

THE CURIOUS CASE OF MARY SIDNEY

The Representation of Women in the Teaching of
Early Modern Literature



Portrait of Mary Sidney Herbert, Nicholas Hilliard, c. 1590



BACHELOR THESIS
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ENGELSE TAAL EN CULTUUR

Teacher who will receive this document: Dr Margu rite Corporaal

Title of document: Corporaal_Lankveld, van_BA thesis

Name of course: BA werkstuk Engelse Letterkunde

Date of submission: 31-05-2019

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Abstract

This study examines to what extent the scholarship on women writers, and Mary Sidney the Countess of Pembroke in particular, is applied in early modern literature courses at West European universities. The research uses Mary Sidney as a case study, considering her in her own time and looking at the image that remains and/or is created of her in contemporary scholarship. Subsequently, it is examined which parts of this image are then again materialised in early modern literature courses, by conducting a survey among lecturers at a selection of British, Irish, and Dutch universities. The results of this survey show that both the representation of Mary Sidney and of women in general varies greatly between courses. From the obtained responses it is observed that this variety is due to a combination of practical reasons, but most of all to an underlying bias towards original writing in the formulation of course syllabi. This suggests that for a significant improvement in female representation not only the syllabi themselves should change, the process of formulating a syllabus should change too.

Keywords: Mary Sidney, women's writing, early modern literature courses, West European universities

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Introduction

The early modern period has produced many masterpieces and figureheads of British literature, but while Shakespeare, Marlowe, and numerous of their male contemporaries are included in almost all syllabi of early modern literature, women have only rarely been incorporated in these course lists. This creates the impression that women did not occupy themselves with literature in this period, or as Virginia Woolf once said it, “it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare.”¹ She continues that “genius of a sort must have existed among women [...] But certainly it never got itself on to paper,”² and until relatively recently there was hardly any scholarly proof that pointed out otherwise. However, in the last two decades of the previous century the area of women’s writing emerged in the field of literary studies. Through the work of the scholars in this area numerous women writers and other female literary figures have been (re)discovered, and those from the early modern period are not an exception to this. One such figure is Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, who played a pivotal role in the literary culture of her time as, for example, a patroness, author, and translator.³ This thesis will focus on how she is represented in teaching on early modern literature at European universities.

The issue of the representation of early modern women writers is often approached from the angle of authorship. A number of critics have argued that it is our current perception of authorship, in which the emphasis lies on the autonomous act of writing and authorship is often equated with the author figure, which has led to the frequent omission of these female literary figures from literary histories. After all, the majority of early modern women who were active in literature fulfilled roles that did not yield original writing by themselves, but which were essential in the process of publication and circulation nevertheless. In *Gender, authorship, and early modern women’s collaboration* by Pender the focus lies on this question of how “conceiving early modern texts as collaborations between authors, readers, annotators, editors, printers, and other textual agents uphold or disrupt currently dominant understandings of authorship?”⁴ She also pays attention to these dominant understandings of

¹ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (Adelaide: The University of Adelaide Library, 2016), 50, https://www.janvaneyck.nl/site/assets/files/2260/v_woolf_a_room.pdf.

² Woolf, 52.

³ Margaret P. Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 1 March 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13040>.

⁴ Patricia Pender, ed., *Gender, Authorship, and Early Modern Women’s Collaboration* (New York, NY: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2017), 3.

authorship in the specific case of Mary Sidney in both ‘The Ghost and the Machine in the Sidney Family Corpus’ and ‘Mea Mediocritas: Mary Sidney, Modesty, and the History of the Book’ and notes how these have led us to misrecognise “one of the most influential instigators of early modern literary culture as an unassuming, ancillary, minor figure.”⁵ In Wall’s *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* the gendered and sexualized language used to define authorship and publication are discussed and she “unfolds the sexual ideologies embedded within these strategies, points to how publication and its attendant class issues motivated such identifications, and then queries how women’s writing provided countermodels to dominant modes of authorization.”⁶

A wide variety of books and texts on women in early modern literature have already been written. Numerous of these are anthologies, such as Ostovich and Sauer’s *Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print, 1550-1700*, Cerasano and Wynne-Davies’s *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents*, and *Women Writers in Renaissance England: An Annotated Anthology* by Martin. In these anthologies the writings of women from the early modern period are collected and sometimes accompanied by annotations and introductions. Mary Sidney is included in most of these as well, mostly for her version of *The Tragedy of Antonie* (translation) and/or the psalms. These women’s writings are also often the subjects of critical commentaries and essays, both by early modern and contemporary critics, of which *Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594-1998* by Cerasano and Wynne-Davies is an example. These essays comment on a wide variety of subjects, from analysis of the texts and their historical contexts, to social-cultural issues and the presentation of the authors themselves. There is attention for more than just the original creative writing by women: Findlay et al.’s *Women and Dramatic Production 1550-1700* examines women in the wider context of the early modern dramatic performance culture, noting that “since they did not participate in the major professional theatre companies as either dramatists or actors until 1660, women’s dramatic productions necessarily challenge the values and expectations according to which drama was, and still is, judged.”⁷ Smith uncovers the various roles women fulfilled in book production, as writers, patrons, readers, dedicatees, etc, in ‘*Grossly Material Things*’: *Women and Book*

⁵ Patricia Pender, ‘The Ghost and the Machine in the Sidney Family Corpus’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 51, no. 1 (2011): 77, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23028093>.

⁶ Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 6.

⁷ Alison Findlay, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, and Gwenno Williams, *Women and Dramatic Production 1550-1700* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 6.

Production in Early Modern England; and *Faithful Translators: Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England* by Goodrich looks at women as translators, a role that was “permitted to women, for in their case it could be seen as a mechanical exercise”⁸ rather than the production of original creative writing.

However, while all these books and studies reveal that these early modern women may have gained their due attention in scholarship, this is only one step towards recognition. While numerous courses specified in women’s writing have emerged, a true indicator of the (under)representation of women is their presence in general surveys of early modern literature that are taught at university, for the way to alter a current perception is to impart others with the knowledge that may change it. The question I will be focusing on is therefore: how has the scholarship on early modern female literary figures, and Mary Sidney in particular, affected teaching on English Renaissance literature at West European universities? To answer this question, I will look at a number of subquestions: How are concepts of canon and women’s writing already incorporated in the teaching of (early modern) literature? How is Mary Sidney represented in scholarship on early modern women writers? Which of the chosen universities incorporate Mary Sidney in their syllabi and how is she framed? These questions will be answered in the following subsequent chapters.

To find an answer to my research question I will select nine universities in Britain, the Netherlands, and Ireland, and study the syllabi of the modules on early modern literature they offer in their English literature programme. Using the course overviews and accompanying reading lists I will try to find out which of these modules discuss Mary Sidney. Furthermore, I will also contact the lecturers of the respective modules and ask them whether they are willing to fill in a short questionnaire on, amongst other things, the specific content of their lecture(s) on the Countess of Pembroke, and their reasons to include or not include her in their modules. By asking these questions I will be able to find out what parts of the scholarship on Mary Sidney are incorporated and what the reasons for this are, but also whether the reason for not including her in historical literary overview courses is indeed what a number of critics suggest, namely our dominant conceptualisation of authorship.

My expected outcome of this study is that the majority of the examined West European universities, perhaps with a few exceptions, will discuss Mary Sidney only in a module on women’s writing or a special class focusing on this subject in a broader early

⁸ Morini, 2006, p. 24 in Jaime Goodrich, ‘Conclusion: Authority and Authorship in Early Modern England’, in *Faithful Translators: Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England* (Northwestern University Press, 2014), 6, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3znxvx.10>.

modern literature course, and even then merely in the context of her relationship with her brother Philip Sidney and his work. This would be due to the fact that surveys of early modern literature tend to focus on authors of ‘original’ work only and women in Renaissance England often do not fit into this narrow definition of authorship.

In recent years there has been more and more attention for minorities’ voices in literature and literary studies, and questioning the legitimacy and origin of our literary canons. This is also visible in the emergence and popularity of fields such as gender and women’s studies. But while we may have gained a better understanding of the important roles these minority groups played in literature and how and why they were underrepresented nonetheless, this does not change representation in itself. As mentioned before, it is not until this knowledge is actively used to change the current view of (early modern) literature that representation can actually be improved. This is exactly where there is a lack of research. While it has now been established *that* and *how* women in early modern literature are underrepresented, relatively little attention is paid to what is actively being done to remedy this and how the recently gained knowledge on these women’s roles in the literary field is applied. Answering my research question will provide further insight into how this is actually done at universities in West Europe. Since universities are institutions where ideas of canon are established and upheld, these are also the perfect places to introduce change. My thesis research will thus show what is already being done to improve the representation of women in early modern literature, where progress can still be made, and will suggest further steps to give these women the respect, appreciation, and place in literary history they deserve.

In Chapter 1 the role of the literary canon in relation to the teaching of women’s writing will be examined. Chapter 2 will focus on Mary Sidney as a literary figure in her own time, and how she is subsequently framed in contemporary scholarship. Finally, Chapter 3 discusses the results of the survey of early modern literature courses at British, Irish, and Dutch universities conducted for this thesis.

Chapter 1 – Canon & women's writing in teaching

The canon & diversity

According to the OED the canon is “the list of works considered to be permanently established as being of the highest quality.”⁹ The literary canon would thus encompass a list of the greatest works of literature of all time, but this definition raises a number of questions. Does the word ‘works’ include all or only certain genres? Are there multiple canons or does only a single one exist? Does ‘permanently established’ mean that once a work has entered the canon it can never be removed from it? What criteria are used in determining whether a work is ‘of the highest quality’? And, above all, who determines which works belong to the canon? Although it is not within the scope of this thesis to answer these queries (if there even is a definitive answer to them at all), these questions and the literary canon itself, specifically the British canon, do play a major role in understanding the (under)representation of women, and Mary Sidney in particular, in course syllabi. Löffler states that ‘Canon’ and ‘Canonicity’ are understood as “concrete manifestations of an institutionally sanctioned standard of literary relevance affecting the work of literary scholars on almost every conceivable level: it structures the scope of course programs and the forms of classroom instruction, it conditions departmental reading lists and exam requirements, it provides important assumptions about the periodization of literature, and, more generally, it functions as a norm for testing, questioning, and re-adjusting the conceptual premises of literary scholarship.”¹⁰ Additionally, it also determines which works are “preserved, reproduced, and disseminated over successive generations and centuries.”¹¹ It states which works are deemed vital to our cultural identity, and are thus part of our (literary) heritage. In other words, the canon influences any and every level of literary scholarship, it determines which specific works are examined and which ones are not. In practice, this meant that until rather recently most if not all works studied were by dead white men, and for a long time this seemed to be relatively unchallenged.

This all changed, however, with what are now called the ‘Canon Wars’. Towards the end of the 20th century, the rise of gender, queer, and race studies, among others, led to the questioning of this traditional ‘white male’ canon. The glaring lack of writers with a different

⁹ ‘Canon’, Oxford Dictionaries | English, accessed 2 April 2019, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/canon>.

¹⁰ Philipp Löffler, *Reading the Canon: Literary History in the 21st Century* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017), 2, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ubnru-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4874938>.

¹¹ John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), vii.

gender and/or ethnical background was criticized, and there was a growing call for change. Critics, especially those in fields like “gender and critical race studies, the New Historicism, queer and disability studies, postcolonial theory, and transnational and hemispheric literary and cultural studies,”¹² began to challenge the criteria on which the canon was founded, questioning whether works were admitted on grounds of literary merit only, or if dominant power structures also played a role. The argument that these other groups were not included because they simply did not write literature has been disproven by the still growing amount of texts written by them that have been recovered. To the critics it became obvious “that social background (and gender) is an important factor in evaluation,”¹³ while some even went as far as saying that “the merit of literature is not an unalterable entity. It is grounded on social values.”¹⁴ As a result, “the relationship between aesthetics and politics has been central to the majority of attempts to re-assess questions of canonicity in the name of politically disenfranchised cultures or communities of writers.”¹⁵ The objective of revising the canon was twofold: not only to reassess the actual list of works and add those by writers left out because of bias, but also to review the criteria of admittance themselves. In the eyes of those calling for change, “canon formation is subject to or a reflection of the ways in which a particular ideological consensus is transmitted via central cultural institutions to the reading public,”¹⁶ and in this case this ideological consensus decreed that white, male writers were superior to any writer who was not. The only way to overthrow this consensus was to provide an alternative one, and thus to reform the canon itself.

On the other side of the Canon Wars stood the ‘traditionalists’. Unlike their ‘multiculturalist’ adversaries, in their opinion there was no need to diversify the canon. The works presented in the classic literary canon were included for their literary merit, a question of aesthetics on which socio-political issues had no bearing whatsoever. These works were included because they supposedly were the greatest works ever produced, and according to traditionalist philosophy, “if one reads and studies the very best of what humanity has produced over the course of millennia, the mind will be better suited to the difficult but necessary task of fearless lifelong inquiry. The student of the ‘great books’ becomes the

¹² Löffler, *Reading the Canon*, 5.

¹³ Susanne Fendler, ed., *Feminist Contributions to the Literary Canon: Setting Standards of Taste*, Women’s Studies (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 3.

¹⁴ Fendler, 3.

¹⁵ Löffler, *Reading the Canon*, 5.

¹⁶ Löffler, 5.

engaged citizen and the self-critical soul.”¹⁷ The expansion of the canon on grounds of diversity would, to them, therefore be an impoverishment rather than an enrichment. In fact, in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*, Bloom argued that “[cultural] relativism has extinguished the real motive of education, the search for a good life.”¹⁸ The diversification of the canon, to them, meant the supplanting of texts that an educated person ‘should know’.

While the preceding account of the Canon Wars has been written in past tense, the issues it concerns are actually still relevant nowadays. As a matter of fact, some scholars would argue that we have re-entered the Canon Wars,¹⁹ or perhaps, rather, that we never left them in the first place. While the traditional ‘Western’ canon is still adopted at universities,²⁰ students also still protest against ‘too white’ courses.²¹ Rupp, too, argues that “more than two decades on, there is an ongoing need for curricular change, with regard to ‘other’ writers and texts as well as other types of ‘text’ [...] the case for new canons in the classroom still needs to be made, and that there is a misfit yet between scholarly attention and teaching practice.”²²

Yet, it also needs to be acknowledged that the circumstances in which the current Canon Wars take place have improved, or at least changed compared with what these were like at the end of the 20th century. When one looks at course syllabi these days, a multiplicity of different canons seem to exist side by side: the classic ‘dead white male’ canon, ones that focus solely on black, female or other minority authors, and any combination that lies in between. The presence of these latter two would suggest that “the multiculturalists won the canon wars,”²³ for after all it means they achieved their aim: a more diverse canon. However, “20 years later, there’s a more complicated sense of the costs and benefits of those transformations [of the canon],”²⁴ and maybe this is the reason why the same discussions on diversification of the canon have returned and/or intensified again. We now know what such (drastic) transformations of the canon have brought us: both the gains of presenting a broader

¹⁷ Katherine Kelaidis, ‘The Return of the Canon Wars’, *Quillette*, 26 April 2018, <https://quillette.com/2018/04/26/return-canon-wars/>.

¹⁸ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1988), 34, <https://iwcenglish1.typepad.com/Documents/14434540-The-Closing-of-the-American-Mind.pdf>.

¹⁹ Kelaidis, ‘The Return of the Canon Wars’.

²⁰ David Marino, ‘Opinion: Politicizing Certain Majors Poisons Our Academic Environment’, *The Arizona State Press*, 27 March 2018, <https://www.statepress.com/article/2018/03/politicizing-certain-majors-poisons-our-academic-environment>.

²¹ Colleen Flaherty, ‘Responding to Student Criticism That Its Foundational Humanities Course Is Too White, Reed College Announces Changes’, *Inside Higher Ed*, 4 December 2018, <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/04/12/responding-student-criticism-its-foundational-humanities-course-too-white-reed>.

²² Löffler, *Reading the Canon*, 270.

²³ Rachel Donadio, ‘Revisiting the Canon Wars - Books - Review’, *The New York Times*, 16 September 2007, sec. Sunday Book Review, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/16/books/review/Donadio-t.html>.

²⁴ Donadio.

range of works and perspectives, but also what views, opinions, and ideas we have lost by omitting certain texts in lieu of others. Perhaps by entering into the Canon Wars once more, Kelaidis argues, we will be able to find “a more productive course than the one we have inherited. A path that need not—and should not—end up returning us to either an uncritical acceptance of the traditional Western canon or a hodgepodge syllabus of mediocre talents collected only because we wish to appear open-minded.”²⁵

Teaching women writers

Both in the previous and current Canon Wars, women writers are seen as one of the ‘minorities’ whose case is argued for by the multiculturalists. For a long time they were barely included in the canon and the syllabi which were shaped according to it, based on the belief that women had made no substantial contributions to literary history. But as more and more texts written by women were recovered, realisation dawned that this belief could hardly be accurate. Feminist critics argued that “the literary canon was formed by excluding women **although** they contributed to literary techniques or realization of topics. The reasons are that, intentionally or unintentionally, the respective innovation was attributed to the first man following in the wake of each respective woman.”²⁶ The solution to this problem would have been quite straightforward: change the canon to include women writers who played essential roles in literary history, and alter syllabi accordingly. But in reality it was and still is not that simple, not least of all because of resistance by traditionalists. The book *Teaching women: feminism and English studies* discusses the issues and problems encountered in the teaching on women, often by women and for women, in literature courses in higher education. It shows the pioneering of women’s writing courses and the incorporation of feminist theory in literary modules in the late 1980s when the Canon Wars were still very much ongoing.

In her contribution to *Teaching women*, Hancock notes that “when contemplating change, feminists can obviously take several directions,” the first one being that “one can make strenuous efforts to achieve a better balance of male/female literary works on courses and make one’s views known on offensive male texts.”²⁷ This approach more or less summarises the objective of multiculturalists in the Canon Wars: to diversify the original canon. Hancock has also “often thought that many books are selected for courses because (a)

²⁵ Kelaidis, ‘The Return of the Canon Wars’.

²⁶ Fendler, *Feminist Contributions to the Literary Canon: Setting Standards of Taste*, 1. (**bold** as in original)

²⁷ Ann Thompson and Helen Wilcox, eds., *Teaching Women: Feminism and English Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 131.

the teacher likes them and (b) the teacher has plenty to say about them, that is, a favoured critical approach can be successfully applied to them. Remaining books tend to be there because they always have been.”²⁸ To make room for more women writers within the limited space of a course syllabus, this would essentially have meant that either teachers with a research interest in women writers and a deeper knowledge of their works should be brought in to teach on these courses, or that the books which ‘have always been there’ should be reevaluated and eventually replaced by texts written by women. The former would in many situations perhaps have been impossible, both for the reasons that teachers with this kind of research interest and expertise were not always available and that it would have meant displacing (part of) the original staff. The latter would have raised a lot of hackles too, visible in the opposition of traditionalists. While Hancock admits that “I certainly haven’t the time to read any more D.H. Lawrence,” and that “on the other hand there are a great many women writers I would bring in to courses or give more prominence to,”²⁹ numerous of her colleagues probably would not have agreed.

When it comes to the literary canon and the gender of the authors of its texts, a double standard has been adopted: texts by male authors, of which some have been part of the canon for ages, are given more weight than texts by women authors. Hancock presents an instructive example of this as well: “I said once to a male colleague in a moment of exasperation that I thought *1984* should not be the standard O and A level text it has become. He accused me of censorship. However the exclusion from literary courses of scores of women writers seems to be perceived as censorship only by students who have, as they see it, been deprived of the opportunity to study texts written by women which they have discovered for themselves.”³⁰ The suggestion of removing a, then relatively new, text written by a man is immediately met with the accusation that it tries to silence a certain voice, but it has never been considered that by neglecting to adopt female authors in the literary canon, women’s voices have been censored for ages.

The second option for change, one that is often adopted, is that “alternatively one can opt for women’s literature courses taught by and almost always for women.”³¹ This would bring a solution to please both sides: those who wish to learn on women writers can sign up for these courses, and those who want their male-dominated syllabi to stay intact will not have

²⁸ Thompson and Wilcox, 131.

²⁹ Thompson and Wilcox, 130.

³⁰ Thompson and Wilcox, 130.

³¹ Thompson and Wilcox, 131.

to fear the removal of one of its texts. In effect, this means the construction of two canons which exist side by side. On the one hand there is a female canon, and on the other the traditional one. While this may seem a cure-all, it eventually accomplishes nothing in changing the position of the female authors, aside from proving that they actually existed. The formation of these two separate canons has “resulted in the formation of two distinct lines: the description of a ‘sisterhood’ among women writers and, on the other hand, the traditional canon of (mostly male) great writers.”³² This suggests that these women were in fact no great writers, and the only reason they are now incorporated in syllabi is that they were women who wrote. It implies that women’s literature is in fact not an actual part of wider literature. According to Fendler “this self-conception as a movement apart, combined with derogatory judgements of men on women which have been repeated over the years, without, sometimes obviously, critics bothering to read the actual works, has resulted in the neglect of or derogatory treatment of women’s literature – not only as far as the canon is concerned but also in the assessment of academic curriculae.”³³ The introduction of “women’s studies [...] as a separate line of studies, [...] emphasizes only that what women do or create is seen as something apart from the ‘main’ events.”³⁴ Thus, even dedicating entire courses to women’s writing, giving these female authors all possible attention, would eventually not incorporate them into wider literary history but, in fact, create a separate space for them, suggesting that they work outside of ‘regular’ literary history. Simultaneously, the danger of introducing a course specifically on women’s writing, would perhaps also “allow everyone to sit back comfortably and conclude that nothing further need be done.”³⁵

Whichever of these two directions of change is adopted, either leads to wider questioning of the canon and canonisation. When texts by female authors are added to usually traditional canon-based syllabi “in the absence of a canon of female literature [...], the matter whose prejudice, whim or enthusiasm had given the text this status in a literary syllabus was suddenly an issue for discussion,”³⁶ and once one starts to discuss this on the syllabus of one course, it easily spreads to other modules as well. When “an alternative canon of lost or undervalued texts”³⁷ is created, it may lead to rereading the traditional canon and asking exactly the kind of questions this chapter was opened with: who decides which texts belong in

³² Fendler, *Feminist Contributions to the Literary Canon: Setting Standards of Taste*, 2.

³³ Fendler, 3.

³⁴ Fendler, 3.

³⁵ Fendler, 131.

³⁶ Thompson and Wilcox, *Teaching Women: Feminism and English Studies*, 65.

³⁷ Thompson and Wilcox, 146.

the canon, and on the basis of what? In some extreme cases it may even lead critics to challenge “the very idea of a canon and the conventional ways in which ‘English’ has been constructed as a subject.”³⁸ Literary studies in higher education are very much governed by ideas of the canon, but in discussion with her students, Griffin, who had presented them with an ‘alternative canon’ with predominantly female authors, discovered that “they (a) had not even noticed the gender bias on the reading list, (b) had relatively little knowledge of what to expect in terms of canonised authors [...], and (c) were less concerned with gender and ‘the canon’ than with, for example, the novelty value of any particular author.”³⁹ It made her realise “how much I as a teacher of English take ‘the canon’ for granted, accept its existence as ‘real’, construct my courses in response to it, and how little relevance it has to the students.”⁴⁰ So, it appears that the canon, in whatever form it takes, is actually more fundamentally important to the authority which maintains it, than to the students, to whom it is passed on.

The questioning and revising of the canon is also visible in the content of the different types and editions of the Norton Anthology, one of the most used anthologies in university teaching. Norton, in a way, offers both options when it comes to the canon: *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, in which women writers are integrated in the ‘traditional’ canon, and a separate canon of women writing in *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English*. In the specific case of Mary Sidney, who is used as a case study in this thesis, this has meant that she is currently included in no less than three Norton anthologies, namely the 10th edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*,⁴¹ the 3rd edition of *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*,⁴² and the 10th edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, The Major Authors*.⁴³ This, however, has not always been the case. She was absent in the 4th edition of the *NAEL*, and Volume 1, which covers the Middle Ages-the eighteenth century, in fact only includes two women: Anne Finch, Countess

³⁸ Thompson and Wilcox, 146.

³⁹ Thompson and Wilcox, 167.

⁴⁰ Thompson and Wilcox, 167.

⁴¹ Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Table of Contents’, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 10th ed., vol. B, 3 vols (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018), https://media.wwnorton.com/cms/contents/NAEL10_VOLB_TOC.pdf.

⁴² Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., ‘Table of Contents’, in *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English*, 3rd ed., vol. 1, 2 vols (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007), https://media.wwnorton.com/cms/contents/nalw_vol1.pdf.

⁴³ Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Table of Contents’, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, The Major Authors*, 10th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018), https://media.wwnorton.com/cms/contents/NAEL10_Major_Vol1_TOC.pdf.

of Winchilsea and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.⁴⁴ There was, however, a “distinct shift between the fourth and fifth editions”⁴⁵ with “the fifth edition of the *NAEL* [including] 26 women who occupy 5.770% of the total counted pages of this edition.”⁴⁶ Although, at this point, I am unsure whether the Countess of Pembroke was among these 26 women, she has at least been present in every edition since the sixth.^{47,48,49,50} Throughout these editions, it varied which of her texts were featured. In the sixth edition ‘A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds’ was included, which, in the seventh edition, was exchanged for ‘To the Angel Spirit’, and Psalms 52 and 139. For both the eighth and ninth edition only these psalms were maintained, and in the tenth Psalm 119 was added to the selection. In the differences in content between these editions, we thus see a shift of focus from her role as a writer to her role as a translator. Another anthology used in literature courses is the *Longman Anthology of British Literature*. This anthology has also included the Countess in at least their fourth (and most recent) and third edition.^{51,52} The texts present in these anthologies were Psalm 71 and 121, and ‘The Doleful Lay of Clorinda’ for the third, and ‘Even Now That Care’, ‘To Thee Pure Sprite’ (alternative title ‘To The Angel Spirit’), and Psalm 71. In contrast with the *Norton*, the *Longman* thus shows Mary Sidney the translator, and Mary Sidney the writer alongside each other. The fact that both anthologies have included the Countess indicates that, at least for the editors of the *NAEL* and the *Longman*, Mary Sidney (and other women writers) should indeed be part of the canon, thus seemingly adopting a more multiculturalist view.

To be included in anthologies like the *NAEL*, but also the canon in general, writers not only needs to have had or been an important influence on literature in their own time, this

⁴⁴ M. H. Abrams, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 4th ed., vol. 1 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1979), ix–xxviii.

⁴⁵ Gillian Gualtieri, ‘Canonized Women and Women Canonizers: Gender Dynamics in The Norton Anthology of English Literature’s Eight Editions’, *Gender Issues* 28, no. 1–2 (2011): 95, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-011-9099-y>.

⁴⁶ Gualtieri, 102.

⁴⁷ ‘Contents | The Norton Anthology of English Literature | W. W. Norton & Company (6th Edition)’, www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/abr6.htm, accessed 26 April 2019.

⁴⁸ M. H. Abrams, ed., ‘The Norton Anthology of English Literature (7th Ed.)’ (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.), accessed 26 April 2019, https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/noa/pdf/TOC_NAEL7_vol_1.pdf.

⁴⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 8th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007).

⁵⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, ed., ‘Table of Contents’, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 9th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2012).

⁵¹ ‘Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 1B, The: The Early Modern Period, 4th Edition’, Pearson, accessed 10 May 2019, <https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/product/Damrosch-Longman-Anthology-of-British-Literature-Volume-1-B-The-Early-Modern-Period-4th-Edition/9780205655328.html?tab=contents>.

⁵² ‘Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 1, The, 3rd Edition’, accessed 11 May 2019, <https://www.pearson.com/us/higher-education/program/Damrosch-Longman-Anthology-of-British-Literature-Volumes-1-A-1-B-1-C-package-The-3rd-Edition/PGM81080.html?tab=contents>.

influence also needs to be recognised in later years. This second point is often the reason that Mary Sidney and numerous other women have not always been included. However, since the rise of feminist criticism and women's writing studies there has been an improvement in this aspect. The next chapter will focus, firstly, on *The Countess of Pembroke* in the context of her own time, and subsequently what parts of her image are focused on by contemporary scholars and how she is framed in their scholarship.

Chapter 2 – Mary Sidney in scholarship

Mary Sidney in her own time

Mary Sidney was born on 27 October 1561 at Tickenhall, as the third daughter of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Sidney. She had six siblings, of whom her elder brother Sir Philip Sidney is the most famous. Aside from the “conventional female skills of music (both as singer and as lute player), and in needlework,”⁵³ she also “received an education in the humanist curriculum [...] was schooled in scripture and the classics, trained in rhetoric, and was fluent in French, Italian, and Latin; she may also have known some Greek and Hebrew.”⁵⁴ In 1577 she was married to Henry Herbert, second earl of Pembroke, and became Countess of Pembroke. She bore four recorded children, William, Katherine, Anne, and Philip, and she and her (extended) family spent most of their time at Wilton, their country estate near Salisbury. On 25 September 1621, outliving her husband by twenty years, Sidney died of smallpox at the age of 59. Throughout her life, Sidney adopted various literary roles: writer, translator, patroness, dedicatee, and literary executor/agent of her brother’s work. Her written work includes the *Psalmes* (which she finished in her brother’s name after he died), the poems ‘To the Angell Spirit of the most excellent Sir Philip Sidney’, ‘Even now that Care which on thy Crown attends’ and ‘A dialogue between two shepherds, *Thenot* and *Piers*, in praise of *Astrea*’, and translations of de Mornay’s *A Discourse of Life and Death*, Garnier’s *Antonius* and Petrarch’s *The Triumph of Death*.

Sidney’s translation *The Tragedy of Antonie* was dated 26 November 1590, but it was not published until 1592, when it was printed together with her translation of *A Discourse of Life and Death* by William Ponsonby, making her the first woman in England to publish a play.^{55,56} During the Countess’s lifetime it was reprinted multiple times, in 1595, 1600, 1606, and 1607,⁵⁷ and enjoyed considerable renown and influence in popularising both the genres of closet and Senecan drama. As a closet play, it was not meant to be acted out in a performance, but rather for a staged reading.⁵⁸ Garnier’s source text is considered (neo-)Senecan drama, a genre that “deliberately emphasizes rhetoric and didacticism, and develops characters through

⁵³ Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’.

⁵⁴ Hannay.

⁵⁵ Hannay.

⁵⁶ S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds., *Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594-1998* (London: Routledge, 1998), 33.

⁵⁷ Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, 33.

⁵⁸ Marta Straznicky, *Privacy, Playreading, and Women’s Closet Drama, 1550-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

soliloquy rather than dramatic action.”⁵⁹ In Mary’s choice of genre, her brother Philip’s influence is clearly visible: in his *The Defense of Poesy* he attacked English romantic drama, instead arguing for plays “full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca’s style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach.”⁶⁰ While Philip may have passed away by the time of *Antonie*’s publication, his sister still tried to implement the changes he was arguing for with her own work, and she was not alone in this. Following her example, members of the Countess’s patronage group and contemporaries also wrote a number of Senecan plays. Among them were Daniel’s *Philotas* and *Cleopatra*, the counterpart to the Countess’s *Antonie*, Brandon’s *The Virtuous Octavia*, Greville’s *Mustapha* and *Alaham*, and Alexander’s *Darius*, *Croesus*, and *The Alexandraean Tragedy*, and Shakespeare later even took inspiration and borrowed from her work for his play *Antony and Cleopatra*.⁶¹ This shows that Sidney’s influence was far-reaching, and that her contemporaries regarded her as important enough to follow her example, making her an instigator in literary tradition.

That Sidney’s *Antonie* was published together with her translation of de Mornay’s text is also no mere coincidence, for both texts emphasize reason over emotion and public duty over private relationships, which are Senecan themes.⁶² *The Tragedy of Antonie* not only introduced Senecan drama to the English stage, it also brought the continental vogue of using historical drama to comment on contemporary politics,⁶³ in Sidney’s translations mostly visible in that second Senecan theme of emphasising the monarch’s public duty. An example of this is the beginning of Act V, in which Cleopatra cries out:

Alas! of mine the plague and poison I
The crowne haue lost my ancestors me left,
This Realme I haue to strangers subiect made,
And robd my children of their heritage.⁶⁴

realising that her feelings for Antonius have led her to destroy Egypt. This commenting on politics is perhaps even more noteworthy in the knowledge that this play, together with ‘A

⁵⁹ Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’.

⁶⁰ Sir Philip Sidney, ‘The Defense of Poesy’, in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 9th ed., vol. 1 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2012), 1077.

⁶¹ Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, *Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594-1998*, 34.

⁶² Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’.

⁶³ Jaime Goodrich, ‘Introduction: Religious Translation in Early Modern England’, in *Faithful Translators: Authorship, Gender, and Religion in Early Modern England* (Northwestern University Press, 2014), 3–28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3znxvx.5>.

⁶⁴ ‘The Tragedie of Antonie.’, ll. 1797–1800, accessed 29 April 2019, <http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/antonie.html>.

Dialogue between two shepherds, *Thenot* and *Piers*, in praise of *Astrea*’, was meant to be performed during an intended visit by Elizabeth I.⁶⁵

The *Psalmes* were originally not meant to be Sidney’s work. Her brother had started translating the Book of Psalms into verse, but when he died in 1586 he left his work unfinished. Mary took it upon herself to translate the remaining psalms, after editing the ones he had already written. While some critics may have argued that the role of translator was permitted to her, and women in general, because translating was inferior to the act of writing, Trill argues that this idea does not hold up in early modern society. In fact, the responses of contemporary writers show that they “clearly saw [women’s] involvement in these areas [– translations, dedications, epitaphs, letters, private devotional meditations –] as being of central social and religious significance.”⁶⁶ Although the *Psalmes* were not published until 1823, eighteen manuscripts of the text are now known to exist, which would have circulated widely.⁶⁷ Daniel, in one of his dedications to the Countess, tells her that her *Psalmes* “Unto thy voice eternitie hath given.”⁶⁸ A number of her psalms were set to music and two of her manuscripts were used for morning and evening prayer, which indicates they were deemed suitable for worship.⁶⁹ The *Psalmes*, however, were not merely approved of as a religious work. In the words of Donne, “they tell us why, and teach us how to sing,”⁷⁰ providing contemporary writers like himself with a model for English (religious) verse. These writers thus acknowledged Sidney’s role as a key influence in the further development of lyrical poetry, and openly embrace her as an example.

In one of the manuscripts, two of Sidney’s original poems are included as well. One of these poems is ‘Even now that Care which on thy Crown attends’, which is addressed “to the thrice-sacred Queen Elizabeth”.⁷¹ This text was probably written for the copy of the *Psalmes* that was meant to be presented to the Queen in 1599, and again this was not without a

⁶⁵ Findlay, Hodgson-Wright, and Williams, *Women and Dramatic Production 1550-1700*, 37.

⁶⁶ Suzanne Trill, ‘Sixteenth-Century Women’s Writing: Mary Sidney’s *Psalmes* and the “femininity” of Translation’, in *Writing and the English Renaissance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

⁶⁷ Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’.

⁶⁸ Samuel Daniel, ‘To the Right Honourable, the Lady Marie, Countesse of Pembroke’, in *Delia and Rosamond Augmented Cleopatra by Samuel Daniel*. (London: James Roberts and Edward Allde, 1594), H6, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.libproxy.ncl.ac.uk/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99840902&FILE=../session/1556626847_17789&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&VID=5446&PAGENO=56&ZOOM=75&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=undefined.

⁶⁹ Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’.

⁷⁰ John Donne, ‘Upon the Translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke.’, Luminarium, accessed 30 April 2019, <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/sidneypsalm.php>.

⁷¹ Mary Sidney Herbert, ‘To the Thrice-Sacred Queen Elizabeth’, Poetrynook, accessed 30 April 2019, <https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/thrice-sacred-queen-elizabeth>.

political agenda. By this time “the Sidneys had earned a reputation for speaking boldly on matters of state, particularly in defence of the Protestant cause,”⁷² and the *Psalmes* were not an exception to this. The sources Sidney consulted for her translation included numerous works with a strong Protestant ideology, some of which were dedicated to monarchs too, in the hopes of persuading them to support their cause.⁷³ In a way, the Countess continues what she had already started by dedicating de Mornay’s *A Discourse* to the Queen and by intending to perform *Antonie* during her visit to Wilton. For example, Psalm 101 discusses the responsibilities of a monarch,⁷⁴ and in ‘Even now that Care which on thy Crown attends’ itself she urges the Queen to support the Protestant cause more strongly.⁷⁵ This impression is only strengthened by the other poem, ‘To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney’, another dedicatory poem, this time addressed to her deceased brother. In this text she does not only dedicate the finished *Psalmes* to Philip, it also laments his death as a Protestant martyr after he died fighting the (Catholic) Spanish in the (Protestant) Netherlands.⁷⁶

Aside from writing herself, the Countess of Pembroke was also patroness of numerous authors, and a number of texts were dedicated to her. Perhaps the most obvious of such texts is her brother Philip’s *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*. In a prefatory letter, he wrote to his sister that “it is don onely for you, onely to you”,⁷⁷ but he was not alone in dedicating work to Mary Sidney. In fact, she was “one of the most frequently addressed female patrons of her age,”⁷⁸ which made her “the first non-royal woman in England to receive a significant number of dedications.”⁷⁹ Until the death of her husband in 1601, after which his title and estate passed on to their eldest son William and her financial means were cut back, she was patron to a wide variety of writers. Especially after Philip’s death, this number grew even

⁷² Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, *Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594-1998*, 147.

⁷³ Randall Martin, ed., *Women Writers in Renaissance England: An Annotated Anthology* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2010), 312.

⁷⁴ Sir Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, *Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke* (New York: Garden City, 1936), 234, <https://archive.org/details/psalmsosirphili00unse/page/234>.

⁷⁵ Sidney Herbert, ‘To the Thrice-Sacred Queen Elizabeth’.

⁷⁶ Poetry Foundation, ‘To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney by Mary Sidney Herbert Countess of Pembroke’, text/html, Poetry Foundation, 19 April 2019,

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/55243/to-the-angel-spirit-of-the-most-excellent-sir-philip-sidney>.

⁷⁷ Sir Philip Sidney, ‘To My Dear Lady and Sister, the Countess of Pembroke.’, in *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia Written by Sir Philip Sidney.*, ed. James Johnstoun, Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 1622:23

(London : Printed by William Du-Gard, and are to be sold by George Calvert ... and Thomas Pierreport ..., M.DC.LV [1655], 1655), A3,

http://eebo.chadwyck.com/libproxy.ncl.ac.uk/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgthumbs.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=17202096&FILE=../session/1546509127_28415&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR.

⁷⁸ Helen Wilcox, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 90.

⁷⁹ Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’.

more since “poets who had sought Philip Sidney's patronage now sought Mary's.”⁸⁰ The list of authors who dedicated at least one of their works to her, or praised her in their work include: Sir Philip Sidney, Mary Wroth (her niece), Robert Sidney (her younger brother), John Davies, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, John Donne, Nicholas Breton, Thomas Nashe, Abraham Fraunce, Thomas Churchyard, and John Aubrey.^{81,82,83,84} Many of those the Countess was patroness to gathered at her stately home in Wiltshire, Wilton House.⁸⁵ This coterie circle of artists and writers is often still referred to as the Wilton circle. Members described it as a “college”⁸⁶ and it was said that Mary “sets to schoole, our Poets ev'ry where”.⁸⁷ In *A Defence of Rhyme*, Daniel writes to William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, that he had been “first encourag'd & fram'd thereunto by your most worthy & honorable mother, & received the first notion for the formall ordering of those compositions at Wilton, which I must ever acknowledge to have beene my best Schoole,”⁸⁸ These examples show that, to these writers, Mary Sidney was not just ‘a patron’. Her influence was vital enough to stimulate them to produce their best work and might even have made their career. Through the assembly of her literary circle, Sidney was a creator of and in the literary field. She brought genres from abroad, such as Senecan drama from France, and through building her own generic repertoire provided blueprints for, for instance, lyrical verse in the *Psalmes* and elegies with ‘To the Angell Spirit’. To the members of her circle, she was not only an enabler of their own art, but also an example of a great literary figure. Nicholas Breton even referred to the Wilton circle as “a kinde of little Court”,⁸⁹ in a way, placing Sidney in opposition to Elizabeth I and her court. It was a court-away-from-court, where the focus lay on literature instead of politics. Given that Mary, and other members of the Sidney family, did not always

⁸⁰ Hannay.

⁸¹ Hannay.

⁸² Paul Salzman, *Reading Early Modern Women's Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 54.

⁸³ Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, *Readings in Renaissance Women's Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594-1998*, 11–14.

⁸⁴ Pender, ‘The Ghost and the Machine in the Sidney Family Corpus’, 75.

⁸⁵ Wilcox, *Women and Literature in Britain 1500-1700*, 272.

⁸⁶ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark, vol. 1 (Project Gutenberg EBook, 2014), 311, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/47787/47787-h/47787-h.htm>.

⁸⁷ Thomas Churchyard 1520?, *A Pleasant Conceite Penned in Verse Collourably Sette out, and Humblie Presented on New-Yeeres Day Last, to the Queenes Maiestie at Hampton Courte. Anno. Domini. 1593.*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 526:18 (At London : Printed by Roger Warde [in the shop of J. Charlewood], dwelling in Holburne at the signe of the Castle, [1593], 1593), B1v.

⁸⁸ Samuel Daniel, ‘A Defence of Rhyme’, in *A Panegyrike Congratulatorie Deliuered to the Kings Most Excellent Maiestie at Burleigh Harrington in Rutlandshire*. (London: R. Read, 1603), http://eebo.chadwyck.com/libproxy.ncl.ac.uk/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99844920&FILE=../session/1556620814_1883&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&VID=9776&PAGENO=39&ZOOM=FIT&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=undefined.

⁸⁹ Breton in Wilcox, *Women and Literature in Britain 1500-1700*, 178.

agree with the Queen, as is seen in the works the Countess addressed to her, it is not so strange to position her as presiding over a certain ‘anti-court’.

Scholars on Mary Sidney

Despite all her contributions to early modern literature, Mary Sidney was relegated to the side lines of literary history over the centuries. While she was still present in seventeenth-century encyclopaedia and such,⁹⁰ and was included in Ballard’s *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (1752),⁹¹ “like most other early modern women writers her reputation was eclipsed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; relegated to the margins in accounts of Philip Sidney, she was accused of bowdlerizing his *Arcadia* and of attacking the popular stage. Her own writing was largely ignored.”⁹² In recent years, however, Mary Sidney seems to have stepped out from her brother’s shadow, and among numerous literary scholars she is “currently recognized as one of the first significant women writers in English. [...] The literary merit of her writings has gained increasing attention, so that she is now accepted as a canonical writer; her works have been collected in a modern edition and individual writings are routinely included in anthologies.”⁹³ Nowadays, the texts she is perhaps best known for and which are most often included in anthologies are her additions to the *Psalmes* and her version of the play *The Tragedy of Antonie*. While both texts are, in their own way, translations, texts which are often not included in the canon because they are not ‘original’ creative writing, scholars have deemed the influence of either text to be too significant to ignore them. Martin states that Sidney’s psalms were “neither literal translations nor quaint works of piety, but innovative re-creations of biblical texts constituting strikingly original poems [...] and gave contemporary writers such as John Donne, George Herbert, and Henry Vaughan suggestive new models for English poetry”,⁹⁴ while Hannay argues for *The Tragedy of Antonie* that “by translating Robert Garnier’s *Marc Antoine* and sponsoring Samuel Daniel’s continuation in *Cleopatra*, the countess helped to naturalize Continental historical tragedy in England.”⁹⁵

The Countess, however, is not only deemed influential through her own writing. For many scholars Philip Sidney’s 1598 *Arcadia*, now often referred to as his *Collected Works*,

⁹⁰ Salzman, *Reading Early Modern Women’s Writing*, 27–28.

⁹¹ Salzman, 30–31.

⁹² Hannay, ‘Herbert [Née Sidney], Mary, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), Writer and Literary Patron’.

⁹³ Hannay.

⁹⁴ Martin, *Women Writers in Renaissance England: An Annotated Anthology*, 311.

⁹⁵ Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, *Readings in Renaissance Women’s Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594-1998*, 142.

“set the precedent for other writers to follow, provided a model for the contemporary poet’s life work, and formed a new idea of the English author that was to influence literary history thereafter,”⁹⁶ and even before that he “raised the status of sonnets in the hierarchy of genres within the literary system of his time”⁹⁷ and made “both poetry pamphlets and collected works more socially acceptable.”⁹⁸ However, this perspective does not acknowledge the fact that by the time this version of the *Arcadia* was published, Philip Sidney had already been dead for over ten years. Even more, at the time of his passing, the new version of *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* was still an unfinished work, ending mid-sentence. The 1598 *New Arcadia*, on the other hand, contained both the last two books of the *Old Arcadia*, and also the additions of *The Lady of May* and *Certain sonnets* (including *Astrophil and Stella*). As with the *Psalmes*, it was Mary who completed his work for him and actually commissioned the 1598 (and 1593) edition. In ‘The Ghost and the Machine in the Sidney Family Corpus’ Pender thus argues that “the early modern shift from coterie circulation to printed publication and from the author figure to the author function as a transformation [are] fundamentally indebted to Mary Sidney’s management of her brother’s corpus”⁹⁹ and that “Mary’s management of Philip’s corpus helped to define literary and textual authority for her own and for immediately succeeding generations of poets.”¹⁰⁰ Philip may have provided the material, but it was Mary who decided how and in what way these materials were put together and brought out into the world. As Pender points out, “it would be absurd to claim for Mary what we have previously claimed for Philip,”¹⁰¹ but it has to be admitted that his (posthumous) accomplishments are for a large part indebted to the way his sister assumed the role as literary executor of his corpus.

Furthermore, Pender states that the Countess stimulated the transition that she had furthered in her brother’s work, from “coterie circulation to printed publication and from the author figure to the author function,”¹⁰² in Drayton and Daniel, to whom she was patroness, as well. Sidney helped to further their careers by “granting them access to the literary coterie at Wilton, suggesting subjects for their work, encouraging the publication of their poems, and accepting dedications to their books.”¹⁰³ Under her guidance these two poets changed from

⁹⁶ Pender, ‘The Ghost and the Machine in the Sidney Family Corpus’, 66.

⁹⁷ Pender, 66.

⁹⁸ Marotti, 1981, p. 230 in Pender, 66.

⁹⁹ Pender, 75.

¹⁰⁰ Pender, 73.

¹⁰¹ Pender, 70.

¹⁰² Pender, 75.

¹⁰³ Pender, 75.

“prodigal subjects to laureate aspirations.”¹⁰⁴ Simultaneously, her patronage did not always benefit herself too. Although she was generously praised in work dedicated to her, Waller argues that in these dedications Sidney was often also “‘positioned and controlled’, allowed a place within discourse only ‘as an object of representation or on condition of her subservience’.”¹⁰⁵ Pearson agrees that, especially in works that Nicholas Breton dedicated to her, such as ‘The Countesse of Penbrookes Love’ and ‘The Countess of Pembrokes Passion’, Sidney appears to be praised “as woman, patron and poet, but his poems also work to humiliate and silence her by putting his words in her mouth, words that create an image of her as self-abasingly humble, suffering, doubtful about her poetry, and unable to speak.”¹⁰⁶ This image of Sidney as a beacon of female modesty is only strengthened further by her own use of the humility trope, for example in ‘To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney’, in which she essentially declares the *Psalmes* to be the sole work of her brother, seemingly assigning to him the full authority of the text.¹⁰⁷ While this is a much used rhetoric strategy of the time, especially by women writers, it is often taken literally in the case of Mary Sidney.¹⁰⁸ It is possibly due to this misinterpretation by scholars, and dedications such as Breton’s that she has so long been undervalued.

Expectations

Based on Mary Sidney’s accomplishments during her own lifetime, and her (re)gained attention and importance in literary scholarship, one would expect to find her in a variety of roles in teaching on early modern literature as well. Firstly, she could be incorporated in a drama course for her *Antonie*, both in discussions on the genres of closet and Senecan drama. Her *Psalmes* could be examined in a class on religious texts or verses. Furthermore, both of these texts plus her other translations would fit into a broader review of the tradition of women translators. There is also the opportunity of discussing her in relation to her brother Philip, her niece Mary Wroth, or the Sidney family in its entirety, and the influence she has had on their work. Lastly, she is also a perfect case study for explaining other collaborative roles, which are often brushed over in literary courses, such as patroness and dedicatee. All in

¹⁰⁴ Pender, 76.

¹⁰⁵ Waller, 1990 in Wilcox, *Women and Literature in Britain 1500-1700*, 90.

¹⁰⁶ Wilcox, 90.

¹⁰⁷ Foundation, ‘To the Angel Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney by Mary Sidney Herbert Countess of Pembroke’.

¹⁰⁸ Patricia Pender, ‘Mea Mediocritas: Mary Sidney, Modesty, and the History of the Book’, in *Early Modern Women’s Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, by Patricia Pender (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), 92–121, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137008015_5.

all, as, perhaps, one of the biggest early modern ‘influencers’ and with the wide variety of roles she adopted during her lifetime, Mary Sidney ought to be easily fitted into the majority of early modern literature courses.

The next chapter discusses the results of a survey carried out under lecturers of early modern literature courses at British, Irish, and Dutch universities, which focused on Mary Sidney and other women writers in these respective courses. This survey will show whether the expectations about Mary Sidney in literary courses are actually materialised.

Chapter 3 – Women writers in course syllabi

Mary Sidney

To look at the representation of Mary Sidney and other women writers in early modern literature courses at European universities, I sent out a questionnaire to a number of lecturers at universities in Britain, Ireland, and the Netherlands about the incorporation of Mary Sidney and other women in their modules (Appendix A). This questionnaire consisted of six questions in total, of which four dealt with Mary Sidney and the remaining two with other early modern women. The answers obtained deal with eleven different courses at nine universities in total, and the filled-out forms are attached in Appendix B.1-B.11.

I examined five different early modern literature courses taught at three British universities, namely: ‘Renaissance and Reformation’ and ‘Jonson to Johnson’, two BA2 courses at Bangor University; ‘Shakespeare’s Showbusiness’ and ‘Women on Trial: Gender, Power and Performance in Early Modern England’, two BA3 courses at Newcastle University; and ‘The Renaissance’, a BA2 course at the University of York (Appendix B.1-B.5). Of all these courses the Countess of Pembroke has been included in four, only the module ‘Renaissance and Reformation’ taught at Bangor University does not discuss her. The reason for not discussing her is a rather practical one, namely “[Mary Sidney] sits on the borderline between this module and the 17th c[entury] module” (Appendix B.1). The 17th century course is ‘Jonson to Johnson’, and the decision has been made to include her in this one. For the other four courses the lecturers stated the reasons to include Sidney were:

“[She is a] pioneer lyricist in her psalm translation” (Appendix B.2).

“The course is trying in general to move away from the idea of the solitary authorial genius by exposing students to the numerous other cultural producers (actors, source texts, printers, editors, etc) who help to create literary texts. Mary Sidney is a good example of someone who was instrumental in shaping her dead brother’s reputation as a literary celebrity, where beforehand he had been known mainly as a courtier and militant Protestant” (Appendix B.3).

“She is significant as a writer of ‘closet drama’, which is one of the genres explored by the course” (Appendix B.4).

“She’s part of a couple of weeks on women’s early modern poetry” (Appendix B.5).

These reasons show that each module focuses on a different part of Mary Sidney's literary career: Mary as a poet, as a dramatist, or as a literary agent/executor and patroness. Taken together these courses show that the Countess is indeed a very versatile figure, and can therefore be effectively incorporated in a variety of literature courses. Which of Mary's texts are discussed, as a consequence, also vary. Her *Psalmes* are discussed on both the Bangor and the York course, while 'Women on Trial' at Newcastle examines *The Tragedy of Antonie*. The other Newcastle module, 'Shakespeare's Showbusiness', on the other hand, only briefly looks at Sidney's 'To the Angell Spirit of the Most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney', and her translations of de Mornay and Garnier, and 'In praise of *Astrea*' are mentioned. Instead the main focus is on a secondary text, Pender's 'The Ghost and the Machine in the Sidney Family Corpus'. The different courses also allot different amounts of time to spend on Mary Sidney, ranging from half a lecture (Bangor), and discussing her only briefly (York), to mentioning her "in a number of survey lectures, and [discussing her] at some length in the lecture on Daniel's *Tragedy of Cleopatra*" (Appendix B.4), and one lecture and one seminar (Newcastle).

Regardless of the time assigned to Mary Sidney in these lectures, she is always discussed in relation to other authors. As mentioned before, one of the Newcastle courses examine her in a lecture on the *Tragedy of Cleopatra* by Samuel Daniel. In this class, Mary Sidney is discussed as being both the patron and originator of the play, as well as the author of *The Tragedy of Antonie*, to which *Cleopatra* is the sequel. Both the other Newcastle module and the one taught at York look at the Countess in relation to her brother Philip Sidney and his work, with the former looking at Mary's influence on Philip's work as a whole, while the latter focuses mostly on the Psalms and sonnet tradition. The York course also places Mary Sidney among the body of other emergent women writers, thus both placing her in a broader literary tradition with her *Psalmes*, as well as somewhat separating her from it together with other women. The Bangor module, too, focuses on the *Psalmes*, and Sidney "features extensively as, in my view, the key forerunner of Herbert, Vaughan and others" and is "placed in dialogue with these other poets, especially Herbert, [...] as the senior figure in the flourishing of early modern devotional poetry in English."¹⁰⁹ This shows that all of these course do not treat Mary Sidney as an isolated, lone figure, but in fact recognise her broader influence on other, often more famous, authors of her period. On a side note, while the Countess is included in the York module, Prof K. Killeen admits he personally finds the other

¹⁰⁹ Helen Wilcox, 'Re: Bachelor Thesis', 14 May 2019.

women who are included more interesting to teach. This, however, does not have to do with her work in itself, but rather with the fact that the Sidneys embody “a long tradition in Renaissance literature of supposing that the queen or king and their court is and indeed should be the centre of attention,”¹¹⁰ while Killeen believes we should ‘de-aristocrat’ the curriculum as far as possible.

The three early modern literature modules taught at Irish universities which I analysed are: ‘Stage and Page: The Early Modern Imagination’, a BA3 course at the National University of Ireland in Galway; ‘Renaissance Literature, c. 1500-1700’, an MA seminar at University College Cork; and ‘Writing in the Age of Shakespeare’, a BA2 course at University College Dublin (Appendix B.6-B.8). Of all three modules, only one, ‘Writing in the Age of Shakespeare’, discusses Mary Sidney. The reasons given by the other two lecturers for excluding her are, again, partly of a practical nature. The module ‘Stage and Page: The Early Modern Imagination’ examines early modern adaptations of Ovid’s mythological tales, and since Sidney never wrote such an adaptation she would not be an expected addition to the syllabus. For the module ‘Renaissance Literature, c. 1500-1700’ the explanation of Sidney’s absence in the course syllabus is a little more complex. As a postgraduate module its aim is to build on the knowledge of Renaissance literature which students have already gathered in undergraduate courses, but also “to expand and diversify to introduce new texts,” canonical as well as lesser known, “genres, authors, contexts, and topics” (Appendix B.7). Nevertheless, women’s writing is only taught in 1-2 classes, so the course space for women writers is limited. Which texts are discussed with regard to this topic depends on the factors of availability and accessibility of the texts, staff familiarity, and student interest, leading to other female authors being favoured over Mary Sidney. Staff expertise is for University College Dublin, on the other hand, a reason to include the Countess of Pembroke in their module, since one of their teaching staff, Prof Danielle Clarke, is an expert on her. Aside from staff expertise, Sidney is also included for the simple reason that she is deemed an important writer of the period. On this module she is incorporated for “her skill in translation, her influences, and her contribution as a woman writer” (Appendix B.8), and she is one of three authors discussed in one particular lecture. Unfortunately I did not receive a timely response to the question with whom Mary Sidney is placed in dialogue and in what way, to provide a complete view of Sidney’s role in this course.

¹¹⁰ Kevin Killeen, ‘Re: Bachelor Thesis’, 13 May 2019.

My survey also included three different early modern literature courses offered at Dutch universities, which are: ‘Literature 2: English Literature, ca. 1550-1675’, a BA1 course at Leiden University; ‘Fools & Furies: The Early Modern Stage’, a BA3 course taught at the Radboud University Nijmegen; and ‘Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature’, a BA2 course taught at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (Appendix B.9-B.11). Among all of these modules, Mary Sidney is only included in ‘Fools & Furies: The Early Modern Stage’ and even then “only as a point of reference in the historical overview on closet drama” (Appendix B.10). The reason neither the Leiden nor the Groningen course included Mary Sidney, although with somewhat practical motivations, is that she could not be easily fitted into the (existing) course syllabus. Due to practical reasons Leiden could only include authors available in the *NAEL*, and although some of Sidney’s psalms are included in this, it was decided these did not fit into the three weeks spent on lyric poetry. In these three weeks the course discusses the sonnet form, John Donne, and George Herbert, subsequently (Appendix C.1), and while Mary Sidney may not be an obvious addition in any of these classes, it certainly would not have been impossible. After all, both Donne and Herbert enjoyed the patronage of Sidney and had their works influenced by her, and even more, it was Donne himself who said the Sidneys set an example for all other (religious) verse with their lyrical translation of the Psalms.¹¹¹ This does suggest a certain short-sightedness in the formation of the Leiden syllabus. Groningen also uses the *NAEL* as its main source for reading material, and therefore could only have used the Psalms included in this, and they would actually have fit quite well into the seminar on religious writing and perhaps even the ‘Reformations and Religion’ lecture (Appendix C.2). However, Dr J. Flood announces that they do not deal with any form of translation in a short course like this. This shows a degree of bias towards ‘original’ writing, which may distort the students’ view of Renaissance literature in which translating, especially for women writers, also formed an important part of literary production. In the Nijmegen course Sidney is discussed for both her role as a patron and her exploration of the closet drama genre through her translation of *The Tragedy of Antonie*. Nevertheless, neither *The Tragedy of Antonie*, nor any of her other texts, are actually part of the reading material for the module. As with the Groningen course, this could imply that despite the acknowledgement of Sidney’s importance attention still goes out especially/only to original works, for example Cary’s *The Tragedy of Myriam* which is the closet drama that *is* part of the reading material. However, in a follow-up interview Dr M. Corporaal indicated that the

¹¹¹ Donne, ‘Upon the Translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke.’

main reason Cary's drama was incorporated in the syllabus is because it can be placed in dialogue with Shakespeare's *Othello*, another text discussed on the course. Had Shakespeare's *Antony & Cleopatra* or Daniel's *Cleopatra* been included instead of *Othello*, Sidney's *Antonie* would have replaced Cary too.

Other women

The survey also included questions on the incorporation of other women, aside from Mary Sidney, in the same early modern literature courses. Of the modules taught at British universities, in fact, all also discuss other women in their classes. In total these courses examine twenty-three different women, of whom twenty were writers, poets, and/or playwrights, namely: Elizabeth I, Anne Lok, Aemilia Lanyer, Margaret Cavendish, Hannah Allen, Aphra Behn, Mary Wroth, Christine de Pizan (Italian-French), Katherine Philips, Margaret Tyler, Isabella Whitney, Jane Lumley, Elizabeth Cary, Lady Jane Grey, Mary I, Anne of Denmark (Queen consort to James I), Anne Southwell, Anne Bradstreet, Hester Pulter, and Lucy Hutchinson. The other three women were Anne Trapnel, alleged prophetess; Moll Cutpurse (Mary Frith), thief and well-known/notorious figure of the age; and Alice Mustian, a little-known performer. Of all these women only Aemilia Lanyer is taught at all universities, in four different courses. Furthermore, Elizabeth I appears on three modules, while Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, and Katherine Philips, are all present in two. All other women only make an appearance once.

On the Irish courses other women are discussed at Cork and Galway, although "Aphra Behn has been on the syllabus before, as has Isabella Whitney" at Dublin (Appendix B.8). The Cork course examines both Elizabeth Cary and Aphra Behn, while the module taught at Galway currently looks at Isabella Whitney (this used to be Mary Wroth, and there will be Wroth again together with Hester Pulter next year). All of the women are included in the modules as writers, poets, and/or playwrights.

The Dutch modules, too, all included other women. Taken together nine different women writers, poets and/or playwrights have been incorporated in their syllabi: Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, Mary Wroth, Katherine Philips, Elizabeth Cary, Lucy Hutchinson, Delarivier Manley, Susanna Centlivre, and Anne Askew. Of these women Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, and Mary Wroth make an appearance twice, while the other women are all included only once. This selection of women is somewhat expected based on the

NAEL: all women except for Cary, Manley, and Centlivre (who are only discussed at Nijmegen, which is not solely bound to the *NAEL*'s content) are included in this anthology.¹¹²

Conclusions

All examined university courses together discuss twenty-six other early modern women in total. Of all these women, nine are included in more than one syllabus, with Behn being the most popular with five appearances. Seven of these authors, Cavendish, Behn, Wroth, Philips, Whitney, Cary, and Hutchinson, are discussed in more than one country, with only Behn and Cary being taught in all three countries. Lanyer, contrarily, is taught at every British university, but at none of the Irish or Dutch ones. Furthermore, sixteen women are exclusively incorporated in British syllabi, three only appear in Dutch syllabi, and the Irish courses incorporate no women who are not taught in one or both of the other countries. This also reflects the order of degrees of female diversity of the countries' courses, with British modules being the most diverse with a total of twenty-three women, followed by Dutch universities with a number of nine, and Irish syllabi with only three as the least diverse.

The results of this survey show that while there is attention for the representation of women on early modern literature courses, the extent of this representation differs widely between countries, universities, and sometimes even between different modules at the same institution. In their replies to the survey, some lecturers admit to very consciously deciding to incorporate (more) women in their courses, for example Dr L. Reid who "always [includes], as a bare minimum, at least one woman writer in any early modern module that [she designs]" (Appendix B.6), Dr J. Grogan and her colleagues who "are keen to incorporate women's writing in [their] presentation of the English Renaissance" (Appendix B.8), and Dr E. Whipday who "was keen to include other female voices – and, of course, significant female historical figures" (Appendix B.4) on her course about the representation of women on the early modern stage, even though the majority of the texts on this specific topic are written by men. Dr L. Fikkers even expressed astonishments at the previous poor representation of women on the module she currently teaches, "(there were [no women writers] on the syllabus prior to 2016!)" (Appendix B.9), and Reid continues that, while filling out the survey, she became very conscious that "the representation of women's voices on the EN3123 syllabus remains quite poor at present!" (Appendix B.6). Despite the fact that Reid is alone in admitting this, her course is certainly not the only one which could (further) improve, and not

¹¹² Greenblatt, 'Table of Contents', 2012.

merely for the number of women on the syllabus, but also the way in which female representation is handled. While Grogan is eager to include women writers in her course, she also adds that these texts are changed each year, a pattern that is visible in some of the other modules as well. Simultaneously, respondents also speak of ‘adding’ women writers, which makes sense in the context of already existing courses which did not include any before, but which still suggests that they are an ‘extra’, something to be added to a certain fixed list of (canon) male authors. This impression is strengthened only further when these women writers are given their own separate classes, implying that women’s writing is its own category or genre of literature and that they are indeed disconnected from the ‘regular’ canon.

The degree of representation on early modern literature courses varies even more in the specific case of Mary Sidney. Overall, she has been included in six of the eleven examined courses, and is taught at five of the nine universities I have looked at. Of these universities, three were British, one was Irish, and one was Dutch. This means that, of the three countries included in this survey, only in Britain Sidney is taught at all universities which were reviewed. Although of both the Dutch and Irish universities one of each teaches Mary Sidney, Ireland does relatively better on representing her, if only barely, given that Sidney is one of three specific authors discussed in a lecture, whereas in the Netherlands she is only used as a reference point. These varying degrees of representation may be due to differences in attitude towards the Countess. On the one hand, the lecturers who have chosen to include her in their course frame her as a pioneer, an important writer, and a significant influence on genres and other writers. On the other hand, those who have chosen not to include her, aside from practical reasons, give the explanation that she did not fit into the syllabus. Not only does this suggest, again, that women writers are adopted into an unchanging male canon, it also reveals a certain difference in focus. From a traditional authorship view her exclusion might seem quite reasonable, after all Sidney produced ‘only’ three pieces of ‘original’ writing. However, this does ignore every single thing she has accomplished with her ‘non-original’ writings and in every other literary role she has fulfilled through her life. By putting such strong emphasis on authors of original writing only, all others who contributed to literary movements and changes are left out, whether they were translators, editors, patrons, dedicatees, or, as Sidney, all of those at once. While the previous chapter discussed various reasons why the Countess of Pembroke might be just as, or sometimes perhaps even more important than other authors of original work, this survey has shown that this is not always reflected in early modern literature course syllabi.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to identify how scholarship on early modern female literary figures, and Mary Sidney in particular, is materialised in English Renaissance literature courses at West European universities. After conducting a survey among a selection of British, Irish, and Dutch lecturers, it can be concluded that while there has been a growing attention for female writers on literature modules, the degree of representation of women on early modern literature courses still varies greatly between countries, institutions, and individual syllabi. Furthermore, while scholarship frames Mary Sidney as an integral literary figure in her own time in a variety of roles, this image is not always upheld in university teaching. While the included British universities do show the Countess from different perspectives, the majority of the Irish and Dutch universities do not discuss her at all. Although in some cases her omission can be (partly) attributed to practical reasons, other courses display a partiality to authors of ‘original’ writing only. This preference is, in fact, not only limited to courses that do not include Sidney, but is even visible in some that *do* discuss her. Even more, while a number of courses acknowledge her influence on other authors, Sidney is primarily presented as a writer and is included for one or more of the texts she has produced. Only one module actively tries to move away from the idea that only the act of writing equals a form of authorship, and that the main reason for including certain people on a course is because they wrote, rather than because of their general literary involvement.

These findings partly bear out the hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this thesis, namely that the majority of the examined universities would discuss Mary Sidney only in the context of a women’s writing course or a specific class focusing on women’s writing, and merely in the context of her relationship with her brother Philip Sidney and his texts, due to a focus on original work. While Mary Sidney is often placed in relation to early modern authors, these include others aside from Philip and/or women writers, and sometimes do not even relate her to the latter two at all. However, lecturers that did not include the Countess in their syllabi often relate her to other women writers, by saying that their inclusion was preferred over Sidney’s. Furthermore, a number of courses, both those which did and did not include Sidney, display a bias towards original writing.

As was indicated by a number of respondents, formulating a course syllabus is not an easy task to begin with. Modules only have a limited amount of time allocated to them for teaching, and determining which works are so vital they should be included rather than others is a difficult, if not almost impossible task. The results of this research show that the inclusion

of women writers in these course syllabi is still not something which can be taken for granted and at times still presents a challenge for lecturers, least of all because of a lack of time. It is also not only due to the dilemma whether to give women writers their own space, either in specific classes or an entire course dedicated to them, or to incorporate them alongside the male writers already present in the syllabus, but is determined by other factors at a more fundamental level as well. The formation of a syllabus is governed by more than just the question of which authors and texts are to be included, it is also determined by the way in which the material will be presented. For example, many courses work with periodisation, presenting literary developments in more or less chronological order, and often certain weeks are dedicated to specific (male-dominated) genres or even specific authors. Add to this the fact that numerous modules, as attested by my survey, also focus mainly, if not only, on writers and their original work, and one finds an environment in which it can be rather difficult for women to be adopted. The process and guidelines for formulating a course syllabus were once determined around a (mostly) male canon, and achieving real diversity in both canon and syllabi is thus not merely a question of adding, in this case, female figures, but to change fundamental aspects in the processes of forming them. A possible solution is to present the syllabus material in a different way. Instead of focusing on genres, for example, lectures and seminars could be built around themes. By looking at content instead of form there is more room to spend on less discussed genres, in which women were often more active, instead of the bigger male-dominated ones. Alternatively, modules could also choose to work with literary networks, such as the Wilton circle. Not only would this give more attention to the women in the less visible roles of editors, translators, patronesses, dedicatees, etc., it would more clearly show the influences of individual creators on each other and also dispel the notion of the author as a solitary genius, instead showing the early modern literary culture for the collaborative process it was.

While this thesis might be a step on the way to providing understanding of teaching practices surrounding the representation of women, further research needs to be done to effectively map out what still needs to be accomplished to improve this representation further. Perhaps the most self-evident way to build on this research is to conduct a wider survey of university courses. The selected universities, especially the British universities, present only a relatively small sample out of the total number of institutions in these countries. Furthermore, other West European countries could of course also be included to present a broader scope of courses. Additionally, while this thesis looked at Mary Sidney, a case study could also be made of other early modern female authors and literary figures, such as Aphra Behn,

Elizabeth I, or Isabella Whitney, and from other historical periods as well, to provide a broader and more general overview of female representation in literary courses. Lastly, while this research speaks of diversity, it looks at women only, yet a similar research could be conducted for other minority groups too.

With this thesis research I have attempted to provide further insight into how scholarship on Mary Sidney and other early modern women is applied at universities in West Europe in courses on Renaissance literature. Although women's writing has enjoyed a still growing popularity as a research subject over the past decades, this growth of available knowledge is not always reflected in university courses. While improvements have been and are still being made, the current varying degrees of female representation show that we cannot yet "sit back comfortably and conclude that nothing further need be done."¹¹³

¹¹³ Fendler, *Feminist Contributions to the Literary Canon: Setting Standards of Taste*, 131.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name:

University:

Module:

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?
2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?
3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.
4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.
5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?
6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

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Date:

Signature:

Appendix B.1

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: HELEN WILCOX
University: BANGOR (WALES)
Module: RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION
(LITERATURE)

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

NO

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

SHE SITS ON THE BORDERLINE BETWEEN
THIS MODULE AND THE 17TH C MODULE.

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

N/A

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

N/A

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

① ELIZABETH I; ② ANNE LOK

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

① EXAMPLE OF PERSONAL AND POLITICAL POETRY
(AND RHETORIC)
② FIRST SONNET SEQUENCE IN ENGLISH.

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Date: 5/4/19

Signature: Helen Wilcox.

Appendix B.2

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: HELEN WILCOX
 University: BANGOR (WALES)
 Module: SONSON TO JOHNSON

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

YES

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

PIONEER LYRICIST IN HER PSALM TRANSLATION

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

PSALMS - HALF A LECTURE (ON RELIGIOUS LYRICS)

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

(SEE ABOVE)

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

① AEMILIA LANYER ② 'ELIZA' ③ ANNA TRAPNEL

④ MARGARET CAVENDISH ⑤ HANNAH ALLEN

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

⑥ APHRA BEHN

AS POETS (1, 2, 4, 6), PROPHETS (3), AUTHORS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS (3, 4, 5), DRAMATISTS (4, 6)

I hereby declare that I give permission for the use of my personal name and the name of my affiliated institution in M. van Lankveld's Bachelor thesis, for research purposes and in this Bachelor thesis only. AND PROSE FICTION/ HISTORY WRITERS (4, 6).

Date: 5/4/19

Signature:

Helen Wilcox.

Appendix B.3

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: Dr Kate De Rycker

University: Newcastle University

Module: SEL3393 “Shakespeare’s Showbusiness”

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

Yes, in one week (out of 12) in the module, where we look at the mythology surrounding her brother, Sir Philip Sidney.

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

The course is trying in general to move away from the idea of the solitary authorial genius by exposing students to the numerous other cultural producers (actors, source texts, printers, editors, etc) who help to create literary texts. Mary Sidney is a good example of someone who was instrumental in shaping her dead brother’s reputation as a literary celebrity, where beforehand he had been known mainly as a courtier and militant Protestant.

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

The problem with this course is that we move through a lot of material very quickly, so we don’t actually look at anything written by Mary in seminar, but instead look at a secondary text which explains her role as the editor of Philip Sidney’s works, and proposes that her labour in shaping his reputation and work be considered a form of authorship. Because I’m more interested in her role as a (from our historical perspective) ‘silent’ partner, really the only text ‘by’ her that I discuss is briefly her dedication ‘to the angel Spirit of the most Excellent Sir Philip Sidney’ which she writes for the translation of the Psalms which Philip started and which she continued/completed after his death. In one slide mapping out her work on Philip’s corpus alongside her own work, I briefly point out that she does publish two translations (A Discourse of Life and Death, Mornay, and Antonius, Garnier) and wrote a dramatic dialogue for Elizabeth I’s visit ‘in praise of Astraea’, and might have written ‘the doleful lay of Clorinda’ for Spenser’s ‘Colin Clouts Come Home Againe’, but we don’t then actually read these. Instead, I mention them to show that she’s involved in household entertainment, published and manuscript translation, and is once again a silent contributor to a text largely the work of a male writer (the Spenser).

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

Not much: one lecture and one seminar, but (see above) not for her own literary merit, but rather as a silent collaborative partner to a famous male writer.

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

*Only briefly, but yes. Same week as Mary Sidney, I introduce her niece Mary Wroth (née Sidney, just to confuse matters!) and her response poem to Edward Denny, and contextualise it in a whistle-stop tour of why women writers and readers were denigrated by men in medieval/early modern times, and what tactics of resistance some of them used. That involves momentarily drawing on: Christine de Pizan, Katherine Philips, Margaret Tyler, Isabella Whitney. That then leads into the point that Mary Sidney (Pembroke) is arguably using tactics such as translation to allow her to publish creative work. During the week on paratexts and printing, the lecture also looks at the preface to Amelia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex*, and her dedications to aristocratic women.*

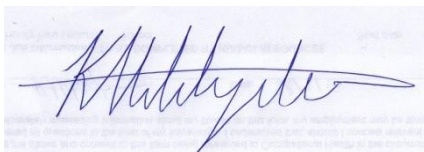
6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

So I've explained above why they're incorporated: as context for (both) Mary Sidney(s). However, last year I did have students look at Isabella Whitney (a working class woman writer- NB) in seminar through her poem 'Will and Testament'. The reason I cut it this year, and the reason why more women don't appear in this module otherwise, is because I'd changed the module to include more dramatic texts and contexts. The module's focus on instances of collaboration means that although women are regularly referred to (boy actors performing female roles, the metaphorical comparison of textual piracy as rape and authorship as a form of birth, anti-theatrical resistance to performance as sexually ambiguous/women viewers as susceptible) it is often conceptually, rather than on the level of representation.

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Date: 27.3.19

Signature: Kate De Rycker



Appendix B.4

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: Dr Emma Whipday

University: Newcastle University

Module: Women on Trial: Gender, Power and Performance in Early Modern England

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

Yes.

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

She is significant as a writer of 'closet drama', which is one of the genres explored by the course.

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

The Tragedy of Antonie is discussed as a closet drama; she is discussed as a female playwright and patron.

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

She is mentioned in a number of survey lectures, and discussed at some length in the lecture on Daniel's *Tragedy of Cleopatra*, as both the patron/originator, and as the author of the play to which *Cleopatra* is a sequel.

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

Lady Jane Lumley is a key course author; I also mention Lady Elizabeth Carey, Moll Cutpurse, Lady Jane Grey, Elizabeth I, Mary I, Anne of Denmark, Aemilia Lanyer, and little-known female performer Alice Mustian.

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

My course is about the representation of women on the early modern (professional) stage – the majority of course texts are therefore authored by men, but I was keen to include other female voices – and, of course, significant female historical figures.

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Date: 23/4/19

Signature: Emma Whipday

Appendix B.5

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: Kevin Killeen

University: University of York

Module: The Renaissance (second year survey course)

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

Yes

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

She's part of a couple of week's on women's early modern poetry

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

Sonnets, in part in relation to Philip Sidney and the sonnet tradition, and in part as one of the emergent body of women writers. Psalm translation.

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

Only briefly

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

Yes, e.g. Amelia Lanyer, Anne Southwell, Anne Bradstreet, Hester Pulter, Lucy Hutchinson, Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, Katherine Phillips.

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

Because they are vibrant political-religious voices, who represent the tumult, literary and political of the age. Personally, I find these others more interesting to teach than Mary Sidney.

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Date: 26 March

Signature: Kevin Killeen

Appendix B.6

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: Dr Lindsay Reid (Lecturer in English)

University: National University of Ireland, Galway

Module: EN3123 'Stage and Page: The Early Modern Imagination'

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

No.

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

This module first ran in the 2016-17 academic year. It ran for a second time in 2018-19 and will likely continue to run on a more-or-less yearly basis into the future. Despite the rather general title of this module (to allow for future flexibility in terms of changing content/focus), it has had a rather specific thematic thrust thus far: it examines how early modern poets and playwrights adapted mythological tales from Ovid's ancient Roman works for English audiences. Given the tight focus on Ovidianism and classical mythology that this module has had to date, Mary Sidney wouldn't be an obvious addition to the syllabus.

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

n/a

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

n/a

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

In 2016-17, the module included two poems by Mary Wroth ('In this strange labyrinth how shall I turn?' from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* and 'Deare, though unconstant, these I send to you' from *Urania*). In the 2018-19 version of the module, I removed Wroth from the syllabus, but added two new poems by Isabella Whitney ('Is.W. To Her Unconstant Lover' and 'The Admonition by the Author' from *The Copy of a Letter*).

For the record, I'm now intending to drop Whitney from the 2019-20 syllabus next year but will be adding a new Wroth piece (Song 1, or 'The spring now come

at last' from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*). For 2019-20, I'm also adding a new poem by Hester Pulter ('Upon the Death of my Dear and Lovely Daughter, Jane Pulter').

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

Both Whitney's and Wroth's poems work very well with the central theme of EN3123; these authors are obvious choices for the syllabus, as both engage quite directly with Ovid's mythological poetry.

On a more personal note, I always love to incorporate Whitney into my syllabi, as she's a longstanding favourite of mine and an author that I've done a fair bit of research on (she gets significant treatment in my 2014 monograph *Ovidian Bibliofictions and the Tudor Book*, and I currently have no fewer than three forthcoming articles/chapters that focus on various aspects of Whitney's poetry). In my experience, students respond well to Whitney's work, too, and find it particularly engaging (more so than Wroth's poetry!). The reason why I'm reluctantly intending to remove Whitney from next year's syllabus for EN3123 is that I want to narrow the scope of the module a bit further so it focuses exclusively on the reception of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* rather than on the reception of both the *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides* (which is the Ovidian text that Whitney engages with more directly).

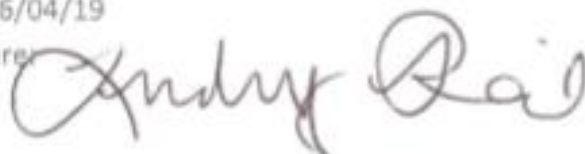
The poems of Wroth that I have included on the EN3123 syllabus in the past were *Heroides*-oriented so will no longer suit, but I anticipate that 'The spring now come at last' (the new Wroth piece I'm adding next year) will fit very well with the module's emphasis on the reception of the *Metamorphoses*. Regarding my intended future inclusion of Pulter on the 2019-20 syllabus, I've never taught any of her work before, but I think the allusions to the *Metamorphoses* in 'Upon the Death of my Dear and Lovely Daughter, Jane Pulter' will complement other course materials.

As a sidenote: I always include, as a bare minimum, at least one woman writer in any early modern module that I design. That said, I've become very conscious while filling out this survey that the representation of women's voices on the EN3123 syllabus remains quite poor at present!

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Date: 16/04/19

Signature:



Appendix B.7

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: Dr Edel Semple, Lecturer in Shakespeare Studies

University: University College Cork, Ireland

Module: EN6054: Renaissance Literature, c. 1500-1700 (10 credit, MA seminar.)

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

No.

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

This MA module is a semester-long, with one class per week. The module is a key strand in the MA programme, alongside modules on Old English, Middle English, and Book History. The module offers a postgraduate level survey of Renaissance literature that builds on the typical undergraduate knowledge of Renaissance texts, but generally tries to expand and diversify to introduce new texts, genres, authors, contexts, and topics. Essentially, the module tries to include a little of everything from the early modern period, both canonical and lesser known. With this in mind, writing by early modern women is taught in 1-2 classes only. Due to the wide availability (free online and in reasonably priced print editions), relative accessibility of, and interest in Cary and *The Tragedy of Mariam*, this is the one female-authored text taught every year. The play also compliments other dramas and topics on the module. Aphra Behn is the other option for this class (either *Oroonoko* or some poetry e.g. *The Disappointment*). The choices of female authors are also determined by staff familiarity (taught Cary for several years, but women authors are not part of my research expertise) and student interest (*Mariam* is always popular.)

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

N/A.

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

N/A.

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

See answer to question 1.

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

See answer to question 1.

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Date: 19/April/2019

Signature: *Edel Semple*

Appendix B.8

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: Dr Jane Grogan

University: University College Dublin

Module: ENG20450 Writing in the Age of Shakespeare

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?
The syllabus varies each year, but we usually incorporate some of her Psalm translations into a lecture on translation, and another on sonnets.
2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?
She is an important writer of the period, and one of my colleagues (Prof. Danielle Clarke) is an expert on her.
3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.
Her skill in translation, her influences, and her contribution as a woman writer are our main interests in her.
4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.
One of three authors in a particular lecture.
5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?
Aphra Behn has been on the syllabus before, as has Isabella Whitney.
6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

We are keen to incorporate women's writing in our presentation of the English Renaissance, though we vary the texts each year.

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Date: 16/4/2019

Signature: Jane Grogan

Appendix B.9

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: Dr Lotte Fikkers

University: Leiden University

Module: Literature 2: English Literature, ca. 1550-1675

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?
No, she is not.
2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?
When we discussed the contents of the course syllabus 3 years ago, we decided to add women writers (there were none on the syllabus prior to 2016!). We opted for three women (Mary Wroth, Katherine Philips and Lucy Hutchinson) whose works could be easily incorporated in the existing programme, without having to make too many changes. Crucially, we could only include women whose work was available in the *Norton Anthology* (the course information had already been published online, so we couldn't add texts that would require students to buy new editions/works/books). Two of Herbert's psalms are in the *Norton*, but these texts could not be easily fitted into the existing build-up of the course.
3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.
She's not; see under 2).
4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.
See under 2): she's not discussed at all (although individual lecturers may refer to her or her work in passing).
5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?
Yes: Mary Wroth, Margaret Cavendish, Katherine Philips and Lucy Hutchinson.
6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?
See under 2): When I started teaching on this course, there were no women on the syllabus. Initially, we added three women to the course. Last year, we dedicated a whole week to Margaret Cavendish's *Convent of Pleasure*. This worked rather well and students seemed to enjoy the text, specifically, and thinking about formation of the canon, more generally. We therefore decided to leave her on the syllabus. Part of the lecture of that particularly week is dedicated to the question of whether or not we should incorporate more women into the canon and/or course syllabus, who gets to decide that sort of thing, etc.

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Date: 26/3/19

Signature: Lotte Fikkers

Appendix B.10

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: *Marguerite Corporaal*
 University: *Radboud University*
 Module: *BA3: Tools & Furios*

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

Only as a point of reference in the historical overview on closet drama

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

I chose Elizabeth Cary instead, for its similarity to Shakespeare's Othello. And I guess because it counted as an original play.

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

Her role as a patron, her translation of The Tragedie of Antonio, its generic conventions (so her role in exploring genre)

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

Part of a historical overview on closet drama during one week of the 13-week course

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

Yes: Elizabeth Cary, Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn, Deborah Marley, Susanna Centlivre

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated?

For the impact they had on dramatic traditions, women and influence in their own time. Their genres and genre bending.

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Date: *23/04/2019*

Signature: *M(C) Corporaal*

Appendix B.11

Questionnaire BA thesis, van Lankveld

Name: John Flood

University: Groningen

Module: Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature

Questions

1. Is Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, incorporated in the course syllabus?

No

2. Why is Mary Sidney (not) incorporated in the course syllabus?

In a short course we don't deal with translations (psalms or drama) and she doesn't readily fit into the syllabus.

3. How is Mary Sidney incorporated in the course syllabus? E.g. which of her texts are discussed, in what roles is she displayed, etc.

N/A

4. How extensively is Mary Sidney discussed in this course? E.g. only briefly mentioned in passing, an entire lecture dedicated to her, etc.

N/A

5. Are there any other women incorporated in the course syllabus? If yes, who?

Anne Askew

Lady Mary Wroth

Aphra Behn

6. Why are these other women (not) incorporated? [I think you need to take out the 'not']
Anne Askew: there is a seminar on the Reformation and *The Norton Anthology*, the course text, has an excerpt from her *Examinations* and Foxe's account of her death.

Lady Mary Wroth: there is a seminar on the history of the sonnet

Aphra Behn: *Oroonoko* is a useful text for early modern prose and a discussion of the rise of the novel.

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Date: 26 March 2019

Signature:



Appendix C.1

Literature 2



English Literature, ca. 1550 – 1675

2018–2019, Semester 2
University of Leiden
BA in English Language and Culture

Image:
Avery Glymph as Ferdinand, Rachel Mewbron as Miranda
in the 2014 Shakespeare Theatre Company production of *The Tempest*.

Instructors

Dr Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen (j.van.dijkhuizen@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Dr Lotte Fikkers (l.e.m.fikkers@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Course Information

2nd semester 2018–2019; 5 ECTS; Level 200

Course Description

This course is an introduction to one of the richest eras of English literature and to a historical period that in many ways marks the beginning of the modern world. Students will familiarize themselves with a broad range of plays, poetry and prose. We will study the language and form of these texts, while at the same time looking at the cultural, political and historical contexts by which they were shaped, and which they helped to shape in their turn.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students will have gained a basic knowledge of early modern English literature. They will be able to analyse the form and language of literary texts from this period, and can relate them to their cultural and historical contexts. The students will also have further developed their academic writing skills.

Lectures

It is imperative that you attend the weekly lectures (in addition to the tutorials). Your knowledge of the concepts, literary analysis and historical information discussed during the lectures will be tested in the written exam, so make sure you pay attention and take notes.

Blackboard

The course programme, assignments, visuals and/or quotations discussed during the lectures and any other relevant material used during the course will be posted on Blackboard.

Essay

During the course you will write one approximately 1200-word essay (excluding quotations), to be handed in on Thursday 28 March, 17.00. The essay must be submitted both in hard copy (on A4-size paper) and via Blackboard. Hand in your essays with a staple in the top left-hand corner. The essay should be presented in accordance with the MLA style sheet (see Mario Klarer's *An Introduction to Literary Studies* and the information on Blackboard). Please keep a back-up copy of your essay on your computer after you hand it in.

☛ **In order to pass this course, you must obtain *at least a 6.0* for your essay!**

Examination

The essay counts as 30% towards your final grade; the written test counts as 70%.

WEEKLY PROGRAMME

Reference Works

In addition to the primary texts, we'll make use of two reference works: Mario Klarer's *An Introduction to Literary Studies (ILS)* and Chris Baldick's *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (OLD)*. The latter is available online via the university library catalogue. Surf to <http://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl> and search for 'oxford dictionary literary terms'.

☛ **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE DONE THE READING FOR WEEK 1 BEFORE THE FIRST TUTORIAL!**

Week 1 (4–8 February)

Lyric Poetry I: The Renaissance Sonnet

Reading from the *Norton Anthology of English Literature (NA)*:

- 'The Sixteenth Century, 1485–1603'
- Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder, 'The long love that in my thought doth harbour' (plus Petrarch, 'Rima 140').
- Henry Howard, 'Love, that doth reign and live within my thought' (see also Petrarch, 'Rima 140').
- William Shakespeare, Sonnets 1, 19, 29, 30, 73, 116, 129, 130.
- Mary Wroth, From *Pamphilia to Amphilantus*: 1, 16, 39, 40, 68.
- John Milton, 'Methought I Saw My Late Espoused Saint'

Reading from *An Introduction to Literary Studies (ILS)*:

- Poetry (pp. 36–58)
- From *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms (OLD)*: Lyric, Sonnet

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Form, tradition and innovation in the early modern sonnet

Week 2 (11–15 February)

Lyric Poetry II: John Donne

Reading from *NA*:

- John Donne, 'The Flea', 'The Sun Rising', 'The Apparition', 'Sappho to Philaenis', Holy Sonnets 10, 14.

Additional reading:

- 'Renaissance' (from M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* [Boston MA: Heinle & Heinle, 1999], pp. 264–268. *To be downloaded from Blackboard*)

Reading from *OLD*:

- Renaissance
- Early Modern

Reading from *ILS*:

- Periods of literature: Renaissance (pp. 88–90)

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Renaissance and Early Modern
- John Donne and manuscript culture
- Sexuality, religion and poetic conventions in John Donne's poetry

Week 3 (18–22 February)

Lyric Poetry II: George Herbert

Reading from *NA*:

- George Herbert, 'Easter Wings', 'Church Monuments', 'Easter', 'Prayer (1)', 'Jordan' (2), 'Virtue', 'Love (3)'.

Reading from *OLD*:

- Emblem
- Pattern Poem

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Theology, form and spiritual experience in Herbert's poetry.

Week 4 (25 February – 1 March)

Drama I: Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*

Reading from *NA*:

- Christopher Marlowe, *Dr Faustus*

Reading from *ILS*:

- Drama (pp. 58–72)

Reading from *OLD*:

- Tragedy

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- The early modern stage
- Dramatic strategies and theological issues in *Dr Faustus*

Week 5 (4 – 8 March)

Drama II: William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

Reading:

- William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Oxford edition, ed. Stephen Orgel)

Reading from *OLD*:

- Romance

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- *The Tempest* in its cultural-historical context: Renaissance utopias, the new world, the court masque.
- The nature of Prospero's power

Week 6 (11 – 15 March)

Academic Writing for Students of Literature: The Basics (Revisited)

Reading from Blackboard:

- 'Basic Principles of Writing Literary-Critical Essays'
- Sample essay on John Milton's *Paradise Lost*
- Sample student essay on *Dr Faustus* containing a number of commonly made mistakes (all files to be downloaded from Blackboard)

Reading from *ILS*:

- Chapter 5: 'Where and how to find secondary literature' (pp. 133–139)
- Chapter 6: 'How to write a research paper' (pp. 139–153)

Assignments for the tutorial:

- Mark all the errors and infelicities (in structure, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, presentation and lay-out) in the sample student essay on *Dr Faustus*.

- Prepare an essay proposal that includes:
 - The topic and thesis statement of your Literature 2 essay
 - A topic sentence for each body paragraph
 - The passages from your chosen literary works(s) which you will discuss in each body paragraph (as support for each topic sentence)

Lecture topics:

- Basic principles of essay-writing

Week 7 (18–22 March)

No Class (Exam Week / Reading Week)

Week 8 (25–29 March)

Drama III: William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*

Reading from NA:

- William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

Reading from OLD:

- Comedy

☞ *Essay Due on Thursday 28 March, 17.00!*

Week 9 (2–6 April)

Drama IV: William Shakespeare's *Othello*

Reading:

- William Shakespeare, *Othello* (Oxford edition, ed. Michael Neill)

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Tragedy, race and gender in *Othello*

Week 10 (8–12 April)

No Class (Humanities Career Event)

Week 11 (15–19 April)

Drama V: Margaret Cavendish's *The Convent of Pleasure*

- Margaret Cavendish, *The Convent of Pleasure* (text to be downloaded from Blackboard)

Reading from OLD:

- Closet drama

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Women writers, gender, genre and *The Convent of Pleasure*

Week 12 (22–26 April)

Narrative Poetry I: Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

Reading from NA:

- Edmund Spenser, from *The Faerie Queene*: 'A Letter of the Authors'; Book 1, Cantos 1 & 2; Book 2, Canto 12.

Reading from OLD:

- Allegory
- Epic
- Chivalric Romance

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Epic, allegory and romance in *The Faerie Queene*
- Religious and national identity in *The Faerie Queene*

Week 13 (29 April – 3 May)

Poetry and the Regicide of 1649

Reading from *NA*:

- 'The Early Seventeenth Century, 1603–1660'.
- 'Crisis of Authority' (from 'Reporting the News' to [and including] John Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*)
- Lucy Hutchinson, 'Memoirs of the Life of Colonel John Hutchinson'
- Katherine Philips, 'Upon the Double Murder of King Charles'
- Andrew Marvell, 'An Horatian Ode'

Reading from *OLD*:

- Polemic

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Political and religious conflicts, 1603–1660

Week 14 (6–10 May)

Narrative Poetry II: John Milton's *Paradise Lost* 1

Reading from *NA*:

- John Milton, from *Paradise Lost*: 'The Verse', 'The Argument', Book 1, Book 2, Book 3 ll. 1–134.

Reading from *OLD*:

- Blank verse
- Enjambment

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Epic, poetic form and the reading experience in *Paradise Lost*

Week 15

Narrative Poetry III: John Milton's *Paradise Lost* 2

Reading from *NA*:

- John Milton, from *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, Book 9, Book 12 ll. 466–649.

Lecture and tutorial topics:

- Language, politics and religion in *Paradise Lost*

Appendix C.2

Academic year 2018-19 | Semester I

Course Unit Syllabus (Course Description)

Shakespeare & Early Modern English Literature

BA LEL008B05

Dr John Flood

Date of this document: 18 July 2018.

1 / Type of course unit, number of ECTS credit points and admission requirements

Type: Compulsory. **ETCS credit points:** 5.

Admission requirements: Admission to the second year allowed; in other words, a student must have at least 45 ECTS credit points from the propaedeutic phase or permission from the Board of Examiners in the event of his or her only having 40 ECTS from the propaedeutic phase.

2 / Content of the course unit

The course covers the period from the late-sixteenth century to c. 1750. As its name suggests, there is a focus on Shakespeare, but the course is a good deal broader than this. It aims to expose students to the varied kinds of writing that were practised at the time. It looks at texts in the light of their historical and cultural backgrounds (e.g. the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Civil War) as well as in the context of the contemporary conventions used by dramatists and poets. The texts on the course vary from religious meditations on death to erotic verse.

3 / Position of the course unit in the degree programme

This is one of the BA modules that focuses on a literary period. It deals in more detail with writing from periods introduced in first year. It is a useful precursor to the study of literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Competences learned in this course will be relevant throughout the BA degree.

4 / Learning outcomes of the course unit

Upon successful completion of this course a student is able to:

1. formulate appropriately sophisticated accounts of the 'Renaissance' and the reformations [1.3, 1.4, 2.2, 3.1];
2. work with different early modern literary conventions as they are relevant to poetry, drama and prose [1.3, 1.4];

3. analyse the works of a selection of individual authors [2.1, 2.4];
4. explain the interplay between the socio-cultural background of Early Modern England and the writing of the period [1.4, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2];
5. communicate effectively in written English in an academic register [4.1] and interact appropriately with fellow students in class discussions [4.3];
6. use a variety of research tools in support of seminar and assessment preparation [2.2, 2.4].

In the list above, the course unit learning outcome is followed by the relevant programme learning outcome in square brackets. The programme learning outcomes can be found in Appendix 1 below.

5 /

a Modes of assessment

- Written assignment; digital exam.

b Assessment: duration, time and place; deadlines and procedures;

- perusal

The following components contribute towards the final course grade:

1: A written assignment worth 25% of the final mark. This assignment will be due at different times for different students during the teaching weeks. A schedule of individual deadlines will be published on Nestor along with instructions explaining the task.

2: A digital exam (in the exam hall) worth 75% of the final grade. All texts from the syllabus may be examined.

There will be two opportunities to submit for each of these components.

Examination dates:

www.rug.nl/let/voorzieningen/bureaustudentzaken/Roosters/index

More details of the assessment procedures will be found on Nestor. Students are responsible for checking these before submitting their work. There will be an opportunity to discuss your written work and your exams after grading.

c Examples of tests

- A sample paper is available on Nestor.

d. Conditions for taking exams/submitting final assessments

- 80% attendance at and active participation in all work groups are required. Students must come prepared to discuss the work for the week. In the event of insufficient participation in seminars a student will not be allowed take the examination or resit;

-
- occasional ungraded exercises may be announced in seminars or on Nestor;
 - one valid written assignment submission with a grade higher than 2.0 is required to take the second exam;
 - a student who does not sit the first exam may sit the second exam.

6 / Mode of instruction and learning activities

The course will involve one-hour lectures, seminars, and independent study in addition to the assessments listed below. Lectures are intended to give overviews of the areas that students are studying. Equipped with this knowledge and any background reading prescribed, students should be able to investigate the course's primary texts so that they can discuss them in seminars and write about them in assessments.

7 / Assessment

a. Assessment Criteria

Assessments will be graded based on the following general criteria:

- knowledge and understanding (e.g. of context, texts and theories);
- applying knowledge and understanding (e.g. focus, logic);
- gathering and interpreting data (e.g. selecting sources);
- written communication (e.g. grammar and style);
- learning skills (autonomy, meeting deadlines).

See Nestor for further details of these criteria as they apply to each form of assessment.

b. Calculating preliminary and final marks

A 5.5 grade in an assessment component is a sufficient grade (a pass). A student who submits for the first date who gets less than 5.5 can submit for the second date (unless s/he has passed the module without this). A student whose final overall mark is 5.5 passes the course regardless of the grades of any components of the course.

8 / Cheating and plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are subject to the provisions set down in the OER (Article 7:18 of Part A of the BA OER). The Board of Examiners is always informed in cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism.

9 / Calculation of student workload

Students will have to exercise good time management and plan in advance so that their reading and other preparation are suitably spread out. The seven weeks will pass quickly.

Student Activity	Hours
Seminars and lectures	28
Preparation for seminars	55
Written exercise	22
Exam and preparation	35
Total	140

10 / Literature

Abbreviations are given in square brackets.

Stephen Greenblatt et al. eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 9th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2012), volumes B [NA-B] and C [NA-C];

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (any academic edition);

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online [ODNB];

Oxford Handbooks Online [O], a database available through the library. References give the name of the relevant book and the chapter to be read;

Ebooks (available through RUG library) [E];

Readings posted on Nestor.

11 / Weekly schedule

L denotes a lecture and **S** a seminar. Seminar titles are followed by the reading required for that seminar. Page numbers in *The Norton Anthology* [NA] are only given where they are necessary, otherwise, you must locate the text by using the index. Page numbers beginning with A (e.g. A87) refer to an appendix at the back of [NA] and numbers beginning with C refer to a volume's colour illustrations. **NB:** You should read the [NA] biographies of any of the authors whose works you are studying.

Week 1

L: Introduction to the Renaissance/Early Modern Period.

S: The Sonnet in the Renaissance.

[NA-B] 'Introduction to the Sixteenth Century' (pp. 531-61); C5-7; Thomas Wyatt, 'Whoso List to Hunt'; Petrarch *Rima*, numbers 140, 190, 189 (pp. 649, 652); Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, 'Love, that doth reign and live within my thought', 'The Assyrians' King'; Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti*, numbers 67, 68; Philip Sidney, from *Astrophil & Stella* no. 41; Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, numbers 1, 20, 55, 130; Richard Barnfield, From *Cynthia*, no. 9, 11; Mary Wroth, from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, no. 77.

[E] 'Wyatt's "Who so List to Hunt"', chapter 60 of Hattaway ed., *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*.

Week 2

L: The Renaissance Stage.

[NA-B] 'A London Playhouse' (A49).

S: Dr Faustus.

[NA-B] Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Dr Faustus*; 'The Two Texts of Dr Faustus'.

[O] Lawton, D. 'Christopher Marlowe: *Dr Faustus*' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*.

Week 3

L: Jews, Christians, Comedy and *The Merchant of Venice*.

S: *The Merchant of Venice*.

Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*.

[O] Shagan, Ethan H. 'Religious Nonconformity and the Quality of Mercy: *The Merchant of Venice* in Reformation Context' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare*.

Week 4

L: Reformations and Religion.

[NA-B] 'Religions in England' (A44-6); 'The English Bible' (pp. 673-6).

Read Genesis 1-3 in the Authorised (King James) Bible. This is freely available online.

S: *King Lear*.

[NA-B] Shakespeare, *King Lear*.

Week 5

L: John Donne and Metaphysical Poetry.

S: Religious Writing.

[NA-B] C2, C16; John Foxe, from *Acts and Monuments* (pp. 688); Anne Askew, from *The First Examination*; Richard Crashaw, 'Of the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord', 'Luke 11', George Herbert, 'The Altar', 'Easter Wings', 'Prayer (1)' (p. 1711), 'The Collar'; John Donne, 'The Flea', 'The Canonization', 'The Relic', *Holy Sonnets*, numbers 7, 10, 11, from *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* 17, 19 (pp. 1420-22). [ODNB] 'Anne Askew'.

Week 6

L: The 'Rise of the Novel'.

[Nestor] Excerpt from Cleland, *Fanny Hill*.

S: *Oroonoko*

[NA-C] Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave*.

The exam will be discussed in this seminar. Please look at the sample exam on Nestor before this seminar.

Week 7

L: Strife on Earth and in Heaven: The Civil Wars and John Milton.

S: The Civil Wars and *Paradise Lost*.

[NA-B] C8, C10, C14, C15; Robert Herrick, 'Delight in Disorder', 'Dreams', 'Upon the Nipples of Julia's Breast', 'Upon Julia's Clothes', 'His Prayer to Ben Jonson', 'To His Book's End'; John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

Weeks 8-10: Reading and Assessment Weeks

12 / Copyright

Respect the copyright of the teaching material. All teaching material is protected by copyright. Students may not make photocopies of teaching material, exams and lectures other than for their own study purposes. In addition, teaching material may not be further distributed in any format. Deliberate violation of copyright is a criminal offence. The University of Groningen will take appropriate measures upon detecting such violations.

Appendix 1: Programme-level learning outcomes

<i>Description of the Bachelor's level in accordance with the Dublin descriptors</i>	<i>Learning outcomes of the specialization. Bachelor's graduates have:</i>
1 Knowledge and understanding Students have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbook, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of a range of linguistic theories as applied to varieties of the English language 2. Knowledge of a range of literary theories as applied to English literature 3. Knowledge of key authors and a broad range of literary texts written in the Anglophone world over a period of 1400 years 4. Knowledge of the cultural contexts in which texts were composed
2 Applying knowledge and understanding Students can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity to generate new ideas 2. Ability to search for information from a variety of up-to-date, academically-relevant secondary sources 3. Ability to identify, present and resolve problems 4. Ability for abstract and analytical thinking
3 Making judgements Students have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to justify a standpoint or decision based on the collection and synthesis of relevant information 2. Ability to identify information relevant to contemporary social issues 3. Ability to be critical and self-critical
4 Communication Students can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to communicate in English in oral and written forms at a near-native level (C1/C2) 2. Ability to communicate information from one's discipline or field to academic and non-academic audiences 3. Ability to interact with others in a cooperative and constructive manner
5 Learning skills Students have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to identify and fill knowledge gaps 2. Ability to connect knowledge and understanding from across the modules of the degree programme 3. Ability to work effectively and autonomously 4. Ability to use IT applications