). Ultimately, for critics old and new, he writes in the service of Gloriana, preferring a poetry of praise not blame. Even in the new

historicism, he is still sweet rather than subversive Spenser trying to keep the peace in his pastorals, and mediating contradictions in the body politic. He retreats to the private world of love when he finds that his poetic gifts have a fragile tenure in the real world (so poignantly illustrated in the story of his Orphic precedent). Or he fragments images of the Queen in attempts to maintain her glory and section off her less appealing features. In Gary Waller's analysis, Spenser is the "dutiful Poet laureate" (English 179) trying to fashion perfect virtue in the Amoretti:

Although the early poems of the collection (those before Sonnet 67) are often light, even titillating, at the point at which the praise and gentle admonition of the beloved give way to a celebration of Christian marriage, the tone changes. Petrarchan praise is forced into the service of Christian duty: it is acknowledged that the beloved may often be a distraction from higher commitments the primacy of the Queen, Christian commitments, and dedication to public duty are never wavered from. (English 178-79)

Reception of Amoretti has been deeply affected by the new historical view of Elizabethan authority as absolutist and inimical to the self. This idea produces and is produced by our changing "episteme", to use the Foucaultian term, of Elizabethan society. In the non-transcendentalist, hermeneutically-suspicious criticisms of the 1980's, the Elizabethan world is at odds with itself, its unconsolidated discourses on man, politics, religion, and the family in conflict. The Elizabethan World Picture no longer accounts for this epoch (or,

rather, historical moment) since it finds unproblematic consolidation only, and does not account for strategies of subversion and containment as part of Elizabethan ideology.

With the disappearance of the macrocosm, Queen Elizabeth has become less apocalyptic, her control more precarious and determined, her personal mythology more a strategy of containment, a response to a diverse and potentially dangerous social formation. Age and the hard-nosed Marxist and deconstructive investigations of custom have withered the essential features of her monumentality. While admiration for her power brokerage in ideological mystification and in steel-spined chastity remains intact, the art of her court, read as the art of politics, seems to reveal a more mutually equivocal relationship between her and her subjects, and critics now find mutually suspicious and narcissistic narratives in the written and social texts of the age. At present, Spenser's Amoretti, traditionally read as a vehicle for her idealization rather than subversion, generates little postmodern critical enthusiasm.

Reasons for this iconoclastic rather than iconographic representation of Renaissance poetry are currently being offered by critics who are or who have been major participants within these new critical dialogues. Lynda Boose and Walter Cohen read new historicism, primarily an American movement, as the response of a Vietnam generation of males, guilty because

of their special exemptions therein, and disillusioned by the failure of the left in the 1980's (Boose 739-40). The new historicists are less invested than traditional British critics in preserving a poetry that articulates national essence, and less overtly theoretical and militant than their Marxist counterparts, the British cultural materialists, whose jobs are threatened by Thatcherite neoconservatism. Nevertheless, like the aesthetic humanists, the new historicists apparently have their own nightmare of history which bears on their interpretations of the past.

Sick of criticism as interrogation, Edward Pechter blasts the new historicists and cultural materialists alike for their socially impotent narratives about the beleaguered literary text, based, he believes, on the cliché that "It's a jungle out there" (300). Jonathan Crewe suggests that this jungle is academe. Viewing the early 1980's retrospectively, he contends that "the purported historicization of sixteenth-century literature, in the course of which such topics as those of ambition and career management, of patronage and clientage, of authority and power, of social mobility and of ancien regime political styles rapidly became dominant, was often little more than an allegory of current professional life" (71).

Perhaps this kind of allegory of beleaguered texts and beleaguered individuals, apparently so fatally

attractive to the latest post-war generation, has even larger implications, representing the less generation-specific anxieties produced by the threat to selfhood offered in post-structuralist philosophy. The Foucauldian idea that, at various moments in history, certain discourses gain legitimacy, and that discourse determines individuality may have evoked as much anxiety as influence. "Discourse" and "system" may be the sublimated others in new historicism, and Queen Elizabeth I, controlling and manipulating Petrarchan and other discourses, becomes the force interanimating the forms of power and the power of forms hostile to the individual. Hence, the fascination with Astrophil and Stella, which has become a postmodern elegy for the lost self in its criticism. "I am not I, pity the tale of me" (45.14) is the line from that poem often quoted and analyzed of late.

If the two great contributions of the Renaissance to the modern world now in decline or, at least, under radical deconstruction are the self and sacramental marriage, another site of loss may also figure largely in the new historicism. As feminism genderizes the Other, and investigates the patriarchal, familial structures in which self and otherness--at whose and at what expense--are produced, Queen Elizabeth may have become a new historical symbol for the hostile other within what Lynda Boose has characterized as the literary-critical family.

Richard Levin recently suggested that some psychoanalytic feminist (mis)readings of "masculinity as

malady" (136), tragedy as male failure in Shakespeare's plays, has led to a diminution of tragedy. And Jonathan Goldberg takes exception to feminism's gender polarization ("Shakespearian" 733). In the romance of Sidney at sonnets, at pastoral, at the accession day tilts, critics find the absent presence of Queen Elizabeth, parsimonious and unaccommodating. New historicism's identification with Sidney and other Elizabethan (male) courtiers is not hard to place if Elizabeth, not only as a his disenfranchiser but as disabler of his notion of self, figures feminism in the new historical unconscious. Within the context of contemporary criticism of Renaissance poetry, Sidney's comment in a letter to Walsingham the year of his death has special significance: "how apt the Queen is," he writes, "to interpret everything to my disadvantage" (Feuillerat 167). The final chapter of this study will continue this investigation of contemporary critical identifications and agendas, this time in the context of the feminism.

Notes

1

J.W. Saunders' article in Essays in Criticism 1 (1951) provides a culture-specific analysis of the poetry's sixteenth century reception. That gentlemen shunned print (140) and never expected to see their poems circulate outside of a small coterie has a variety of implications for the interpretation of sonnet sequences, especially those written by court poets.

2

There are many articles of this nature on Amoretti as the following titles suggest. See James N. Brown, "'Lyke Phoebe': Lunar Numerological and Calendrical Patterns in Spenser's Amoretti"; William C. Johnson, "Spenser's Amoretti and the Art of Liturgy"; and Charlotte Thompson, "Love in an Orderly Universe: A Unification of Spenser's Amoretti, 'Anacreontics', and Epithalamion."

CHAPTER SIX

Studies gathered under the rubric of "feminist" offer a multiplicity of approaches, some of them materialist like the new historicism. Foregrounding woman and the role of the sex/gender system underwriting culture, feminist analysis has made its own significant contribution to the deconstruction of humanist ideology. Feminism's concern with a male/female dialectic, or a discourse of sexual difference, in literature has played a large part in historicizing "Man" and revoking his claim to universal human essence and spirit by the discussion of his sociohistorical, cultural, ethnic, and gender specificity.

Synthesizing Derrida and Simone de Beauvoir, some have determined that within the dialectic that is said to produce selfhood, the self is male and otherness is female. They claim that our value system therefore always goes back to this binary opposition. Woman, associated with nature, not culture, has had to fight against the tendency in patriarchal society to view her as a non-discursive being.

It is only recently that feminism, allied with psychoanalytic theory, has shown how pervasive and, particularly, how pernicious the cultural association between nature and the female, perhaps best articulated by Freud in Civilization and Its Discontents, can be.

"Mother", as a source of nurture, is etymologically related to "matter", that is, the material or natural world. Women, like nature, have traditionally been matter or inspiration rather than the instrument of cultural production or representation: "Excluded from representation by its very structure, they return within it as a figure for--a representation of--the unrepresentable (Nature, Truth, the Sublime, etc.)" (Owens 59).

This has meant that women as subjects and producers of discourse have had a difficult time. For example, Ann Rosalind Jones claims that Petrarchan poetry is part of a gender-specific discourse. It has therefore been problematic for women writing within it:

a woman who analyzes her suffering in the absence of her lover, in the Petrarchan mode, reverses the relationship on which Petrarchan poetry depends: the distance and silence of the lady versus the pain and longing hence the speech, of the lover. To speak as a woman in either of these discourses (most poets, in fact, combined them) is to contradict the role they assign to women: the opaque target of the masculine gaze, of male desire, of male praise and persuasion. (136)

The Petrarchan mode is just one participant in what Luce Irigaray terms "phallogentric" discourse (Speculum 50). Irigaray claims that subjectivity is male, or more specifically, that it is inscribed with the values of the white, educated, Western male, but that its gender- and culture-specificity have been effaced. Thus, many of those desiring to be accepted as speaking subjects (not only women but also the working class, ethnic and racial

minorities) have had to employ the terms of this subjectivity. For many feminists, the discourse of humanism is phallogentric. This view has had a profound impact on the reception of the writing of the Renaissance, often celebrated as a time of tremendous social development.

Owens', Jones', and Irigaray's critiques are grounded in an historical analysis of the patriarchal thinking that can be traced back to Aristotle, Plato, the Bible, and the Latin fathers¹ and survives intact into the twentieth century. The locus classicus for the notion of the male as presence and the female as absence is Aristotle's Metaphysics where it is stated that "the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities; we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness" (Cited de Beauvoir xvi). The same idea informs Freud's dialectical libidinal philosophy of human development and acculturation. Indeed, even though postmodernism has produced a radical critique of the discourses that have articulated Western man's identity, the literary analysis of the sonnets derived from it continues to be preoccupied with a traditional signification of woman as absence.

Two conceptions of the female inform the Petrarchan lyric. Astrophil describes Stella either as a princess, on the one hand, or as a witch, "Divill", "murdring theefe", and "Deare Killer" on the other. Even in

Spenser's homely, reverential, domestic sonnets, the lady is occasionally represented as a "lyonesse", "tyrannesse", and "tigresse" even though she is the angelic spirit that moves his soul toward God. These are, respectively, instances of the profane and sacred categories often invoked in discussions of women. The signification of "Woman" can vary depending upon the attitude of the representer toward those things associated with the category "female"--nature, the unconscious, pathos, intuition.

This dialectic between the profane and sacred is present in sonnet criticism as well. Lever opposes the female other to rationality, civilization, progress, order and so on. He reserves a place apart from other English sonnets for the Amoretti and allies them with poetry which expresses a Latinate world view. Lever sees Spenser's reconciliation of the self with those things external to it, woman and nature, as a movement away from the evolving empiricist world view of his contemporaries who, instead, impose a strict Germanic dualism upon their representations of eros. Material reality and physical desire are said to be transcended in Shakespeare's sonnets by universal love; neither the Italians, the French, nor Spenser manage to effect this transformation since the presence in their work is woman and/or nature.

Lever applies his British commonsense criticism a bit too heavy-handedly. In championing a repression of the female term and all he associates with it (Nature,

Continental ideology), he is able to impugn women and Latin culture simultaneously. But in reproducing his culture's valuations of the female and nature, and its faith in empiricism, Lever is merely invoking a libidinal economy, or genderized system of thought, which few would have recognized or opposed thirty or forty years ago.

By contrast, C.S. Lewis' criticism is generated out of a reverence for the female other. For him, Amoretti and Epithalamion represent the discovery of presence through the agencies of woman and marriage. Spenser, the great genius of English epithalamia, banishes the "False Cupid" who had informed courtly love, the "tradition of polite adultery, which had been written of as an art ever since Ovid's time" (Lewis, Spenser's 33).

In Spenser's Amoretti, woman is still the other, but the association of woman and nature is celebrated. Here, she is linked with fertility and reproduction (Nature), and exalted in the roles affiliated with it (wife, potential mother). Lewis remains the most eloquent exponent of Spenser's evocation of this allegory of love. The opposition between culture and nature, between the demands of logos and those of pathos, is said to be mitigated by Protestant Christian marriage. The private, personal, affective bond between the speaker and his beloved is made to partake of the laws of social orthodoxy.

Appending an epithalamion, Spenser's sonnet sequence

incorporates materiality into spirituality, redefines chastity, and represents woman as a force beneficial rather than inimical to man. While Petrarch's Laura also becomes a sacred force, a conduit to spirituality, she is always a chaste ideal. Petrarch's relationship with her is never profanated by sexuality. Astrophil's position is similar to Petrarch's, though sexual desire is never sublimated but continually frustrated, becoming a profane force, unsettling to rationality and moral duty.

The idea that Spenser rewrites Petrarchism redounds to his credit in much sonnet criticism. As O.B. Hardison observes, "almost alone among Renaissance sonnet cycles, Spenser's Amoretti celebrates love as a benign life force" ("Amoretti" 216). Past and present, Spenser's Amoretti and Epithalamion have earned encomiastic critical commentary. Satisfied that the unity achieved in the poems is a positive value, many critics today continue to work in the tradition of C.S. Lewis extolling his aesthetic rendering of the unity and "oneness" of Christian marriage.

Recent critics interested in unity include Charlotte Thompson. Working in the numerological tradition, she claims that

Spenser has arranged the love story into a design that repeats in expanding and ascending strata through the so-called three worlds--sublunary, celestial, and supercelestial--of conventional Elizabethan thought. A system of analogies binds these strata together and ultimately unites the speaker's small, temporal amoretti to the supernal Amor of God. (277)

A hidden unity in Spenser is associated with his adherence

to the rules of decorum. This creates a "finished artifact" (Wells, "Poetic" 9): "at the end [of Amoretti and Epithalamion], Spenser invites the reader to stand aside and admire it, not for its expression of personal feeling--that concerned only Elizabeth Boyle--but as a work of human artifice: the poet addresses not only his bride, but the poem itself" (Buxton 402). Finding a unifying liturgical structure in Amoretti, William C. Johnson also suggests that the signifiers "love" and "woman" "always take second place to higher forms of affection" (50); the love of which he writes is "a metaphoric presentation of the Christian's love for Christ" (50).

Peter Cummings identifies the allegory of love in Amoretti as "love between Man and Woman, a sophisticated metaphor in which a specific man and woman become the exempla of Man and Woman" (164). Finding a similar allegory, Lisa Klein examines the themes of submission and captivity in Amoretti. The words "leaf", "life", and "love", repeated throughout, call attention to "the oneness of the poet and his work and their reliance on the beneficent response of the woman." For many critics, convinced of the virtue of unity, the themes of Amoretti are ultimately allegories of the unity of God. After the Reformation, a new conception of mutually amorous marriage was consolidated by the Protestant humanists. To the Protestant reformers, the unity achieved in sacramental, monogamous marriage also included a revised notion of

chastity, formerly seen as a virtue primarily of the ascetic life. As contemporary criticism of Amoretti seems to suggest, this discourse on marriage is still compelling today.

Inspired by deconstructive feminism, however, critics for whom difference is a reality have begun to look askance at the thematics of unproblematic unity and the institution of marriage. Where other critics seek unity and identity, the postmodernist tends to seek evidence of plurality, decentredness, indeterminacy, gaps, even schizophrenia. A poetics of difference is articulated in Luce Irigaray's This Sex Which Is Not One where unity (male) opposed to multiplicity (female) is depicted as an allegory of female oppression, past and present. The darker side of patriarchal thought depicts woman as diffuse and irresolute, her thought as non-linear and therefore irrational. These qualities are elevated, and charged with positive value in Irigaray's essentialist feminism.

As long as the discourse on marriage and woman is accepted as natural, or as social orthodoxy, the notion that Spenser overcomes the "failure to confront psychic otherness" (Braden, "Petrarchan" 14) characteristic of more conventional sequences and sonneteers continues as a critical commonplace. Astrophil is often condemned for using the female other in his project of self-definition. This is seen as an act of "symbolic violence" (Jones and

Stallybrass 60) where other is appropriated to the male self-denying female difference. However, when Spenser's speaker claims of his lady that "You frame my thoughts and fashion me within" (Amoretti 8.9), it is a benevolent rather than a violent or subversive self-fashioning.

In feminist discussions of late, the discourse on marriage has been examined critically for its participation in the discourse on Man. Many historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and others see a strengthening of patriarchal power during the Renaissance, a firmer division of gender roles as capital begins to provide the greatest source of income in early modern society, and the establishment of woman's place within the private, affective locale of the home rather than the public domain of the workplace. As the conditions for the bourgeois family develop in the Renaissance, women are more constrained within the home, their work associated with or defined as reproduction and consumption rather than production, the definitively human activity. Thus, a negative answer to Joan Kelly's question posed in a seminal feminist essay of 1977, "Did women have a Renaissance?", is confirmed by Lawrence Stone, Natalie Davis, David Leverenz, Jonathan Goldberg, and others who have demystified the "Family" and explored the extent to which the Family as a social institution has served the class interests of a patriarchal modern society for the past 400 years.²

Placed within the context of this research agenda, it

is easy to understand the lack of feminist interest in Spenser's poem. Stevie Davies suggests that Spenser "seems to locate and see, not an image of the 'other'-- foreign, alien, antithetical--but fugitive reflections of the psyche itself" (41), an idea often put forth by Spenser's supporters. Yet to many psychoanalytic feminists, this signifies what Jane Gallop describes as the "daughter's seduction" into a limited humanity offered as wife and mother. According to this analysis, women are seduced by a system which invokes the Family in order to protect, nurture, and enable male participation in the gender-effacing discourse on Man, in the Symbolic order from which woman is "naturally" excluded. In Luce Irigaray's uncompromising words, "As far as the family is concerned, my response will be simple and clear: the family has always been the privileged locus of women's exploitation" (This 142).

The oppression of women within the Family is vividly figured forth in the following feminist indictment of Freud's (mis)reading of the hysteria of his patient Anna O.: "She expressed through the body language of her paralyzed arm, her squint, and her speech disorders the effects on her as a woman of life in a father-dominated family and a male-dominated world that suppressed the female voice. The matrix of her disease was both sexual and social: the patriarchal family" (Kahn 34). Spenser's matrimonial compromise, then, becomes false consciousness.

Instead of confronting psychic otherness, marriage is the means by which otherness is effaced or denied. It depends on woman's "benificent response", on her willingness to reflect the male psyche, the patriarchal order.

Alan Sinfield examines the themes of captivity and submission in Amoretti as Klein has done. However, he suggests that for the lady of Amoretti, mutual, fulfilled, connubial love, the new affective bond put in place by the Reformers, produces fear. Sinfield notes that there is a contradiction between "reciprocity and authority" in this Protestant conception of marriage because authority is ultimately invested in the man, as Paradise Lost makes plain (Literature 68). In Sonnet 67, the speaker compares himself to "a huntsman" who after a "weary chace" finds that his "deare" returns to him of "her owne will firmly tied." Sinfield suggests that,

It is a tender image and we may feel sure that Spenser will not ill-treat the gentle creature he has captured, but it represents a distinct shift from the romantic admiration for her "heavenly form" and the marital ideal of "mutual good will." . . . He juggles three kinds of relationship--romantic, mutual and patriarchal--and cannot quite reconcile them. (Literature 68)

Woman in patriarchal society is said to have little choice. There are no sanctified roles for her besides wife and mother. If she takes a position other than these, she does so at the expense or at the profanation of her sexuality. But as wife and mother, she denies her difference and conforms to what psychoanalysis has identified as the "law of the same", where the other is

appropriated to the self: "same sexuality, same discourse, same economy, same representation, same origin--with woman permitting the repetition of the same in disregard for difference, and with man using her to assure himself of and to reassure himself about the very structures which define him" (Feral 6-7).

The conclusion in recent theory, then, is that full participation in subjectivity is usually denied to women. But exceptions are notable, and one of the great exceptions, Queen Elizabeth I, presides over the culture of the English Renaissance. According to the new historicism, she is the principle signified for the sonnet mistress and "the body of the text" (Goldberg, Endlesse 124) of The Faerie Queene. Synonymous with the textuality of the age, her image is evoked more readily than that of any other English Renaissance monarch in discussions of the court and courtliness. Moreover, she is often the "body" of the contemporary feminist text, first of all, because of the biological fact of her sex, and, secondly, because of her manipulation of and by her gender.

The first wave of feminist Renaissance literary criticism looked at female characters in literature, emphasizing their powers within familial relationships, exploring the wisdom and hidden force, for instance, of the often absent wife or mother. Stephen Orgel explains the salutary effect this has had on the contemporary male critic: "As men, we used to want assurance that we could successfully compete with or replace or supersede our

fathers; now we want to know that our lost mothers will return. Both of these no doubt involve real perceptions, but they also undeniably serve particular cultural needs" (52). Though Orgel does not make these needs explicit, it is safe to assume that they are involved not only with a male desire for consolatory fictions and interpretations, but also with the eagerness of earlier feminists to provide them. While eager to explore female power, feminist criticism at this stage locates that power within the family, just as Elizabeth I often allayed the ambivalence of her councillors and courtiers by insisting on her marriage to her kingdom and her commitment as good mother to her subjects.

But as the less conciliatory French feminisms of Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, Monique Wittig, and others³ begin to lay bare (and sometimes even to promote their own) remorseless libidinal economy in Western society, Anglo-American feminist criticism accepts the culpability of the Family and abandons its consolatory mode. Critics such as Louis Montrose have recently drawn attention to the erotic as well as the virginal and maternal features of the "shaping fantasies" that Elizabeth and her subjects employed ("Midsummer" 67). And feminists of late have begun to celebrate her power as a woman who, for all her own propaganda, escaped the oppressive precincts of the Family.

To the editors of Rewriting the Renaissance, her

power derived "from her skillful manipulation of marriage. She used that institution to reward the bureaucrats who helped her consolidate her power and to weaken aristocratic families that posed threats to the crown; she also used it symbolically to woo her people and literally to attract various suitors, foreign and domestic, to a royal hand she never finally gave" (Ferguson et al xix-xx). Curiously, this commentary is in the tradition of her great biographer, Sir John Neale, who painted her as a coyly Petrarchan adept with her courtiers: "for the adulation they would have given to a king quite naturally became tinged with admiration, flattery and coquetry which they used towards an attractive young woman. Thus, by a paradox, sex, having created a problem, itself solved it, and the reign was turned into an idyll, a fine but artificial comedy of young men--and old men--in love...It secured service, which it was a monarch's function to do, and charged service with emotion, which it was Elizabeth's desire to do. Her genius rose to the game" (70). What is clear in both accounts is her remarkable control over the flux of material reality. And the condition for that control is also the same: the refusal to submit or surrender to the delectations or perturbations of sexuality and/or marriage. In both instances, the same solution is offered to the "problem of [female] sex."

Moreover, that solution is Petrarchan not Marian. But the figure of Laura or sonnet mistress, while "as potent a symbol of feminine dominance and power as the

Renaissance ever provided" (Woodbridge 189) and one of the few Renaissance role models for the unmarried woman, has recently been deconstructed. Critics such as Mary Thomas Crane have observed that in many depictions of Elizabeth as a fixed and frozen figure of control she tends to become a "passive symbol of power" (1). As in the case of the cold, obdurate Petrarchan mistress, activity and textuality are generated by the poet-courtiers who produce her Petrarchan, pastoral, and courtly idiom. This can be traced to one of the early preoccupations of post-modern criticism of Petrarchism, first articulated by John Freccero who suggested that the Rime sparse of sonneteering scatters, disperses, fragments, and transfixes otherness (38-39). Nancy J. Vickers noted the injustice done to woman by scattering the "body into signs" (273) which results in stasis and even fetish.

Here, Astrophil has been depicted as particularly culpable: "Instead of allowing Stella's unity to appear in sublimated form as a star (beautiful, steadfast, unattainable), he wants to fragment her metonymically, to fetishise each part of her body and enjoy her in fragmented fantasy" (Campbell 89-90). Availing himself of "the perspective afforded by feminist criticism", Charles S. Levy proposes that "Astrophil fails systematically to take Stella seriously as a moral and emotional being" (57). Moreover, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass suggest that, in his game of power politics, Astrophil's

words do violence to Stella and the Queen who stands behind her (60). Astrophil controls the fiction (62): "Stella, as subject or agent, is absorbed into the performances of the I-speaker; she becomes his subject (in the sense of 'topic') and also the instrument through which he studies himself" (62). Commentary of this nature participates in one of the major issues of the feminist reception of love poetry: the objectification of woman in the discourse on Woman produced mainly by men.

Feminist criticism of the English Petrarchan tradition has most recently worked to undo this "fetishization" of woman as Petrarchan ideal produced, some feminists claim, by the combined specular forces of male poets and latter and former day critics. A new critical project seeks the lost and repressed voice of the sonnet mistress. Critics therefore seek Stella's voice and presence: "Stella early talks or sings to Astrophil, listens to him (perhaps weeping on one occasion), often argues with him, reads his work, and apparently blushes twice and expresses pity, love, and anger" (Levy 62). This is a Stella who is much wiser than Astrophil, who, as Alan Sinfield has proposed, is figured in the text by her refusal of his petitions which is ultimately a refusal to participate in his self-destructive self-deception ("Astrophil's" 16). Where the focus of new historicism was on Sidney's subversion of the social system through Astrophil, here "Stella is also a subversive figure, especially the dramatic Stella, the person who actually

denies Astrophil's suit" (Montgomery, "Astrophil's" 50). To Murray Krieger, Stella's flesh-and-blood presence disrupts Astrophil's postmodernist enterprise:

Many of the best of Sidney's sonnets enact the successful invasion of the poems by Stella's presence: in them the poet's struggle with the emptiness of language and of poetic conventions is transformed and resolved as her transcendent power becomes immanent. So long as the poem tries to be about her, its attempt to create her meaning must be thwarted; but once it manages to encompass her being, the breakthrough beyond the failures of language and poetic convention is achieved. (Poetic 12)

Clark Hulse, taking exception to the New Critics and new historicists who rely on a hegemonic model of Elizabeth and Elizabethan power structures and textuality, argues that Astrophil and Stella is a "nonhegemonic" (286) text with "three power centers, the poet, the reader, and the society around them, each pulling and tugging at the language of the poems to control their shape and meaning" (286). Here, Stella is a real reader rather than a "dummy" reader occluding the real (male) courtly and critical audience. As Hulse points out, this traditional approach to Stella as "dummy" "gives us a sixteenth-century audience remarkably like a twentieth-century academic audience trained in New Critical assumptions about personae" (273). Similarly, in a defence of Sidney, Nona Fienberg seeks the presence of a "'real' Stella" (15), allowed some "autonomy of voice and character" (5) in a sonnet sequence which "does give space to a Stella who is not simply a projection of the speaker's desires"

(7). Analysis of this kind is popular and seems to mobilize the static woman of the sonnets, and redeem her from the realm of the Symbolic.

Like the new historicists, the critics seeking to recuperate a lost feminine content find the debat between Astrophil and Stella particularly engaging. They also accept the analogy between Stella and Astrophil, and Queen and courtier. One notes in Fienberg how the analogous political rhetoric generated by Sidney's Queen and Astrophil's Stella takes on the features of contemporary feminist rhetoric: "Stella, like the courtier Sidney's prince, commands in part through the very marginalized discourse to which her femininity relegates her. She thus translates her deprivation into a mode of domination" (12).

But the question to ask is whether this political discourse is marginalized discourse. Many suggest that it is not; that is, that the Queen (and the Stella created in her image by feminism and new historicism alike) struggled to maintain her authority by accepting and promoting her association with patriarchal authority: "Her virginity exempted her from most of the recognized categories of female experience, allowing her to preserve her independence while simultaneously tapping into the emotional power behind the images of wife and mother through fictionalized representations of herself. But the identity which lay behind all the others and lent them much of their authority was her identity as ruler.

Elizabeth envisioned this primarily public identity in clearly male terms" (Marcus 138). Catherine Belsey suggests that "Elizabeth I, who spoke powerfully, did so most famously to deny her femininity" (Subject 180). To Allison Heisch, her career was that of an "honorary male" (54), "absorbed into the existing patriarchal system, de-sexed, elevated and hence transformed into a figure both above and distinct from other women" (54).

It is noteworthy that the Stella of much feminist criticism is, like Queen Elizabeth, "beautiful, vain, witty, and politically assertive" (Hulse 275), "joining forces with Virtue and Honor" (Hulse 279). Unlike Astrophil, "she informs her love with a theological dimension" (Fienberg 16), and "she accepts her social responsibility" (Fienberg 18). Alan Sinfield praises her self-assurance, implying her possession of male subjectivity, which he compares to that of Elizabeth Boyle: "This is the kind of commitment to her true self (as the Elizabethans saw it) which Stella maintains, but what impresses Spenser frustrates Astrophil" ("Sidney" 34).

In these studies, Stella has become teacher and reformer to Astrophil, the quintessential misguided male defining and condemning himself within the parameters of a solipsistic and myopic (male) literary tradition in which Petrarchan lyrics figure largely. This is an assertive Stella who in many ways endorses the status quo and uses

the terms of social orthodoxy to exercise her own power. Enacting a distinctly male "mode of domination", she is the ideal of what Julia Kristeva describes as first phase feminism where women co-opt the terms of patriarchy for their own empowerment (14).

Unlike Stella, the lady of Amoretti is seldom given a voice. The educative function fulfilled by the female is usually bestowed instead upon the androgynously arrayed Britomart of The Faerie Queene: "Britomart, who takes a very active role in a loving relationship, is an anti-Petrarchan heroine. Her warmth and vulnerability expose the essential sterility and self-absorption of Petrarchan lovesickness" (Silberman 260). Emotive as she eventually becomes, it is significant that Britomart is unmarried during her active tenure in the epic. Like Stella, she is portrayed in criticism as an independent female combatting male solipsism; hence, she appeals to a world of shared feminist understanding. Though Britomart and Stella are betrothed or married, these facts recede into the background and the focus, for feminists, as for other poets of courtly love and for modernist and new historical critics, is with their significance in a non-familial relationship. It is this assertive, even embattled, image of the individual female, like the New Critical or new historical Astrophil in war with time, the opposite sex, and/or political hegemony,⁴ that has generated most critical interest. Rather than the lady of Amoretti who is "a type of Edenic haven, a chastened image of

felicity in which the poet can safely rest" (Bernard 422), it is the woman as beleaguered individual who is most engaging to most contemporary feminist critics. This is not the nurturing mother figure that Arthur Marotti finds represented in Amoretti's three Elizabeths:

As benefactresses (and as maternal figures), the three women are praised for the "gifts" they have given the poet: the first, his mother, for his very being, the second, Queen Elizabeth, for social prestige and economic support, and the third, Elizabeth Boyle, for an ennobling love. A fantasy of nurturance underlies all three relationships and, when things go wrong morally in the sequence, as they do in the famous poems about the mistress' breasts . . . the cause is metaphorized as an oral longing that has become a predatory greed. (415)

At this point, it would be easy to single out the desire for male subjectivity as the master contradiction of feminism. One could argue that, like many criticisms of the twentieth century, feminist analysis assumes unencumbered individualism as an ultimate good, and finds in the "genre noble" of courtly love as opposed to the middle class epithalamion (Forster 93) a dignity for female presence not so easy to locate in other genres. Indeed, one could draw comparisons between elitist identifications, as Anthony Easthope describes them, then and now. Courtly love has always been fairly compelling to criticism: one could probably deconstruct academic elitism quite effectively in the context of the nostalgic dialogue on courtly love produced by twentieth-century scholars. Feminism could then be held accountable for endorsing the idealism of academic modernism. At the end

of the modernist epoch, Lionel Trilling suggests the "we are habituated to the idea that society, though necessary for survival, corrupts the life it fosters" (60). There is perhaps no stronger indictment of sociality than in feminism's anti-oedipal deconstruction of culture, or in the desire for escape from the family that some feminists support or imply. Trilling also identifies as "one of our esteemed attitudes, firmly established in our advanced educational system...that personal autonomy is fostered by art" (66). Feminists, too, then, seem no less inclined at times than their predecessors to escape the bourgeois philistine world, into which their articulations have traditionally been placed, in *Art or Love*.

But one of the insistent themes of the feminist cultural critique is that classic liberalism--the belief in personal autonomy and human agency--depends on the hidden subsidy provided by the family and by women. In this discourse, "all members [of society] who do not enter the market must be ignored, which is done by subsuming them, as members of families, into the individualism of the head of the household, who can then be assumed to be the economic agent" (Waylen 96). As long as the productivity of woman's work is effaced in the name of reproduction, and whenever the exigencies of reproductive function cannot be effaced, liberal feminism becomes mired in contradiction. No less than for the new historicists, then, "freedom" has become a lost cause, and guilt for

special exemptions figures largely in feminist analysis of the material conditions of the past.

There is a difference, however, since women--even middle class North American women and English Renaissance female monarchs--do not escape quite so easily from material conditions. Some even claim that they pay a higher psychosexual price for their "transcendence" than men do. Thus, the analysis of many (female) feminists is caught in the middle. Feminists are suspicious of individualism yet compelled to endorse it, appealing for justice in the name of a humanism that, in many ways, has been the ideological condition of women's oppression, and, even when they partake of it, continues to be condition of oppression for others. Because of its origins in social activism, the incoherences in feminism have become more immediately evident than in other literary theories. Moreover, the paradox of the contemporary theoretical deconstruction of autonomous subjectivity is illustrated most in feminist theory and practice: "paradoxically the triumph of individualism . . . brings about the individual's demise" (Heller et al. 8).

So many see in Queen Elizabeth's "delicate balancing act between assertion and abnegation of authority" (Crane 2), not a type of the honorary male, but the enactment of the inescapable dialectic of gender. Thus, Stella provides an image for contemporary feminism: "Stella approaches reality in the gaps between her identity with her poet-lover, and her difference from him" (Fienberg

14). At this point, it remains to be seen where the new and unconsolidated discourse on Woman will align itself, and whether it will ever escape the kind of analysis that examines at whose and at what expense it was produced.

Notes

¹ For a descriptive analysis of the Renaissance discourses on woman and their history, see Ian Maclean, The Renaissance Notion of Woman. For an attempt to examine this heritage outside of the discourses of patriarchal objectivity, see Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman.

² See Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage 1500-1800; Natalie Zemon Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France; David Leverenz, The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology, and Social History; and Jonathan Goldberg, "Fatherly Authority: The Politics of Stuart Family Images."

³ See Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, New French Feminisms.

⁴ For a discussion of the corporeal features of Astrophil's conflicts, see Leonard Barkan, Nature's Work of Art: The Human Body as Image of the World.

⁵ Linda Woodbridge uses these terms to distinguish the aristocratic genre of the sonnet sequence from bourgeois satire of women often found in Renaissance drama, in "Saints of Sonnet, and the Fight for the Breeches," Women and the English Renaissance, 184-223.

CONCLUSION

Each of the critics considered in this study participates in an expanding twentieth-century dialogue on Renaissance poetry. Romantic expressivist critics, formalist critics, New Critics, and reader-response critics focussed upon a particular feature of the inception, composition, or reception of poetry. Though this appears myopic today, these were attempts to articulate the uniquely literary. With calls of late to historicize literary interpretation, discussions of the author, text, and reader have been subsumed within a historically contextualized analysis. While earlier critics certainly did not ignore historical context, they were not as concerned with acknowledging the influence of their own historicity on their interpretations. But today's criticism of Renaissance poetry claims to be dialogical and diacritical discourse, aware of its own role in producing the reality of the Renaissance.

Where some romantic expressivists and modernists had faith in the identity between the words and structures of poetry and their notion of the Renaissance mind or world, criticism of today often professes to doubt its exegetical ability. This is ironic at a time when Anglo-American literary theory has a wider variety of methodologies than ever before, and has emerged from a rigorous interrogation of its earlier theoretical

reticences. Yet, by its own logic it cannot allow itself to be confident about its analysis.

At the same time, however, its new-found status as discourse sanctions it as "authentic" writing. Where earlier literary critics assumed that their work existed at a remove or two from the real thing, contemporary criticism is confronted with and enjoys the dialectic between absence and presence that faces any practitioner of writing--poets, historians, philosophers, and so on. Jacques Derrida can be said to have redeemed all writers with his assertions about the repressed anxiety that produces discourse: no writing can claim an informing presence. With no ground for signifying of any kind, all begins and ends in doubt. Doubt as opposed to confidence seems to provide the contrast between the postmodern and the modern critic.

It is safest to draw the dividing line between the modern and the postmodern in a discussion of twentieth-century reception history, although, as the preceding chapters suggest, there are significant ideological shifts from romantic expressivism to Eliot's depersonalized modernist criticism, from New Criticism and various formalisms to reader-response criticism, from New Criticism to mythopoeic structuralism. The shift from the modern to the postmodern is mainly linguistic, the result of the "death of the word." And since the word is no longer identical with world or with man, the signification of man and woman "slides beneath the signifiers." Certain

contemporary discourses, particularly some feminisms, however, retain a humanist agenda. Even new historicism, for all its reliance on discursive and social formations as key concepts, is piqued at its own discoveries about the conditional nature of human subjectivity. Though critics of today see their interpretation as radically different from what has come before, this past inheres in the present.

While acknowledging the postmodern theory of the empty signifier, Murray Krieger has nevertheless attempted to reconcile the modern and postmodern views of language, bringing verba and res together in his analysis of Sidney's Defence. Sidney's oration is an example par excellence of self-conscious rhetoric revealing, in its duplicitous way, ambivalence about its own claims for poesie's transcendence. Though Renaissance theorists like Sidney are said to be as aware as any present-day semiotician of absence in writing, they are nevertheless fascinated by the possibility of a signified imported bodily into the sign. They vacillate between a skepticism induced by a perception of the merely verbal nature of their invention, and a notion of word magic, the possibility that words can turn into things themselves (Poetic 6-7). Sidney's Defence toys with this notion of "an inter-illumination, an inter-referentiality, among words, emblems, concepts, and things" (6) while it simultaneously empties out its signs.

Though Krieger's account is said to err on the side of essentialism,¹ it calls attention to a dialectic between presence and absence, one which mobilizes Sidney's Defence and one which also plays an important role in creating the vicissitudes of twentieth-century criticism. For the romantic expressivist, presence originates with the author's sincere feeling; for the New Critic and other formalists, it inheres in the work itself. Though signifiers within texts are indeterminate and unstable for the reader-response critic, ultimate stable meaning is recuperated in the reader's mind. For the postmodernist, the signified slides beneath the signifiers, and stable meaning is a lost cause. Word and world, signifier and signified are never fixed.

If the last two chapters are an indication of critical consensus, Astrophil shares the postmodernist's anxieties: "What may words say and what may words not say?" (Sonnet 35.1) is the question that hovers about all his attempts at signification. Like Petrarch before his vision of the Blessed Virgin, Astrophil grapples with the instability of signifiers. His overdetermination of Stella is a lament for lost presence. In Amoretti and Epithalamion, however, stable, determinate presence overrides the tension within individual sonnets and the tension in the grand design of the poem. A comparison of Sidney's and Spenser's sonnets on absent presence reveals their differences:

When my good Angell guides me to the place,
 Where all my good I do in Stella see,
 That heav'n of joyes throwes onely downe on me
 Thundred disdaines and lightnings of disgrace:
 But when the ruggedst step of Fortune's race
 Makes me fall from her sight, then sweetly she
 With words, wherein the Muses' treasures be,
 Shewes love and pitie to my absent case.
 Now I, wit-beaten long by hardest Fate,
 So dull am, that I cannot looke into
 The ground of this fierce Love and lovely hate:
 Then some good body tell me how I do,
 Whose presence, absence, absence presence is;
 Blist in my curse, and cursed in my blisse.
 (Astrophil and Stella. 60)

So oft as homeward I from her depart,
 I goe lyke one that having lost the field,
 is prisoner led away with heavy hart,
 despoild of warlike armes and knowen shield.
 So doe I now my selfe a prisoner yeeld,
 to sorrow and to solitary paine:
 from presence of my dearest deare exyled,
 longwhile alone in languor to remaine.
 There let no thought of joy or pleasure vaine,
 dare to approach, that may my solace breed:
 but sudden dumps and drery sad disdayne,
 of all worlds gladnesse more my torment feed.
 So I her absens will my penaunce make,
 that of her presens I my meed may take.
 (Amoretti 52)

Both speakers are concerned with lost presence, but, like the modernist, the speaker in Amoretti hitches his mantle and carries on with a faith in ultimate resolution.

Astrophil, on the other hand, finds it is vain to seek the ground of his profitable invention, and continues to generate dead, or at any rate, orphaned signifiers.

His refrain is heard again:

O absent presence Stella is not here;
 False flattering hope, that with so faire a face,
 Bare me in hand, that in this Orphane place,
Stella, I say my Stella, should appeare.
 (Astrophil and Stella. 106.1-4)

His is a poetry of loss not plenitude. Astrophil's case is a dilemma. He is compelled and disturbed by the

cupidity of his words, that is, by what Derrida calls "iterability", their unfixed condition. Their futility, a subtext in much postmodern language theory, also haunts Astrophil: "So that I cannot chuse but write my mind,/And cannot chuse to put out what I write" (Astrophil and Stella 50.9-10).

Moreover, Astrophil talks incessantly about words, drawing attention to his medium, to his artifice, like any self-conscious postmodern critic or artist. Poesie, pens, study, ink, problems, and conventions absorb him more than they do the speaker in Amoretti. Critics are right to suggest that the relationship between "leaf", "life", and "love" makes for "Most happy letters" (Amoretti 74.1) in Spenser's poem. Instead of signifiers, these are signs stabilized by the Word. The "I" in this poem masks in mirth, sports his muse, and, as John Crowe Ransom claimed, sanctifies the rich materiality of the world's body that the Puritanical Astrophil murders. The Kafkaesque Eighth Song of Astrophil and Stella, dedicated to "Stella, in whose body is/Writ each character of blisse" is a case in point. What is most suspect about Amoretti to readers convinced of the death of the word as sign of a univocal meaning, is the speaker's Augustinian confidence. However patronizingly, the speaker in Spenser's most famous poem reproves the lady's inability to understand that words in a shifting and slippery medium can become the Word:

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
 but came the waves and washed it away:
 agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
 but came the tyde, and made my paynes his
 pray.
 Vayne man, sayd she, that doest in vaine assay,
 A mortall thing so to immortalize,
 for I my selve shall lyke to this decay,
 and eek my name bee wyped out lykewize.
 Not so, (quod I) let baser things devize
 to dy in dust, but you shall live by fame:
 my verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
 and in the hevens wryte your glorious name.
 Where whenas death shall all the world subdew,
 our love shall live, and later life renew.
 (Amoretti 75)

Today's literary critic identifies not with the self-assured speaker in this poem, but with Astrophil who views his own words dubiously: "Thus write I while I doubt to write" (Astrophil and Stella 34.12).

As meaning slides away, at least from its former secure position, the whole notion of writing literary history is problematized. Astrophil captures the anxieties of the present-day literary historian. Thomas Greene suggests that the question of how the text makes itself intelligible across the bridge of time is one which contemporary critics share with the Renaissance writer:

the advances of latter-day philology have not truly dispelled the radical problem of anachronistic reading . . . We have not yet put to rest the problematic first lucidly and self-consciously exposed in the fifteenth century, neither as philologists nor as men and women living within a history. We have not conjured the problem of historical knowledge, which must remain in some degree anachronistic. (Light 10)

To many contemporary critics, their own anachronism is fact. Yet doubt does not prevent them, as it did not prevent many modernist critics, from perceiving their own

present in the past. It is not only Astrophil, but also Machiavelli, Spinoza, Montaigne, and Galileo who can figure a contemporary decentred human subjectivity, as they do in Jonathan Dollimore's Radical Tragedy (154).

For all his doubts, the new historicist, for instance, continues to ask simultaneously for a criticism that is not mere nostalgia, and for one which can speak to the concerns of the present, as if this were possible. Furthermore, he argues that the creation of a responsible criticism rests upon the critic's self-reflexiveness. But linguistic theory today teaches us that the subject of the enunciation is not the same as the subject of the enunciating, that is the "I" that speaks about itself is not the same "I" that is created in the former "I"'s writing or speech.

Reflexivity, then, may threaten the coherence of contemporary theory as objectivity did formalism. Moreover, postmodernist pretensions to self-reflexivity are questioned by Charles Newman who notes that postmodernism is not only impotent and specular, but "willfully theoretical", the age of inflation and consumerism come home to academe and art, generating increasingly obscurantist theory and practice which further distances literature and literary theory from an indifferent and shrinking rather than repressed audience (Newman passim). Parody, subversion, and nihilistic play only confirm impotence and indulge specular inertia, rather than move and teach today's mass audience.

It is important to remember the insights of New Criticism and the reader-response critics, that *Astrophil* is not Sidney's last word on signifying. The Defence is more revealing than Astrophil and Stella of Sidney's ability to move among essentialist, materialist, ethicopolitical, and subversive positions, to live in the gaps of the discourses that are said to define us. Furthermore, what the variety of critical perspectives on both Astrophil and Stella and Amoretti provide is evidence of the co-existence of the Augustinian and Petrarchan, the modernist and the postmodernist features of both these poems.

If one thing is confirmed in this study, it is that no literary interpretation, history, or theory escapes nostalgia for everyone is the subject of his own history, as the gentler deconstruction of the last two chapters reveals. Rather than create feelings of doubt or futility, however, this should challenge literary critics to accept the presence not only of themselves, but also of earlier moments of literary theory, in the past and in reconstructing individualism. This leads me to offer for consideration the prediction that a genuine humanism will necessarily be founded on nostalgia.

Note

1

See Jacqueline T. Miller, "'What My Words Say':
The Limits of Language in Astrophil and Stella," Sir
Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance
Culture, Eds. Gary F. Waller and Michael D. Moore (Totawa,
N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1984), 95-109.

Works Cited

- Abrams, Meyer H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: Oxford UP, 1953.
- Alden, Raymond M. "The Lyrical Conceits of the Elizabethans." SP 14 (1917): 129-52.
- . "The Lyrical Conceits of the 'Metaphysical Poets'." SP 17 (1920): 183-98.
- Alpers, Paul. The Poetry of The Faerie Queene. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1967.
- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. Trans. Ben Brewster. London: New Left Books, 1977.
- Arnold, Matthew. Culture and Anarchy. Ed. Ian Gregor. 1869; New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971.
- Bacon, Francis. The Advancement of Learning. Ed. G.W. Kitchen. 1915. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1973.
- Barkan, Leonard. Nature's Work of Art: The Human Body as Image of the World. New Haven: Yale UP, 1975.
- Barker, Sir Ernest. Traditions of Civility. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1948.
- Barthes, Roland. S/Z. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.
- Belsey, Catherine. Critical Practice. London: Methuen, 1980.
- . The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama. New York: Methuen, 1985.
- Bernard, John. "Spenserian Pastoral and the Amoretti." ELH 47 (1980): 419-32.
- Bieman, Elizabeth. "'Sometimes I...mask in myrth lyke to a Comedy': Spenser's Amoretti." Spenser Studies 4 (1983): 131-42.
- Boose, Lynda E. "The Family in Shakespeare Studies; or-- Studies in the Family of Shakespearians; or--The

- Politics of Politics." Renaissance Quarterly 40 (1987): 707-42.
- Booth, Stephen. An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets. New Haven: Yale UP, 1969.
- . Shakespeare's Sonnets. New Haven, Conn.: Yale UP, 1977.
- Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane. Modernism 1890-1930. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1976.
- Braden, Gordon. "Beyond Frustration: Petrarchan Laurels in the Seventeenth Century." SEL 26 (1986): 5-23.
- . "Recent Studies in the Renaissance." SEL 5 (1985): 183-248.
- Broadbent, J.B. Poetic Love. London: Chatto and Windus, 1964.
- Brooks, Cleanth. "The Critic and His Text: A Clarification and a Defence." The Humanities: An Appraisal. Ed. Julian Harris. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1962.
- . The Well Wrought Urn. London: Dennis Dobson, 1949.
- Brown, James N. "'Lyke Phoebe': Lunar Numerical and Calendrical Patterns in Spenser's Amoretti." Gypsy Scholar 1 (1973): 5-15.
- Burckhardt, Jacob. The Renaissance in Italy. London: Phaedon Press, 1960.
- Bush, Douglas. English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962.
- Buxton, John. "'Certaine Signes Here Set in Sundry Place': Spenser's Advice to his Reader." RES n.s. 34 (1983): 395-402.
- Campbell, Marion. "Unending Desire: Sidney's Reinvention of Petrarchan Form in Astrophil and Stella." Sir Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance Culture. Eds. Gary F. Waller and Michael D. Moore. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1984. 84-94.
- Castiglione, Baldesar. The Book of the Courtier. Trans. George Bull. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1967.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Coleridge's Lecture on Spenser: delivered 1818." Spenser: Selections. Ed. W.L. Renwick.

- 1923; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1956. 9-15.
- , "Organic Form." Romantic Prose and Poetry. Eds. Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling. New York: Oxford UP, 1973. 655-56.
- Courthope, W.J. Life in Poetry: Law in Taste. London: Macmillan, 1901.
- Coward, Rosalind, and John M. Ellis. Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject. London: Routledge and Paul, 1977.
- Crane, Mary Thomas. "'Video et Taceo': Elizabeth I and the Rhetoric of Counsel." SEL 28 (1988): 1-15.
- Crewe, Jonathan. Hidden Designs: The Critical Profession and Renaissance Literature. London: Methuen, 1986.
- Cruttwell, Patrick. The English Sonnet. London: Longmans, Green, 1966.
- , The Shakespearian Moment and Its Place in the Poetry of the 17th Century. New York: Random House, 1960.
- Cummings, Peter M. "Spenser's Amoretti as an Allegory of Love." TSL 12 (1970): 163-79.
- Dasenbrock, Reed Way. "The Petrarchan Context of Spenser's Amoretti." PMLA 100 (1985): 38-50.
- Davies, Stevie. The Idea of Woman in Renaissance Literature. Brighton: Harvester, 1986.
- Davis, Natalie Zemon. Society and Culture in Early Modern France. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1975.
- Davis, Walter K. "Recent Studies in the Renaissance." SEL 15 (1975): 169-202.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex. Trans. H.M. Parshley. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968.
- Derrida, Jacques. Of Grammatology. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1977.
- Dollimore, Jonathan. Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.
- Dollimore, Jonathan and Alan Sinfield. Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.

- Donno, Elizabeth Story. "Old Mouse-Eaten Records: History in Sidney's Apology." SP 72 (1975): 275-98.
- Dunlop, Alexander. "The Drama of Amoretti." Spenser Studies 1 (1980): 107-20.
- . "The Unity of Spenser's Amoretti." Silent Poetry: Essays in Numerological Analysis. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970. 116-40.
- Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.
- Easthope, Anthony. "Poetry and the politics of reading." Re-reading English. Ed. Peter Widdowson. London: Methuen, 1982. 136-49.
- Eco, Umberto. The Role of the Reader. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979.
- Eliade, Mircea. The Myth of Eternal Return. Trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1954.
- Eliot, T.S. "The Metaphysical Poets." Seventeenth Century Prose and Poetry. Ed. Alexander Witherspoon and Frank S. Warnke. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1957. 1061-65.
- . "Tradition and the Individual Talent." The Sacred Wood. 1920. London: Methuen, 1964. 47-59.
- . The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism. 1933. London: Faber and Faber, 1959.
- . "What is a Classic?" On Poetry and Poets. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1943. 55-73.
- Erskine, John. The Elizabethan Lyric. New York: Columbia UP, 1903.
- Fekete, John. The Critical Twilight: Exploration in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan. London: Routledge, 1978.
- Feral, Josette. "Antigone or The Irony of the Tribe." Diacritics 8 (1978): 2-14.
- Ferguson, Margaret. "Sir Philip Sidney: Pleas for Power." Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry. New Haven: Yale UP, 1983. 137-62.
- Ferguson, Margaret W., Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, eds. Rewriting the Renaissance: The

Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe.
Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986.

Feuillerat, Albert, ed. The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1912.

Fienberg, Nona. "The Emergence of Stella in Astrophil and Stella." SEL 25 (1985): 5-19.

Fish, Stanley E. Is There A Text In This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980.

-----, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics." New Literary History 2 (1970): 123-62.

-----, "Recent Studies in the Renaissance." SEL 12 (1972): 183-222.

-----, Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1972.

Forster, Leonard. The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969.

Fletcher, Angus. The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1971.

Foucault, Michel. Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Ed. Donald F. Bouchard. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1977.

Fowler, Alastair. Conceitful Thought: The Interpretation of English Renaissance Poems. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1975.

-----, ed. Silent Poetry: Essays in Numerological Analysis. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970.

-----, Spenser and the Numbers of Time. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.

-----, Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1970.

Freccero, John. "The Fig Tree and the Laurel: Petrarch's Poetics." Diacritics 5 (1975): 34-40.

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.

Gallop, Jane. The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982.

- Garner, Shirley Nelson, Claire Kahane, and Madelon Sprengnether, eds. Introduction. The (M)other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. Endlesse Worke. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1981.
- . "Fatherly Authority: The Politics of Stuart Family Images." Rewriting the Renaissance. Eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 3-32.
- . James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and Their Contemporaries. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983.
- . "Shakespearian Inscriptions: The Voicing of Power." Shakespeare and the Question of Theory. Ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman. New York: Methuen, 1985. 116-37.
- Gollanz, I. "Spenseriana." PBA 3 (1907): 99-105.
- Gottfried, Rudolf B. "Spenser Recovered: The Poet and Historical Scholarship." Contemporary Thought on Edmund Spenser. Ed. Richard C. Frushell and Bernard J. Vondersmith. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1975. 61-78.
- Gouws, John, ed. The Prose Work of Fulke Greville Lord Brooke. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- Graff, Gerald. Poetic Statement and Critical Dogma. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1970.
- Greene, Thomas M. "The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature." The Disciplines of Criticism. Ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas M. Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr. New Haven: Yale UP, 1968. 241-64.
- . The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry. New Haven: Yale UP, 1982.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "Introduction." The Forms of Power and the Power of Forms in the Renaissance. Genre 15 (1982): 1-4.
- . Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Grierson, Herbert J.C. Metaphysical Lyrics and Poetry of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler. Oxford: Clarendon, 1921.

- Grosart, A.B. The Complete Poems of Sir Philip Sidney. Vol. I. London: np, 1873.
- Grundy, Joan. "Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Elizabethan Sonneteer." Shakespeare: The Sonnets, A Casebook. Ed. Peter Jones. London: Macmillan, 1977. 185-99.
- Hager, Alan. "The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney's Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader." ELH 48 (1981): 1-16.
- Hamilton, A.C. "Sidney's Astrophel and Stella as a Sonnet Sequence." ELH 36 (1969): 59-87.
- . The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1961.
- Hammond, Gerald. The Reader and Shakespeare's Young Man Sonnets. London: Macmillan, 1981.
- Hardison, O.B. "Amoretti and the Dolce Stil Novo." ELR 2 (1972): 208-16.
- Hazlitt, William. "Lectures on the English Poets." Spenser: Selections. Ed. W.L. Renwick. 1956. Oxford: Clarendon, 1923. 1-8.
- Heisch, Allison. "Queen Elizabeth I and the persistence of patriarchy." Feminist Review 4 (1980): 45-56.
- Helgerson, Richard. The Elizabethan Prodigals. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1976.
- . Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1984.
- Heller, Thomas C., Morton Sosna and David E. Wellbery. Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986.
- Heninger, S. K. "The Aesthetic Experience of Reading Spenser." Contemporary Thought on Edmund Spenser. Eds. Richard C. Frushell and Bernard J. Vondersmith. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1975. 79-98.
- . "Gloriana at the Crossroads: Recent Readings of The Faerie Queene." The British Studies Monitor 5 (1975): 3-23.
- Hieatt, A. Kent. Short Time's Endless Monument. New York: Columbia UP, 1960.
- Holub, Robert. Reception Theory. London: Methuen, 1984.

- Howard, Jean E. "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies." ELR 16 (1986): 13-44.
- Howe, Ann Romayne. "Astrophel and Stella: 'Why and How'." Studies in Philology 61 (1964): 150-69.
- Hulse, Clark. "Stella's Wit: Penelope Rich as Reader of Sidney's Sonnets." Rewriting the Renaissance. Eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 272-86.
- Hunter, G.K. "Spenser's Amoretti and the English sonnet tradition." A Theatre for Spenserians. Eds. Judith M. Kennedy and James A. Reither. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973.
- Irigaray, Luce. Speculum of the Other Woman. Trans. Gillian C. Gill. 1965; Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- . This Sex Which is Not One. Trans. Catherine Porter. 1977; Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Iser, Wolfgang. The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978.
- . The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974.
- Jauss, Hans Robert. Toward an Aesthetic of Reception. Trans. Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis P, 1982.
- Javitch, Daniel. "The Impure Motives of Elizabethan Poetry." Genre 15 (1982): 225-38.
- . Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978.
- Johnson, William C. "Spenser's Amoretti and the Art of the Liturgy." SEL 14 (1974): 47-61.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Assimilation with a Difference: Renaissance Women Poets and Literary Influence." Yale French Studies 62 (1981): 135-53.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind, and Peter Stallybrass. "The Politics of Astrophil and Stella." SEL 24 (1984): 54-68.
- Kahn, Coppelia. "The Absent Mother in 'King Lear'." Rewriting the Renaissance. Eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 33-49.
- Kalil, Judith. "'Mask in Myrth Lyke to a Comedy':

- Spenser's Persona in the Amoretti." Thoth 13 (1973): 19-26.
- Kalstone, David. Sidney's Poetry: Contexts and Interpretations. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1965.
- Kaske, Carol V. "Spenser's Amoretti and Epithalamion of 1595: Structure, Genre, and Numerology." ELR 8 (1978): 271-95.
- Kellogg, Robert. "Thought's Astonishment and the Dark Conceits of Spenser's Amoretti." Renaissance Papers 1965. Ed. George Walton Williams. Durham, N.C.: Duke UP. 3-13.
- Kelly, Joan. "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" Women, History and Theory. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.
- Kennedy, William J. "Petrarchan Audiences and Print Technology." Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies 14 (1984): 1-20.
- Kermode, Frank. Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971.
- Klein, Lisa M. "Spenser's Amoretti: The Poet Lover as Artificer." Spenser at Kalamazoo. Kalamazoo, Mich. May 7-10, 1987.
- Krieger, Murray. The New Apologists for Poetry. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1956.
- . Poetic Presence and Illusion: Essays in Critical History and Theory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1979.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Women's time." Trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake. Signs 7 (1981): 13-35.
- Lamb, Charles. "Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sydney." Last Essays of Elia. 1823. London: J.M. Dent, 1965. 249-56.
- Lanham, Richard A. "Astrophil and Stella: Pure and Impure Persuasion." ELR 2 (1972): 100-15.
- . The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance. New Haven: Yale UP, 1976.
- Leavis, F.R. The Great Tradition. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962.
- Lee, Sir Sidney. "The Conceits of the Sonnets." Shakespeare: The Sonnets, A Casebook. Ed. Peter

- Jones. London: Macmillan. 55-63.
- . Elizabethan Sonnets. London: Westminster, 1904.
- . Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century. London: Archibald Constable, 1904.
- . The Perspective of Biography. London: The English Association, 1918.
- . Principles of Biography: The Leslie Stephen Lecture. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1911.
- Lee, Sir Sidney, and Sir Leslie Stephen, eds. The Dictionary of National Biography. Vol. 16. 1896. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1949-50.
- Leishman, J.B. The Monarch of Wit: An Analytical and Comparative Study of the Poetry of John Donne. London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951.
- Lentricchia, Frank. After the New Criticism. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Levao, Ronald. "Sidney's Feigned Apology." PMLA 94 (1979): 223-33.
- Lever, J.W. The Elizabethan Love Sonnet. London: Methuen, 1966.
- Leverenz, David. The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology, and Social History. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1980.
- Levin, Richard. "Feminist Thematics and Shakespearean Tragedy." PMLA 103 (1988): 125-33.
- Levy, Charles S. "Sidneian Indirection: The Ethical Irony of Astrophil and Stella." Sir Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance Culture. Eds. Gary F. Waller and Michael D. Moore. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1984. 56-66.
- Lewis, C.S. The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition. 1936. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1959.
- . English Literature in the Sixteenth Century. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1964.
- . Spenser's Images of Life. Ed. Alastair Fowler. Cambridge UP, 1967.
- Longhurst, Derek. "'Not for all time, but for an Age': an approach to Shakespeare studies." Re-Reading English.

- Ed. Peter Widdowson. London: Methuen, 1982. 150-63.
- Lowell, James Russell. "Spenser." North American Review 120 (1875): 334-94.
- Macdonell, Diane. Theories of Discourse: An Introduction. London: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Maclean, Ian. The Renaissance Notion of Woman. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.
- Marcus, Leah S. "Shakespeare's Comic Heroines, Elizabeth I, and the Political Uses of Androgyny." Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Ed. Mary Beth Rose. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse UP, 1986. 135-54.
- Marks, Elaine and Isabelle de Courtrivon. New French Feminisms. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1980.
- Marotti, Arthur F. "'Love is not love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order." ELH 49 (1982): 396-428.
- Martz, Louis L. "The Amoretti: 'Most Goodly Temperature'." Form and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser. Ed. William Nelson. New York: Columbia UP, 1961. 146-68.
- McCallum, Pamela. Literature and Method: Towards A Critique of I.A. Richards, T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1982.
- McCanles, Michael. Dialectical Criticism and Renaissance Literature. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1975.
- McCoy, Richard. Rebellion in Arcadia. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers UP, 1979.
- McNeir, Waldo F. "An Apology for Spenser's Amoretti." Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser. Ed. A.C. Hamilton. Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1972. 524-33.
- Miller, Jacqueline T. "'Love Doth Hold My Hand': Writing and Wooing in the Sonnets of Sidney and Spenser." ELH 46 (1979): 541-58.
- , "'What May Words Say': The Limits of Language." Sir Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance Culture. Eds. Gary F. Waller and Michael D. Moore. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1984. 95-109.
- Minta, Stephen. Petrarch and Petrarchism: The English and French Traditions. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1980.

- Miola, Robert S. "Spenser's Anacreontics: A Mythological Metaphor." SP 77 (1980): 50-66.
- Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. London: Methuen, 1985.
- Montgomery, Robert L. "Astrophil's Stella and Stella's Astrophil." Sir Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance Culture. Eds. Gary F. Waller and Michael D. Moore. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1984. 44-55.
- . Symmetry and Sense: The Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney. Austin: U of Texas P, 1961.
- Montrose, Louis Adrian. "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship." Renaissance Drama, n.s. 8 (1977): 3-35.
- . "'Eliza, Queene of shepheardes,' and the Pastoral of Power." ELR 10 (1980): 153-82.
- . "'The perfecte paterne of a Poete': The Poetics of Courtship in The Shepheardes Calender." TSL 21 (1979): 34-67.
- . "Renaissance Literary Studies and the Subject of History." ELR 16 (1986): 5-12.
- . "A Midsummer Night's Dream and the Shaping Fantasies of Elizabethan Culture: Gender, Power, Form." Rewriting the Renaissance. Ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 65-87.
- Muir, Kenneth. Sir Philip Sidney. London: Longmans, Green, 1960.
- Myrick, Kenneth. Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1965.
- Neale, J.E. Queen Elizabeth I. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1965.
- Neely, Carol Thomas. "The Structure of English Renaissance Sonnet Sequences." ELH 45 (1978): 359-89.
- Newman, Charles. The Post-Modern Aura: The Age of Fiction in an Age of Inflation. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern UP, 1985.
- Norbrook, David. Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

- O'Connor, William Van. "Tension and Structure in Poetry." Sewanee Review 51 (1943): 555-73.
- Orgel, Stephen. "Prospero's Wife." Rewriting the Renaissance. Eds. Margaret Ferguson, et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 50-64.
- Owens, Craig. "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism." The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture. Ed. Hal Foster. Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983. 57-82.
- Pechter, Edward. "The New Historicism and Its Discontents: Politicizing Renaissance Drama." PMLA 102 (1987): 292-303.
- Peter, John. Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature. Oxford: Clarendon, 1956.
- Prince, F.T. "The Sonnet from Wyatt to Shakespeare." Shakespeare: The Sonnets, A Casebook. Ed. Peter Jones. London: Macmillan, 1977. 164-84.
- Puttenham, George. The Arte of English Poesie (1589). Ed. Edward Arber. Birmingham: np, 1869.
- Quinones, Ricardo J. Mapping Literary Modernism: Time and Development. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985.
- Ransom, John Crowe. "Shakespeare at Sonnets." Shakespeare: The Sonnets, A Casebook. Ed. Peter Jones. London: Macmillan, 1977. 103-108.
- . The World's Body. New York: Scribner's, 1938.
- Rebhorn, Wayne A. Courtly Performances: Masking and Festivity in Castiglione's Book of the Courtier. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1978.
- Renwick, W.L. Spenser: Selections: With Essays by Hazlitt, Coleridge and Leigh Hunt. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1923.
- Richards, I.A. "The Places and the Figures." Elizabethan Poetry. Ed. Paul J. Alpers. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1967. 78-89.
- . Practical Criticism. 1929. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, n.d.
- . Science and Poetry. London: Macmillan, 1926.
- Ringler, William A., ed. The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney.

- Oxford: Clarendon, 1962.
- Robertson, Jean. "Sir Philip Sidney and Lady Penelope Rich." Review of English Studies. n.s. 15 (1964): 296-97.
- Roche, Thomas P., Jr. "Astrophil and Stella: A Radical Reading." Spenser Studies 3 (1982): 139-91.
- ". "Autobiographical Elements Sidney's Astrophil and Stella." Spenser Studies 5 (1984): 209-29.
- Rollins, Hyder E. and Herschel Baker. The Renaissance in England. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1954.
- Rose, Mary Beth, ed. Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse UP, 1986.
- Rudenstine, Neil. Sidney's Poetic Development. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1967.
- Ruthven, K.K. The Conceit. London: Methuen, 1969.
- Saintsbury, George. The Collected Essays and Papers of George Saintsbury. Vol. 3. Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1923.
- Saunders, J.W. "The Stigma of Print: A Note on the Social Bases of Tudor Poetry." Essays in Criticism 1 (1951): 139-64.
- Sessions, William A. "Editor's Comment." Studies in the Literary Imagination 15 (1982): 1-2.
- Sidney, Sir Philip. An Apology for Poetry: or The Defence of Poesy. Ed. and intro. Geoffrey Shepherd. London: Thomas Nelson, 1965.
- ". The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney. Ed. and intro. William A. Ringler, Jr. Oxford: Clarendon, 1962.
- Silberman, Lauren. "Singing Unsung Heroines: Androgynous Discourse in Book 3 of The Faerie Queene." Rewriting the Renaissance. Eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, et al. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986. 259-71.
- Sinfield, Alan. "Astrophil's Self-Deception." Essays in Criticism 28 (1978): 1-18.
- ". Literature in Protestant England 1560-1660. Totawa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1983.
- ". "Sidney and Astrophil." SEL 20 (1980): 25-41.

- Smith, Hallett. Elizabethan Poetry. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1952.
- Smith, J.C. "The Problem of Spenser's Sonnets." MLR 5 (1910): 273-81.
- Spencer, Theodore. "The Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney." ELH 12 (1945): 251-78.
- Spenser, Edmund. Poetical Works. Eds. J.C. Smith and E. De Selincourt. 1912. London: Oxford UP, 1977.
- Stillinger, Jack. "The Biographical Problem of Astrophel and Stella." Journal of English and Germanic Philology 59 (1960): 617-39.
- Stone, Lawrence. The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.
- . The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641. London: Oxford UP, 1967.
- Strong, Roy. The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry. London: Thames and Hudson, 1977.
- Tillyard, E.M.W. The Elizabethan World Picture: A Study of the Idea of Order in the Age of Shakespeare, Donne and Milton. London: Oxford UP, 1943.
- Thompson, Charlotte. "Love in an Orderly Universe: A Unification of Spenser's Amoretti, 'Anacreontics', and Epithalamion." Viator 16 (1985): 277-35.
- Trilling, Lionel. Sincerity and Authenticity. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1972.
- Tucker, Thomas G. The Foreign Debt of English Literature. London: George Bell, 1902.
- Tuve, Rosemond. Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery. 1947; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1957.
- Vance, Eugene. "Love's Concordance: The Poetics of Desire and the Joy of the Text." Diacritics 5 (1975): 40-52.
- Vickers, Nancy J. "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme." CritI 8 (1981): 265-79.
- Waller, Gary F. "Acts of Reading: The Production of Meaning in Astrophil and Stella." Studies in the Literary Imagination 15 (1982): 23-35.
- . "Author, Text, Reading, Ideology: Towards a

Revisionist Literary History of the Renaissance." Dalhousie Review 61 (1981): 405-25.

----- . English Poetry of the Sixteenth Century.
New York: Longman, 1986.

----- . "The Rewriting of Petrarch: Sidney and the Languages of Sixteenth-Century Poetry." Sir Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance Culture. Ed. Gary F. Waller and Michael D. Moore. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1984. 69-83.

Waller, Gary F. and Michael D. Moore, eds. Sir Philip Sidney and the Interpretation of Renaissance Culture: The Poet in his Time and in Ours. Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1984.

Warkentin, Germaine. "'Love's sweetest part, variety': Petrarch and the Curious Frame of the Renaissance Sonnet Sequence." Renaissance and Reformation 11 (1975): 14-23.

Warnke, Frank J. "A Hook for Amphibium: Some Reflections on Fish." Approaches to Sir Thomas Browne. Ed. C.A. Patrides. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1982.

Webster, John. "'The Methode of a Poete': An Inquiry into Tudor Conceptions of Poetic Sequence." ELR 11 (1981): 22-43.

Weiner, Andrew D. "Structure and 'Fore Conceit' in Astrophil and Stella." TSL 16 (1974): 1-25.

Wells, Robin Headlam. "Poetic Decorum in Spenser's Amoretti." Cahiers Elisabethan 25 (1984): 9-21.

----- . "Semper Eadem: Spenser's 'Legend of Constancie'." Modern Language Review 73 (1978): 250-55.

Whigham, Frank. Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Literature. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.

Widdowson, Peter. Re-Reading English. London: Methuen, 1982.

Williams, Raymond. Culture and Society 1780-1950. London: Chatto and Windus, 1958.

----- . Marxism and Literature. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977.

Wilson, Elkin Calhoun. England's Eliza. New York: Octagon Books, 1966.

- Wilson, Mona. Sir Philip Sidney. n.p. 1931.
- Wimsatt, W.K. and Monroe C. Beardsley. "The Affective Fallacy." The Verbal Icon. Lexington, Ky.: U of Kentucky P, 1954. 21-39.
- , "The Intentional Fallacy." The Verbal Icon. Lexington, Ky.: U of Kentucky P, 1954. 3-18.
- Winters, Yvor. "Poetic Styles, Old and New." Shakespeare: The Sonnets, A Casebook. Ed. Peter Jones. London: Macmillan, 1977. 153-63.
- , "The 16th Century Lyric in England: A Critical and Historical Reinterpretation." Elizabethan Poetry: Lyrical and Narrative. Ed. Gerald Hammond. London: Macmillan, 1984. 75-84.
- Woodbridge, Linda. Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1984.
- Wordsworth, William. "Preface to Lyrical Ballads." Romantic Poetry and Prose. Eds. Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling. New York: Oxford UP, 1973. 594-611.
- , "The Prelude." The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. Eds. Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest de Selincourt. 1904. London: Oxford UP, 1946. 631-742.
- Yates, Frances. Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Young, Richard B. "English Petrarche: A Study of Sidney's Astrophel and Stella." Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton. 1-89.