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The Master's Voice: Secretarial Information Management and Gendered Authorship in Works

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THE MASTER’S VOICE:
SECRETARIAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND
GENDERED AUTHORSHIP IN WORKS BY
MARY SIDNEY HERBERT, ANDREW MARVELL,
AND JOHN MILTON

by

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A thesis submitted to the
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This thesis entitled:
The Master’s Voice: Secretarial Information Management and Gendered Authorship in Works
by Mary Sidney Herbert, Andrew Marvell, and John Milton
written by Ann Catherine Stockho
has been approved for the Department of English

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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.
This dissertation examines intersections between early modern ideas of secretaryship as described in texts such as Angel Day’s *The English Secretary* and works by Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke; Andrew Marvell; and John Milton. It proposes to expand ideas of early modern authorship by showing, first, that forms of authorship could be drawn from patterns of information management, particularly circulation and transfer; and, second, that such forms of authorship were available to both men and women. Therefore, I argue, women and men had access to wider and less gender-restricted opportunities for authorship and narrative agency than previously thought. In her dedicatory poems to the Sidney *Psalmes*—“Even now that Care” and “To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Phillip Sidney”—and in the preface to *The Countesse of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, Sidney Herbert uses her position as a transmitter to construct herself as an author in relation to her brother, Sir Philip Sidney; in doing so, she gains her authority from her intermediary status. Marvell, who sought the position of secretary during the Interregnum, explores and modifies the secretarial model in his Cromwell poems—“An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland,” “The First Anniversary of the Government under O. C.,” and “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.”—to examine his representational relationship with Oliver Cromwell. Milton, who also worked as a secretary, links *Paradise Lost*’s Eve to narrative authority after she enacts the secretary’s ability to disrupt given structures of information circulation. In shifting the secretary/master relationship from a predominately “one-self” model
to a model of independent, if bureaucratic, agency, Marvell and Milton show how the secretarial model could be modified in response to a changing political landscape and developing views regarding the relationship of the individual to existing power structures. This adaptability of a sixteenth-century secretarial model contributed to its continued use in the seventeenth century; this adaptability also contributed to the development of a narrative voice in the early novel. We therefore can connect novelistic narrative voice—both masculine and feminine—with late sixteenth-century information technology.
For my father, Robert John Stockho
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Introduction

This dissertation examines intersections between early modern ideas of secretaryship and works by Mary Sidney Herbert, Andrew Marvell, and John Milton. It proposes to expand ideas of early modern authorship by showing, first, that forms of authorship could be drawn from patterns of information management, particularly circulation and transfer; and, second, that such forms of authorship were available to both men and women. Therefore, I argue, women as well as men had access to much wider and much less gender-restricted opportunities for authorship and narrative agency than previously thought.

Sidney Herbert’s dedicatory poems to the Sidney Psalms, Marvell’s Cromwell poems, and Milton’s Paradise Lost show how such forms of authorship were formulated and achieved. Sidney Herbert uses her position as a transmitter to construct herself as an author in relation to her brother, Sir Philip Sidney; in doing so, she does not rely on her position as Sidney’s sister to legitimize her work but gains her authority from her intermediary status. Marvell, who sought the position of secretary during the Interregnum, explores and modifies the secretarial model to examine his representational relationship with Oliver Cromwell, while Milton, who also worked as a secretary, links Paradise Lost’s Eve to narrative authority after she enacts the secretary’s ability to disrupt given structures of information circulation. Both Marvell and Milton show how the secretarial model could be modified in response to a changing political landscape and developing views regarding the relationship of the individual to existing power structures. This adaptability of a sixteenth-century secretarial model contributed to its continued use in the seventeenth century; this adaptability also, as I propose in the conclusion, contributed to the development of a narrative voice in the early novel. We therefore can connect novelistic
narrative voice—both masculine and feminine—with late sixteenth-century information technology.

An early modern secretary was a man of both letters and business, a pivotal figure in the circulation of information. There were both private and political secretaries—although the two could overlap, since the private often was the political, especially among the ever-restless English aristocracy—and political secretaries to the Tudors were very powerful indeed. But no matter what the scope of an individual secretary’s duties, the basic concepts of the position were similar. A secretary was an agent of his master, there to articulate the latter’s will, to carry out that will, and even to help formulate that will. Secretaries handled correspondence, wrote letters, handled business matters, and gathered information. The political secretary had for some time been a figure of interest on the continent, especially in Italy, where texts focusing on the role and conduct of a secretary came close to constituting an entire sub-genre.¹ England did not produce as many secretarial texts, but there are a few. These include the popular manual by Angel Day, *The English Secretary*, which was first printed in 1586 and reprinted numerous times until 1626; Nicholas Faunt’s “Discourse Touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate” (1592), Robert Beale’s “Instructions for a Principall Secretary” (1592), and Robert Cecil’s “The State and Dignity of a Secretary of State’s Place” (1600). These texts attempt to codify and prescribe the secretary’s role, and they focus as much on the secretary’s relationship with his master as on his specific duties.²

In this relationship, a secretary takes on a certain transparency. He is his master’s “other self,” subsumed in him to the point of invisibility, yet at the same time valued for his own individual intelligence. He is an “inward man”—a keeper of secrets and an inhabitant of the secretary’s closet, where he and his information are kept close.³ Viewed this way, a secretary is
part of a system of correspondence, in the sense of likeness; he corresponds to the master and is
analogous to him, as a figure that functions as part of a larger system for the organization of
knowledge. The secretary is also an accumulative figure, a compilation of his master’s
knowledge, opinions, and secrets. He stores and transmits information, which is organized in his
body just as a book closes stored information between its covers. But for all the emphasis on a
secretary’s correspondence with his master, his textuality is interactive, the product of the
master, the secretary himself, and his audience. The secretary is part of a network, and although
his relation to the world theoretically is mediated through another, it can change to a direct
relationship. The secretary always has the capability to insert himself into the connections he
mediates and to re-author the master he himself stores and rearticulates. Formulated as a device
to stabilize communication, the secretary is a figure who can actually contribute to a sense of
fragmentation and disorder. This ability to destabilize is the secretary’s opportunity for
individual agency and authorship.

Such opportunity for authorship attached to the way information is organized and
circulated is not limited to men. Although in the late sixteenth century the term “secretary,” as a
category of professional labor, designated men, descriptions of secretaryship do not rigidly
enforce masculinity. In fact, they attach feminine characteristics to the master’s other self,
framing him as wholly dedicated and devoted to his master. This impression that a secretary is
like a wife is reinforced by contemporary domestic manuals written for women. Wives, too, were
designated household information managers and keepers of their husbands’ secrets, and the ways
in which manuals instruct them to do so are remarkably similar to the instructions in secretarials
texts. Reading the two gendered genres together reveals that, although the labels “secretary” and
“housewife” are gendered, the activities each engages in are quite similar. The range of activities
associated with the circulation of information—mediation, storage, and transmission—therefore are not rigidly gendered but occupy a field of gender fluidity and overlap. Consequently the same opportunities for forms of authorship that are available to secretaries are also available to women. Women, too, could “rewrite” their husbands or reconfigure the information and knowledge they were charged with preserving. Self-insertion into networks of transmission, then, offers opportunities for forms of authorship that arise out of a culturally and socially endorsed loss of the self for the information handler, whether secretary or wife.

Recent critical work on secretaries and secretarial texts has largely fallen into three categories. In one, scholars such as Lisa Jardine, William H. Sherman, and Anthony Grafton have studied secretaries’ activities for what they tell us about early modern intersections between intellectual and political history. This work has been crucial in recognizing the problematically liminal social and political space that secretaries occupied and in uncovering early modern concerns with secretaries’ intimacy with their employers and their possible political influence. Focusing on secretaries as “scholarly readers” whose activities crossed disciplinary and professional boundaries, these critics have shown how secretaries’ services for their employers formed a vital part of political and intellectual life in England at the end of the sixteenth century. In this vein, Paul E. J. Hammer has written on the highly political and fractious secretariat of the Earl of Essex, and Alan Stewart has focused on Henry Cuffe, one of Essex’s secretaries, who was executed for treason after Essex’s failed rebellion.

In the second category, scholars have studied secretarial texts for what they reveal about early modern ideas of subjectivity. Richard Rambuss has focused on Edmund Spenser’s use of the secretarial model as a way of advertising his professional capabilities, and Jonathan Goldberg has written more generally on textual production. Both Rambuss and Goldberg see the physical
and metaphorical spaces that the texts describe, particularly the secretary’s closet, as spaces where the emergent subject is constructed through an elastic tension between secretary and master that both allows and creates fluctuations in power and authority. This line of study has led to the third category, which builds on these ideas of subject formation but focuses more closely on male relations and the closet.⁹ Work in this category reads the “secret” space of the secretary’s closet not as a marginal secret space where one individual is formed, but as a “politically crucial transactive space” shared between two men; this work suggests that the language of the “self” in these texts is really the language of two “selves.”

In this dissertation I focus on the ways in which ideas of secretaryship reveal opportunities for authorship, a topic Rambuss touches on but does not explore at length. Rambuss acknowledges that a secretary had the power to author his master but does not consider that authorial opportunity also arose from a secretary’s position in a larger network of transmission and circulation.¹⁰ Realizing that a secretary’s connectedness as an information hub is authorial opportunity enables me to relate that to similar opportunities for women, as well as to examine how ideas of secretaryship function in specific literary works and how their utility continues well into the seventeenth century.

This dissertation relates to what we might call information studies, in which scholars have directed new attention to the ways in which early modern readers and scholars coped with what has been called an “information explosion” in the period from 1550 to 1750.¹¹ This explosion was due in large part to the development of printing, a new technology analogous to the twentieth-century development of computer technology. As Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday have suggested, “The experience of our own new technology has enabled us to re-imagine the impact of new technologies in the past.”¹² The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries
saw the development of the printed text overlap with scribal and manuscript culture, as people grew accustomed to the idea that books were a natural medium for storing and transmitting knowledge. Readers also had to learn to read printed texts and interpret the ways in which printers organized and presented their contents through their choice of typeface, type size, and images. Printers developed, and readers learned to use, more sophisticated retrieval systems, such as tables of contents and alphabetized indices. Scribal conventions by which large amounts of information could be stored, indexed, and found were expanded on an enormous scale, and the modern search engine came into being.\(^\text{13}\)

While new print technology presented exciting possibilities, it also created heavy demands on scholars, who developed strategies of their own to meet those demands. Ann Blair has written on the reading techniques scholars adopted, such as browsing, skimming, annotating, and cutting and pasting.\(^\text{14}\) Blair has also outlined the ways in which knowledge began to be classified and organized in libraries, sales catalogs, and bibliographies.\(^\text{15}\) Sherman has considered how astrologer and mathematician John Dee was able to exploit this profusion of knowledge by recovering and analyzing textual information, pursuing practical knowledge, and assembling England’s largest library and museum. By developing commercial and courtly contacts who could profit from access to this store, Dee essentially set up England’s first “think tank.”\(^\text{16}\) Other studies liken the early modern experience of new technology to our own. Rhodes and Sawday, the editors of *The Renaissance Computer*, consider how many functions and effects of the modern computer were imagined or anticipated before the invention of modern digital computing technology, including memory systems and the emergence of terms associated with computer culture.\(^\text{17}\) Other scholars, such as Joad Raymond, focus on the development of mass media and news networks and consider the ways in which communicative networks operated.\(^\text{18}\) This recent
work has stepped away from formal, geographical, or narrative approaches in favor of an
emphasis on the pathways of exchange and an examination of the relationships between ideas,
politics, and modes of communication.

Almost all of this work uses the words “information” and “knowledge” interchangeably,
as do I when referring to the material that secretaries handled. These terms, particularly
“information,” have taken on a complex variety of meanings in the postmodern era. With the
advent of computer technology came the development of information theory, a central dogma of
which is that information exists independently of the meaning it expresses; rather it is an abstract
concept which can be embodied in any coding language. But “information” also retains more
diffuse meanings, including anything that one is apprised of or told (including what we tend to
term “news”), instructions, directions, and the like. Information may be a form of knowledge or
it may produce knowledge, in the sense that an informed person may know something he did not
know before. Consequently, in my view, secretaries trafficked in both information, in its more
diffuse, layered sense, and in knowledge.

This dissertation’s connection with information studies lies in the fact that the sixteenth-
century secretary is formulated as an information-management device. He is a mechanism for the
accumulation, storage, and delivery of information, and, like our computer technology, he
theoretically is neutral in performing these functions. As the master’s other self, he ideally has no
bearing on the master’s voice; he merely, as a transparent interface, delivers it. In addition, a
secretary functions as part of a communicative network, as a hub for both intake and outflow of
material. But these are not his only functions. A secretary also has interpretive status, as a filter
who has knowledge and understanding of that which he delivers or stores. Further, he is valued
for his intelligence and his capabilities as a counselor and advisor. The fact that ideas of
secretaries include such contradictory multiple functions, which coexist in a productive tension, gives us insight into what the perception was of early modern information management needs, and how they could be addressed through a proto-professional, and increasingly bureaucratic, position.

This dissertation also intervenes in the discussion about early modern authorship and gender, particularly because it emphasizes the similarities between men’s and women’s informational activities and consequent authorial opportunities. In early modern studies, considerations of gender and authorship have tended to tease out gender differences in men and women’s approaches to authorship. Much work has been done on the ways in which women reinforced their femininity by writing in genres approved for female activity, such as religious tracts or translations, and the ways in which certain genres, such as Petrarchan sonnet cycles, reinforced masculinity for male writers. Wendy Wall has argued that, because of the questionable status of print, late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century male writers deflected anxiety about class onto gender by presenting their texts or themselves as female, while at the same time the developing concept of authorship in printed works was masculinized. More recent work, such as Marcy L. North’s *The Anonymous Renaissance*, has opened this approach up somewhat. North’s work unsettles the common practice of gendering anonymous poets as female, and it also urges us to query any automatic attribution of anonymous female-voiced work to women writers. Anonymity was a useful tool for both women and men, as it was impersonal and general, encouraged focus on the product and not on the producer, reduced the author’s responsibility, and distanced him or her from the product. In my view, the forms of authorship offered by secretaryship, or information management, are precisely part of this anonymity. The secretary is anonymous because, like the married “feme covert,” he is “covered” by another—the
master figure—but that coverture does not preclude his ability to rewrite the master’s narrative from a position of authority as one with inside knowledge of the master.

This dissertation is contextualized historically by the rise of bureaucracy and state formation in England in the period. Government bureaucracy was, of course, not new in the seventeenth century; G. E. Aylmer dates it to the twelfth century. But the Tudor period saw a shift away from bureaucracy centered in the royal household toward departmental bureaucracy.23 By the time of Charles I, the government was what might be called bureaucratic, even if it was not a specialized bureaucracy in the modern sense. The Privy Council and its staff, and the secretaries of state, handled a wide diversity of issues, while many junior officials, although in the king’s service, were not appointed by the king but owed their appointments to senior officials. Other subordinates were not in the king’s service but were private employees of other officials.24 The Restoration brought about more government growth, with the creation of more boards and departments, and after 1660 new central departments, such as the Treasury and the Admiralty, experienced major growth.25 Michael Braddick, in State Formation in Early Modern England c. 1550-1700, sees this emerging state not as an autonomous collection of central institutions created by bureaucrats, but as a network of local office holders who helped create the resources and demands of central agencies.26 For Braddick, this period’s state formation is a social process, the product of shifting needs rather than top-down bureaucratic authority.

As government bureaucracy grew, and the position of secretaries who worked in government became more institutionalized, the uniquely personal, coupled aspect of the secretary/master relationship came under pressure. Both Marvell and Milton reshape this aspect of the secretarial model.27 The Revolution and unsettled times indicated to Marvell that it would be safer for the secretary to remove himself from the intense identification with a master figure
that the late sixteenth century had endorsed. Milton’s Eve, a figure he associates with secretarial function, ultimately resists submersion in a master body and exerts individual agency, challenging and refiguring dominant structures of information control.

These moves to individualize the secretarial figure in response to political change are in keeping with changing early modern ideas of individual identity. Megan Matchinske has traced a shift in early modern identity formation from a more spiritually motivated sense of identity in the sixteenth century to civil-war perceptions of the self as inscribed by the state. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse also connect a new sense of the individual with political state formation. They have suggested that the revolution led to a language of individuation and interpretation; once the state no longer controlled the printed word and vernacular English became the language of control and power, a middle-class readership and a public sphere of personal opinion arose. Su Fang Ng’s work also suggests a changing concept of the individual. Ng argues that the familiar analogy between the patriarchal state/sovereign and the patriarchal family was not a static model consistently applied but was used in a wide range of applications to support many different ideas of political community. In her suggestion that familial secondariness could be reconceived as something good, Ng touches on the idea of individual merit, a sense that an individual could step out of roles once considered hierarchically determined. A secretary, of course, was always involved in a hierarchical relationship that could be at odds with his representational agency. But for Marvell and Milton, the secretary does not acquiesce to hidden self-immolation in the relationship. Rather he becomes an individual who publicly at once contributes to and is separate from that which he represents.

For a visual analogy, we may consider the title page of the 1651 edition of Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan*. In this image, the gigantic figure of Leviathan gazes out at the viewer, arms
outstretched, with a crozier in his left hand and a sword in his right. His body is made up of a mass of small figure in hats and cloaks, whose backs are to the viewer as they gaze upward toward the head of the body they compose. This figure simultaneously represents the king’s, or sovereign’s, two bodies—his own body and the overlapping figures of the body politic. It is a literal image of Hobbes’s conception of the Commonwealth as an “artificial covenant,” which men enter to erect a common power, and which in turn protects them and enables their prosperity. In Hobbes’s political theory, the sovereign “bears the person” of the people; he represents them as a corporate identity. But this visual metaphor also captures the fluctuations between individual and corporate identity that are so much a part of the secretary’s position, while pointing to the agency that accompanies that fluctuation. The individuals who make up the person of the Commonwealth are all “authors” of sovereign authority, which represents their collective identity. In a sense, all these figures occupy a secretarial position, in that they are merged into another body and at the same time author that body. By making the metaphor visual, this image invites us literally to see how metaphor works on two levels: we must entertain the image the metaphor represents, while at the same time understand it as representative of something else. Secretaries, too are metaphors, as analogous stands-ins for the person they represent. As the Leviathan title page does, Marvell and Milton take steps toward understanding the citizen’s role in general as inherently secretarial, as they make the secretary a more individualized figure who, while retaining representational and constitutive functions, operates more publicly.

Work on secretarial function also touches on how collaborative authorship is tied to information management. Although secretarial texts are not overtly concerned with collaboration—indeed, one of their primary objectives is to erase any sense of two persons
actively engaged in producing text—a secretary and his master constitute a writing couple whose interactive practice produces written text. “Collaboration” and “collaborative authorship” are terms that have recently come to designate a wide range of interactions. They may describe the work of two writers, larger social group activities, or the activities of printers, patrons, and readers in shaping the meaning or significance of a text. Such expansion of conceptions of collaboration derive from examinations of authorship and the status of the author “not as historical givens, but as contingent constructs and institutions whose changing shapes represent responses to particular social, cultural, and economic pressures.”

Arthur Marotti has written on the ways in which texts in manuscript culture were inherently malleable as they passed from hand to hand; Stephen Dobranski, in examining print culture, enlarges the definition of “author” to include printers, publishers, and booksellers, whose activities were a form of co-labor that contributed to the texts they produced. Dobranski further suggests a reciprocal relationship among authors, printers, and their readers, arguing that the frequently seen omissions in early modern texts invited readers into the processes of authorship and publication. Such wider definitions of authorship have been particularly important to studies of early modern women writers, enabling scholars to recognize women writers who participated in alternative formulations or experiences of authorship. The idea that early modern authorship was, in various ways, a product of social practice connects with my argument that secretaries—and women, in their role as information managers—could access a form of authorial agency from their position as transmitters or mediators; that is, authorship derives from a position in a larger social network of communication. But secretarial texts also reveal the processes of negotiation and resistance that could engage the writing pair, and the ways in which a sense of ownership of text could be passed back and forth between the writing partners. At such times, the texts create
authorship not as a social function but as a product of individual association with text and the suppression of a collaborative participant. In this regard, the work of Jeffrey Masten also influences my study. In *Textual Intercourse*, Masten focuses on collaborative pairs who wrote for the theater and situates the practice of joint dramatic writing in larger discourses of sex and gender. Masten challenges the idea of collaboration as “merely a more multiple version of authorship,” arguing that the acceptance and prevalence of joint work in the period pose historical and theoretical challenges to the ideology of the author. These collaborations, Masten asserts, result in the dispersal of authority, rather than a simple doubling of it. I, too, examine joint work in gendered contexts, even though ideas of secretaryship actually oppose ideas of dispersal, committed as they are to assigning single authorship to a master figure. Instead of dispersing authorship, secretarial texts seek to concentrate it and make two people create one author. But secretarial texts also show the unsustainability of their formulations of two voices that jointly produce one voice.

Finally, this dissertation touches on connections between late sixteenth-century secretarial texts and the early novel of the late seventeenth century, suggesting that the invisible secretarial voice links to the invisible novelistic narrative voice, particularly a female narrative voice. One bridge in this development is the seventeenth-century genre of letter-writing guides that use the term “secretary” in their titles, such as *The Secretary of Ladies* (1638), *The Female Secretary* (1671), *The Young Secretary’s Guide* (1687), and *The Lover’s Secretary* (1692). Presented as collections of templates for the letter-writer, these texts are also conduct books that model proper behavior, particularly for women. Such books are often seen as forerunners of early epistolary novels, such as the popular *Portuguese Letters* (1667) and Aphra Behn’s *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684-1687). Nancy Armstrong locates a prototype
for domestic fiction in female conduct books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Natascha Würzbach sees these letter-writing “secretaries” as particularly contributing to the development of the personal letter of gallantry, which in turn was an important contributor to the epistolary novel. These textual “secretaries” overtly associate women with ideas of secretaryship—not only letter writing, but the covered stance of the letter writer, whose identity in these compendia is frequently buried under layers of intervening personas whose origins are unclear and who may be fictitious. Female voice thus becomes associated with anonymous space that transmits another’s voice, in a process similar to the way in which epistolary novels often use a female narrator to open a discursive space for the writing subject. Catherine Gallagher, in Nobody’s Story, has argued that the eighteenth-century literary marketplace was often the setting for what might be called female authors’ vanishing acts; in other words, that female writers appear mainly through their displacements and disappearance in literary and economic exchanges. This ability to write through displacement parallels the position of the secretary, who is a sixteenth-century “no-body” constructed as his master’s body. The secretary, like Gallagher’s women writers, is a disembodied voice, paid to be wordless himself. Because secretary-like information management is a gender-fluid field, the disembodied secretary may be linked to Gallagher’s construction of women as disembodied novelistic narrators.

It is not new to see roots of the novel in seventeenth-century letter-writing manuals and conduct books. What I have done, however, is extend that genealogy further back, to late sixteenth-century texts written for men that concern both personal service and political functions of statecraft. We can see then how ideas of information management cross over into developing literary forms and begin to shape techniques of transmission in literature. In tracing how
secretarial ideas are used, modified, and developed over this period in works by Sidney Herbert, Marvell, and Milton, I hope to help uncover the hidden figure of the secretary.

Chapter Summaries

In Chapter 1, “Inward Men: Secretaries, Housewives, and Information Management,” I consider the English treatises on secretaryship and link the major tropes of secretarial labor to similar tropes that appear in manuals of domestic labor. One of the first things that strikes a reader of the treatises on secretaryship by Day, Faunt, and Cecil is the fact that all three construe the secretary’s role and relationship with his master in the same ways. The secretary is a site of transfer, where the master’s will is materialized into text, but the secretary’s intellectual labor can also be a site of containment, as he stores information in himself. Faunt, for instance, calls him a “remembrancer of all such matters as are of most necessarie dispatch.” In addition, the manuals emphasize that the secretary’s role is to keep his master’s secrets. Day bases the word “secretary” in “secrets” and identifies the secretary as “a keeper or conserver of the secret unto him committed.” Secrecy around information and its circulation is therefore paramount, and to facilitate this secrecy the manuals establish the secretary’s secret place: his closet. This closet becomes identified with the secretary’s body, which becomes a physical space wherein reside knowledge and secrets. The body, however, may mutate; often the secretary’s body is also a dissected body. For Faunt, the principal secretary is “the mouth of the councell of State,” and a secretary is his master’s “owne penne, his mouth, his eye, his eare, and keeper of his most secrett Cabinett.” This close association between a master and a secretary engendered by the sharing of secrets and information creates an intimate homosocial relationship that is often likened to marriage. As Rambuss observes in Spenser’s Secret Career, the secretary/master relationship
“enacts a symbiosis of master and secretary so complete it becomes difficult to determine where the thoughts of one let off and the other begin.” This other-self model is set up as the primary goal of the texts, as a device to guarantee the authenticity and legitimacy of transmitted text. All these elaborate constructions reveal specific concerns around questions of authorship and agency, and collaboration and duality of voice. The manuals theorize ways to enable two voices to speak as one yet are constantly aware that in the act of materializing text, the secretary gains authority and agency, as he re-authors the master. The manuals try to suppress this secretarial authority by insisting that the secretary be entirely subsumed in the master, but the difficulty in formulating a way to preserve voice and data as they move through another person is apparent.

Tropes of the management of information, particularly mental inventories, secrecy, and the body as the repository of secrets, are repeated in domestic manuals of the period written for women. Marriage is part of the working relationship here, too; the housewife is married to her husband/master, and of course operates in a domestic realm. Domestic manuals are consequently concerned with the same issues of information circulation and storage that occupy secretary manuals, and the two genres devise similar systems for managing information in an effort to forestall the consequences of its excessive circulation. While domestic manuals reinforce conceptions of the late-sixteenth and early to mid-seventeenth-century household as a politicized realm, or microcosmic state, they show that women participated in the circulation of information and “secrets” in ways similar to those of the most politically powerful men. Further, I argue, such participation was publicly assigned and known. Secretarial texts obviously were written for men, just as domestic manuals were written for women, and their public function is to delimit gendered spheres of activity. But the similarities between their descriptions of the ways in which secretaries and housewives manage information show that a woman who positioned herself in a
secretarial role was not acting against gender restrictions. While she may not have freely styled herself a secretary, nevertheless an emphasis in her work on handling text rather than household goods did not entail a radical shift. Therefore a stance as a textual collaborator and transmitter for another, “primary,” voice allowed women to access forms of authorship offered by socially prescribed behaviors.

In Chapter 2, “The Secretarial Phoenix: Mary Sidney Herbert as Textual Manager,” I examine the ways in which Sidney Herbert positions herself as her brother Sir Philip Sidney’s textual manager and takes advantage of the opportunities for authorship that such a position offers. I specifically consider the pieces that describe her writing practice in relation to her brother: her preface to the 1593 folio edition of Sidney’s *Arcadia*, and her dedicatory poems—“Even now that Care,” and “To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Sir Phillip Sidney”—for the siblings’ verse translation of the Psalms. In these pieces, Sidney Herbert does not exploit her status as Sidney’s sister to authorize her work. Instead, she emphasizes her status as Sidney’s textual interface with his audience, a stance that allies her with the information-management figure of the secretary.

Sidney Herbert was no secretary; she was the wife of an earl and a highly placed aristocrat. But she was often a linguistic mediator; she was the editor of her brother’s *Arcadia*; she translated the Psalms, *Antonie*, and Philippe de Morney’s *Discours de la vie et de la mort*, and she was the final conveyor of the translated Psalms, a joint project with her brother, to Queen Elizabeth I. Sidney Herbert thus occupies the same transmittal space that a secretary occupies, and her paratextual pieces deal with the same issues that secretarial texts deal with. For instance, in her dedicatory poems to the Psalms, “Even now that Care” and “To the Angell Spirit,” she deals with the problem of duality of voice in ways similar to the ways in which
secretary manuals theorize the same problem, identifying her body and voice with her brother’s just as secretarial texts identify the secretary’s body with the master’s. She also constructs an relationship between herself and her brother that locates authorial agency in the transmittal space, and she takes advantage of this space to create a position that is at once single and double, subservient and yet in control of the word.

Herbert’s work as an editor of Sidney’s *Arcadia* also occupies the secretarial space of transmission. Not happy with Fulke Greville’s publication of the *New Arcadia* in 1590, she reworked and combined portions of the *Old Arcadia* and *New Arcadia* and published this version in 1593. She then oversaw the publication of her brother’s collected works in 1598. She was thus central in establishing Sidney’s literary persona, and her role places her on the secretarial threshold between metaphysical understandings of language (the idea of Sidney and his works, and the metaphysical concept of what Sidney represented) and material understandings of language (the texts themselves). Beyond mediating Sidney as an author to the public, she also produces him, because once production of language shifts to the secretary, the master’s (or, in this case, Sidney’s) name can no longer signify an authentically occupied identity. Thus speech and writing, and the production of Sidney in print, signify the loss of, and nostalgia for, full agency for him as an author. Sidney Herbert is responsible for the loss of Sidney as an author even as she recreates him, and here she uses secretarial space in a way the manuals fear: as a space to pirate the text away from her brother and re-author both it and him. Secretary manuals fear the secretary as an aggressor; it is what they constantly try to control. Sidney Herbert’s act sheds light on how secretaries can manipulate texts as well as authorial personae and identity. Far from being “shadow men,” figures who occupy secretarial space are really the ones in control of the word.
In Chapter 3, “Coming Out of the Closet: Marvell and the Absent Master,” I consider the ways in which Marvell explores ideas of secretaryship in his three Cromwell poems: “An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland” (1650), “The First Anniversary of the Government under O. C.” (1654), and “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.” (1658). These poems were written during times of political upheaval in England: the Civil War, the regicide of 1649, Cromwell’s rise to power and the establishment of the Protectorate, and Cromwell’s later, quasi-monarchical rule. Negotiating these perilous waters, Marvell in these poems conveys his desire to be in a secretarial relationship with Cromwell while yet protecting himself from the dangers that the master figure faces. Consequently, in these poems Marvell establishes Cromwell as a phenomenon who “breaks the mold” of previous statesmen and therefore necessitates modification of the secretary/master relationship in ways that remove the secretary from the master’s orbit yet maintain the secretary as one who may authentically represent the master. Marvell’s primary mechanism to achieve this modified secretarial role is to reduce the importance of presence and place in the secretarial construct. While earlier secretarial ideas relied on the presence of both secretary and master in specific, enclosed space—the closet—to cement their relationship and to guarantee the authenticity of secretarial representation of the master, Marvell makes Cromwell’s absence a prerequisite for his true representation; only when Cromwell is gone may we truly know him, Marvell suggests.

The modifications of the secretary/master relationship that Marvell develops in these poems are tied to the fact that the poems were written at times of heightened crisis, times that specifically provide a secretary with an opportunity for self-definition. “An Horatian Ode” was written at a time when no one knew who would emerge as a government leader; “The First Anniversary,” although ostensibly a celebratory poem, reflects the anxiety occasioned by
Cromwell’s serious carriage accident in 1654, which spurred thoughts of the crisis that would ensue if he were to die. “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.” deals with just that period after Cromwell’s death, when the future of his government was uncertain. In Day’s *The English Secretary*, such times of crisis for the master figure are particular times of opportunity for the secretary, whose actions to protect his master (or, in the case of the master’s death, to ensure that the latter’s will is carried out), define him as a secretary. Crisis for the master thus enables self-determination for the secretary as well as specific agency, and in these poems Marvell, as a would-be or actual secretary, takes advantage of this link and adapts secretarial constructs in response to the particular moment. In “An Horatian Ode,” Marvell considers a depersonalized form of service as he reconfigures types of possible master figures: the type represented by Charles I and the type represented by Cromwell. In “The First Anniversary,” Marvell is more particularly concerned with political succession in case of Cromwell’s death, and while the poem displays Marvell’s abilities to “write” a master figure, at the same time it places the secretarial figure in a more protected position, outside a closeted, personal relationship with the master. Finally, in “Upon the Death of O. C.,” Marvell reconsiders this position. In humanizing Cromwell by describing his relationship with his daughter, Marvell recalls a nostalgic version of intimacy analogous to late sixteenth-century models, with an emphasis on affinity and the sharing of hidden or secret selves. But later in the poem he returns to the distanced model he developed in “The First Anniversary,” which links the master’s absence to the truth of his representation and establishes the secretarial figure as the one who mediates that representation. Marvell thus enables the secretarial figure to authentically represent a master figure from a more public position.
Chapter 4, “‘And I perhaps am Secret’: Eve as Secretary in *Paradise Lost,*” argues that Milton’s reworkings of secretarial ideas pick up where Marvell leaves off. Marvell’s poems were written in the midst of the experiment of republicanism and the Protectorate, and they express a certain optimism regarding the ability of the secretary to constructively participate in that project; but *Paradise Lost* was completed after the republican experiment had failed. Seventeenth-century events had led, however, to new conceptions of the individual, and these new conceptions come into play as Milton modifies ideas of secretaryship. While for Marvell the primary problematic aspect of secretarial ideas is its traditional dependence on presence and place, for Milton the personal, other-self model of the secretary-master relationship itself is unworkable, because the individual autonomy and agency that Milton so values inevitably disrupt constructions that meld one figure into another. The secretarial figure who enacts this disruption is Eve, who unites secretarial activity with the feminine, a combination that results in narrative agency.

As critics have often observed, the circulation of information is one of *Paradise Lost*’s major themes, and several characters have secretary-like roles. The angels Raphael and Michael, for instance, act as God’s messengers and deliver information to Adam, while Adam himself transmits information to Eve. But no character participates in the foundational secretarial construct of the other self except Eve, who is Adam’s “other self,” made of him and for him. Her other-self status could be attributable only to her position as a wife, were it not for the fact that Eve is also responsible for the containment of information. Adam and Eve are charged with not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge; their task is to maintain structures that contain and limit information and its circulation. In a secretarial combination, Eve is thus both Adam’s other self and a mechanism for information management. This model fails, however, as Milton shows how
untenable the other-self construction is in practice. As early as Book 4, he undermines the
stability of the model, and while it seems to function well in Books 5 through 8, it fractures in
Book 9. Ultimately, Eve’s status as an autonomous individual conflicts with her other-self role
and leads her to make choices that Adam presumably would not make. Her choices result in the
Fall; she and Adam eat the forbidden fruit and knowledge is dispersed. However, as a result of
the Fall, Eve’s transformational abilities lead her to gain narrative agency, as her actions
increasingly drive the poem’s events. This narrative agency, no longer bound by another self,
becomes self-directed yet maintains secretarial cover, or invisibility.

Through the figure of Eve Milton demonstrates the ability of the theoretically submerged
figure to enter established structures of information control and redirect narrative flow.
Secretaries always have this power: they may write, rewrite, or otherwise manipulate
representations of the master, who is their material to maintain or to change. Secretarial texts
attempt to suppress this power, using the other-self model to guarantee that the secretary will not
transgress his given boundaries and that he will transmit information only in approved pathways.
But Eve, who at first is contained in Adam, as his other self, but who ultimately realizes the
transformational power of the secretary, crosses over secretarial boundaries when she refuses to
obey the dictum of the prevailing authority, which seeks to control the availability of knowledge.
In opening up the containment model and dispersing knowledge, Eve’s sin is the secretarial sin
that texts such as Day’s so assiduously guard against. Eve’s act exposes the fragility of the
established hierarchy, which is propped up by a system of suppressing individual ability in
service to the regime. By setting up this conflict, the poem investigates the ability of an
individual to challenge existing authority and to play a part in re-ordering it.
Finally, in the conclusion to the dissertation, I suggest that sixteenth-century notions of an invisible secretarial voice link to the late seventeenth-century development of an invisible novelistic narrative voice. Early omniscient or explanatory narrative voices, such as the third-party narrative voice that joins the two letter writers’ voices in Aphra Behn’s epistolary novel *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*, have much in common with secretarial theory. They are disembodied and anonymous, yet they carry authority as they act as transmitters and mediators of narrative action. As they intervene between reader and story, they become the same sort of transparent interface that the ideal secretary was. That many of these early narrative voices are feminine is a result of the gender fluidity of secretarial information-management activities, which more overtly transfer to women through seventeenth-century letter-writing manuals. These manuals, such as *The Secretary of Ladies* and *The Female Secretary*, associate women with secretarial processes and serve as forerunners of the epistolary novel. I thus suggest that the genealogical tree of the novelistic omniscient narrator has roots in sixteenth-century information technology.
Notes

1 Italian secretary manuals include Torquato Tasso’s *Del Secretario* (1587); Guilio Cesare Capaccio’s *Il secretario* (1589); Panfilo Persico *Del segretario* (1620); Gabriele Zinano’s *Il segretario* (1625); and Franscesco Sansovino’s *L’avvocato e il segretario* (1564). Other authors who published manuals included Andrea Nati (1588); Giambattista Guarini (1594); Angelo Ingegneri (1594); and Vincenzo Gragnigna (1620). See Douglas Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries: Humanism and Professions in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002) chapter 6, for a discussion of Italian secretary manuals.


3 In a 1569 letter from Nicholas White to Sir William Cecil, White reported: “Edward Waterhouse, Secretary to the Lord Deputy [of Ireland], arrived here, furnished with all instructions as well concerning his master’s private causes as also touching the whole state of that realm. And as he is wise, so the writer knows him to be an inward man with his master, and the same in effect that Mr. Allington is to Cecil in the affairs of his office.” Qtd. in Richard C. Barnett, *Place, Profit, and Power: A Study of the Servants of William Cecil, Elizabethan Statesman* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1969) 29.

5 By the mid- to late-seventeenth century, the term “secretary” was also frequently associated with women. Hannah Woolley describes herself as a secretary in her manual *The Gentlewoman’s Companion* (1673) and letter-writing manuals called “secretaries” were increasingly written for a female audience.


10 Rambuss 43-46.


13 Rhodes and Sawday, “Paperworlds” 7.


16 Sherman, *John Dee* xiii.

17 Rhodes and Sawday, “Paperworlds” 9-11.


21 Wall 4.


24 Aylmer 460.


27 For private, personal secretaries, the other-self model could still apply. But Marvell and Milton both worked as government secretaries, and their modifications of the secretarial model concern secretaries in relation to sovereign powers.


See Walker; Haselkorn and Travitsky.


diary writing, question and answer periodicals, and other forms. But I focus on secretaries because I see them as a link between earlier secretarial ideology and fictional narrative.


38 Faunt 502.

39 Day 103.

40 Faunt 500, 501.

41 Rambuss 43.
Chapter One

Inward Men: Secretaries, Housewives, and Information Management

In “A Treatise of the Office of a Councellor and Principall Secretarie to her Majestie” (1592), Robert Beale recounts that “... upon the death of Mr. Secretarie Walsingham all his papers and bookes both publicke and private weare seazed on and carried away, perhaps by those who would be loath to be used so themselves.”\(^1\) Beale’s concern is with the loss of public records along with Walsingham’s private papers; the two, he admonishes, should have been kept separate. But the brief exemplum points to something a bit more disturbing: the reason Walsingham’s papers were carted off. As William H. Sherman points out, “There were in the early modern period deep-seated uncertainties about the power of information and those who possessed it.”\(^2\) Such uncertainties had diverse roots. The rise of print technologies and the resulting division between the body, or the hand, and the text sparked anxieties about the legitimacy of print reproduction. If one hand produced a manuscript, one could be sure of its “parentage” and thus its legitimacy; if a printing press produced many copies, one was less sure of an uninterrupted link between source and text.\(^3\) Anxieties also were spurred by a sense of the sheer overabundance of information; simply put, too many books. Historian Ann Blair has described the techniques early modern scholars employed to cope with information overload and makes it clear that there was a prevailing sense and agreement among scholars that information was proliferating too fast to comfortably keep up with.\(^4\) This proliferation came to be seen as dangerous; Adrien Baillet later wrote, in 1685, “We have reason to fear that the multitude of books which grows every day in a prodigious fashion will make the following centuries fall into a state as barbarous as that of the centuries that followed the fall of the Roman Empire.”\(^5\)
Information, then, and the ways in which it was circulated, were a subject for scrutiny and concern. While absolutely necessary, information was also dangerous and its legitimacy, or trustworthiness, often questionable. It is not surprising, then, that texts began to deal in more detail with figures who were themselves intimately connected with information, in particular the figure of the secretary. A secretary, whether a highly placed government official or an employee in a private household, wrote letters, kept records, and assisted his master, prince, or monarch in various ways. He was often a close advisor, and early modern texts characterize him as the keeper of his master’s secrets. But another of his primary functions was the materialization of his master’s will, or voice, into text, and the transmission of that text. The secretary therefore is a pivotal figure in the circulation of information and has access to the power that information confers. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the secretary became the subject of treatises and proto-manuals that are both descriptive and prescriptive; they describe the secretary’s position and duties and prescribe his ideal behavior, attitudes, and relationship with his master. Although their authors range from a secretary of state to assistants to secretaries of state to secretaries in private households, the texts’ purposes are the same: to delineate the processes of information management and circulation, and in so doing contain and control those processes. All the texts address issues of information’s security, authenticity, containment, and accessibility, and one strategy they employ to achieve these goals is the formulation of a way to stabilize a dynamic relationship between two voices, so that the two voices may speak as one. Consequently these texts shed heretofore unexamined light on early modern ideas of forms of authorship that are based in collaboration, cooperation, and coordination, and that are closely tied to information management.
Although the secretarial texts were written by and for men, contemporary domestic manuals written for women make it clear that women, too, were expected to handle large amounts of information, and in markedly similar ways. Female realms of information included household management and economy, cooking, and medicine and “physicke,” and the binding of these realms into reference books and manuals is itself an act of information transfer, with the mistress of the household poised as the pivotal figure of further transfer and practice for the benefit of the family unit. What’s striking in the rhetoric of these manuals is the fact that women’s relationships with information and their position vis-à-vis a master figure are construed in language and metaphors that are similar to those used in the secretarial texts. Such similarity suggests that women were not seen as having a radically different relation with information but were expected to participate in its collection, retention, and circulation in much the same ways as men. Information management, and particularly the transmission of information, therefore do not appear to be specifically gendered spheres of activity but part of a social context of general participation by both men and women in information circulation.

In this chapter, I examine early modern secretarial texts and argue that despite their attempts to formulate writing relationships that stabilize meaning and ensure its security, their efforts to control and contain information processes actually reveal its instability and the shifting ownership and authorship of text. Further, because of women’s participation in the flow of information, the forms of authorship that are tied to information management are also open to women. As secretaries do, they achieve authorship through accessing the potential to assume a position of primary linguistic or textual power that occurs when information moves from place to place, or from source to source.
Secretaries were highly visible in early modern England and they operated among the lowest levels of society as well as among the highest. Criminals obtained false documents from cronies who could read and write, and who were termed “secretaries” for this service; on the legitimate side, secretaries were employed by churchmen, families, aristocratic households, and royalty. Under the Tudors, the position of the monarch’s principal secretary had risen to one of wealth and power. Stephen Gardiner and Thomas Cromwell, under Henry VIII, were highly influential principal secretaries, as were William Cecil and Francis Walsingham under Queen Elizabeth I. A secretary handled his employer’s correspondence, wrote letters, and transcribed documents. He kept records and files, and, if an advisor, formulated policy and saw to its implementation. Principal secretaries for the monarch, and other secretaries for powerful individuals, ran intelligence networks and gathered information both at home and abroad. Secretaries could be mere copyists, but in general they were valued for what they could contribute as well as their ability to write clearly. Secretaries to great households were literate and intelligent, and they were often active in their employer’s political activities, if the latter had ambitions for advancement at court. The degree of intimacy between employer and secretary could vary, but often the relationship was very close and the secretary was a trusted friend and councilor. In fact, the position of the monarch’s principal secretary had its roots in a private relationship of the king’s household. Originally a secretary was a friend “a secretis,” someone close to the king whom the latter trusted to carry dispatches, convey the monarch’s wishes, and undertake confidential missions. The secretary was the keeper of the privy seal and, later, the signet, the monarch’s most private seal. From a position in the king’s household, the secretary gradually became a public servant of the state; the office of the king’s principal secretary first became prominent in the reign of Henry VIII.
As secretaries who were advisors to the crown became more publicly associated with statecraft, more thoughts on, and analysis of, their position became to appear in texts. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli, who had been a secretary in the Florentine government, wrote of “the secretaries that a prince must choose.” Many Italian texts and manuals on secretaryship followed, including Torquato Tasso’s *Del Secretario* (1587), Giulio Cesare Capaccio’s *Il secretario* (1589), and Panfilo Persico’s *Del segretario* (1620). These Renaissance authors looked to classical models for secretarial behavior and regarded a secretarial career as a ladder to success. Certainly a secretarial position could be lucrative, through information trading and control of access to highly placed employers; secretaries such as Cecil and Walsingham enjoyed immense wealth and power. But secretaryship had its hazards, as a secretary’s fortunes were tied to those of his employer. If the latter fell out of favor, the secretary was at risk, too. Secretaries to monarchs in the Tudor period often had vaguely delineated duties so they could exercise discretionary powers as the instrument of the royal prerogative when dealing with foreign princes, but this also could be hazardous. As Florence Evans notes, principal secretaries constantly exceeded the bare limits of their official authority, but if they made a mistake and did something the monarch did not approve they could be harshly punished, even executed.

Secretarial texts in English began to appear toward the late sixteenth century, spurred no doubt by what John Archer calls the “culture of surveillance” at the Elizabethan court. Archer argues that the Elizabethan age and its aftermath was an age that saw the growth of a complex court culture and the first large-scale intelligence networks in England, and certainly Walsingham ran an extensive spy network in the years after 1585. Spying became a part of the monarch’s sovereign control, and courtiers were aware they were continually under observation. Their own observation of others, however, could be turned to advantage; information was
currency and a means to advancement. R. Malcolm Smuts writes, “An aspiring place seeker had to know how to gather news and analyze political intrigues, whether as an ambassador reporting on the inner workings of a foreign court or as a domestic ‘intelligencer.’” In this context, secretaries, closely associated with both information and intelligence, were apt subjects for description and definition.

The first edition of Angel Day’s *The English Secretary, or Methode of Writing of Epistles and Letters* appeared in 1586. Robert O. Evans, in the preface to his edition of Day’s later 1599 volume, calls Day “a man of letters” who wrote, besides *The English Secretary*, poetry and a pastoral romance. Day also apparently worked as a secretary, referring to the post as “that which my selfe have practiced in place of service,” although we do not know for whom. His book was popular; three editions followed the first before a “newly revised and corrected” edition came out in 1599, followed by four additional editions before the book’s final printing in 1626. As a secretary was one skilled in letter writing, Day’s book was primarily aimed at those who wished to improve their letter-writing skills. The 1599 edition, the version referred to in this chapter, consists of three parts. The first and longest section discusses the epistolary art and presents numerous examples, or templates, of letters a secretary might use, merely changing the wording according to personal circumstance. The second section is a discourse on rhetorical principles and figures of speech, first substantially expanded for the 1595 edition. Finally, in the third section, Day shifts his focus from the ways in which to write letters to the person who writes the letters, in a 32-page treatise titled “Of the partes, place and Office of a Secretorie,” in which Day discusses a secretary’s role in the household and his relationship with his master.

Other texts dealing with secretaries followed Day’s 1586 foray into the subject: Nicholas Faunt’s “Discourse Touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate, &c.” (1592); Robert
Beale’s “Instructions for a Principall Secretary, observed by R. B. for Sir Edwarde Wotton: Anno Domini 1592” (1592); John Herbert’s “Duties of a Secretary” (1600); and Robert Cecil’s “The State and Dignitie of a Secretarie of Estates Place” (1600). Faunt served as secretary to Walsingham from 1580 on and was intimately acquainted with the workings of the principal secretary (of state), the secretaries who in turn served him, and the Privy Council. Faunt’s discourse is briefer than Day’s but touches on many of the same points, particularly as regards the relationship between the secretary and the master. Beale was Walsingham’s brother-in-law and occasionally served as Walsingham’s stand-in when the latter was abroad. Beale, too, had first-hand experience dealing with the queen and the Privy Council, and his treatise is similar to Faunt’s in its delineation of the administrative areas with which the secretary of state must be conversant. Herbert was appointed to the post of second secretary in approximately 1600, and Cecil was principal secretary after 1596. Cecil’s manuscript, like Beale’s, was written as advice for another administrator; in Cecil’s case, his text was addressed to the Earl of Bedford, who had been appointed governor of Berwick. Day’s advice, written for public consumption, is mainly for secretaries in affluent private households; Faunt, Beale, Herbert, and Cecil, whose texts are private or semi-private, are concerned with the secretary as a statesman and his relationship with the sovereign. Despite these differences, all the texts’ formulations of the master/secretary relationship are remarkably similar.

Some of these texts are more practical than others. Faunt, Beale, and Herbert outline the main bureaucratic duties of a principal secretary; Faunt also goes into the structure of the principal secretary’s secretariat, with an emphasis on methods of organizing and recording the masses of information flowing through the office. Beale, on the other hand, is more concerned with the secretary’s precarious position as a go-between and offers quantities of advice on self-
protection when dealing with the Privy Council and the queen. Day and Cecil are both more conceptual and are primarily concerned with the relationship between the secretary and his master, framing a homosocial bond of duty and affection that becomes a trusting friendship. In fact, for Day the secretary’s trustworthiness is his most important qualification for the position; Day loftily dismisses the notion that the practical skill of writing might be a secretary’s chief qualification: “So then am I not of the opinion of the multitude, who hold that the... ableitie of well writing or ordering the pen, is the matter that maketh the Secretorie... but that... the person thereunto named... containeth the chiest title of credite, and place of greatest assurance that may be reposed.”16 Faunt as well touches on the close relationship between master and secretary. Taken together, therefore, these five works give us an overall view of the secretary that combines the practical and the theoretical through descriptive and prescriptive formulations of his duties, attitudes, and behavior.

Critical studies on secretaries and secretarial texts have included work on secretaries as significant figures in political and intellectual history. This work has recognized the liminal social and political space that secretaries occupied and has revealed early modern concerns with secretaries’ political influence.17 Other work on secretarial texts has studied them for what they reveal about early modern subject formation. Richard Rambuss has argued that Edmund Spenser used the secretarial model to advertise his professional capabilities, and Jonathan Goldberg has written on textual production.18 Rambuss and Goldberg both see the physical and metaphysical spaces that the texts describe—particularly the secretary’s closet—as constructive spaces for the emerging subject. Work related to this focuses more closely on male relations and the closet, suggesting the closet is productive of multiple selves.19
My work focuses on issues of secretarial authorship, a topic Rambuss touches on but which is not his primary focus. Because secretaries were men, and because secretarial texts were written by men for a male audience, other critical work has naturally considered secretarial practice as exclusively male. In this dissertation, however, I propose that we can extend our sense of who participated in secretarial information management by recognizing that women, although not designated “secretaries,” participated in information circulation in ways similar to those described in secretarial texts. Therefore, I argue, women as well as men had access to the authorial opportunities that attach to information management. In secretarial texts, secretaries are not supposed to be authorial; a secretary is construed as a transparent interface who speaks and writes his master’s will. The master figure has the only sanctioned authorial agency. However, through their efforts to contain the secretary in such a submerged position, the texts reveal their awareness of the fact that the secretary does have opportunities for authorial agency; that he can, in fact, disrupt the systems of information circulation he is supposed to seamlessly participate in and that he can alter or influence meaning in its transmission. Secretarial texts’ strategy to suppress this secretarial agency is to create the writing pair of the master and secretary as a dialogic unit from which only one voice legitimately emerges. Therefore the ways in which the secretarial texts formulate the processes of the secretary and master’s compositional activity, and the ways in which they frame the master/secretary relationship, reveal important early modern ideological and methodological approaches to joint writing practices.

The secretarial texts are not overtly about collaboration; indeed, one of their primary objects is to maintain the idea that, no matter how close an advisor the secretary is, or how much leeway the master allows him in composing letters and handling information, the master’s voice is always the voice that speaks in unadulterated form through the secretary. This ideological
adherence to a “one voice” model, however, conflicts with the actual practice of having two men intimately involved in a shared relationship with information and its textual production. The interplay between master and secretary, secretary and audience, and secretary and sources, and the secretary’s position as a hub in this complex interplay, offer enormous scope for shifting voice, control, and selection. At times, the secretary becomes an author, through the fact that his participation in these systems of information creates meaning in conjunction with, in addition to, and at times dominant over the supposedly single, pure, and authentic voice of the monarch or master. Ultimately, the secretarial texts, in trying to articulate ways in which two voices can become one, expose ways in which two voices compete as well as cooperate through interactive writing practice.

In general, the secretarial texts present highly idealized portraits of secretary/master relationships as a way to address very real concerns about information and its material channels of circulation. These concerns include security, authenticity and authority, noncorruption of data, containment, storage, and accessibility. The secretarial authors are also worried about indiscriminate circulation, which threatens both the meaning and value of information. I have already mentioned Blair’s observations that information overload was perceived as a threatening, destabilizing phenomenon, and this perception may have been exacerbated by the fact that the administrative apparatus of England’s government was in fact rapidly changing, growing larger and with not-clearly-defined positions—such as that of the secretary of state—assuming greater power and influence. Given this changing landscape, the circulation of information was increasingly difficult to control, and the stable meaning of information that entered these widened channels of information flow increasingly difficult to maintain. This could have serious repercussions; stable meaning and authority were necessary to maintain the power of the state,
diplomatic relations, and the structures of authority. Certainly the secretaries who wrote on the subject were well aware of the pressures on meaning, recognizing that it depended on its context and modes of expression. Day rails against “the venome of flatterie,” for flatterers and “private whisperers” “[impugn] the plaine and simple drifts of honest meaning.”

For Day, meaning takes on different forms—honest or dishonest, complex or simple—depending on its mode of delivery. Further on, he writes that a secretary, no matter how sophisticated a writer he may be, must “frame his penne and order of practice to pursue that form of writing, which plainest meaning and aptest speech, hath in common deliverie,” although he acknowledges this can be difficult for one “being wise in discourse.”

“Plainest” meaning here becomes a goal, but it is also a matter of judgment, for someone must decide what constitutes the “plainest” meaning, or what is “common deliverie.” While trying to confine message-bearers and writers to a narrow path of “honesty” and “plainness,” Day reveals that meaning easily slips into other forms in the process of transmission. Beale, too, is aware of meaning’s mutability. Recounting an anecdote in which Henry VIII heavily edited a “wrightinge” made by the secretary William Petre, Beale concludes, “The Princes themselves know best their owne meaninge and ther must be time and experience to acquaintance them with their humours before a man can doe anie acceptable service.”

Beale here upholds the authority of the source, the monarch, while suggesting that a secondary source can never be “best” in understanding, can never match the monarch’s level of meaning.

These ideas, that some quality of meaning is inevitably lost simply by the act of transfer, and that meaning changes depending on the mode of transfer, predate the twentieth-century recognition that “the medium is the message,” but are no less keen in their perception that transmission reshapess content. Three hundred years later, the post-structuralist Friedrich A.
Kittler posited that every material channel of transfer, or “mediality,” produces noise and confusion beyond the information it carries; the content stands in relation to this “non-meaning” and is defined by the difference between the two. Modern information theory is also aware that noise surrounds information dissemination but holds that information may be reliable despite such noise if it is sufficiently redundant. Beale and Day also differentiate between a core meaning and what happens around it in the act of transfer, and their awareness of the instability of meaning in relation to its “noise” of transfer is a part of their anxiety surrounding information technologies in general.

This anxiety extends to issues of security. Beale in particular recognizes the irresistible, even erotic, lure of information. He describes the secretary’s “speciall Cabinett,” in which he keeps his private papers and “secret Intelligences,” and instructs the secretary to distinguish the “boxes or tills rather by letters than by the names of the Countryes or places, keepinge that only unto himselfe, for the names may inflame a desire to come by such thinges.” On the other hand, information may be too “locked up,” or constricted; Beale is concerned with finding a balance between having too much information available and too little. If too many records become “more private than weare fitt,” there is “no means used of instruction and bringinge up of others in Knowledge to be able to serve her Majestie.” Some information is necessary for instruction, to “see what was donne before.” Beale’s anxieties about security, in conjunction with his concerns that not all information be inaccessible, lead him to wish for clearer boundaries between what should be public and what should be private, and to bemoan the rape of public records along with private papers when Walsingham’s papers were carted away, in the passage noted at the beginning of this chapter.
Such concerns about information lead to multiple strategies to address them. Because the most worrisome aspect of information management is content’s vulnerability when being transferred and circulated, one of the secretarial texts’ primary strategies is to construe the secretary—a figure whose actual specific purpose is to facilitate the transfer and circulation of information—as a figure who, in the texts’ idealized portrait, has very little to do with transfer and circulation. Instead, the texts minimize transfer between master and secretary by constructing the relationship between the two as so seamlessly united that it obviates the necessity for transfer between them; and they minimize transfer between the secretary and third parties by emphasizing his role as a depository, a trusted associate who keeps his master’s secrets.

As the texts focus on the relationship between a secretary and his master, they delineate a bond that is so physically and mentally close that it “enacts a symbiosis of master and secretary so complete it becomes difficult to determine where the thoughts of one let off and the other begin.” Secretaries are physically close to their masters; Day advises the secretary to “bee always as neere and as readie as may bee,” and he notes “it is needful to be always at hand,” but this physical closeness is surpassed by their mental unity. Day writes that the secretary’s “conversing, his neerenese and attendance, turneth then to an affection, and this . . . maketh at last a contunation” and “a most perfect uniting.” The secretary becomes subsumed in the master; he must “utterlie to relinquishe anie affectation to his owne doings, or leaning herein to anie private iudgement or fantasie,” for his “pen . . . is not his owne.” Day goes so far as to call the master “the disposer of his [the secretary’s] very thoughts, yea he is the Soveraigne of all his desires.” Faunt describes the secretary as the master’s “owne penne, his mouth, his eare, and keeper of his most secret Cabinett,” adjuring, “[I]f the servant take this charge in hand he must
give himself wholly to his Master.”

By blurring boundaries and erasing difference between secretary and master, the secretarial texts enable two voices to become one, both eliminating a sense of transfer between them and assuring that the material production of text by the secretary does not alter or corrupt the mental conception of the master. Unity is thus a means of security, as it reduces transfer and all its attendant risks.

The secretarial texts further reduce transfer by emphasizing the secretary’s role as a depository and repository for information, rather than a transmitter. All of them stress that a secretary is the keeper of his master’s secrets. Day, noting that the word “secretary” has its basis in the word “secret,” calls a secretary “a keeper or conserver of the secret unto him committed.” Faunt states, “In a principall servant to the secretarie, secrecie and faithfulnes bee cheifly required,” placing discretion and trustworthiness above other qualifications. For this reason, Faunt limits the number of desirable secretaries for a principal to one: “by experience I canne say that the multitude of servantes in this kinde is hurtful and of late yeares hath bredded much confusion with want of secrecie and dispatch,” he writes. Day writes of the importance of secret physical space, identifying this with the body: “By this reason, we do call the most secrete place in the house, appropriate unto our owne private studies, and wherein we repose and deliberate by deepe consideration of all our weightiest affaires, a Closet . . . a place where our dealings of importance are shut up, a room proper and peculiar to our selves.” The secretary, as a repositor of secrets, is also a closet: “he is but the closet, whereof another hath both the key, use and commandement, that he ought therein to be as a thicke plated door, where through . . . no man may enter, but by the locke which is the tongue, and that to be of such efficacie, as whereof no counterfeit key should bee able to make a breach.” As the closet, the body becomes a physical space wherein reside knowledge and secrets. This is closely allied with the secretary’s
role as an archivist; Faunt describes how the secretary must see that papers are “dispatched to be removed into some Chest or place, lest confusion or losse of some of them growe through an excedinge and unnecesarie multitude of papers as hath beene sene in that place.” The secretary also has to store information in himself, as Faunt says “hee may also bee a remembrancer of all such matters as are of most necessarie dispatch.” A secretary is thus one who is less a transmitter of information than one who holds it and, importantly, keeps it from others. He becomes more associated with secrets, private space, safety, and security through noncirculation than with dissemination. Further, while queer readings of the closet generally focus on its role in subject formation and the construction of identity, these constructions of the closet tend to erase the secretary even as they identify his body with the space of the closet. The secretary is simultaneously the master’s body and the closet, which at least fractures rather than supports his subjectivity. In my reading the closet is a site of tension between being and non-being for the secretary.

The texts extend this mystification (through its conjunction with the secret), of the secretary’s private space to the secretary himself. In both Day and Cecil’s texts, the secretary’s actual duties are obscured by a cloud of vagueness. Cecil writes, “All servants of Princes deale upon strong and warie authoritie and warrant . . . only a Secretary hath noe warrant or Commission, noe not in matters of his own greatest particulars, but the vertue and word of his Soveraigne.” According to Cecil, this absence of warrant or commission is necessitated by the wiliness of foreign princes; Cecil writes, “For such is the multipicitie of actions, and variable motions and intents of Forraigne princes, and their dayly practices, and in many parts and places, as Secretarie’s can never have any commission, so long and universall as to secure them.” But while it is true that the office was in a state of transition and a secretary’s duties varied
depending on what the sovereign needed him to do, it is also true that sources such as Beale, Faunt, and Herbert describe quite concretely the organization of the office and list in some detail the secretary’s areas of knowledge and authority, which include foreign service, treaties, and negotiations; and domestic service, defence, courts, and revenues. Therefore the vagueness of Cecil and Day, while supporting the necessary leeway of the office, may also be read as part of their texts’ strategy to address anxieties about the secretary’s role as an information manager. If his role can be mystified and highly idealized, it again diverts attention from the realities of his post—the constant to-and-fro of information circulation, the trading of information for profit, and his association with socially suspect elements such as spies and informers—and focuses on those qualities which establish him as a safe and secure participant in information’s flow. The texts’ characterization of the secretary as a figure of elevated trustworthiness, honesty, and virtue obscures worrisome realities of information circulation while it enhances the bond between master and secretary, which guarantees authenticity and accuracy.

The metaphors the texts use support their construction of master and secretary as a unit. Metaphors of the body, such as Faunt’s references to the secretary as his master’s “ownt penne, his mouth, his eye, his eare . . .” and as the “mouth of the councell of State,” present the secretary’s dissected body parts as appendages of the master, not only employed in his service but wholly operational at his will; the secretary’s mouth, eyes, and ears are the master’s own. This assimilation reinforces ideas of the master and secretary as one unit and reduces the secretary’s status as intermediary. Any information taken in through eyes and ears goes directly to the master, and any information given out through pen and mouth comes directly from the master. Metaphors of the closet similarly reinforce ideas of the secretary as a secure repository of information and secrets, minimizing his role as a transmitter. Day, after asserting that the closet
is “the most secrete place in the house, . . . where our dealings of importance are shut up,” goes on to emphasize the closet’s special status of separateness: “In this place we doe solitarie and alone shut up our selves, of this we have the key our selves, and the use thereof alone doe onlie appropriate unto our selves.”

Day lays out his argument that, if the closet is the space which holds secrets, and the secretary’s purpose is to be the “keeper or conserver of the secret unto him committed,” it follows that, “in respect of the covertness, safetie and assurance in him reposed, and not otherwise, the partie serving in such place may be called a Secretorie.”

The essence of secretaryship here is located in a specific, static place, not in any idea of circulation or transmission; the secretary is like a closet, and later on he metaphorically is a closet: “he is but the closet, whereof another hath . . . the key.” The rhetoric of separate, private space, locked and secure, establishes the secretary’s body as an inviolable repository.

These metaphors of the dissected body and the body as closet address concerns about the authenticity of text produced by the secretary. By equating his physical body and its parts with the body and parts of the master, they resolve the problematic division between the head (and its metaphysical understanding of language and text) and the hand (and its material production of language and text). Because the secretary, as the hand, is divorced from the head, the master, and occupies the border space between conception and textual production in which meaning can be lost or altered, metaphors of physical unity reposition the secretary, removing him from a borderline position and conjoining him with the textual source even as they construe him as the producing parts of mouth and pen. Metaphors of the closet continue this process, enclosing the secretary with the master and the master’s secrets in a space accessible only to the two of them. The security and separateness of this space ensure the secretary’s status as a reproductive device that can produce an exact copy of the master.
Such theoretical and metaphorical strategies of an idealized unity between a secretary and master bound together by shared secrets in enclosed space—strategies designed to allay concerns about information’s security, containment, accuracy, and authenticity—are underpinned by real threats of severe consequences for secretarial transgressions. Secretaries to highly placed individuals could find themselves in precarious positions indeed, as any misstep could be construed as treasonous, and the threat of execution constantly lurked. It is worth noting that the title of Cecil’s “The State and Dignitie of a Secretarie of Estates Place” extends to add “With the care and peril thereof.” Cecil ends his idealized portrait of a secretary/master relationship grounded in mutual trust, loyalty, and affection with a blunt warning: “[I]f he [the secretary] be not worthy of trust, he is lesse worthy of life; and a suspicion of a secretary is both a tryall and Condemnation and a Judgement.”

Beale, extremely conscious of the secretary’s risk, emphasizes throughout his text the importance of keeping careful records, documenting approvals, and obtaining sign-offs and receipts. He is well aware that the secretary’s position as a go-between makes him vulnerable on all sides. For royal secretaries, the Privy Council may be a support, but it can also pose a threat; Beale advises:

> When there shal be anie unpleasant matter to be imparted to her Majestie from the Councell . . . let not the burden be layed on you alone but let the rest ioyne with you. Excuse yourself by your yeares and for lack of experience; do not overthrowe yourselfe for anie of their pleasures . . . for if anie thinge be disliked, it will be said that it was the Secretarie’s doinge, that they signed for companie, that the lettre was brought to them, &c.

Keenly aware that the messenger is the most likely scapegoat, Beale would have the secretary maintain a delicate balance: “Learne before your accessse her Majestie’s disposicion by some in
the Privie Chamber with whom you must keep credit . . . and yet yeilde not to much to their importunitie for sutes, for so you may be blamed, nevertheless pleasure them when convenientlie you may.”

The Queen’s volatility must always be kept in mind; Beale writes, “When her highnes is angrie or not well disposed trouble her not with anie matter . . . unles extreame necessitie urge it.”

By these practices, and other safeguards, Beale hopes the secretary will avoid such a fate as befell secretary William Davison, who obtained Elizabeth’s signature on Mary Stuart’s death warrant; he was later sent to the Tower as culpable for Mary’s death, which Elizabeth, after the fact, claimed she had never intended. The secretarial texts thus combine ideal guarantees for the protection of information based in relationships with real guarantees based in fear of reprisals and punishment.

It is clear that these manuals are dedicated to the one-voice model of authorship, despite the fact that the secretary-master relationship is a collaborative one. The texts themselves, mindless to their self-contradictions, point out that the secretary is more than just a mindless reproductive instrument: above and beyond “well writing,” he carries “a purpose of much weightier effect.”

Cecil compares the private councils between a monarch and the secretary of state to “the mutual affections of two lovers,” and his idea of mutuality underscores the transactive nature of the two men’s work. But despite this theoretical dedication to a single voice, and all their efforts to construct ways in which two voices can speak as one, the texts do give us indications of how that transactive and collaborative process worked. They also show us the tensions at play in such interactive practice and reveal ways in which the secretary/master relationship, far from always being the ideal harmony the texts theorize, was at times fraught with the difficult dynamics of a collaborative situation in which clearly assigned single authorship was always ostensibly the goal, but in which such single authorship could be
dangerously unstable. Such tensions expose the opportunities for authorship and agency available to the secretary, despite his supposed subsumption in the master.

The ideal collaboration the texts describe is a form of textual coupling that erases one of the participants to serve economic and political power. Cecil echoes that the secretary is an extension of his master when he writes that the secretary of state should be “created by himselfe [the king] and of his owne raising.” Beale relates how Henry VIII told Sir William Petre, after editing his work, “not to take it in evill parte, for it is I, sayde he, that made both Crumwell, Wriotheslie and Pagett good Secretaries and so must I doe to thee.” Since the goal is to erase duality, the master or monarch is firmly established as the “maker” of the secretary and his voice. The maker’s voice signifies, while the secretary’s voice does not.

In practice, however, there was more interactive cooperative work—a textual back-and-forth—as well as levels of resistance and negotiation on both sides. Beale in particular outlines these processes. When he advises the secretary, “Be not dismayed with the controlements and amendments of such things which you shall have done, for you shall have to doe with a Princesse of great wisdom, learninge, and experience,” his stance of humility masks an editorial process of amendment and revision. The previously quoted anecdote in which Henry VIII boasts that he made secretaries also notes that the king “crossed and blotted out manye thinges in a writinge which he [Sir William Petre] had made,” pointing to the inky processes of revision that underlie the idea that the secretary is osmotically the monarch’s mouthpiece. Beale further advises, “Use no peremtorie contestacions or replies but deliver your opinion simplie and the commodities and inconveniencies that are like to ensue on both sides,” again drawing attention to the secretary’s role as advisor and collaborator. In this back-and-forth relationship, the secretary has opportunities for authorial agency himself: he may be directed to draft a document on his own or
to review the letters written by the French and Latin secretaries, on the assumption that “her Majestie’s meaninge and humor shalbe better knowne unto you than them.”⁵⁷ At such a point of knowing and implementing the monarch’s will, the secretary becomes the one who “makes” the monarch.

The secretary may, as Beale advises him, press back against unconsidered obedience. Beale’s emphasis on sign-offs, for instance, reveals both the negotiation and resistance that enter the collaborative relationship. He writes:

If you be commanded to write anie matter of importance, doe what you can to procure that the same may be done by a speciall lettre from her Majestie herselfe, or if that may not be, sett it downe in writinge. Make as though you doubted whether you had conceived her highnes’ mind or not and reade it before her and alter it as she will have it. Keepe the Minute and a note of the daye, least afterwardes you be charged with it . . . ⁵⁸

In its request for a “speciall lettre” that would document the queen’s request this is, of course, negotiation for the sake of self-protection, but it is also resistance to being entirely subsumed in the monarch/master. Beale makes it clear that, at a certain point, the risks to a secretary outweigh the benefits; his advice to clearly separate from the monarch and draw authorial boundaries at that point displays the actual binary dynamic at work, not the theoretical unity. Furthermore, accommodation, coordination, and resistance operate on both sides of this dynamic.

This is not to say that Beale, or any of the secretary-authors, wants recognition for his contribution. On the contrary, when Beale pushes back against the fiction of seamless unity, he wants protection, not recognition. In asking the queen to provide written evidence that he is writing a potential powder-keg of a document at her request, he is asking for certification that
“his pen in this action is not his owne,” and here ownership and authorship intersect. Although the public construction and perception of the secretary/master relationship always assign authorship and authority to the master, the master retains the ability to “disown” his authorship and assign it to the secretary, destabilizing the entire secretary/master construct and also the concept that the voice that emerges from secretary/master activity is always the master’s voice. It opens the door for secretarial agency and authority, and publicly assigned authority and agency, at that; not that Beale wants either, but the possibility is there. While the other secretary-authors rely, at least in their texts, on trust, honesty, and affection to forestall any such betrayal by the master, Beale’s bluntness about what the secretary really needs to protect himself reveals the behind-the-scenes reality. The means of this protection—sign-offs, letters, records of dates, and so on—are devices by which to stabilize ownership and, consequently, authorship, and to create an author who cannot be uncoupled from his words, even if he does not actually write them. In the collaborative relationship between master and secretary, therefore, authorship is revealed as reassignable and unstable, capable of being passed back and forth over boundaries that may at times be sharply delineated, rather than blurred.

The secretary’s participation in networks of information technologies, particularly his mediality as a medium of transfer, offers authorial scope and the opportunity to generate meaning. As an instrument of mediation, the secretary is at once formed by and formative of discursive networks. Kittler, in his work on discourse networks—“the medical, technological, scientific, and literary discursive systems at a given historical moment that connect apparently disparate subjects such as writing technologies to the formation of human subjectivity”—generalized the concept of the medium, applying it to all domains of cultural exchange. In so doing, he reclassified literature as medially constituted, a means for processing, storing, and
transmitting data. Given that literature is medially constituted, its meaning is the product of selection and “rarefaction.” Here we connect with the secretary, who as the material channel of production is productive of meaning. David E. Wellbery, writing on Kittler, summarizes his position thus:

All media of transmission require a material channel, and the characteristic of every material channel is that beyond—and, as it were, against—the information it carries, it produces noise and nonsense. What we call literature, in other words, stands in an essential . . . relation to a non-meaning, which it must exclude. It is defined not by what it means, but by the difference between meaning and non-meaning, information and noise, that its medial possibilities set into place. Kittler’s idea relates to literature, but the same idea has been applied to information networks. Claude Shannon, as I have said, makes the same distinction between noise and content in his law of reliable communication, although his focus is on the accuracy of content. But the idea that content’s meaning is shaped by its difference from the “noise and nonsense” generated by its transmission zeroes in on the transmission process, rather than previous conception or articulation, as the arena that produces meaning. Applying this to the secretary, we see that his position as the instrument of transmission—whether to a third party from the master, or to the master from a third party—may be productive of the content. As the figure who can control and manipulate the context of delivery, he controls the meaning that is defined by its difference from that context.

Although the secretarial texts in general ignore and elide this process, they do occasionally touch on it. Cecil, for instance, notes that “to the Secretary out of a Confidence and singular affection there is a libertie to negotiate at discretion at home and abroad with friends and
enemies in all matters of speech and intelligence.\textsuperscript{61} This discretionary power provides room for a secretary to adjust messages, and thus to inflect the transmission process and the non-meaning noise of transfer that defines the content’s meaning. This is one reason the secretarial texts work so hard to erase secretary and master difference, but in doing so they risk creating a symbiosis so complete it can contest or even reverse the power structure it seeks to maintain. There is an intriguing passage in Day:

\begin{quote}
Much is the felicitie that the maister or Lord receiueth evermore of such a servant, in the chary affection and regard of whom affying himselfe assuredlie, he findeth he is not alone a commander of his outward actions, but the disposer of his uerie thoughts, yea he is the Soueraigne of all his desires, in whose bosome hee holdeth the repose of his safety to be far more precious, then either estate, liuing, or advancement, whereof men earthly minded are for the most part desirious.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

If one accepts Day’s general emphasis on the master as primary and the secretary as secondary, his intent in this passage is to portray the master as the sovereign of the secretary’s thoughts. But the grammatical construction resists an easy unraveling of the relationship between the master and the secretary. Rambuss asks:

\begin{quote}
Is Day asserting that “the secretary is the disposer of the master’s thoughts,” implying that the secretary’s task is to enact the wishes of his master, to turn the master’s thoughts into deeds? Or does he mean “the master is the disposer of the secretary’s thoughts,” suggesting perhaps that the secretary is so thoroughly indentured to his master that his very thoughts are disposed, controlled by the master?\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}
The passage also lends itself to an even more extreme reading, “as an assertion that the secretary is the real prime mover here, that the ‘master’ merely disposes, merely enacts the will of the secretary.” Such a reading is not far-fetched when we consider that to reproduce the master is really to produce him. To write another person, to become “his owne penne, his mouth,” as Faunt says, is to assume the position of productive power. Day, by getting caught up in his own conception of the inseparable mesh that is the secretary/master relationship, here unwittingly exposes the fiction that the secretary enables the master to write himself by suggesting the truth: the secretary writes the master, as the discursive producer of the master.

As the master’s double, then, and as a transmitter, the secretary’s position offers him forms of authorship directly linked to information technologies. Additionally, the power to control, retrieve, and authenticate information increases the secretary’s position of power. In a sense, the secretary’s mere presence, whether as writer or negotiator, undermines, rather than reinforces, the master’s supposed primary authority, because the secretary’s insertion into the information flow between master and others disrupts that connection and “indicates the inability of the master’s name to signify an authentically occupied identity.” It also indicates the ability of the secretary to manipulate that same identity. Consequently, fear and anxiety about the secretary’s capacity to appropriate and inflect meaning, and to manipulate the master’s identity, spur the secretarial texts to construct the secretary/master relationship in the ways they do. Their deterministic attempts to forestall any doubts or questions about who is authoring whom are not entirely successful, as the anxieties driving their approach become clear through the means used to suppress them. Further, as these secretary-authors author themselves in these self-fashioning texts, they cannot resist reminding us that texts construct identities. At the end of his text, Day writes, “The Secretory is now accomplished and by all respectes, circumstances, and
inducements that maie bee, confirmed both in person and office." The person and the office are “accomplished” in and through text; this applies not just to the secretary, but the masters and monarchs who are also “accomplished” in texts written by others’ pens.

The secretarial texts, in describing the secretary’s role, his relationship with the master, and the forms of authorship that are available to him, do not create a particularly masculinizing narrative. Instead, they describe secretaries in ways that suggest a certain degree of gender fluidity in men and women’s relations to information and information management. In secretarial texts, secretaries’ relationships with their masters are often described in ways that link the secretary’s position with marriage. For Day, the secretary/master relationship is “this friendlie knot of love,” a reference to love knots and the knot of marriage. Day describes the secretary as “verie charie,” or prized and dear, to his master, and “by a great deal to be beloved.” When he describes the “most perfect uniting” between secretary and master, he propounds that the “virtue” in each man is “kindled by the others Grace,” suggesting sexual heat but also a marital relationship sanctified by “grace.” Cecil, as previously mentioned, compares the private counsels of master and secretary to “the mutual affections of two lovers, undiscovered to their friends.” He goes on to say that when those private councils are more publicly “disputed in Counsell, it is like the conference of Parents and solemnization of Marriage, the first matter, the second Order, indeed the one the act, the other the Publication.” The private affection between secretary and master has a public face that is like marriage, the “order” or structure of the relationship. Faunt as well uses tropes of marriage to describe the secretary/master relationship, like Day envisioning a reciprocal relationship that is self-creating:

Lastly the dutie of a servant in this kind must proceed from a speciall loue and affeccion hee beareth towards his Master, the same being grounded likewise upon
some testimonie of his masters good opinion and recipracall love borne vn to him.

For if the servant take this Charge in hand hee must giue himself wholly to his
Master i.e., hee must in a manner cast of the care of his private estate to thend hee
may chiefly attend and intend this service, which assuredly will requier a whole
man, and therfore the maister affectinge, and findinge in him this extraordinarie
paines and care of his Charge, cannott but regard his perticuler estate and supplie
wherein hee is wantinge to himself vpon some fitt occasion offered to do him
good . . . . 

Like the bride in a marriage ceremony, the secretary takes “this Charge in hand,” divesting
himself of his “private estate” and giving himself “wholy to his Master,” who in turn will
“supplie wherein hee is wantinge.” Day echoes this idea of free and entire giving of oneself
when he writes that the secretary’s “fidelity [is] not commanded but of a zeal to weldoing
voluntarily embraced.” Finally, the secretarial texts’ painstaking construction of the secretary
as seamlessly one with the master may be compared to contemporary descriptions of marriage as
“partners in painstaking, or two oxen that draw in one yoke.” More poetically, the secretary is
the master’s “likeness,” his “fit help,” and his “other self,” as Eve is to Adam in Paradise Lost
(8.450).

Like wives, secretaries are expected to be reproducers of their masters, to produce exact
copies whose origins are crystal clear. The secretary serves patriarchal power as the device of
male continuity, and ideally his role in this process is as neutral as possible. This reproductive
work is at once mental and of the body, as he is his master’s “owne pen, his mouth, his eye, his
ear, and keeper of his most secrett Cabinett.” Even the space of his work, closets and secret
cabinets, is womb-like, secret interior space controlled by the master: “[H]e is but the closet,
whereof another hath both the key, use and commandement, that he ought therein to be as a thicke plated door, where through . . . no man may enter, but by the locke which is the tongue, and that to be of such efficacie, as whereof no counterfeit key should bee able to make a breach.”

Renaissance secretaries were known as “inward men” because they were the keepers of secrets, but the phrase also evokes early modern ideas of female reproductive anatomy. “Closet” and “cabinet” could be words for female sexual parts, and when Beale advises the secretary to label the boxes of his “speciall Cabinett” “by letters [rather] than by the names of the Countryes or places, keepinge that only with himself, for the names may inflame a desire to come by these things,” he is acknowledging not just the erotic allure of information, but of the secret cabinet itself. Also like constructions of the female body, secretaries could be “leaky” and dangerously permeable. The secretarial texts’ efforts to control the secretary’s body are similar to injunctions to women to be “chaste, silent, and obedient”: Day reminds the secretary of the “vertue of ordering and keeping the tongue,” because “silence . . . leads to a modest and choice kind of government in all our actions.”

More prosaically, secretaries are associated with the feminine through their relations with domestic activities. Their work of “ordering the pen” is a form of handwork, and Day refers to the master and secretary as “knitted together.” Faunt refers to “this servaunt” who is charged with “orderinge the papers and clearinge the table.” In Lord Burghley’s household, his household staff’s duties often overlapped with those of wholly domestic staff, and at times all staff were called upon to serve at table. Metaphors of household goods in the secretarial texts connect household management and the disposition of “moveables,” generally associated with women, to secretaries. In Day, men are “furnished with . . . abilitie,” and when outlining his qualifications to write on secretaries, he claims, “. . . I am none of those that maie vaunt my selfe
of any furniture sufficient to so speciall an end and purpose . . . “78 The secretary himself, “for his own furniture and instruction,” should have knowledge of languages, history, and so on.79 These metaphors of knowledge, information, and experience as furniture remind us that the secretary materializes thought into text and thus produces and manages household “stuff,” a responsibility usually associated with women.80

These associations with the feminine indicate a significant amount of gender fluidity in the construction of those who were intimately involved with information. I do not mean to suggest that a secretary was necessarily feminized or became the “wife” as a result of his subordinate position to the master; this is not the case, and all the secretarial texts emphasize the mutuality and reciprocity of the secretary/master relationship. What these texts indicate, rather, is a high degree of comfort in constructing information management as not rigidly gendered, but as a realm that encompasses both the masculine and the feminine. This suggestion is borne out by contemporary domestic manuals written for women, which describe women as information managers in ways markedly similar to the ways in which the secretarial texts describe secretaries. First of all, domestic manuals present women as involved in several realms of secrets and secrecy related to knowledge and information. Wives are also to keep their husbands’ secrets. In A Godlie Forme of Householde Government (1598) John Dod and Robert Cleaver tell the husband that his wife “must continually be conversant with thee, at thy table, in thy chamber, in bed, in thy secrets, and finally, in thy heart and breast,” an injunction to physical, mental, and emotional closeness and unity that echoes the closeness of secretary and master.81 Gervase Markham, in The English Hus-wife (1615), recommends “skill and knowledge in cookery, together with all the secrets belonging to the same.”82 After learning cookery, “she shall then sort her mind to the understanding of other housewifely secrets.”83 Distillation, medicine, and dairy
work are all characterized as having their “secrets” which the housewife must know. Markham has the housewife be “secret in her affairs, comfortable in her counsels,” evoking a figure associated with both self-contained secrets and participatory “counsels.” In Hannah Woolley’s *The Compleat Servant-Maid* (1670), Woolley directs all women who may be serving in a household, “If you are entrusted with any secrets be careful that you reveal them not.” Ideas of secrecy, then, are an integral element of information that circulates to and among women and an integral element of husband/wife and mistress/maid relationships, just as they are for constructions of secretaryship and secretary/master interactions.

Women’s domestic knowledge was also associated with the private space of the closet, chests, and cabinets. Stewart writes, “Both the lord and the lady of the sixteenth-century country house would possess a personalized closet, possibly leading off a main social room, but more likely built inside their respective bedchambers.” In Markham’s *The English Husbandman* (1635), a model floor plan for a house for the gentry class includes “an inward closet within the parlor for the Mistress’s use, for necessaries.” The architectural historian Mark Girouard writes that the closet “was essentially a private room; since servants were likely to be in constant attendance even in a chamber, it was perhaps the only room in which its occupant could be entirely on his own. . . . [I]t was a room for private devotions and a room for private study and business.” Women’s closets were often used for prayer and reflection; Lady Margaret Hoby wrote in her diary for September 13, 1599, that she “praied with Mr. Rhodes [her chaplain], and privatly in my Closett.” They could also be used for study and instruction: Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, wrote in her diary, “Upon the 9th [January 1616/1617] I went up to see the things in the Closet & began to have Mr. Sandy’s book read to me about the government of the Turks.” Women also used their closets for utilitarian household activities. The 1556
inventory of the contents of the closet of the wife of Sir William More of Losely Hall included “several chests, caskets and hampers, a desk, working baskets, boxes, glasses, pots, bottles, jugs, conserve jars, sweetmeat barrels, an hourglass, a grater, knives, a pastry-mould, ‘a pair of great shers,’ brushes, a pair of snuffers” and several books. Women’s realms of knowledge, therefore, are associated with a spatial context, as are the secretary’s. This association found material expression in texts and their titles, such as A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen, a book of recipes and remedies (Anonymous, 1608), and John Partridge’s The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets, Commonlie Called, the Good Huswifes Closet of Provision, for the Health of her Household (1600). Closets’ contents could also indicate a degree of gender crossover. When the compendium The Closet of the Eminentely Learned Sir Kenelme Digbie Kt Opened was published in 1669, it “Discovered Several ways for making of Metheglin, Sider, Cherry-Wine &c. Together with Excellent Directions for Cookery: As also for Preserving, Conserving, Candying, &c,” which is “precisely the material we might expect to find in the closet of Sir Kenelme’s lady.”

As secretarial texts do, domestic texts for women emphasize their role as keepers of another male’s goods and secrets. In the sixteenth century, the increase in available goods and luxury items that signaled wealth and status, and the growth of consumer culture, led to an emphasis on forms of managing household goods and furnishings. Natasha Korda observes that a housewife increasingly was seen as the keeper of goods that her husband acquired; Juan Luis Vives, in The Instrucion of a Christen Woman, cites Aristotle as his authority for this notion: “Aristotle sayth that in house kepynge the mannes duetie is to get and the womans to kepe” (translation by Richard Hyrd, 1529). This shift was reflected in the development of the term “housekeeper” to refer to one who maintains and manages household stuff. As housekeepers, women were charged with “not only saving, storing, and maintaining, but marking, ordering,
accounting, dividing, distributing, spending, and disposing of household property, including both durable and perishable goods.” This position as both the keeper of the master’s goods—saving, storing, and maintaining—and as the pivotal figure in their circulation—distributing, spending, and disposing—echoes the secretary’s position as both keeper and transmitter of what Day calls “furniture,” his mental knowledge. Further, the housewife’s “keeping” and her internalization of her domestic duties are forms of mental labor. William Gouge, in *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), writes:

> My method and manner of proceeding brought many things to my minde, which otherwise might have slipped by. For by method sundry and severall points appertaining to one matter are drawne forth, as in a chaine one linke draweth up another. . . . As method is an helpe to *Invention*, so also to *retention*. It is as the thread or wier whereon pearles are put, which keepeth them from scattering . . . In which respects *method is* fitly stiled the *Mother of the Minde, and Mistresse of Memorie*. If you well marke the order and dependence of points one upon another, you will finde as great an helpe in conceiving and remembering them, as I did in inventing and disposing them.\(^\text{95}\)

Here Gouge offers specific knowledge-processing technologies designed to help the housewife keep, protect, and retrieve information. As Korda states, in her reading of this passage, “To be a good housekeeper, she [the housewife] must re-collect or internalize via memory the objects she is charged with keeping, and the places in which they are kept, so that she always knows where they are and has them ready to hand.” Gouge gives the housewife a sophisticated mnemonic technique with which to do so, using visualizing metaphors of links in a chain and pearls on a thread. Further, this is his own technique, his “method and manner of proceeding,” which is
gendered feminine as the “Mother of the Minde” and the “Mistresse of Memorie.” Here women are seen as relating to information in the same ways as secretaries do, keeping, protecting, and retrieving it in ways designed to serve the male figure who begets and owns these mental goods.

Although this emphasis on women as keepers diverts attention from their roles as transmitters, women were vital figures in the circulation of information in their households, in their communities, and, for aristocratic women, in the political realm. A housewife handled large amounts of information important to the health and well-being of her family. If she used domestic texts, she stood as the point of transfer between the text and its application to and for others. Some texts’ titles, such as Partridge’s The Treasurie of Hidden Secrets, Commonlie Called, the Good Huswifes Closet of Provision, for the Health of her Housshold, try to restrict use of a housewife’s knowledge to the household through an emphasis on enclosure: the “hidden secrets” of the bordered space of the closet are used for the benefit of the “housshold” and not beyond. However, such attempts to maintain borders around a prescribed path for information ignore the constant flux of information exchange. Women amended and added on to circulating collections of recipes and remedies; Mary Baumfylde’s receipt book of 1626 passed from housewife to housewife. Katherine Foster signed it in 1707, and Katherine Thatcher signed it in 1712, each contributing more recipes. Women also circulated household tips and knowledge in commonplace books. Beyond the household, female information networks operated wherever women worked or gathered: childbirth and birth, dairy and bakehouse, and town and market. Aristocratic women participated in the exchange of information at court. When Beale writes, “Learne before your accessee her Majestie’s disposicion by some in the Privie Chamber with whom you must keep credit,” he may be referring to female courtiers, who had greater access to the more intimate space around the queen. Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson write:
Although female courtiers may not have participated in the factional politics of Elizabeth’s reign, that is not to conclude that they lacked political influence. In a personal monarchy, knowledge about the monarch’s disposition was useful for many kinds of political transactions, both to themselves and to their male kin and friends. Some kept abreast of international affairs by their correspondence with members of the ambassadors’ trains. Others accompanied their husbands on various duties.  

Particularly notable is their assertion that when women at court gave political advice to men, they “engaged with men on some kind of equal terms,” indicating a practical recognition of women’s place and value in widespread information networks, despite socially prescriptive texts’ policies of evading, or even erasing, this point.

Secretarial texts and domestic manuals, within the confines that they do construct, recognize both men and women as participants in the flow of information, and the texts describe this participation in similar ways. These forms of information management, therefore, are not rigidly gendered; instead, there is a large field of gender fluidity. Both genres delineate a relationship with a man (master or husband) for one who inhabits domestic, or household, space, and whose duties include knowing, protecting, and selectively revealing a body of knowledge construed as secrets. Consequently, the forms of authorship that are linked to information management and that are available to secretaries are also available to women. Through their own relationships with information, women gain opportunities for agency and authorship much as secretaries do.

The ways in which their duties as keepers of their husbands’ goods were defined offered housewives scope for divergent paths of resistance. Korda cites the example of Margaret
Phillips, who used her chest or “cabinet” to conceal, rather than to protect, household goods. When Margaret refused to open her locked chest, her husband took an axe to it and discovered pieces of brass and pewter that she had told him she had sold or given away. Korda writes, “It is clear in this context how the housewife’s role as keeper could become threatening to patriarchal authority; for her exertion of ‘effort to retain’ the object in her ‘possession or control’—if not to ‘withhold’ or ‘conceal’ it—could easily be used to keep goods from rather than for her husband.”¹⁰⁰ The secret chest or cabinet, theoretically a device of control and containment, is vulnerable to appropriation by either a wife or a secretary.

Another form of resistance is resistance to the mental “method” of order that Gouge advises. The mind of the wife is also like a secret cabinet, enclosing information to be organized like pearls on a thread. Gouge’s metaphor attempts to impose one internal order and allow for no other; the housewife must “well mark the order and dependence of points one upon another.” Once the pearls are threaded, they will always stay in the same order, maintaining a stable configuration. This control mechanism, however, creates another dynamic for resistance: the wife may reorder the pearls, scatter her husband’s goods, or retrieve them in ever-changing configurations. This potential for agency leads Gouge to complain that wives “are the more dangerous by how much the more they are trusted, and lesse suspected,” revealing, like Beale, the distrust and the room for shifting power that exist in the master/subordinate relationship under the public face of a relationship based in trust and “mutual affection.”

These forms of resistance position the housewife as one who can author the master figure. The constructs of secretarial texts and domestic manuals are designed to guarantee the security and stability of information that defines the dominant (usually male) figure and enables him to self-author through written texts or material goods, but when these constructs are
disrupted the ability to author the master shifts to the one who has control over the goods, so to speak. The wife, ideally a neutral figure who does not interfere with her husband’s self-representation but instead enables him to produce himself, both through noninterference with the ways in which his goods are kept, displayed, and stored, and through the bearing of children, may become active; she is “dangerous,” as Gouge observes, because she may enter these processes of information arrangement and disrupt them at any one of several points, in effect changing the public and private configurations of her husband.

Outside the household, women had the same opportunities for authorship offered to secretaries through transmittal. Women commonly entered the authorship of texts that were worked and reworked: commonplace books, recipe books, books of household tips, compendia of medical advice, and so on. When a housewife steps out of the central binary collaborative relationship of wife/husband or wife/household into a role as receiver or transmitter, she effects content through mediation, circulation, and transfer and gains agency and control because of her insertion into the circuits of information flow. As the secretarial texts do, domestic manuals downplay the role of the housewife in broader information networks, instead emphasizing her role as a keeper of her husband’s goods and secrets in the household in an effort to convey the impression that information flow is somehow safe and controlled. Their focus on the collaborative couple boosts a sense of authenticity, which may be diluted as information circulates and becomes the product of many. But circulation, while devalued in secretarial and domestic texts, was in practice a highly valued, necessary foundation of cultural communication. Archer writes, “The circulation of compliments, services, and information constituted perhaps the most important social bond, after kinship ties, during the Elizabethan period.”101
As freely as it circulated, information was still a source of anxiety. Private libraries—sites of information gathering, storing, and exchange—represented intellectual creativity, social status, and political influence. They also became a focus of anxiety, resentment, and violence, and “those who commanded [printed] information were at once empowered and endangered by their textual collections and skills.” Secretaries, as part of this privileged information culture, were also empowered and endangered by their knowledge, and secretarial texts not only strive to allay anxieties about the security and authenticity of information, but to protect the secretary by doing so. A secretary’s very position between the metaphysical understanding of ideas and language and their material expression disrupts the relationship between authority and its expression and destabilizes the former. While they are supposed to be neutral devices of transmission, secretaries are not divorced from understanding content, so secretarial texts have to find ways to construct a “working but uncorruptible secretarial body,” a mechanism by which data can be processed without being betrayed. Their solution is to construct the secretary as a working paradox. He is at once mystified and defined; defined and erased; absorbed into the master and differentiated from him. The secretary is an absolute subject, an instrument of his master’s mind, yet at the same time the master’s equal, participating in a horizontal dialogue of exchange. He is a collaborative device by which to produce one voice.

Such ideological paradoxes are difficult to maintain in practice, and in practice secretary/master relationships were subject to resistance, shifting agency, and manipulation of prescribed information management protocols. Such shifting ground provided the secretary himself with forms of authorship, and these forms were also available to women. In Chapter Two I will explore these forms of authorship as they specifically apply to Mary Sidney Herbert,
Countess of Pembroke, who, I argue, constructs herself as an author in ways directly tied to information management as formulated in early modern secretarial texts.
Notes

1 Robert Beale, “Instructions for a Principall Secretarie, observed by R.B. for Sir Edwarde Wotton: Anno Domini, 1592,” British Museum, Additional MS 48149 (Yelverton Collection, MS 161, pt. 1), fols. 3b-9b. Reprinted in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1925) 423-43; 431. All references to Beale are to the 1925 reprint.


9 Other titles included Gabriele Zinano’s *Il Segretario* (1625) and Francesco Sansovino’s *L’avvocato e il segretario* (1564). Other authors who published manuals were Andrea Nati (1588), Giambattista Guarini (1594); Angelo Ingegneri (1594); and Vincenzo Gragnigna (1620).

10 Evans 2.


14 Day 101.


16 Day 102.


20 See Rambuss 42-45.

21 Day 116.

22 Day 128.

23 Beale 439.


25 Beale 428.
26 Beale 431.
27 Rambuss 43.
28 Day 112.
29 Day 113.
30 Day 115.
31 Day 115.
32 Faunt 501.
33 Day 103.
34 Faunt 501.
35 Faunt 500.
36 Day 103.
37 Day 124.
38 Faunt 502.
39 Faunt 502.
40 See Stewart, “The Early Modern Closet Discovered.”
41 Cecil 2.
42 Faunt 504-507.
43 Faunt 500.
44 Day 103.
45 Day 103.
46 Cecil 4.
47 Beale 425.
48 Beale 437.
Beale 438.

Beale 439. Elizabeth threatened to have Davison hanged but released him after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Day 102.

Cecil 3.

Cecil 3.

Beale 439.

Beale 439.

Beale 440.

Beale 427.

Beale 439.


Cecil 1.

Day 115.

Rambuss 44.

Rambuss 44.

Price and Thurschwell 6.

Day 132.

Day 113.

Day 113.
69 Cecil 3.
70 Faunt 501.
71 Day 114.
74 Day 123.
75 Day 114.
76 Faunt 502.
77 Barnett 5.
78 Day 101.
79 Day 127.
82 Markham 60.
83 Markham 125.
84 Markham 8.
85 Hannah Woolley, *The Compleat Servant-Maid; or, The young maidens tutor* (London, 1670)

9.

86 Stewart, “The Early Modern Closet Discovered” 82.


92 Stewart, “The Early Modern Closet Discovered” 89.

93 Korda 30.

94 Korda 27.


96 Korda 50.

97 Orlin 110.


99 Mendelson and Crawford 373.

100 Korda 42.
101 Archer 45.

102 Sherman, *John Dee* 51.

103 Price and Thurschwell 8.
Chapter Two
The Secretarial Phoenix: Mary Sidney Herbert as Textual Manager

Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1561-1621), was proud of the fact that she was Sir Philip Sidney’s sister. As a writer, she frequently positioned herself in relation to him, although critics have had varying views on the ways her brother’s status inflected her own work. But whether they see Sidney’s work as sheltering his sister’s efforts or see Sidney Herbert as an assertive writer in her own right, she is almost always assumed to be presenting herself as an author from a specifically feminine gender position, as a woman and as a sister. However, in this chapter I propose that this is not the position Sidney Herbert herself assumes when self-constructing as an author. One of my conclusions in Chapter 1 was that a stance as a textual collaborator and transmitter for another, ostensibly primary, voice allowed early modern women to access forms of authorship offered by socially prescribed behaviors. In this chapter, I argue that this is precisely the position that Sidney Herbert writes from in the pieces that specifically describe her writing practice in relation to her brother: the preface to the 1593 folio edition of Sidney’s Arcadia, and Sidney Herbert’s dedicatory poems for the siblings’ verse translation of the Psalms, “Even now that Care” and “To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Phillip Sidney.” In these pieces, Sidney Herbert does not exploit her status as Sidney’s sister to authorize her work. Instead, she emphasizes her status as Sidney’s textual interface with his audience, a stance that allies her with the information-management figure of the secretary as described in early-modern texts. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the secretary may seem to be a masculinizing figure, but associations with the feminine in secretarial constructions indicate a
significant degree of gender fluidity, a suggestion borne out in contemporary domestic manuals’
descriptions of women as information managers. While labels such as “secretary” and
“housewife” are gendered, the activities of information management that underlie the labels
therefore appear not to be specifically gendered, but part of a social context of general
participation in information circulation. Consequently, when Sidney Herbert takes advantage of
the secretarial model in the paratextual pieces she writes for Sidney’s work, she is not writing
entirely with or entirely against a gendered position. Instead of establishing herself solely as a
female author who is apologetically or transgressively entering systems of male discourse,
Sidney Herbert accesses authorship and authority from a position in the gender-fluid field of
information management. Seeing Sidney Herbert as an information manager thus enables us to
revise our sense of early modern gendered authorship.

The pieces that describe Sidney Herbert’s collaborative relationship with her brother—the
preface, the dedicatory poems, and also Sidney’s dedication of *Arcadia* to Sidney Herbert—
show us how contemporary ideas of information management operated in shaping literary
delivery and authorial agency. All four pieces are particularly concerned with textual
management—textual origins, production, authentication, safekeeping, and circulation. By
inserting herself into the frame of information management as Sidney’s collaborator, textual
manager, and transmitter, Sidney Herbert accesses the forms of authorship that arise from those
functions. However, her presentation of herself as a textual manager does not follow the
orthodoxy of contemporary ideology. Rather, her representation of herself as Sidney’s “lesser”
collaborator and transmitter capitalizes on the social fictions of collaborative textual production
and information management, fictions that secretarial texts help to shape and to reinforce. These
fictions center on a concept of transparent mediation: the possibility that two voices can
seamlessly become one without difference, and that resemblance can guarantee authenticity. They are built on the assumption that difference can be erased, but difference becomes the basis of Sidney Herbert’s construction of her authorship. Sidney Herbert writes against these fictions, using difference to make her authorial presence known, exposing the power of the transmitter to rewrite others’ relations to text, and redirecting the sequence and paths of transmission. She actualizes the potential secretarial texts are aware of and try to suppress, and in so doing she exposes the doctrines of information management as fictions of production and delivery. This exposure enables her to step away from a submerged position as “merely” her brother’s transmitter and claim an autonomous authorial voice and presence.

Sidney Herbert’s best-known characterization is as “Philip’s phoenix,” the agent of her brother’s immortality through the continuation, revision, and publication of his works after his death in 1586 from a wound at the battle of Zutphen. The works Sidney left behind include two poems published anonymously while he was alive; *The Lady of May*, a pastoral entertainment for Queen Elizabeth; *Certain Sonnets*, a collection of thirty-two translated and original poems; the *Old Arcadia*, a five-part pastoral romance; the *New Arcadia*, an incomplete revision of the *Old Arcadia* in a three-book format; *Astrophil and Stella*, a sonnet cycle of 108 sonnets and eleven songs; *The Defence of Poesie*, a response to a contemporary attack on poetry; a translation of part of Guillaume du Bartas’s *La Semaine ou la Création du Monde*; and a metrical paraphrase of the first forty-three psalms. An unprecedented outpouring of literary remembrances followed his death, including numerous individual elegies and laments, and three university volumes of collected tributes.

Sidney Herbert was also a writer and translator. Several of her works were published in her lifetime: an English prose version of Philippe de Mornay’s *Discours de la Vie et de la Mort*;
an English version of Robert Garnier’s *Marc Antoine*; an elegy for her brother, “The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda”; and a poem in praise of Queen Elizabeth, “A Dialogue between two shepheards, Thenot and Piers, in praise of Astrea.” Sidney Herbert also translated Petrarch’s *Trionfo della Morte* and completed the Psalter project begun by her brother, reworking Psalms 1 to 43 and translating Psalms 44 to 150. She also wrote the two previously mentioned dedicatory poems for a presentation copy of the Sidney *Psalmes* for Queen Elizabeth. Her literary work further included editing and overseeing the publication of her brother’s works: she produced a composite folio of the *Arcadia* that combined the *New Arcadia* and the last three books of the *Old Arcadia*, published as *The Countesse of Pembroke’s Arcadia*; and she supervised the publication of Sidney’s collected works, including *The Defense of Poesie* and the first complete edition of *Astrophil and Stella*. Finally, her literary involvement included significant acts of patronage to numerous other writers, including Samuel Daniel, Abraham Fraunce, and Nicholas Breton.

Critical assessments of Sidney Herbert have linked her work with her brother’s in various ways. For several, her brother’s death instigated and inspired her own writing. Gary Waller, considering the fact that most of Sidney Herbert’s literary activity apparently followed Sidney’s death, proposes that “the burst of [Sidney Herbert’s] creative energy in literary experimentation and translation was directly inspired by his example and dedicated to his memory.” Jonathan Goldberg writes that “the assumption of the voice of mourning . . . impels all her writing,” and, although Sidney Herbert was also mourning the deaths of her father and mother in 1586, “[i]t was especially the death of Sir Philip Sidney that mobilized her.” Goldberg echoes Margaret Hannay’s assertion that “her literary career was to spring, Phoenix-like, from her brother’s death.” More recently, Gavin Alexander writes that Sidney Herbert’s writing “chose to occupy
the threshold of Sidney’s death and afterlife, a ‘swanne-like dying song,’ and to concern itself with death and dying.” Other critics have argued that Sidney’s persona and his status as a male writer sheltered Sidney Herbert’s efforts as a woman writer. For Mary Ellen Lamb, “[h]er representation of her various literary activities as an extended elegy for her famous brother enabled her writing at a time when the boundaries were tightly drawn around women’s public speech or published words.” For Wendy Wall, too, the voice of Sidney behind Sidney Herbert’s work on the Psalms “gives her permission to speak,” as Sidney Herbert “appropriates the ‘secrett power’ of her fantasized and ethereal projection of her brother as a means of vindicating her literary endeavor and covering the transgression of her boldness in writing” in her dedicatory poem “To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Sir Phillip Sidney.”

Still other critical views see Sidney Herbert as possessing an authorial voice and presence in her own right. Elaine Beilen observes, “What has probably most distorted our view of Mary Sidney is the influence of her brother, Philip Sidney,” and considers Sidney Herbert in a wider context of early modern women writers, recognizing “her considerable growth as a poet” and “her widened audience,” even while suggesting she was “aware of her limitations.” Louise Schleiner also sees Sidney Herbert as developing her own voice, although still heavily dependent on her brother: “She was able to nurture his memory and channel his ideology into her own identity and development as a writer.” Sidney Herbert has even stronger champions in Beth Wynne Fisken, Natasha Distiller, and the editors of her collected works, Margaret Hannay, Noel Kinnamon, and Michael Brennan. Fisken sees Sidney Herbert’s style as “self-assertive,” and Distiller applauds her “competent, unapologetic authorial presence.” Hannay et al. point out that no Englishwoman before Sidney Herbert had achieved such a prominent public literary
identity, and also that “[w]e should not underestimate her boldness,” as “Pembroke never apologizes for her role as a woman writer.”

Whether Sidney Herbert’s literary accomplishments were a never-ending swan song for her dead brother or an assertion of her own power as a poet and translator—or some combination of the two—there is no question she and her brother had a close sibling relationship and shared literary interests. They enjoyed a collaborative working relationship while Sidney lived, and Sidney Herbert’s collaborative involvement with his work continued after he died. In the preface to the *Arcadia*, Sidney identifies his sister as both originating impulse and primary audience for the romance: “But you desired me to do it, and your desire to my heart is an absolute commandment. Now it is done only for you, only to you.” She is also responsible for any further circulation: “If you keep it to yourself or to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of good will . . . I hope . . . it will be pardoned.” Much of the actual composition was done in her presence: “Your best self can best witness the manner, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest by sheets sent unto you as fast as they were done.” Her collaborative role is notably active, as her desire results in the text’s materialization and she is reader, critical judge, and circulator.

The siblings’ collaborative work continued on the Sidney *Psalmes*. Patricia Demers picks up the idea of a shared space of composition and extends it to their psalmic metaphrase: “One can only speculate to whether brother and sister began the Psalter project together or if Sidney worked alone, perhaps in the inspiring, encouraging presence of his gifted, like-minded sister.” Demers describes the siblings’ working relationship as “deferred collaboration,” assuming Sidney Herbert’s compositional efforts were deferred until after Sidney’s death, when she “doubled back to revise or regularize some of the metrics in Sir Philip’s work and translated
Psalms 44 to 150.” Like Demers, most critics considering the Sidney Psalter assume that Sidney originated and began the project, and Sidney Herbert completed it. Hannay et al. sum up the prevailing view when they write, “Pembroke honored her brother by completing the Psalms which he had begun; his voice therefore authorized her own.” For Fisken and Schleiner, Sidney Herbert’s assumption of the project after her brother’s death had a tutorial effect. Fisken writes, “[S]he had available . . . in her brother’s work a literary model from which she could teach herself how to write”; Schleiner states, “[S]he learned many techniques from him.” However, construing Sidney Herbert as a pupil valiantly trying to emulate the master devalues her contribution and is pure speculation; as Alexander points out, “[W]e cannot discount the possibility that the metaphrase [of the Psalms] was always intended to be a collaborative effort. . . . It is equally possible that Sidney intended Pembroke to complete the metaphrase after his death, and even expected her to revise his portion.” For Alexander, Sidney Herbert’s work on the Psalms “makes the metaphrase shared labour.” Demers, too, argues that the work was truly collaborative, although unconventionally so, and that the “layered, incremental work of the surviving partner” cannot be disentangled from the work of her brother. If we extend ideas of collaboration to include the unconventional, we can also see that, as a patroness, Sidney Herbert engaged in collaborative roles with other writers, and that her editorial work and oversight of the publication of his works were other forms of collaboration with Sidney.

Sidney Herbert, then, was enmeshed in a network of systems of collaborative literary production. Yet she left us with very little actual evidence or descriptions of the more precise forms that her collaborative work took, particularly with her brother. In fact, both she and Sidney tended to downplay the actual labor of writing, adopting a “pose of careless negligence.” Sidney called the *Arcadia* “this idle work of mine,” and Belin notes that, “like her brother, the
countess was entirely reticent about the labor of composition” and once referred to one of her works as “a certaine Idle passion.” Therefore we are fortunate to have the two prefaces and two poems that directly refer to the working partnership between the two Sidneys in the production of the *Arcadia* and the Sidney Psalter. Sidney’s *Arcadia* preface touches on Sidney Herbert’s roles in *Arcadia*’s writing. The later preface “To the Reader,” which appeared in the composite edition of the *Arcadia* published under Sidney Herbert’s supervision in 1593, engages with Sidney’s earlier preface in describing Sidney Herbert’s role in editing, revising, and publishing the new folio. Finally, in “Even now that Care” and “To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Sir Phillip Sidney,” Sidney Herbert herself describes, albeit metaphorically, the writing relationship between her and her brother that resulted in the metaphrastic Psalms.

The fact that of the four original poems we have by Sidney Herbert two include descriptions of her collaborative work with Sidney, and that the *Arcadia* preface also concerns this theme, is evidence that the careful and deliberate construction of her collaborative relationship with her brother was important to her. Yet surprisingly, given both the contemporary context of Sidney’s popularity and the later critical context that emphasizes Sidney Herbert’s sisterly devotion to her brother, these pieces show that, when she considers their collaboration and her own authorial identity, her relationship with her brother as a non-gendered writing collaborator and transmitter was apparently more important to her than her relationship to him as his sister. Not only does she never apologize for being a woman writer, in these pieces she rarely invokes her position as Sidney’s sister to gain authority for her work. While her sibling relationship with Sidney always contextualized (and contextualizes) reception of her work, in the texts of these pieces she does not emphasize that relationship. Instead, the more insistently repeated notes are the various forms of her joint work with him and her pivotal position as the
transmitter of his textual corpus. Her productive authorial identity and agency as she herself establishes them in the preface and poems are based not in a corporate identity with Sidney as his sister, but in a corporate identity with him as his cowriter, textual manager, and transmitter.

Sidney Herbert’s construction of her individuated authorial agency thus intersects with contemporary models of authorship based in secretarial activity and information management. In these pieces she concerns herself with the same issues secretarial texts deal with, such as how to make the transmittal figure simultaneously present and absent, the deliverer whose task it is to convey the master’s voice. Unlike the authors of secretarial texts, however, in these pieces Sidney Herbert is not only theorizing and describing a secretarial role, she is establishing herself in it, as a secretary-like figure whose acts of transmittal simultaneously require self-erasure while they enable self-assertion and authorial power. Sidney Herbert’s relationship with her brother gives her a unique opportunity to access this position. By positioning herself as the key figure in the circulation of Sidney’s texts as well as a partner in their production, she takes advantage of the opportunities for authorial agency that secretarial models of authorship offer. Further, she actively claims the space and role of transmitter, manipulating its ideological status as a non-seen, non-heard position. While secretarial texts, on the face of it, minimize ideas of the secretary as a site of transfer, this is precisely the site Sidney Herbert stakes a claim to.

Certainly Sidney Herbert was aware of secretaries’ activities and their household functions. She grew up in, and as a married woman, lived in, large households engaged in ongoing business and political activities. Her husband, a powerful Protestant earl, had several large estates and a correspondingly large household, including the secretary Hugh Sanford, who may have performed secretarial duties for Sidney Herbert and who helped her produce the 1593 edition of *Arcadia*. Her father, Sir Henry Sidney, served as President of the Council of the
Marches of Wales and as Lord Deputy in Ireland; as an important administrator, he had a large retinue of servants and employees, including secretaries Edward Waterhouse and Edmund Molyneux. Her mother, Mary Dudley, was the sister of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, a member of the queen’s inner circle. Leicester’s household included a number of secretaries who helped him manage his extensive interests and affairs, including Edmund Spenser, Arthur Atye, and Jean Hotman, all of whom knew her brother Philip. In the years immediately before and after Sidney Herbert’s 1577 marriage to Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, Sidney Herbert was at court, where the great secretaries of state Lord Burghley and, later, Sir Francis Walsingham were important presences. Philip Sidney married Walsingham’s daughter, Frances, in 1583, extending Sidney Herbert’s connections with secretarial activity at the highest political levels. Through this connection, she may have known Nicholas Faunt; she was in all likelihood also aware of and perhaps knew Angel Day, who wrote and published a long narrative elegy for Sidney, which he addressed to Walsingham. In all these households, secretaries were a visible and active presence. They were “crucial to the running of important households,” as H. R. Woudhuysen observes, and in Sidney Herbert’s own household they were involved with both master and mistress’s affairs. The secretarial texts discussed in Chapter 1, in their project of minimizing secretarial presence to bolster the primacy of the master’s conveyed voice, tend to suggest that a secretary was a hidden-away figure, working only in seclusion in a closet and theoretically so subsumed in the master as to be a non-presence. This is contradicted by our knowledge of Elizabethan households, however, particularly large aristocratic households, in which life was mostly lived in public and privacy was a newly evolving concept. Staff worked by their employers’ sides, and secretaries must have been highly visible participants in the activities of daily life. Faunt, for instance, talking to one of the queen’s ladies in an antechamber in an attempt to gauge the
queen’s mood before approaching her with a bit of unwelcome news, was not a hidden figure by any means but a figure who operated in public view.

Many of the men who worked as secretaries were also writers, or hoped to be; Woudhuysen writes, “A secretary’s post was probably considered a good beginning for young men who aspired to become writers.” Writers who worked as secretaries included John Lely, Hugh Sanford, Thomas Carew, Edmund Spenser, and, later, John Donne. Leicester seems to have been particularly fond of using writers as secretaries, employing at various times Edmund Dyer, Edmund Campion, Spenser, and John Woolley. Spenser went on to work in Ireland in the 1580s as secretary to Lord Grey, and later to Sir John Norris. William Temple, Sidney’s secretary in the 1580s, already had dedicated two books to him by the time he was hired. Duties of these writers, in addition to secretarial duties, often overlapped with other forms of information management. Sanford, for example, worked as a tutor for Sidney Herbert’s children, and the poet Samuel Daniel probably also taught the children. Sidney Herbert herself involved members of her household in such overlap. According to Hannay, almost everyone in the Wilton household wrote, except Pembroke. Sidney Herbert encouraged those around her to write, including Thomas Moffat, the family physician; Sir John Davis and Sanford, her husband’s secretaries; and Gervase Babington, the chaplain. Through such urging, Sidney Herbert established links between information management and authorship in her own household. One was not necessarily divorced from the other in any particular figure; instead, they coexisted with a high degree of simultaneity. Sanford, for example, was a “good scholar and poet,” and William L. Godshalk describes him as a “learned man, a scholar.” As well as working as Pembroke’s secretary and the children’s tutor, he wrote and contributed verses to Lord Egerton’s secretary John Bond’s edition of Horace in 1606. Sidney Herbert was thus familiar with the idea that a
secretary could be an author and play a key role in the circulation of texts. When Sidney Herbert herself became her brother’s literary heir and the editor of his works for publication, she accessed an authorial identity by emphasizing her role as his transmitter and textual manager; in other words, by using secretarial models of information handling.

Sidney himself is the first to associate Sidney Herbert with a role as his textual manager in his dedication to *Arcadia*; this association continues in her own editorial work on that text and in the preface that describes her editorial role in the preparation of the 1593 folio. This preface engages with Sidney’s dedication and builds on his suggestion that she stands in a secretarial relation to his text. But Sidney Herbert’s version of the *Arcadia* and its construction of forms of authorial agency for her were really spurred by an earlier edition of *Arcadia* published under the auspices of Sidney’s friend Fulke Greville, an edition Sidney Herbert apparently disliked. These different editions present different histories of the *Arcadia*. Most evidence indicates that Sidney began writing it in 1577 and wrote much of it at the Pembroke estates of Wilton and Ivychurch between 1577 and 1580.29 As Sidney wrote and revised this first version, which ultimately was composed of five sections, or books, he had copies or transcripts made that circulated to friends and family members.30 If William A. Ringler is correct, after Sidney completed this version, now known as the *Old Arcadia*, he had copies made for himself and his sister.31 Ringler theorizes there were four manuscripts, now lost: Sidney’s foul papers, a copy he kept, a copy his sister kept, and a copy Greville had.32 Sidney wrote a dedicatory letter with this version, “To My Deare Ladie and Sister, the Countesse of Pembroke,” in which he entrusts this “trifle” to her protection: “his chiefe safetie, shal be the not walking abroad, and his chiefe protection, the bearing the liverye of your name.”
In the early 1580s, or perhaps beginning earlier, Sidney substantially revised his romance, essentially rewriting it. This version, which became known as the New Arcadia, was left unfinished; it ends in the middle of a sentence in Book III. Before he left for Holland in 1585, Sidney left this incomplete manuscript with Greville, who later sent it to Sidney’s wife, Frances (Sir Francis Walsingham’s daughter). After Sidney’s death in 1586, none of his relations or friends apparently immediately thought of publishing his works, which primarily had circulated in manuscript to a small coterie. But it was only a matter of time until someone tried to cash in on Sidney’s renown, and later in the year Greville received word from the printer William Ponsonby that someone was seeking to register an unauthorized version of the Old Arcadia for printing. This in turn spurred Greville to write to Walsingham, Sidney’s father-in-law. In a letter dated November 1586, Greville wrote, in part:

Sir

This day one Ponsonby, a bookbinder in Pauls’ Churchyard, came to me and told me that there was one in hand to print Sir Philip Sidney’s old Arcadia, asking me if it were done with your honour’s consent or any other of his friends’. I told him, to my knowledge, no. . . . [I]n this I must presume, for I have sent my Lady, your daughter at her request a correction of that old one done four or five years since, which he left in trust with me, whereof there is no more copies, and [it is] fitter to be printed than that first, which is so common; notwithstanding even that is to be amended by a direction set down under his own hand how and why; so as in many respects, especially the care of printing, it is to be done with more deliberation.
This letter addresses several of the problems associated with getting Sidney’s works into print: forestalling unauthorized pirated editions; determining which version of the *Arcadia* to print; and deciding how to shape Sidney’s canon. Greville’s reference to a “correction of that old one done four or five years since” is presumably to the *New Arcadia*, which he considers superior to the *Old Arcadia*, “which is so common.” Later in the letter Greville also states he would like to see in print Sidney’s translation of du Plessis’s *De la vérité de la religion*, his translation of Bartas’s *Semaine*, and the forty psalms Sidney had translated. Greville’s choices indicate his desire to identify Sidney as a religious writer, and to publish his religious works so “that Sir Philip might have all those religious honours which are worthily due to his life and death.”

Judging from available stationers’ records, Greville’s plan seems to have been adopted, although his edition of the *New Arcadia* was the only volume that was ever printed. Greville worked with Matthew Gwinne and John Florio to edit the manuscript and prepare it for publishing, and in 1590 the *New Arcadia* was published under the title *The Countesse of Pembroke’s Arcadia*. Their editing mainly consisted of dividing the books into chapters and writing chapter headings that act as mini-indexes to each chapter. There is also a brief introductory note that precedes the first chapter. Although Greville does not mention Sidney’s family, and specifically the countess of Pembroke, in his letter (an omission Woudhuysen calls “an ominous sign of the disputes which were to follow”) it is possible that he and Sidney Herbert cooperated on the 1590 edition. In addition to the use of Sidney Herbert’s name in the title, Sidney’s dedication to his sister appears in the 1590 edition, and Jean Robertson assumes that Sidney Herbert must have sent it to Greville for inclusion. Hannay suggests that Sidney Herbert and Greville cooperated at this point to forestall the pirated edition of the *Old Arcadia*. Assuming they did cooperate, however, their cooperation seems to have ended after Greville’s
edition came out, as Sidney Herbert apparently disliked Greville’s chapter divisions and summaries.\textsuperscript{41}

Sidney Herbert issued her own edition of \textit{Arcadia} in 1593, the first folio version of her brother’s work. It is not clear who the primary editor of this edition was. Woudhuysen states that the editor was Hugh Sanford, but he also refers to an editorial “team” of Sanford, Sidney Herbert, and possibly Samuel Daniel, who had dedicated his sonnet cycle \textit{Delia} to Sidney Herbert in 1592.\textsuperscript{42} The general critical consensus is that Sidney Herbert and Sanford edited it together, with Sidney Herbert maintaining supervisory control. Kenneth T. Rowe, for example, considers that the countess retained considerable personal authority over the editing of the 1593 edition, although she delegated many important tasks to Sanford. Godshalk also takes this tack, arguing that Sanford probably did not have free editorial rein, but assisted the countess.\textsuperscript{43} Given Sidney Herbert’s skill as a writer and the family’s interest in shaping Sidney’s legacy, I too consider the editorial work and the front matter of the 1593 edition expressions of Sidney Herbert’s wishes and decisions.

Sidney Herbert, possibly feeling control of Sidney’s works and public image slipping away from her (an unauthorized edition of \textit{Astrophil and Stella} had been printed in 1591), removed the chapter divisions and summaries and added a slightly revised version of the last three books of the \textit{Old Arcadia} to the end of the unfinished \textit{New Arcadia} to supply a conclusion. Like Greville’s, this composite volume appeared under the title \textit{The Countesse of Pembroke’s Arcadia}, and added the line “Now since the first edition augmented and ended” on the title page. This edition includes both Sidney’s dedication and a preface, “To the Reader,” which criticizes the 1590 edition and justifies the editorial approach of the 1593 edition. This preface appears over the initials H. S. and is generally accepted to have been written by Hugh Sanford. However,
since the preface names Sidney Herbert as the editor and describes her work on the text, it was
certainly written with her supervision and approval. Sidney Herbert’s presentation of the
Arcadia, from the editing, to the preface, to the elaborate frontispiece, was precisely and
deliberately calculated to achieve certain effects in the presentation of Sidney’s text, and it is
improbable that Sidney Herbert did not scrutinize the preface. Even the preface’s critical
assessment of the 1590 edition, which it describes as “disfigured,” was probably part of Sidney
Herbert’s calculations; as Joel Davis points out, it is likely that “if the countess did allow Sanford
a personal swipe at Florio, she did so consciously and with an eye to her own purposes in
publishing the 1593 Arcadia.” Consequently, I take the preface as a statement of how Sidney
Herbert wanted to present herself as a literary presence in the circulation and presentation of the
Arcadia.

Sidney’s dedication, Greville’s letter to Walsingham and his editorial approach to the
1590 Arcadia, and Sidney Herbert’s preface and her different editorial approach in the 1593
Arcadia all contextualize and present the Arcadia in different ways. But precisely because these
notes and editorial choices are about context and presentation, and therefore ultimately about
influencing the reader’s reception and perception of the text and its author, it is not surprising
that all three of these authors’ ideas intersect with specifically secretarial ideas pertaining to the
production and circulation of textual matter. Sidney’s dedication, the first piece of Arcadian front
matter, introduces secretarial modes of production as part of the very origins of Arcadia. Sidney
obviously is not trying to set up a precise or actual secretarial relationship, but the dedication
does suggest connections to secretarial constructions. This charming dedication is full of
lighthearted fancies and grotesqueries; it refers to “this idle work” as something which is, “like
the Spiders webbe, . . . fitter to be swept away, than worn to any other purpose.” Sidney
describes his work as the product of a “young head,” which, “having many many fancies
begotten in it, if it had not ben in some way delivered, would have growen a monster.” Then,
Sidney continues, “more sorie might I be that they came in, than that they gat out.” His
monstrous fancies are no better than “stuffe . . . as in a Haberdashers shoppe, glasses, or
feathers” and he invites Sidney Herbert to laugh at the text’s “follyes.” The dedication also
connects Sidney Herbert to Arcadia’s inception and production. Sidney writes that his impulse is
to “cast out in some desert of forgetfulness this child, which I am loath to father,” but he refrains
because “you [Sidney Herbert] desired me to do it, and your desire, to my hart is an absolute
commandement.” Because Sidney Herbert is the agent of the text’s preservation, Sidney seems
to be associating her with secretarial function. But in the next line he plays with the collaborative
relation between the two of them, figuring himself as secretarial to her: “Now, it is done onlie for
you, onely to you.” Sidney Herbert is at once the master figure (done “for you”) and the recipient
(done “to you”). Sidney continues to suggest secretarial constructions as he describes a
collaborative relationship between him and Sidney Herbert that resulted in the production of the
text: “Your dear selfe can best witness the maner, being done in loose sheetes of paper, most of it
in your presence, the rest, by sheetes, sent unto you, as fast as they were done.” The image of the
two of them closely involved in the text’s production—sharing productive space, passing sheets
back and forth, he seeking her response, comments, and approval—evokes the enclosed space of
the secretary’s closet.

Sidney designates his sister as the gatekeeper of Arcadia’s circulation, writing, “[I]f you
will keepe it to your selfe, or to such friendes, who will weigh errors in the balaunce of good
will, I hope, for the fathers sake, it will be pardoned, perchaunce made much of, though in it
selfe it have deformities.” It is not “for severer eyes . . . being but a trifle”; its “chiefe safetie,
shalbe the not walking abroad; and his chiefe protection, the bearing the liverye of your name.”

Here Sidney Herbert’s discretion and judgment are actively sought, as Sidney assigns her the secretarial duties of keeping textual matter safe or selectively determining the extent of its circulation. In addition, if the text does “walk abroad,” its protection lies in bearing her livery; protection here transfers from Sidney to Sidney Herbert, whose guardianship shields and maintains the text. Sidney here recognizes the same risks inherent in transfer and circulation as secretarial texts do, realizing that circulation may damage his text or alter its meaning and reception. He, too, sets up a system that charges a collaborative secretarial figure with its safekeeping. As in secretarial texts, this figure guarantees the legitimacy of text; Sidney Herbert does this through her protection of the text and also as the “witness” to its production. She is the sole figure who, having been present when the pages were written, can affirm that Sidney was truly the father to the textual child.

Sidney also appeals to love as a basis for his relationship with his sister. Sidney and Sidney Herbert love each other as brother and sister, but Sidney’s association of love with textual production also evokes the love and trust of the secretary/master relationship. He asks her to laugh at Arcadia’s follies and, despite them, to “continue to love the writer, who doth excedinglie love you, and most most hartelie praies you may long live, to be a principall ornament to the familie of the Sidneis.” By appealing to their love for each other, Sidney takes a step to establish that similitude between secretary and master that also is a guarantor of texts. Further, he specifically frames this as a writing relationship, asking Sidney Herbert to love the writer, not the brother. While he contextualizes their work within the Sidney family, the collaborative relationship Sidney here constructs with Sidney Herbert is not focused on their sibling relationship. Although the dedication’s salutation is “To my Deare Ladie and Sister, the
Countesse of Pembroke” and the closing is “Your loving Brother Philip Sidnei,” in the body of the dedication there is no reference to their familial relationship. Instead, the relationship Sidney describes is strictly textual; the dedicatee is his collaborator and textual manager, who relates to Sidney as a writer. This approach echoes the gender fluidity of information management; while Sidney’s domestication of his work as a spider’s web that needs to be swept away, or as glasses or feathers, seems to place it in a feminine realm of household management, he avoids emphasizing Sidney Herbert’s status as his sister in the body of the dedication and instead emphasizes her role as a literary manager whose agency is based in a collaborative writing relationship as well as in a sibling relationship.

Like Sidney’s dedication, Greville’s and Sidney Herbert’s editorial activity and front matter in their editions of the *Arcadia* also reflect ideas of secretaryship and secretarial authorship derived from information management. Both Greville and Sidney Herbert act as mediators of Sidney’s work, and both take advantage of the opportunities offered by the mediating position to author Sidney in different ways. The forms their efforts take are secretarial in the sense that they use Sidney as an originator and master figure to legitimize and authenticate the text as well as their work on the text; they also use the space of transmission to shape and establish their own authorship and authority.

In Greville’s work, the fact that he is working with these ideas is apparent as early as his letter to Walsingham. In his concern that the right manuscript of the *Arcadia* be printed in the right way, Greville reveals that he stands in a position of guardianship and transmittal. Greville writes that Sidney left his “correction of that old one done four or five years since” (the *New Arcadia*) “in trust with me.” His use of the phrase “in trust” emphasizes that guardian role of safekeeping that is so crucial in information management. But Greville also judiciously
circulated the text; he has sent the manuscript to “my Lady your daughter.” He assumes the agency of the secretarial information manager when he writes, “it [the New Arcadia] is fitter to be printed than that first which is so common,” making a unilateral decision as to which version should be made public. Yet immediately following this boldness Greville invokes Sidney again as authority: “ . . . notwithstanding even that is to be amended by a direction set down under his own hand how and why.” Greville cannily establishes the originator’s authority while not revealing what those directions are; he creates the space in which his own agency and discretion may act while blanketing it under this reference to Sidney’s decisions. Then Greville continues, “ . . . so as in many respects, especially the care of printing, it is to be done with more deliberation.” His emphasis in these few lines is on revision, correction, and improvement as he establishes a progression for the improvement of Arcadia. Greville thus ostensibly becomes the instrument of Sidney’s will, the transparent vehicle through which Sidney’s text reaches the public. However, it is clear that Greville has his own will and agency in this process, from deciding which version should be printed to implementing Sidney’s unspecified directions.

That Greville exercises his will and agency is apparent in what he does editorially to the New Arcadia in his 1590 edition. In the body of the text, Greville printed Sidney’s papers almost as the latter left them, but he added summaries that head each chapter and that act as mini chapter indices. These plainly direct the reader to experience the text in a certain way. Davis, in his analysis of Greville’s purposes in writing and adding these summaries, observes that the chapter summaries “allow Greville to impose his interpretation of the Arcadia on his readers in the guise of Sidney’s own intentions.” Davis argues that Greville’s motivation in his editing of the Arcadia was political: “Greville chose to represent Sidney and the Arcadia as intellectual precursors to the Tacitean political thought beginning to emerge at the same time in the circle of
Robert Devereaux, the earl of Essex, who had become Greville’s patron. Essex was the political heir to the militant anti-Spanish faction led by Leicester and Walsingham; Leicester had died in 1588 and Walsingham late in 1590. When Greville’s edition of the *Arcadia* was printed, Essex was the most prominent courtier and patron among those who had supported Walsingham and Leicester. According to Davis, Greville’s manipulations of Sidney’s text aligned it with his own work; he “imposed on his 1590 *Arcadia* the same variety of Neostoic moral philosophy that structures his *Letter [Letter to an Honorable Lady, 1589]* . . . .”

Davis’s argument dovetails with my assertion that the transmittal space of information management is an active space of authority and agency for the information handler, although this activity is ideologically masked by construction of the master/transmitter relationship as a seamless unity. Greville himself constructs his relationship to Sidney through his work on the *Arcadia* in just this way. In his letter to Walsingham, he establishes an unbroken lineage for the *Arcadia* as it passes from Sidney to him, and in the text itself he uses similitude to create the illusion that his summaries accurately reflect Sidney’s work. Sidney’s final chapter in Book 3 ends in the middle of a sentence describing a combat between two characters, Zelmane and Anaxius: “But Zelmane strongly putting it [a stroke by Anaxius] by with her right hande sword, coming in with her left foote, and hande, woulde have given him a sharpe visitation to his right side, but that he was faine to leape away. Whereat ashamed, (as having never done so much before in his life)” (the text breaks off here). Greville’s chapter summary to this final chapter reads, “The Combattants first breathing, reencounter, and” (his text breaks here). By breaking
off in mid-phrase, as Sidney’s text does, Greville mirrors the text and suggests that his work is the same as Sidney’s. He thus creates the illusion that his new, original work actually duplicates the originator’s, as his work becomes a reflection of Sidney’s instead of an imposition on it. Through this device, Greville’s influence on the text—his form of authorship of it—becomes at once visible and transparent. And, in authoring the text, he is also authoring Sidney. Davis writes, “Greville was clearly recasting Philip Sidney as one of the English Taciteans who would turn the course of Neostoicism to almost strictly instrumental political ends in the 1590s . . . .”

Sidney Herbert also uses secretarial modes to shape her edition of the *Arcadia*, which significantly differs from Greville’s *Arcadia*. Woudhuysen suggests she had several problems with Greville’s version: she noted errors of transcription; she disliked the “moralizing, pretentious, and inaccurate” chapter headings; she disliked the fact that there were gaps in the text and that the poems that accompanied the text were, in her opinion, misplaced; and she felt the *Arcadia* needed an ending. Her editing reflects these attitudes. The 1593 edition eliminated the chapter divisions and the chapter summaries, smoothed over gaps in the text, rearranged the poems and added others, and added an ending taken from the *Old Arcadia*. The 1593 folio also emphasizes the pastoral elements Greville had disliked and downplayed and is, as Davis observes, “a more prestigious artifact” designed to associate Sidney firmly with the Sidney family. In short, Sidney Herbert dramatically repackaged the 1593 *Arcadia*, and its lengthy preface, “To the Reader,” draws attention to this fact. This piece of front matter both explains and justifies the editorial work of the new edition and, as Sidney’s dedication does, emphasizes Sidney Herbert’s position and agency as Sidney’s textual manager while it shows concerns with the same issues of legitimacy, guardianship, protection, authenticity, and circulation.
The first sentence disdains the 1590 edition and establishes Sidney Herbert as the protector of the *Arcadia*: “The disfigured face, gentle Reader, wherewith this worke not long since appeared to the common view, moved that noble Lady, to whose protection it was committed, to take in hand the wiping away those spottes wherewith the beauties therof were unworthily blemished.”56 By referring to Sidney’s dedication and Sidney Herbert’s position as the dedicatee, this sentence also establishes the legitimacy of her position as arbiter of the text. Greville had claimed that Sidney left the *New Arcadia* in trust with him; here Sidney Herbert counterclaims that she is the rightful supervisor of Sidney’s text because he dedicated it to her. Her position as protector authorizes her work, pointing to the agency inherent in the space of safekeeping; the preface continues, “But as often in repairing a ruinous house, the mending of some olde part occasioneth the making of some new: so here her honourable labour begonne in correcting the faults, ended in supplying the defectes; by the view of what was ill done guided to the consideration of what was not done.” The preface indicates that the business of “supplying the defectes”—that is, adding what was missing—enables Sidney Herbert’s literary agency as textual manager: “Which part with what advise entred into, with what successe it hath beene passed through, most by her doing, all by her directing, if they maybe entreated not to define, which are unfurnisht of meanes to discerne, the rest (it is hoped) will favourably censure.” It is “most by her doing, all by her directing,” yet after this assertion of substantial action and control the preface legitimizes her work by referring to the originator as the source: “But this they shall, for thyr better satisfaction, understand, that though they finde not here what might be expected, they may finde neverthelesse as much as was intended, the conclusion, not the perfection of Arcadia; and that no further then the Authours own writings, or knownen determinations could direct.” The preface uses the same obfuscating clarification that Greville used, claiming that
Sidney Herbert’s changes either reflect Sidney’s own work or “knowen determinations” without specifying what the latter are or even who “knows” them. This technique at once cites a source while erasing a source; such nonspecific authority and legitimization give the textual manager great scope to exercise her own discretion.

The preface continues to construct Sidney Herbert as the guardian of the text by giving her discrimination in its circulation. The preface appeals to the discerning reader; others, it implies, will neither understand nor appreciate the *Arcadia*. After claiming the folio goes “no further then the Authours own writings, or knowen determinations could direct,” it says, “whereof who sees not the reason, must consider there maybe reason which he sees not.” The “worthles Reader,” it says, “can never worthily eteeme of so worthye a writing: and as true, that the noble, the wise, the vertuous, the curteous, as many as have had any acquaintaunce with true learning and knowledge, will with all love and dearenesse entertaine it, as well as for affinity with themselves, as being child to such a father.” This appeal makes it appear that Sidney Herbert is fulfilling Sidney’s request to show the *Arcadia* only to “such friends, who will weigh errors in the balaunce of good will” and thus affirms the legitimacy of her connection with the text, even though of course she is making it available to all readers and therefore, in a sense, is transgressing Sidney’s wishes.

Sidney Herbert also uses the technique of similitude to establish links and lines of legitimacy. The preface repeats the parental metaphor of the dedication, calling the *Arcadia* “child to such a father” as Sidney calls it “this child, which I am loath to father.” The preface suggests that “the greatest unlikeness [between the text and its progenitor] is rather in defect then in deformity,” echoing Sidney’s phrase, “Though in it selfe it have deformities.” And at the end of the preface is a claim that is both hereditary and possessive: “But howsoever it is, it is now by
more then one interest The Countesse of Pembroke’s Arcadia: done, as it was, for her: as it is, by her,” a reworking of Sidney’s phrase “now it is done onelie for you, onely to you.” Such near replication subtly reinforces the text’s alignment with, and representation of, the originator; at the same time, its difference is a reminder of the transmitter’s capacity to change that originator, to manipulate him into something at once like and unlike himself. Such recreation of the originating master figure is the ability of the secretary, and the preface brings this usually obscured capacity to the forefront, in effect showcasing how this process works. When the preface states that the re-edited text of the *Arcadia* does not “exactly and in every lineament represent” its author/father, it is overtly stating that representation is at the crux of transmission and that Sidney Herbert has created something that is like Sidney but is not Sidney. The preface also emphasizes the power of this position, as it gives complete ownership of the *Arcadia* to Sidney Herbert: “it is now by more then one interest The Countesse of Pembroke’s Arcadia.” It was previously done “for” her, but now it is done “by” her. Authorship has transferred, and, once again, this agency and authorial identity are based primarily in a corporate identity with Sidney as his textual collaborator and manager, not as his sister. The entire preface bases her authority in her textual relation to her brother and to *Arcadia*, as its inheritor, protector, and editor; it does not refer to Sidney as her brother until the very last line. While the preface situates this corporate relationship in a familial context, as Davis and Wall have argued, within that context both Sidney’s dedication and the 1593 preface base the relationship between the two of them in their textual work.57

The editorial work of Greville and Sidney Herbert thus shows involvement with secretarial ideas of preservation, replication, and transmission. It also demonstrates how people working in secretarial roles as information managers actually accessed the agency and forms of
authorship that such management offered. Their work is not just about Sidney’s text but is also about representing themselves and their authorial identity achieved through mediation, a goal indicated by their presence in their editions of the *Arcadia*. They both insert themselves into their editions. In Greville’s 1590 edition, his voice intervenes between the reader and Sidney’s text in the chapter headings, as he interrupts to direct the reader’s attention to upcoming points. He also inserts himself between the reader and the text in a brief introductory note, which is placed after Sidney’s dedication and before chapter one. This note foregrounds the editorial work on the text, reminding the reader that another hand in addition to the original author’s has been at work on the text. It immediately strikes this note in its first words: “The division and summing of the chapters was not of Sir Philip Sidneis doing, but adventured by the over-seer of the print, for the more ease of the Readers.” The use of the word “adventured” almost suggests that the editor’s appropriation and direction of the text are acts of piracy, as he wrests its control and representation away from the originator. But this audacity is then covered, as the note next cites Philip Sidney for authority and legitimacy, but keeps agency in the hands of the “over-seer”: “As also if any defect be fund in the Eclogues, which although they were of Sir Phillip Sidneis writing, yet were they not perused by him, but left till the worke had bene finished, that then choise should have bene made, which should have bene taken, and in what manner brought in.”

It is clear that the master hand here is the over-seer’s; the note’s placement between the dedication and the text physically puts the editor in the space of transmission and calls attention to the fact that that space is an active space of intervention, choices, and decisions.

Sidney Herbert also inserts her voice into her edition. The 1593 preface, which is four times as long as the 1590 editorial note, is a substantial description of her activity in the space between Sidney and the reader. This preface is also placed between Sidney’s dedication and
chapter one, and its length enforces a sustained interruption of Sidney’s voice. In the text itself, Sidney Herbert inserts herself with a brief bridging note placed between the end of the *New Arcadia* (when the text ends in mid-sentence) and the added ending taken from the *Old Arcadia*. This note reads:

> How this combate ended, how the Ladies by the comming of the discovered forces were delivered, and restored to Basilius, and howe Dorus againe returned to his old master Damaetus, is altogether unknowne. What afterward chaunced, out of the Authors owne writings and conceits hath bene supplied, as foloweth.⁵⁹

This note foregrounds the activity of the transmission space and embodies the presence of the textual manager who works in this space. While it presents the ending as the work of Sidney, the word “conceits” again is a nonspecific term that the transmitter may use to hide her own work. What the textual manager does as her form of authorship here is create something new, that is, a version of the *New Arcadia* with an ending, and present it as something that already existed. The note puts her and her activity squarely in the reader’s eye and reminds the reader that she is controlling a large part of the text.

These notes enable Greville and Sidney Herbert to foreground themselves and to establish a presence in the text under the guise of presenting the master figure’s voice. They create a space in which the narrative voice changes and thus they confuse assumptions about who the narrative voice is; under the guise of stabilizing the text and its author in print, these insertions destabilize the presumptive authorial voice, an effect which the physical placement of the notes reinforces. This is the secretary’s, or mediator’s, space, and Greville and Sidney Herbert concretize it and make it visible. When the 1593 bridging note says, “What afterward
chaunced...hath bene supplied . . .” it points to the invisible hand at work, the unspecified hand supplying the ending. Through their occupation of this space they remind the reader who is materializing the text into print, and they become a presence that needs to be drawn aside to get to the ostensibly primary voice. For both Greville and Sidney Herbert, this is the space in which private becomes public, and they negotiate this turn as information managers who access authorship in this space, fully aware that transmission reshapes content and generates meaning.

This substantial space that Greville and Sidney Herbert establish and claim in these editions of the *Arcadia* is a public expression of an ideologically hidden function. In secretarial texts, mediators are theoretically transparent, or occupy no space at all, ideally being entirely subsumed in the master. Their complete alignment with the master negates a space where text can be transformed, or where meaning changes, as text materializes or is transferred. Yet Greville and Sidney Herbert overtly occupy this space, carving it out for their activity and authorial agency. Further, the dispute between the two over the editing of the *Arcadia* is not so much about Sidney’s text as it is about the ownership and control of this space. The stakes are particularly high because Sidney is dead, and consequently this space becomes the only portal to him as embodied in his work; it is also the most important means of constructing and stabilizing him socially and politically. This ownership ultimately went to Sidney Herbert, whose edition of the *Arcadia* became the standard and was reprinted numerous times, while Greville’s edition was never reprinted and sank into obscurity. In 1598 Sidney Herbert stabilized Sidney further in print in the 1598 folio which practically amounted to his collected works. It included the *Arcadia* (1593 version), *The Lady of May*, *Certain Sonnets*, *The Defense of Poetry*, and *Astrophil and Stella*. Her choices for this edition are evidence of the way she chose to reauthor Sidney for the public. Where Greville had wanted to print Sidney’s religious works, they are notably absent
from this folio. Instead, the author that Sidney Herbert presents is more secular and worldly, and she continued to foster the growth of this Sidney persona through later editions of his work, her patronage, and her own writings. In the contest for control over the space of transmission she successfully outbid Greville. The size of the 1593 *Arcadia*, its grand frontispiece which itself outs the invisible hand by boldly stating “Now since the first edition augmented and ended,” its lengthy and almost arrogant preface combine to literally and figuratively outweigh Greville’s modest 1590 edition, with its plain title page and brief editorial note.

While constructing Sidney in this contested space, Sidney Herbert also establishes her own authorial identity by drawing on the opportunities the space offers to construct and inflect meaning through transfer. Sidney’s dedication to “my deare ladye and sister” and the 1593 preface enact this transmission. Sidney’s transfer of the *Arcadia* to his sister is intimate and private; her transfer of it to print is general and public. The text of “To the Reader,” Janus-like, looks both backward to Sidney’s dedication and forward to the experience of his new readers, articulating the process by which the transfer happens and thus defining the space of that transfer. It illuminates the secretarial figure of transfer, rather than obscuring it as a shadowy presence, as it makes manifest what secretarial texts try to erase. Finally, it creates Sidney Herbert’s authorial identity through her textual relations with Sidney. She is of course his “deare sister,” but she also accesses authorship as his collaborator, editor, and transmitter.

The *Arcadia* preface was not the last opportunity Sidney Herbert took to comment on the nature of her collaborative work with her brother. Fulfilling the promise of the concluding sentence of the preface, which states, “Neither shall these pains [of producing the *Arcadia*] be the last (if no unexpected accident cut off her determination) which the everlasting love of her excellent brother will make her consecrate to his memory,” in 1599 Sidney Herbert completed a
verse translation of the biblical Psalms, a project which either Sidney began alone or they began together before his death. At that time Sidney had translated psalms 1 through 43; Sidney Herbert translated the remaining psalms 44 through 150 and substantially revised her brother’s verses.

This was an ambitious project. Debra Rienstra and Noel Kinnamon characterize it as “a peculiar work—a translation, a paraphrase, a scholarly meditation, an artist’s sketchbook of poetic forms, an intensely personal devotional exercise”—but its completion and the variety of its verse forms in vernacular English were significant literary accomplishments, and the Sidney Psalms remains Sidney Herbert’s best-known work. She apparently worked on the project, writing and revising, throughout the 1590s, and arrived at a final version in 1599. In that year a presentation copy was prepared for the queen, prefaced by two dedicatory poems by Sidney Herbert, “Even now that Care” and “To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Sir Phillip Sidney.” “Even now that Care,” apparently written in 1599, dedicates the Sidney Psalter to Queen Elizabeth; “To the Angell spirit,” which Sidney Herbert may have worked on for several years, rededicates it to Sidney. Although there are eighteen extant manuscripts of the Psalms, these two poems exist only in one, the Tixall manuscript. In these two poems, among their other purposes, Sidney Herbert presents herself as a writer and further develops representations of her writing relationship with her brother, as was done in his Arcadia dedication to her and in the 1593 Arcadia preface.

The Psalms project as a whole demonstrates Sidney Herbert’s inclination to fortify the Sidney family’s reputation as a Protestant force and literary center, and they may have been presented to the queen as a reminder of that force. Certainly the dedicatory poem to the queen has political overtones, reminding her that Sidney died in her service and that it is she “on whom
chief dependeth to dispose / what Europe acts in these most active times” (7-8). This poem, written in twelve eight-line stanzas of iambic pentameter, compares Elizabeth to the biblical David and alludes to contemporary events, such as the defeat of the Spanish Armada and explorations of the New World. It uses a clothing metaphor for the completed *Psalmes*, comparing the psalter to a “liverie robe” to be “bestowed” by the queen (34), the fabric having been woven by Sidney and Sidney Herbert. The poem appeals to Elizabeth as a patroness, yet, as Hannay et al. point out, it avoids the usual references to the queen’s beauty, eternal youth, and chastity. Instead it addresses her in religious and political terms, with an emphasis on her duty and her god-given ability to fulfill her position.67 “To the Angell spirit” is conceived as a direct address to Sidney, both as a commemoration of his genius and as an apology for Sidney Herbert’s own work. It consists of thirteen stanzas of seven iambic pentameter lines, and adopts the voice of one grieving for Sidney. As an elegy, it laments the death of Sidney and praises him as a poet. His works are “immortall monuments” of his fame (71), while the speaker stresses personal inadequacy to complete his works.

Several modes of discourse operate in these two poems, which have been characterized as falling into “the usual feminine genres of dedications and epitaphs.”68 Hannay observes that the two dedicatory poems together function as admonitory flattery, coupling a lament for Sidney with a disguised political recommendation to Queen Elizabeth that she further his dedication to the Protestant cause in Europe.69 In “To the Angell spirit,” praise is the dominant mode in the elegiac form, combined with the conventional modesty topos. Wall has pointed out that “To the Angell spirit” heavily uses Petrarchan conventions—“broken bodies, monetary expenditures, emotional reckoning, eternizing conceit, and hyperbolic praise”—while Lamb argues that Sidney Herbert also uses the discourse of *ars moriendi*, and that it underlies Sidney Herbert’s version of
I identify yet another discourse at work in these two poems, the discourse of secretaryship, or of information management as constructed in secretarial texts. Just as Sidney, Greville, and Sanford draw on this language and its constructs in their paratextual pieces for Sidney’s work, Sidney Herbert, in these two original poems, relies on it as a structural foundation for her identity as a writer and, through its use, overtly plots the intersection of its social prescriptions with the literary. In both poems, she uses the familiar secretarial constructs of collaborative equality and similarity, means to legitimacy and authority, transmission and circulation, transparency of the mediator, and the nature of the textual body of the secretary to access the opportunities that a position as textual transmitter offers.

While reading the varied and complex objectives of these two poems—to flatter and politically motivate the queen, to praise Sidney and solidify his heroic and literary persona, to mourn his death, and to construct Sidney Herbert’s own identity as a writer, among others—it is important to remember that they are emphatically poems about transfer. Both poems make a point of establishing this in their opening lines, and a space of transmission thus contextualizes both poems. As “Even now that Care” begins, the poet acknowledges “that Care on which thy Crowne attends” (1) but nevertheless hopes that “One instant will, or willing can, she lose / I say not reading, but receiving Rimes” (5-6). Right away the act of reception takes precedence over the act of reading. While reading seems to be the desired aim (and presumptuous hope), the spotlight on reception draws attention to the actual act of transfer, giving it its own distinct space apart from the act of reading. The opening lines in “To the Angell spirit” introduce a curious hybrid of elegy and dedication, as Sidney Herbert directs the psalms back to the spirit of their now-dead other author: “To thee pure sprite, to thee alone’s addres’t / this coupled worke, by double int’rest thine” (1-2). In both poems, it is immediately apparent that it is important to
Sidney Herbert that she establish their status as instruments of transfer and herself as the guiding hand of that transfer.

To focus first on "Even now that Care," references to transmittal continue throughout the poem. The poem’s space and time in fact occupy and define the transmittal space, since transmission never seems to be actually achieved. In line 20, Sidney and Sidney Herbert are “Senders,” and lines 33-34 read, “And I the Cloth [the *Psalmes*] in both our names present, / A liverie robe to bee bestowed by thee,” making presentation/transfer the act of the poet at this moment and also the act of the queen in the future. Later in the poem, referencing the biblical David as the true source of the psalms, Sidney Herbert writes, “A King should onely to a Queene bee sent” (53), and the passive construction elliptically refers again to the one doing the sending. Late in the poem, the speaker addresses her muse: “Thy utmost can but offer to hir [the queen’s] sight / Her handmaids taske, which most her will endures” (89-90), indicating that the middle ground of transmission, the space between offering and acceptance, continues to be the space of the poem.

The poem also is careful to establish authorizing sources, a concern complicated by the several different sources it names. Sidney seems to authorize his sister’s act of presentation through his absence, which necessitates her act in substitution for him: the “Postes of Dutie and Goodwill / shall presse to offer what their Senders owe; / which once in two, now in one Subject goe / the poorer left, the richer left awaye; / who better might (O might ah word of woe.) / have giv’n for mee what I for him defraye” (19-24). But the “stuffe” of the poem, its metaphorical fabric, the poet says, is “not ours” (28). Their work is merely cloth in which to see David, “the Psalmist King / Now English denizend, though Hebrue borne” (29-30). Sidney and Sidney Herbert together occupy the space of translation (another form of transmittal) of David’s
originating work, so Sidney is at times a source and master figure for Sidney Herbert and at other times a partner. David seems to be the “real” source for the psalms, but then Sidney Herbert conflates him with Elizabeth, who becomes both the inspiring source as well as the recipient: “for in our work what bring we but thine owne?” (41). English belongs to Elizabeth, says the poet, but what is already hers is also sent to her: “A King should onely to a Queene bee sent. / Gods loved choise with his chosen love” (53-54). David and Elizabeth become mirrored images, as God’s “loved choise” and “chosen love.” Elizabeth legitimizes the text through both inspiration and protection: “Thy brest the Cabinet, thy seat the shrine, / where Muses hang their vowed memories: / where Wit, where Art, where all that is divine / conceived best, and best defended lies” (45-48). The reference to Elizabeth’s breast as the cabinet of the Muses emphasizes the exclusivity of manuscripts kept by the queen, and thus their enhanced value, but it also makes the queen the keeper and archival source of history where the Muses “hang their . . . memories.” The queen is thus the originating, legitimizing source and, as the keeper of the textual production from that source, the continuing guarantor of its legitimacy.

Sidney Herbert’s identification of these possible sources enables her own pose of absence, or self-erasure, in the poem, a pose that accords with the secretarial notion of transparency. In making Queen Elizabeth the perfect reader, recipient, and patron, as well as the Psalmes origin and rightful owner, Sidney Herbert minimizes her own role in their creation. Her characterization of the Psalmes as the result of a joint act with her brother of making a verbal “cloth” also distances her from a position of originating authority or authorship. She writes, “but he did warpe, / I weav’d this webb to end; / the stuffe not ours, our worke no curious thing” (27-28). This pose is supported by the use of the same technique secretarial texts use of creating equality and similitude between the master and secretary, or the collaborative writing partners.
While Sidney Herbert seems to establish her brother as the more important writer, at the same time she subtly presents herself as equal to him. Although Sidney is the “richer” subject and “better might . . . have giv’n for mee what I for him defraye,” they both are equally capable of the act of giving the poems, and the inversion of “giv’n for mee” with “I for him” in line 24 establishes equilibrium in the act of transfer. Further, she presents the cloth in both their names (33), not just in her brother’s name, thus putting herself on an equal basis with him in the act of transfer. Even the weaving metaphor, usually read as indicative of inequality in her writing relationship with Sidney and as a claim on Sidney Herbert’s part to be the lesser writer, subtly suggests forms of equality. 72 The more obvious intent of the use of “but” at the beginning of line 27—“but he did warpe”—is as meaning “nevertheless,” but it also hints at the sense of “only,” as if the line read “he did but warp,” which shifts the emphasis to her act of weaving. The end of the line, “I weav’d this webb to end” also emphasizes her act of completion. This technique of using a form of equal presence (in joint work on the psalms) to establish similarity, which then supports the absence of the secretarial, or transmittal, figure (who because of similitude has been subsumed into the master figure) is precisely the complex, paradoxical technique used in secretarial texts to erase the presence of the secretary and create the necessary absence in which the master’s presence may be realized. 73 This construction enables Sidney Herbert to be present and yet maintain a pose of absence, a secretarial pose continued in the poem’s later reference to her “handmaids taske.” This links Sidney Herbert to feminine handwork of weaving and needlework, but also to the “hand” work of writing what Sidney conceived, the completion of the Sidney Psalter.

Sidney Herbert continues to use secretarial discourse in “To the Angell spirit.” This poem is usually identified as an elegy, although it starts off as a dedication. The poem praises Sidney’s
work, and presents Sidney Herbert’s work on the *Psalmes* as a poor substitute for what he would have done if he had lived. The poem elevates him as an incomparable paragon, and his works “above all praise, extende” (70). He is portrayed as now in a heavenly realm, and the speaker mourns his death and describes her own pain and grief. Finally, she wishes to also die, because her grief is so great. The poem is written in an interlocking rhyme scheme in thirteen stanzas of seven iambic pentameter lines.

The first stanza immediately presents several secretarial indicators. It establishes the poem, and therefore the speaker, as mechanisms of transfer; it describes shifting ownership of text within a collaborative writing relationship; it establishes an apparently “master” voice for the pair; it devises a method of authenticating the work of the secondary, or secretarial, writer; and it connects that authenticating process to secrecy. It reads:

To thee pure sprite, to thee alone’s addres’t
this coupled worke, by double int’rest thine:
First rais’d by they blest hand, and what is mine
inspird by thee, they secret power imprest.
So dared my Muse with thine it selfe combine
as mortall stuffe with that which is divine,
Thy lightning beames give lustre to the rest . . .        (1-7)

The first line, “To thee pure sprite, to thee alone’s addres’t / this coupled worke” enacts the transfer. The work is “coupled, … first raised by they blest hand, and what is mine / inspird by thee,” a nice expression of collaboration with forms of dual ownership that seem to establish a primacy for one of the writers, the one who wrote first and then inspired the other writer. This suggests that the second writer is somehow directed by the first, fulfilling a secretary-like
function of acting as the instrument for fulfilling the master’s direction. However, there is a form
of dual ownership of the text here, worked in the couplet “thine” and “mine.” The text is not
wholly the master’s. Although the secretary’s part is “inspird by thee,” it is described as “what is
mine,” a definite claim (although to the unspecific “what”). Next, the speaker’s claim that the
text is “inspird” by Sidney presents one form of authentication (that is, that Sidney’s voice, as the
primary/master voice, speaks authentically in and through the text of the *Psalmes*). Inspiration
makes the secondary writer a vessel for the transmittal from a now-absent source. But that form
of certification is immediately buttressed by another: “thy secret power imprest.” Inspiration here
takes the form of a physical seal, as it is “imprest” on the secondary writer. Sidney Herbert then
expands this idea of impression by describing how her muse “dared…with thine itself combine, /
as mortall stuffe with that which is divine.” This language of impression and the mingling of
muses often is read sexually, as indicating a metaphorically incestuous conception of the work.
R. E. Pritchard points out that “coupled” has a sexual meaning, as does “impressed,” a term
derived from the language of coining and frequently used at the time for the sexual act and
impregnation. He reads Sidney Herbert as here invoking a sexual union between a woman and a
divine being to emphasize the authenticity of the work. 74 Wall reads the combined muses as
“interactive” and the work as a product of their “erotic entanglement.” 75 But while “imprest”
may refer to the sexual act, it also carries connotations of authenticating seals, or stamps, some
of which could leave impressions that would later be inked over. The monarch’s authenticating
“dry stamp,” for instance, was instituted toward the end of Henry Tudor’s reign. According to
David Starkey,

The dry stamp . . . left an uninked impression on the paper which was
gone over in pen-and-ink by an expert clerk. The result was a near perfect
facsimile, that was used henceforward to authenticate all documents to which the sign manual would ordinarily have been applied. In this reading, the secretary/secondary writer becomes “the near perfect facsimile,” not only the bearer of the master’s authenticating mark, but the embodiment of the mark itself. In the master’s absence, the secretary becomes the mechanism by which the master is present. A secretarial interpretation of “impressed” is further supported by its conjunction with “secret.” Secrecy is the cornerstone of the master/secretary relationship; in secretarial texts the secretary is first and foremost the keeper of his master’s secrets. Therefore the transfer of Sidney’s “secrett power” through impression to the secondary writer describes and reinforces a textual relationship signified by such specifically secretarial terms.

The density of information management themes in the first four lines of “To the Angell spirit” establishes their importance as contextualizing ideas for the rest of the poem, and the ideas they present are in fact repeated in the poem’s text. The poem refers to markers of authenticity and truth: “Truth I invoke,” says the speaker, lest people think “my blood should partialize” (50-51), and Sidney’s worth is “seal’d above” (56). In the final stanza, Sidney Herbert writes, “Receive theise Hymnes . . . / if any marke of thy sweet sprite appeare, / well are they borne, no title else shall beare” (85-87). “Marke” recalls the authenticating impressed stamp of stanza one, here again invoked to guarantee the authenticity of Sidney’s presence.

Sidney Herbert also presents herself as an absent presence in the poem, in accordance with the secretarial pose of self-erasure. By claiming “what is mine [is] inspired by thee” in stanza one, she suggest that her own work is really his product. In line 46 her senses are “stricken dumb,” silencing her even as she speaks in the poem. In line 87, when she states the Psalms “no
title else shall beare,” she suggests only to erase the possibility that they may bear her title, Countess of Pembroke, and claim her lineage.

Her use of images of dissection also recalls secretarial texts’ images of the merging of the secretary’s and master’s dissected bodies. In the third stanza, she writes that if Sidney had lived, “This halfe maim’d peece had sorted with the best. / Deepe wounds enlarg’d, long festred in their gall / fresh bleeding smart; not eie but hart teares fall” (18-20). The part of the Psalms not completed by Sidney is “but peec’t, as left by thee undone” (24). Here Sidney Herbert evokes her brother’s fatal wounds, identifying “this halfe maim’d piece” with his body; Wall writes, “[H]is anatomy blends with the text because both are wounded.”77 Sidney Herbert’s anatomy, too, blends with the text and Sidney’s body through her own evoked wounds: the deep wounds of her grief “fresh bleeding smart.” She bleeds as he bleeds, and her body is dissected into eyes and heart as his body and the text are “half maim’d”: “not eie but hart teares fall.” She continues this confusion of bodies and text in stanza thirteen, when she writes,

To which theise dearest offrings of my hart
dissolv’d to Inke, while penns impressions move
the bleeding veines of never dying love:
I render here: . . . (78-81)

The “bleeding veines” appear to be hers, but they could also again refer to Sidney’s wounds, creating a collaborative mutuality of bodies that then is converted to ink as she writes—“renders”—“the dearest offrings of [her] hart.” The writing process then arises out of the joining of two pieced bodies, just as it does in secretarial formulations in which the secretary becomes the master’s dissected body—his eyes, ears, hands, and so on—as a way to guarantee authenticity and security. Sidney Herbert’s use of “impressions” in line 79, which echoes stanza
one, underscores this convergence of pieced, bleeding bodies that authorizes, produces, and authenticates text.

For Lamb, Sidney Herbert’s use of blood for ink marks her writing as a physical, not intellectual, act, a stance Sidney Herbert makes explicit as she continues stanza thirteen:

I render here: these wounding lynes of smart

sadd Characters indeed of simple love

not Art nor skill which abler wits doe prove,

Of my full soule receive the meanest part. (81-84)\\textsuperscript{78}

This is not merely a pose of humility, however. In the context of secretarial information management, Sidney Herbert’s disclaimer is absolutely appropriate. Secretaries, as textual handlers, are not supposed to insert their own art or skill; they are to function only as the master’s “hand.” The secretary’s purpose is to perform the physical act of writing, not the intellectual act of conception, which is the master’s domain. However, the secretary is bound to love the master, who is bound to return that love. Sidney Herbert makes a similar connection between secretarial function and love, maintaining the fiction that she contributes nothing of “art” or “skill” but is only the hand that writes “sadd Characters . . . of simple love.”

Sidney Herbert’s use of secretarial ideas connected to collaborative authorship and textual transmission enables her to do several things. First, because she positions herself in the gender-fluid area of information management, her freedom to write is much greater, as is her ability to self-construct as a author. Second, it allows her to exercise, and thus demonstrate, the agency and power of the secretarial position—both the representational power that the secretary has to write and rewrite others, and the power that the secretary has to remap the geography of
transmission. As she appropriates these forms of power and agency, Sidney Herbert self-represents as a figure of authorial control behind a pose of inferiority.

Critics have applied various gender matrixes to these two poems, seeing Sidney Herbert as either submissively (and appropriately) feminine in her devotion to her brother, as sexualized in an incestuous relationship with him, or as manipulating male discourses of power to subversively claim authority as a woman writer. The assumption is that Sidney Herbert is always writing in a context of gender conflict, either working against restrictions on women’s writing or against male discourses that objectify women. However, a few critics have given more attention to the fact that these two poems are remarkably self-assertive and do not seem particularly concerned with apologizing for being by a woman writer. The editors of her collected works observe that in “Even now that Care,” “Pembroke never apologizes for or even mentions her own role as a woman writer”; Rienstra and Kinnamon write that “Pembroke neglects to express self-abnegation for being an audacious writing woman” (in “To the Angell spirit”). Such absence perhaps is not so remarkable if we consider that Sidney Herbert’s self-assertion in the poems is enabled in part because she does not have to “unsex” herself (or apologize for her sex) to write as an information manager, a role available to both men and women. As Lamb has argued, discourses of gender difference sexualized women’s language to prevent authorship by women, out of an underlying concern for the subversive potential of women’s anger. The discourse of information management, however, is not a discourse of gender difference but one of gender fluidity, because its aim is to prevent various forms of authorship by both men and women, out of an underlying concern for the subversive potential of information managers to corrupt data, threaten social confidence in information’s legitimacy, and disrupt information flow. The concentration on gender difference in Sidney Herbert’s dedicatory
poems has obscured the fact that Sidney Herbert is manipulating social formulas that do not construct gender but arise from information technologies. For instance, Wall has argued that by making Sidney her muse (in stanza one of “To the Angell spirit”), Sidney Herbert “disrupts and restructures conventional sexual metaphors for textual production.” This is true if sexual metaphors for textual production are always heterosexual, but in information management, which creates highly eroticized male/male textual relationships, they are not. Further, in information contexts, the secretary or information handler is already established as a secondary figure, inspired or directed by another in a love relationship. So in stanza one it is possible that Sidney Herbert is simply stepping into the discourse of information management, not structuring an alternative discourse. In this reading, when Sidney Herbert appropriates the “secrett power” of her fantasized projection of her brother, she is not, as Wall suggests, using it to vindicate her literary endeavor or to cover “the transgression of her boldness in writing.” She is doing exactly as a secretary should, using the authorizing mark to ensure the legitimacy of the transferred data. Wall also suggests that when Sidney Herbert references Sidney’s wounded body in stanza three, she manipulates the reader’s gaze by displaying an aristocratic male body and thus, by presenting an alternative poetics of display, regenders it. We can complicate Wall’s suggestion if we consider that Sidney Herbert, in addition to altering a discourse in which men display dissected female bodies, is using a discourse in which men display and align dissected male bodies, not to self-author but to author the object, that is, the master body.

Particularly in “To the Angell spirit,” what is striking is not Sidney Herbert’s position of gender difference, but her position of gender similarity; that is, she can write as a woman in a male discourse that does not rely on difference. Because she is Sidney’s sister, it would be natural to expect her to exploit that connection and emphasize the sibling relationship that would
establish her in the feminine role of sister. But Sidney Herbert does not construct a familial past with Sidney in the poem, nor does she claim authority through the sibling relationship. As in the 1593 *Arcadia* preface, there is no reference to her sex, nor are there any gender clues in the body of the poem. It is not until the end of the Tixall manuscript that the reader reaches an attribution, “By the Sister of that Incomparable Sidney,” and the writer is identified. The poem does refer to “blood” and disclaims family partiality in its praise of Sidney, but unless a reader already knows who the poem’s author is there is no way to tell from the poem itself if the speaker is male or female. For Kim Walker, the poem’s “overflow of emotion [is] appropriate to notions of femininity,” but hyperbolic emoting abounds in elegies for Sidney that were written by men. Nicholas Breton’s “Amoris Lachrimae” (1591), for example, is unparalleled in its “grandiose evocation of the speaker’s predicament.” Like “To the Angell spirit,” “Amoris Lachrimae” dwells on the speaker’s loss and grief, and expresses deep love for the departed Sidney in such lines as “. . . my penne can never halfe express / The hideous torments of my heavie hart.” Like Sidney Herbert, Breton sees Sidney as an inspiration, and also like Sidney Herbert, other elegists presented their poetry as inferior to Sidney’s, indicating that these poses are not necessarily feminizing. In fact, the lack of gender difference in “To the Angell spirit” led to assumptions that it was by a man. An earlier version of the poem was found among Samuel Daniel’s papers after his death and published as his work in 1623.

One indication of social comfort and familiarity with the gender fluidity of textual managers, and with the idea that a woman could fill the position, is Sidney Herbert’s designation as “Philip’s phoenix.” For more than a decade after Sidney’s death, despite the existence of other possible candidates, she assumed the literary role that would have been her brother’s. Writers dedicated works to her and sought her patronage. Sidney himself had been symbolized as a
phoenix, and the mythical bird became a symbol for Sidney Herbert as the reincarnation of her brother. This reincarnation emphasized her similarity to her brother; writers stressed her likeness to him in “shape and spright,” called her the “inheritor of his wit and genius,” and claimed that Sidney had “bequeathed the secrets of his skill to her.” Of course those who painted her in such terms were flattering her and seeking patronage, but it is notable that others were apparently comfortable with putting her in the same relation to writing and text as a man, and this comfort is evidence of the gender fluidity of the information management position in more generalized social practice. It becomes unremarkable that a woman may be the repository of a writing partner’s “secrets” and the instrument of perpetuating and circulating his “wit and genius”: she may do so because that position in relation to textual matters is gender fluid and allows for gender similarity, instead of enforcing gender difference.

Because Sidney Herbert is easily established in this discourse of information management, in the two dedicatory poems she is free to explore issues of representation as well as her ability to self-represent while representing another. In various ways, the poems illustrate how a secretary/transmitter’s position of representation covers the power to author and re-author the master figure and to usurp ownership and control of the text that represents the master figure. The transmittal position also enables the secretary to author and present himself or herself. These powers lie behind the constructs of information management, in which similarity and other devices are set up to hide the actual differentiated nature of the secretary. This very pose, however, enables the secretary’s own agency, which arises out of the difference and dispossession that information management discourse tries to erase.

In these two poems, Sidney Herbert adopts the secretary’s pose. She is ostensibly representing her brother, as she casts him as the primary writer of the psalms and herself as
secondary. She seems very much to be the go-between, as she positions herself as the transmitter and describes herself as “the poorer” and Sidney as “the richer reft awaye” (“Even now that Care” 22). Sidney “better might . . . have giv’n for mee what I for him defraye” (23-24), and “hee did warpe, I weav’d this webb to end” (27). In both poems, this sense of unequal collaboration is contextualized by a pervading sense of doubleness. In addition to the double dedications and the references to the double authorship, the first stanza of “To the Angell spirit” uses the terms “double,” “coupled,” and “combine” and refers to the two muses of Sidney and Sidney Herbert. Sidney Herbert continually elevates Sidney and his work and apparently denigrates her own contribution to their poetic project. The piece is “half-maimed”; presumably her half is the maimed half. As previously noted, Sidney Herbert adopts a pose of self-erasure in the poems, and she also insists, as any good secretary would, that the work she and Sidney did on the psalms did not alter their substance. In “Even now that Care” she writes, “the stuffe [is] not ours, our worke no curious thing” (28), and in “To the Angell spirit” she claims that the psalms are not transformed in “substance” but that the metaphrase is “superficiall tire” (9). In the poems she works hard both to claim the psalms as legitimate representations and to apologize for them as poor substitutes, an articulation of precisely the secretary’s challenge in representing the master. Alexander has noted Sidney Herbert’s eagerness to put Sidney’s unfinished works in a position of “unassailable authority,” while Walker observes that, in “To the Angell spirit,” the “real” is located elsewhere as Sidney Herbert portrays her writing as “offring” and mere “impressions.” Waller feels that Sidney Herbert expresses total reliance on her brother’s inspiration, and Wall notes Sidney Herbert’s “poignant self-erasure” in her revisions of “To the Angell spirit.” Such readings confirm that the secretarial posture is clearly operating in Sidney Herbert’s work.
At the same time, Sidney Herbert establishes her own presence and a sense of her own authorial ownership of the poems as she negotiates the tension between her own authorship and her role as her brother’s transmitter. In “Even now that Care” Sidney is not mentioned until line 20, in the third stanza. The two opening stanzas describe a transaction between two women, and the “rimes” offered to the queen may easily be assumed to be by Sidney Herbert alone. In line 3, Sidney Herbert refers to “my Muse,” indicating a single author with single ownership. Sidney Herbert continues to subtly reinforce her presence in "Even now that Care" by repeated use of the pronoun “I” in the first five stanzas. Not only is she present, it is an active presence, as “I the Cloth in both our names present” (33). She is also bold; in “Even now that Care,” she dares (“yet dare I so” [9]) to present the completed Psalmes to the queen, while in “To the Angell spirit” “So dared my Muse with thine itself combine” (5). Her muse assumes an active role, combining with his, and their combined muses, not just Sidney’s, control the text. Although “what is mine” is inspired by Sidney, it also constitutes a clear claim to ownership (3-4).

In both poems, Sidney Herbert uses the device of calling attention to Sidney’s absence to emphasize her presence. The phrase in “Even now that Care,” “Which once in two, now in one Subject goe,” effectively eliminates him and positions her as the figure in whom the psalms now “goe” (21). As she continues, her invocation of his memory reminds the reader that he is gone while situating her as capable of action. In “Even now that Care” she writes, “How can I name whom sighing sighes extend, / and not unstopp my teares eternall spring?” (25-26). Not only is she present and capable of tears, she assumes the agency to “name” Sidney, to recall and recreate him. In "To the Angell spirit," memory again invokes him and triggers her agency:

Ah memorie what needs this new arrest? …

Yet here behold (oh wert thou to behold!)
this finish’t now, thy matchlesse Muse begunne,  
the rest but peec’t, as left by thee undone. (21-24)

As she invokes him—“Yet here behold”—the parenthetical phrase reminds us he is not here to “behold” the finished project. A key word here is “finish’t”; although Sidney Herbert cloaks her work in modesty—the rest is “but peec’t”—the work did not depend on his presence. Sidney Herbert finished it, because Sidney left it “undone.” Again, her action and agency—and her ability to name and finish him—follow a reminder of his presence.

Sidney Herbert further establishes agency by manipulating specific images of secretaryship designed to confirm the master’s authority. Her references to seals and the dissected body draw attention to Sidney’s absence and her presence, and also to the fact that it is only in her presence that Sidney can be realized. As she is “imprest” with his “secrett power,” her work is not only authorized by the presence of his seal, but she now becomes the bearer of the seal and consequently the only authenticating indictor of his presence. That this power is transferred is indicated in line 56 of “To the Angell spirit.” Calling on “Truth” to confirm her claims that Sidney is beyond earthly praise and is now appropriately in heaven, “Where truthfull praise in highest glorie shin’de” (40), she writes that “At least ’tis sealed above” (56). This line refers to her point that Sidney’s greatness is confirmed, or sealed, in heaven, and that heaven knows his greatness in ways that those on earth cannot fully appreciate or express. In echoing the imagery of seals, the line continues the poem’s concern with authenticity and legitimacy. But in addition to reading “above” as a reference to heaven, we can also read it as a reference to what is written “above” in the text, as a self-referential indicator to what has been previously stated. Given the language of information management that operates in the poem, the use of such a technical textual term is entirely appropriate, and it foregrounds the text itself as well as Sidney
Herbert’s ability to “seal,” or confirm, Sidney in text. Here she claims the ability to exercise the power transferred to her in stanza one, as she, as the bearer of his mark, becomes the one who can indicate (or not indicate) the authentic presence of Sidney. She does so through written text, the secretarial medium for authorship of the master. Consequently, when in the poem’s final stanza, she refers again to Sidney’s “marke” and says that if the psalms bear any mark of his spirit “well are they borne, no title else shall beare” (87), this is not only a gesture of self-erasure but at the same time an echo of her power to designate and decide what bears his mark, as she is the one who declares “no title else shall beare”; that is, she is the one with the deciding power over titles.

Similarly, Sidney Herbert’s use of images of dissection in “To the Angell spirit” not only allows her to represent the master figure through her own pieced body, but to claim an authorial presence. While, as Wall argues, Sidney Herbert’s reference to Sidney’s wounded body and her blending of the text with his anatomy “authorizes the work as an emblem of the piecemeal body of a culturally resonant, dead male,” it also shows her mastery of his body, in her ability to disassemble and reassemble it. As in secretarial texts, this is a strategy for authenticity, to establish the realness of the master’s presence in the secretary through a device of corporeal display in which displacement becomes a substitute for the real thing. Therefore Sidney Herbert’s use of this substitution directs the readerly gaze to her body, which represents but also displaces the male body of her brother. She becomes the master “body” of the text, behind the gesture of presenting his body.

Seals and dissection thus become images through which Sidney Herbert can self-represent as a figure with authorial power while representing another. Another device she uses to the same end is the repetition with variations of Sidney’s own words. The editors of Sidney
Herbert’s *Collected Works* have discussed the extent to which Sidney Herbert’s revisions of “To the Angell spirit” evoke Sidney’s work, echoing *Astrophil and Stella, Arcadia*, and Sidney’s *Arcadia* dedication. In stanza one of “To the Angell spirit,” the repetition of “To thee…to thee alone’s addres’t” echoes Sidney’s *Arcadia* dedication: “most deare, and most worthy to be most deare Lady,” and also his “onelie for you, onely to you.” In “Even now that Care,” Sidney Herbert’s reference to the “webb” she weaved to completion recalls Sidney’s comparison of *Arcadia* to a spider’s web; her characterization of the *Psalms* as a “liverie robe” recalls Sidney’s invocation of “the liverye of your name” as protection for his *Arcadia*. With such references and repetitions, Sidney Herbert uses the same technique employed in the 1593 *Arcadia* preface, effectively creating both likeness and difference, presence and absence. While evoking Sidney’s presence because of textual similarities, the device also indicates her power to rewrite him and refigure his textual presence through difference. It is a subtle reminder of the fact that, despite secretarial formulations, it is always impossible for a secretarial transmittal figure to place the recipient or reader in immediate contact with the master figure; what the secretary presents will necessarily be a distortion, and the secretary has the power to form that distortion.

Sidney Herbert thus uses the poems to self-represent as the authority behind representation. Her assumption of a secretarial role, or a role that emphasizes her position as Sidney’s textual manager and transmitter, enables her to do so because the secretarial pose covers the difference that enables such agency. Secretarial formulations define the secretary as a site of dispossession, or erasure. Complete alignment with the master theoretically creates a system for his seamless representation, a way to produce the master that disallows any distortion. In a sense, the secretary disappears into the master discourse, so at the very moment he speaks or writes, he ceases to be. But as Goldberg has suggested, in considering what happens to female
writing that is subsumed into dominant forms of male discourse, the site of dispossession may be a site of opportunity: “the representation of oneself in that state of dispossession could be . . . a site of representation rather than one of identification, and a site moreover so riven with contradictions. . . that the contradictions, rather than being annihilative, are productive.”94 In the dedicatory poems, Sidney Herbert establishes herself as in a state of dispossession, as lacking poetic power and as being merely the vehicle for Sidney’s voice. But her state of dispossession does become a site of representation instead of identification, as her reproductions of her brother subtly become representations of him that are just different enough to establish that she retains the authority and agency to rewrite and recast him. While secretarial texts assume that the master figure can be reproduced, as a verifiable identity or presence that can be circulated and that always remains the same, Sidney Herbert destabilizes this idea through the use of difference, such as the difference between Sidney’s words and the ways in which she rewrites them; the difference between Sidney’s use of “secrett power” to authenticate her words and her use of the transferred power to certify him; and the difference between the use of his dissected body to represent the text and her dissected body as the textual vehicle. While she blurs boundaries and seems to be erasing difference between herself and her brother, at the same time she teases out difference in which to locate her own agency. The result is her self-construction as an author through the manipulation of information formulas and their contradictions.

Sidney Herbert’s exploitation of the difference that underlies ideas of seamless transmittal is not the only way in which she accesses authorship and agency in the two dedicatory poems. She also demonstrates the transmitter’s ability to remap the geography of transmission by altering the assumed directions in which information travels. The structures of secretaryship set out clear linear paths for information’s movement. There are two primary
conduits: information either flows from the master to the secretary, and then to designated others; or information from outside sources flows to the secretary and through him to the master. At times this flow may be contained, as when the secretary becomes the site of storage, for information that is no longer to circulate. However, the paths information follows are never circular. Information never doubles back on itself or moves multidirectionally.

This kind of linear movement seems to be the path Sidney Herbert sets up for the psalms in “Even now that Care.” She invokes the biblical King David as the source for the psalms, which then passed through the translators Sidney and Sidney Herbert, and now are presented to Queen Elizabeth, who in turn may bestow them on others. The “Psalmist King” becomes “English denizend, though Hebrue borne” (29-30). But then Sidney Herbert disrupts this straight path by equating Elizabeth with David. “Thy Rule is painted in his Raigne” (65), and each is “possest of place, and each in peace possest” (68). “Hand in hand with him thy glories walke:” Sidney Herbert tells the queen (73), and this identification of Elizabeth with David creates circular information flow, as the psalms seem to return to their source, the new David.

These two competing ideas, that the psalms follow a linear path to the queen and yet somehow are circling back to their source, is further complicated by Sidney Herbert’s construction of Elizabeth alone as their inspiration: For in our worke what bring wee but thine owne?” she asks (41), again returning the psalms to their source, but this time eliminating David. Elizabeth is a double site of origin and destination:

What English is, by many names is thine . . .

Thy brest the Cabinet, thy seat the shrine, . . .

Where Wit, where Art, where all that is divine conceived best, and best defended lies. (42-48)
As the cabinet and the site where the psalms are “conceived best” and “best defended,” Elizabeth becomes the psalms’ beginning and end; they effectively trace no movement at all, a suggestion that contradicts the poem’s earlier description of the Psalms as a “liverie robe” to be bestowed by the queen (34).

Other substitutions and redirections contribute to the tensions in the poem. Because the Psalms are now a livery robe to be bestowed by the queen, she seems to replace Sidney Herbert herself, as the phrase echoes Sidney’s reference to the “liverye” of his sister’s name as Arcadia’s chief protection in his dedication. Elizabeth replaces David, and Sidney Herbert replaces her absent brother. Looking at “Even now that Care” and “To the Angell spirit” together, in “To the Angell spirit” Sidney replaces Queen Elizabeth as the psalms’ beginning and end, as he is portrayed as their “real” author and also as their audience and recipient. While “Even now that Care” more fully erases Sidney and Sidney Herbert’s role in producing and transmitting the psalms, linking David directly with Elizabeth, in “To the Angell spirit” Sidney is established as the key figure in their production, the divinely inspired poet.

While Sidney Herbert’s compression of several information functions—conception, distribution, storage—into the queen’s body seems to contain the psalms in one person’s voice, her layered substitutions and redirections give the psalms multiple voices, at times David’s, at times Elizabeth’s, at times Sidney’s, at times Sidney Herbert’s. The effect is a display of the transmitter’s power to rewrite others into new relations with text. The shifting sources are not purposelessly confused but a demonstration of the transmitter’s ability to assign and reassign authorship; further, this ability establishes the transmitter as the authorial power. The redirections of the poems also display the transmitter’s power to move information in various directions and even in conflicting trajectories; instead of adhering to secure, linear transfer, Sidney Herbert
makes it dangerously multidirectional. Her demonstration of the transmitter’s power establishes
her as a single, independent author, as she deconstructs the idea of a master voice behind the
transmitter and makes it clear that she is, indeed, the “one subject” in which the completed
Psalmes now “goe” and who directs their movement.

The four paratextual pieces that describe Sidney Herbert’s collaborative relationship with
her brother indicate the opportunities that contemporary ideas of information management
offered for shaping literary delivery and authorial agency. The pieces’ concern with textual
origins, production, authentication, safekeeping, and circulation allies them with secretarial texts;
by positioning herself as Sidney’s collaborator, textual manager, and transmitter, Sidney Herbert
accesses the forms of authorship that accompany these functions. Her awareness of the ways in
which a secretarial pose of transmission without corruption—that is, transmission that recreates
the true voice of the original as he intended it—enables authorship in itself allows her to write
herself as an absent presence, or a present absence, in her narration of both Sidney’s writerly
persona and her own. As this absent presence, she turns the alienated position of secretarial
dispossession into a position of self-expression, writing herself as an author who arises out of the
contexts of textual management.
Notes

1 The phrase referred to Mary Sidney Herbert in the aftermath of her brother’s death and was used as the title of Margaret P. Hannay’s biography of Sidney Herbert, *Philip’s Phoenix*. See Margaret P. Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990) 81-83.


4 Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 58.


10 Beth Wynne Fisken, “‘To the Angell Spirit…’: Mary Sidney’s Entry into the ‘World of Words,’” *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, eds. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1990) 263-275, 266; Natasha


14 Demers 43.


16 Fisken 266; Schleiner 81.

17 Alexander 85-86.

18 Alexander 94.

19 Demers 54.


21 Beilin, ch. 5, note 5, 308.
Five letters exist which are not entirely in Sidney Herbert’s hand; two are in different secretary hands and two in an italic hand. See H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 215, note 36.

Woudhuysen 77.

Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 113; Woudhuysen 113.


Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 112.


There are nine extant manuscripts of this version of *Arcadia*. On the circulation of *Arcadia* manuscripts, see Ringler, Woudhuysen.

Ringler 369; Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 70.

Ringler 370.

Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 71. On the writing of the *New Arcadia*, see Woudhuysen, Robertson, Ringler.
34 Fulke Greville, letter to Sir Francis Walsingham, 1586. Rpt. in Woudhuysen, appendix 3, 417. All subsequent references to this letter are from this edition.

35 It is not completely clear from Greville’s letter which version of *Arcadia* Sidney left with him, although most critics read him as referring to the *New Arcadia*. See Woudhuysen 227.

36 See Woudhuysen 226.

37 On Matthew Gwinne’s and John Florio’s participation in the editing process, see Woudhuysen 227.

38 Woudhuysen 226.

39 Robertson lix.

40 Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 73.

41 For views that Sidney Herbert and Greville never cooperated, see Woudhuysen; see also Joel Davis, “Multiple *Arcadia*s and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke,” *Studies in Philology* 101.4 (2004): 401-429.

42 Woudhuysen 228.

43 Godshalk 174.

44 Davis 403. Sanford’s disdain for the editing on the 1590 *Arcadia* was not the end of the literary quarrel between Greville’s camp and that of the countess of Pembroke. Woudhuysen writes, “With this new start [the 1593 edition] the editing of Sidney’s works provoked argument and disagreement.” Critiques and name-calling went back and forth; in *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598) Florio scoffs that “H. S,” stands for “Huffe Snuffe, Horse Stealer . . . Hugh Sot, Humfrey Swineshead.” John Florio, “To the Reader,” *A Worlde of Words, or Most copious, and exact Dictionarie in Italian and English, collected by John Florio*, London, 1598. On the literary quarrel between Greville and Sidney Herbert, see Godshalk, Woudhuysen 228-229, Davis.
Sidney Herbert was for a long time criticized for her editing on the *Arcadia*, but the critical consensus now is that she followed Sidney’s intentions fairly closely. See Ringler 379; Woudhuysen 230; Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 75.

H. S., “To the Reader,” in Sidney, *Prose Works*, vol. 1, 524. All subsequent references to this preface are from this edition.

See Davis 426-430; Wall 312. Both assert that the preface’s project was to situate Sidney in the Sidney family.

Sidney, *Prose Works*, vol. 1, 4. The “over-seer” here is generally taken to be Greville, although it is not known whether he wrote this note or if it was inserted by the printer. But it certainly had his knowledge and approval.

This idea has become a reading convention, persistent to this day. Davis has observed that Greville’s editing on *Arcadia* has not been examined, but has been treated as transparent: “. . . most accounts of Greville’s editorial work on the 1590 *Arcadia* present Greville’s editing as a distortion of that text and try to see through Greville’s editing, because they see to recover Sidney’s original text” (414, emphasis in original). Alexander eliminates Greville altogether and makes the text its own editor: “The text is so tickled by its mid-sentence ending that it ends the chapter summary above it with an abrupt ‘and’” (88).

Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 72. They may have used the same manuscript.

While most critics assume Sidney Herbert’s role on the psalter project was one of completion—that is, she finished the project begun by her brother, and which was originally intended to be his achievement—Alexander observes, “…[W]e cannot discount the possibility that the metaphrase was always intended to be a collaborative effort.” Alexander 85-86.


Alexander 84-85.

MS. *J*, Tixall MS., Dr. Bent E. Juel Jensen.


Hannay, “Doo What Men May Sing” 149.

Hannay, “Doo What Men May Sing.”

See Sidney Herbert, *Collected Works* 156; Wall 313.

See Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matters* 269.


David Starkey, “Court and Government,” *Revolution Reassessed*, ed. Christopher Coleman and David Starkey (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 29-58, 55. A document “signed” by use of the dry stamp also had to be entered into a register by the king’s secretary to be fully authorized.

See Waller; Lamb; Wall. See also Beilin; Distiller.

Sidney Herbert, *Collected Works* 41; Rienstra and Kinnamon 52.
Elaine Beilin is the only critic I have encountered who notices this remarkable choice on Sidney Herbert’s part, observing that "To the Angell spirit" “reveals little about their actual sibling relationship.” See Beilin 150.


89 Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix* 79.

90 Alexander 89; Walker 80.

91 Waller 105; Wall 317.

92 Wall 316.

93 Hannay et al., *Collected Works* 74-77.

Chapter Three

Coming Out of the Closet: Andrew Marvell and the Absent Master

The utility of the secretarial model to Mary Sidney Herbert in part arose from the fact that she easily could position herself in a personal, privileged writing relationship with her brother. For a government secretary in the seventeenth century, however, the model of the enclosed and personal master/secretary relationship became intensely problematic, particularly as differences between functioning as a private secretary for a private individual and serving as a secretary for the realm became more distinct. England’s Civil War, the regicide of 1649, Oliver Cromwell’s rise to power and the establishment of the Protectorate, and Cromwell’s later rule all called for a redefinition of government service. Consequently, a young man with republican sympathies who aspired to be a secretary in Cromwell’s government could consider various questions: If he was no longer to be secretly or privately enclosed with the master figure, how was their relationship to be constructed? What besides the sharing of secret knowledge with the master could guarantee the authenticity of the secretary’s representation? How could the secretary mediate competing views or representations? And, a question that gained new urgency in a time of political upheaval, how could the secretarial figure survive the death or absence of the master figure?

These are questions that Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) considers in the three poems he wrote about Oliver Cromwell: “An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland” (1650), written when Marvell was considering his professional future; “The First Anniversary of the Government under O. C.” (1654), written when Marvell was actively seeking a secretarial post in Cromwell’s government; and “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.” (1658), written when Cromwell died and when Marvell had served the Protectorate as a secretary for a year.
The approach Marvell takes over the course of the three poems redefines the process of representation by the transmittal figure. In sixteenth-century secretarial texts, representation originated in private, enclosed space that enabled the sharing of secret knowledge. The secretary and master together were an intensely private dyad, and this privacy guaranteed the authenticity of representation. But Marvell reworks that formula, stepping away from the private relationship to one that is less personal. In “An Horatian Ode,” he presents Cromwell as such a phenomenal force that it would be impossible to “enclose” with him; in order to imagine a service relationship with him, Marvell depersonalizes Cromwell in favor of making him more generic. In “The First Anniversary,” Marvell suggests that it is actually necessary to imagine Cromwell’s death to temper what otherwise would be immoderate praise of him; in this poem, Marvell first suggests that true representation depends on the master’s absence rather than his presence. Finally, in “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.,” Marvell turns Cromwell’s actual death into a prerequisite for his true representation; using a metaphor of an oak for Cromwell, Marvell writes that only when the oak has fallen can we see how strong and tall it was. This connection between representational truth and the absent master allows Marvell to remove the secretary from an intimate dialogic relationship with the master and to operate in an informational field that, while still a field of transfer and transmission, aligns him with the receiving audience rather than with the master. Through such distance, Marvell maintains a sense of the transparency of the secretary as mediating figure while simultaneously protecting him from danger that might threaten the master. The three poems thus trace an arc that redefines aspects of the secretary/master relationship through an examination of secretarial processes.

The Shifting Landscape, 1600-1650
Before I turn to my discussion of the Cromwell poems, I will delineate briefly the shifting landscape of secretaries and their relationships with the monarch in the first half of the seventeenth century. The years between Elizabeth I’s reign and Cromwell’s ascendancy in the 1650s were a period in which established social structures of the monarchy, its underpinning aristocracy, and the church all came under pressure. I focus here on political secretaries at court, because that is what Marvell aspired to be, although of course he did not aspire to a monarchical court but to Cromwell’s “court,” which itself became increasingly monarchical during Cromwell’s term as Lord Protector.

If we take texts such as Angel Day’s advice for secretaries to be prescriptive of social practice, many elements of that prescription were still in play in 1650. Fidelity, loyalty, and trust all remained important in the service relationship. But young men who previously may have sought service as private secretaries increasingly sought more desirable government service, and consequently the intensely personal secretary/master relationship was open to revision. In addition, the context of anxiety about the rise of print had changed—by 1650, as the level of publication rose, print culture was widely and well established. Anxieties about print proliferation still existed—the administration of both James I and Charles I tried to control the expansion of means of communication in the 1620s and 1630s—but the print revolution could not be stopped, even though it caused some worry that it would cause a paper shortage.¹ And as more ideas circulated, public opinion, in the sense of a body of views belonging to literate people with varying degrees of influence, was born.² If the late sixteenth century was all about the containment of information, the mid-seventeenth century was all about the dispersal of innumerable conflicting viewpoints.
In this landscape, various changes in the way government was administered and the role secretaries played took place at court. The seventeenth century saw increasingly institutionalized systems of government administration and bureaucracy, but the shift from administrative power that attached to an individual because of his privileged personal relationship to the monarch, to administrative power that was vested in a defined professional position did not happen overnight. It seesawed back and forth in the first half of the seventeenth century, tied to the style of rule of the reigning monarch. The Stuart kings used favorites in managing affairs of state; consequently, as Mark Kishlansky writes, “Governmental leaders neither emerged through a political process nor rose to power through the possession of particular offices.”\textsuperscript{3} Intensely personal relationships combined with bureaucratic roles, limiting any sense of professionalization of particular offices; the public governmental side of court was the product of the character of the monarch.

This combination of the personal with the bureaucratic was the result in part of the organization of the royal court. There was little recognizable separation between the court as the seat of government business and the court as the king’s domestic household; the court combined the king’s political and domestic life. Political power and influence for courtiers and office holders depended on access to the monarch, and access at court was influenced by the physical layout of the royal apartments, where the monarch lived and worked. These rooms were arranged linearly as a sequence of increasingly private areas. Outer rooms and a guard chamber preceded the presence chamber, which led to the privy chamber, which then led to the royal bedchamber and privy apartments. Guards at each entrance controlled access; visitors were filtered out by rank, and only those of highest rank or special favorites were allowed into the semiprivate privy chamber, and possibly into the bedchamber and privy apartments.\textsuperscript{4}
This arrangement allowed shifts in the way those who administered government related to the monarch in the Tudor and Stuart courts. For instance, the administrative prominence of the privy chamber during the reign of Henry VIII declined under Elizabeth I, for whom the privy chamber functioned as a more domestic space where she was attended by her ladies. Since Elizabeth’s closest attendants were women, her Privy Council and Secretary of State had primary political agency. While Henry had had a Secretary of State and a private secretary, the latter of whom was under the province of the Chief Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, under Elizabeth the offices of principal Secretary of State and the private secretaryship were fused in William Cecil, with whom Elizabeth shared a professional intimacy.\(^5\) In the later years of Elizabeth’s reign, Cecil was the most influential member of her Privy Council and the key figure in the administration of the realm; he had the queen’s complete confidence and controlled both foreign and domestic policy.

This separation between Elizabeth’s political life and her more intimate domestic life, which encouraged more professionalized and institutionalized government administration, did not last into the reign of her successor James I. Robert Cecil, William Cecil’s son and successor to his father as Secretary of State in 1596, tried to maintain the power of his office, but with James returned the power of the entourage, and priority and influence went to James’s favorites, such as the Earl of Somerset and the Duke of Buckingham. This favoritism revived the bedchamber and privy apartments as the focus of influence and power, rather than the Privy Council.\(^6\) Robert Cecil became one of a dozen senior advisors, and after his death in 1612 no Secretary of State was named to take his place. From 1615 to 1619, although James had an official secretary, the king’s favorite the Duke of Buckingham really fulfilled the role, obtaining the sign manual and generally wielding secretarial power.\(^7\)
This use of favorites to govern continued when Charles I succeeded his father. The Duke of Buckingham continued as Charles’s intimate ally and the most powerful man in the kingdom until he was assassinated in 1628. After that, Charles retreated from privileged favorites, but his insistence on formality, distance, and privacy still limited access to the king to a select few, although Charles did not begin to bypass the Privy Council until 1640. This further separated Charles from his ministers and distanced those who governed from those who held places of intimacy with the king. Secretaries of State at this time were administrative officers and had executive authority; their personal secretaries, clerks, and servants looked after most of the king’s correspondence and drafted or copied his letters for the sign manual. Charles himself often corrected and amended drafts of letters that went out in his name, working alone in his study. The combination of the king’s domestic life and his political life did not become fully untangled until the end of the seventeenth century. Administrative offices became more systematized at the time of the Restoration, when Parliament insisted on increased accountability and control over government; later “the court” officially became a political entity distinguished from “the household.”

The use of secrecy as a guarantor for authentic representation also had become problematic with the decline of the monarchy. Sixteenth-century secretarial handbooks had emphasized the secretary’s role as the keeper of his master’s secrets and his function as a “cabinet” for the keeping of secret information. This sharing of the master’s secrets bolstered the idea of the secretary as his master’s double and legitimized secretarial transmission. The texts assume that this treatment of secrets serves a personal, economic, or political good, but by 1650 the public had seen more examples of how the king actually used secrets. Secrecy is of course always a useful political tool, a fact acknowledged in the concept of *arcana imperii*, knowledge
so secret it is retained only by the monarch. The ruler may invoke the principal to justify questionable acts; in other words, *arcana imperii* guarantees that the king is right, but this rightness can be understood only in the light of knowledge so secret it cannot be mentioned. In James I’s *Basilikon Doron*, an advice book he wrote for his son Prince Henry, James refers to the necessity for state secrets: “a king will have need to use secrecy in many thinges.”

Judicious deployment of secrets both legitimized and delegitimized royalty; the publication of Mary Queen of Scots’ private correspondence known as the casket letters was a ploy by Elizabeth I to discredit Mary and justify her execution. A half-century later, parliamentarian forces seized Mary’s grandson Charles I’s secret correspondence at the battle of Naseby, and these letters were subsequently published under the title “The King’s Cabinet Opened” in 1645. This correspondence became a powerful weapon for the parliamentarians, as they revealed Charles’ untrustworthiness; he said different things to different opponents, apparently did not like or trust many of this own supporters, and, worst of all, he had promised concessions to Roman Catholics in England and Ireland in exchange for their support. In short, the letters exposed devious kingcraft and evidence of wicked intentions. Royalists countered with the *Eikon Basilike*, an autobiography they insisted had been written by Charles himself before his execution, although it was common knowledge that royal writings were frequently ghosted. The most important royalist book of the period, *Eikon Basilike* also pretends to be the most secret, a private and unmediated deathbed statement. It was actually written with publication in view (and only partly written by Charles), and this deliberate positioning as a private work is an attempt to reclaim secrecy as a guarantor of true representation of the “real” king. Royalist tributes to *Eikon Basilike* explained that the secret, hitherto unknowable heart of the king was at last revealed. Lois Potter writes, “To counteract the damage done by the contents of “The King’s
Cabinet Opened,” it was essential to believe that the piety and forgiveness . . . in the book . . . came from the still more secret cabinet of the king’s heart.”¹⁸ By creating and then peeling away layers of secrets and suggesting that one can finally reach the innermost “true” secret, royalists reinforced the idea that secrecy is a means of truth and yet destabilized it by introducing the question of which layer of secret truth is the true legitimizing or justifying agent.

Marvell’s Cromwell Poems: Truth in Absence

Marvell’s three Cromwell poems trace stages in Cromwell’s career, but they also mark stages in Marvell’s professional life. A tutor when he wrote the “Ode,” Marvell was also taking steps to advance in a diplomatic post. In 1653 he applied for a government position and was recommended by John Milton, but he did not receive the appointment. In 1657, however, he was employed by the office of the secretary to the Council of State. Marvell assisted Milton, the secretary for foreign tongues, and translated and drafted letters and documents; he also translated for visiting foreign dignitaries. The conjunction between his career and the poems allows me to consider how, in the poems, Marvell negotiates between traditional secretarial models and new models that are less dependent on the secretary’s personal identification with a master figure.

These three Cromwell poems have been assessed critically either for their literary qualities or for their political implications. Literary analysts highly value “An Horatian Ode” for its complex ambiguities, consider “The First Anniversary” interesting due to its unconventionality, and dismiss “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.” as uninspired conventional elegy.¹⁹ Political analysts examine the poems for what they indicate about Marvell’s political attitudes and allegiances and for what they tell us about the political landscape of the time. They
generally read “An Horatian Ode” and “The First Anniversary” as complex reflections of the contemporary political context and largely ignore “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.” This chapter, although engaged in literary analysis, is less concerned with the literary or political value of the poems and focuses instead on how the three, when read together, trace developments in Marvell’s thinking about how he can relate to Cromwell in a professional, specifically secretarial, way. While he is writing an ode, an encomium, and an elegy, he is also considering how to construct his relationship to a master figure who breaks all previous molds.

The key to reading the three Cromwell poems as in part expressive of secretarial models lies in recognizing the fact that all three address specific times of risk and crisis for the master figure, times that necessitate considerations of succession and continuity and that offer a secretary the specific opportunity to consider how he will enact his relationship with the master. “An Horatian Ode” concerns the regicide and the question of who, or what, will replace monarchy; “The First Anniversary” centers on Cromwell’s 1654 coaching accident, in which he nearly died; “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.” deals with Cromwell’s death and touches on his son Richard’s succession. At such critical times, various forms of secretarial agency are particularly enhanced. Since they handled their masters’ business matters, secretaries were frequently involved in the drafting, writing, and implementation of wills and acted as instruments of transfer. Political secretaries performed such activities on a larger, more public stage, with greater political consequences. William Paget, Henry VIII’s primary Secretary of State, was part of the faction that controlled access to Henry as he declined in the fall of 1546. It has been speculated than this group doctored Henry’s will in various ways, and “the subtle and minimal forgery used to effect all this points clearly to Paget, the secretary . . . as its author.” One clause referred to various unspecified gifts the king had intended to make, which of course favored this
group; Paget later asserted to the Privy Council that documentation of Henry’s intentions was now lost but that he (Paget) could remember them. This secretary thus became one of those who determined the king’s will and spoke it for the king.

Robert Cecil, Elizabeth I’s Secretary of State at the time of her death, was even more influential in determining Elizabeth’s successor. Concerned about ensuring a smooth and peaceful succession, Cecil began a secret correspondence with James VI of Scotland in 1601, two years before Elizabeth’s death. Elizabeth herself never named a successor; reportedly shortly before she died she said, “Who should succeed me but a king,” an apparent endorsement which Cecil promptly relayed and interpreted to mean James. In announcing Elizabeth’s deathbed directive Cecil acted as the instrument of her will, as he continued to do when he read the proclamation announcing James’ succession at Whitehall and in the city of London; he was also the chief architect of that will. The secretary here acts out of his own agency to recreate a form of the master figure by designating a replacement; the secretary also wields the power to legitimate the replacement. These two forms of power in Cecil’s case operated under a pose of transparency, of simply enacting the will of another.

Day, in his treatise on secretaries, explicitly discusses such power attached to transfer, and he particularly considers the secretary’s role when the master’s physical body is at risk. Given the forms of physical, intellectual, and emotional intimacy between secretary and master that secretarial texts present, it would be reasonable to assume that peril to the master is also peril to the secretary, or that the death of the master would somehow effect the end of the secretary as well. Instead, times of instability for the master serve to stabilize and even increase the secretary’s agency. Day hints at this ascendancy when he writes that the secretary, “being in one condition a servant, . . . is at the pleasure and appointment of another to be commanded, and
being in a second respect as a Friend, he is charilie to have in estimate, the state, honor, reputation and being of him whom he serveth. This charges the secretary, at once servant and friend, with care not only for the “state, honor, and reputation” of the master, but also his very being, in an inversion of the previous clause. As a servant, the secretary is at another’s command; as a friend, he constructs the “being” of the master.

Day follows these references to secretarial agency by a blunt statement of power obtained specifically through the service relationship: “There is also by that very name of servant a kind of fidelitie and trust required, more speciall then that betweene the sonne and the father, and that of so great efficacy, as whereon (peradventure) may rest not alonely the disposition of the goods, estate, and principall affairs, but also oftentimes the life, hazard, or undoing of the person of his said maister.” Day here gives the secretary office to dispose, or determine, all aspects of his master; not only his business concerns of “goods, estate, and . . . affairs,” but his personal well-being, his “life, hazard, or undoing.” The fidelity and trust embedded in the service relationship are “more speciall then that betweene the sonne and the father,” giving the service relationship primacy over the familial, blood relationship, particularly at moments critical for the disposition of the master’s estate or for his preservation—in other words, at times of possible succession or replacement of the master figure.

Day reinforces the strength of the service tie by arguing

A son cannot be said to owe fidelitie to his parents, for which cause there is no breach of trust on him to be imposed. If he deale contrarie to the condition of a son, the bond by which he is strained procedeth of a nature, and so are his actions accordinglie held unkind, or unnaturall. But the servant not linked in nature, is
tied in trust, and by contrarying of such trust, or not performing thereof, is held
treacherous or unfaithfull.\textsuperscript{27}

By asserting that a breach of trust is a more egregious offense than a breach of nature, Day
establishes the service relationship as the more powerful one. Notably, this relationship has
political overtones; while a son’s breach of nature may be unkind, a secretary’s breach of trust is
treacherous. Qualities designated as part of service, fidelity and trust, carry great weight: “so
great a predomination hath this name of fidelitie in the harts of a number, that many have refused
to commit themselves in times of hazard to their children, but rather have relied themselves
wholly on the assurance of their servants.”\textsuperscript{28}

In addition to this agency to maintain and protect the master, exacted through the
obligations of fidelity, Day also gives the secretary another form of agency: the “decernment” to
determine how this fidelity shall manifest itself in behavior. Day tells the story of how an
English gentleman, Henry Davill, was murdered by his Irish host, Sir John of Desmond. When
Sir John and his henchmen entered Davill’s chamber, swords drawn, Davill’s personal servant
threw himself on Davill and could not be separated from him. This exacerbated the midnight
murderers’ rage, and “made them kill the Boy uppon his maister, and his Maister under the Boy,
both at one instant togethers.” While Day momentarily misdirects his reader to believe that this
action exemplifies the noblest expression of fidelity, Day soon corrects that assumption. While
the servant’s action was, “no doubt, a thing woorthie to be admired,” the secretary should not be
“of iudgement so disfurnished, but that touching the difference of counsels, or tender of his life,
he should make a decernment.”\textsuperscript{29} If the servant had not acted so hastily, “his masters death might
have been revenged, or his life preserved”; Day asks, “Els to what end is Fidelitie applied, or
what use at all in reckoning, remaineth there of it?”\textsuperscript{30} The secretary, then, has the agency to
decide how he shall enact fidelity according to individual circumstance. Fidelity thus becomes self-determined, particularized practice related to secretarial judgment, instead of a generally defined quality or attribute. In fact, this nonprescriptive quality gives the secretary’s behavior its value. Day continues:

By discretion to discerne, by vertue to judge, and by wisdome to resolve, how and which way the efficacie and assurance of all trust and fidelitie ought to be caried, is a thing meetest in all reputation principallie to be observed. How can there otherwise appeare anie worthinesse, if affections sort to be equall, or what distinction may there be of spirits when mens judgements are common.\textsuperscript{31}

The secretary’s judgments are not to be common, in the sense of base or low, nor are they to be held in common with others’. Therefore, Day assigns the secretary the agency to construct his own forms of social service, and by doing so increase his own social capital.

Day’s ideas that the secretary is responsible for the being of the master, and that the service relationship, while less natural than a blood relationship, is more powerful in this regard, combine with his direction that the secretary determines how the fidelity of service will be performed to suggest a form of textual and administrative service that protects and maintains a master figure; and that, in fact, gains power and stability as the master figure destabilizes, through risk or death. The examples Day uses to illustrate the ways in which secretaries exercise judgment to enact fidelity focus primarily upon death: the death of a secretary to avoid betrayal of his master; the choice of a secretary not to reveal his master’s death-bed confidences. This strengthens the idea that Day sees the secretary’s agency to determine fidelity as particularly tied to questions of succession and replacement. When the master dies, the secretary’s role switches from protection to administration of the master’s estate according to the master’s will. Such
judgment and activity thus become the instrument of replacement and continuity of the master, placing secretaries in a powerful position to effect continuity through the choices they make in enacting a service relationship.

For Marvell, who aspired to be a government secretary, the destabilization of the monarchy and questions of the succession of leadership in the 1640s created just such an opportunity to consider secretarial models and determine the form his service relationship with a master figure would take. The 1649 regicide disrupted the assumed natural order, recalling a metaphor Day had drawn sixty-three years earlier in explaining why servants may be more crucial than sons in ensuring a master’s protection or survival: “For as a current of water loseth his power in being turned backwarde, from his straightened course, but hath forcible passage in the waie that it holdeth: so is Nature in this action of parentes and children, which running forwards from issue to issue, hath mighty operation, but when it should be returned backwarde, hath seldom anie power at all.”32 This is the point at which the service relationship becomes paramount in maintaining continuity. In 1650, the year of Marvell’s “An Horatian Ode upon Cromwel’s Return from Ireland,” a new order loomed, but no one was sure what form that new order would take. A national leader, if there was to be one, had yet to emerge. Processes of succession were chaotic, creating a space for service relationships to step forward in questions of replacement and succession. However, as Day’s text suggests, at the same time bureaucratic figures had the agency and the responsibility to determine precisely in what way they would enact that service relationship. It is my contention that Marvell is doing just that in the “Ode”: working out what his relationship to a possible master figure would be. Critics often approach this poem as an expression of a preexisting political stance and try to determine what that stance is, despite the poem’s undeniable ambiguity. But we can instead read the poem as an exploration
and development of possible service relationships to a master figure, as a feature of Marvell’s participation in questions of succession and replacement. Marvell is exercising the “decernment” of Day’s text, the judgment of actions that will best enact his relationship to the master figure and in so doing construct and maintain forms of that master figure. Blair Worden writes that it was a time for young men to make choices; the landscape of patronage was no longer unified, but partitioned. Marvell, in working out a relationship to a master figure, is also working among the different political versions of authority circulating at the time, arriving at such a choice as he displays his knowledge of the secretarial duty to determine how he will perform the service relationship’s incumbent requirements of loyalty, trust, and fidelity.

As part of the process of determining how to relate to Cromwell, in “An Horatian Ode” Marvell considers different constructions of the figure who, in 1650, was emerging as a central figure of power. The poem presents a series of possibilities that lay out different approaches to Cromwell, and as each approach becomes problematic, or unsustainable, in terms of establishing Cromwell as a master figure the poem tries a different model. Critics have observed how, in this poem, Marvell is finding a new vocabulary, or a new representational mode to describe the phenomenon that is Cromwell, who overshadows usual styles of encomia. This quality of being outside the usual parameters of achievement and ability makes it difficult to find a way to relate to Cromwell as a possible master figure, because the usual bases for establishing such a relationship are no longer sufficient.

Some critics suggest that “An Horatian Ode” sets up Charles I and Cromwell as competing figures, whose poetic presentation necessitates choice and endorsement, but the poem is not equally balanced between the two. David Norbrook has observed that the Ode’s structure is centrifugal, not symmetrical. Charles is at the structural center of the poem, but Cromwell
circles him, as the focus of attention behind and in front of the king. In this reading, Charles could still seem like the dominant, controlling figure around whom Cromwell spins. But if we read the poem’s structure as linear, not circular, the placement of Charles follows an interior logic as the poem traces chronological events: Cromwell’s emergence into the war, his victory at Marsten Moor, Charles’s escape from Hampton Court, his execution, and Cromwell’s Irish campaign. The poem ends with a look forward to the approaching Scottish campaign. The poem does not just recap events, however, but at each stage presents a different type of man, and as each type becomes problematic Marvell shifts to consideration of another type. This consideration of types, and their qualities, indicates a search, an attempt to formulate Cromwell in a way that would enable a relationship with him.

The poem begins with the choice to relate to Cromwell militarily. The “forward youth”—perhaps Marvell himself, perhaps a stand-in for any studious young man desirous to serve in some capacity—is enjoined to “forsake his Muses dear”: “‘Tis time to leave the Books in dust, / And oyl the unused Armours rust” (5-6). Because the youth is called away from books and the “shadows” of line 3, which together suggest enclosed, studious space, to take up arms, the poem’s opening lines set up a traditional contemplation-versus-action dichotomy. But they also set up two different types of work, or ways to serve: the established secretarial mode of enclosed retreat, centered on texts; and the mode of outdoor military action, centered on arms. Immediately, to be with Cromwell demands a relation to him that is radically different for those steeped in a bookish world.

The rationale for this action comes in lines 9-12: “So restless Cromwell could not cease / In the inglorious Arts of Peace, / But through adventurous War / Urged his active Star.” The youth is called to action because in that way he will be acting like Cromwell; his action would be
a form of imitation, an element in secretarial service. But any suggestion that such imitation could lead to the possibility of secretarial substitution is obliterated by further description of Cromwell as an uncontrollable natural force; like “three fork’d lightning” he “[d]id through his own Side / His fiery way divide” (13; 15-16). This unleashed, fiery Cromwell seems alarmingly dangerous to both sides, as the poem goes on to confirm:

For ‘tis all one to Courage high
The Emulous or Enemy;
And with such to inclose
Is more then to oppose. (16-19)

Cromwell’s courage sets him apart; he does not recognize boundaries delineating his own side from the enemy, and to try to contain the force of his power only strengthens it. But this quality also makes it impossible for anyone to sustain a traditional relationship with him, hinted at by the use of “emulous” and “enclose.” To emulate a master figure in various ways and to enclose with him in dialogic space are precisely the established hallmarks of secretarial service, yet to try to relate to Cromwell in this way is impossible. His superhuman abilities, admirable as they are, are too dangerous to the would-be servitor.

The poem maintains this picture of Cromwell as an overpowering force that burns through air, rends palaces and temples alike, and “Caesar’s head at last / Did through his Laurels blast” (23-24). But this power in these lines is purely destructive, increasingly problematic for human relations. Consequently the poem takes a step back to humanize Cromwell, to consider him as a man: “And, if we would speak true, / Much to the man is due” (27-28). Again there is an attempt to place him in organized space, this time his “private Gardens” (29). This man,
“reserved and austere” (30), is relatable; however, he escapes this space, too, and overpowers time and history, again becoming a superhuman figure. From the garden, he

Could by industrious Valour climbe

To ruine the great Work of Time,

And cast the Kingdome old

Into another Mold. (33-36)

Again, Cromwell’s power is destructive; he can ruin the great work of time. But he is also restorative, since he could cast the kingdom into another mold, or structured shape. He is an instrument of fate, overriding justice and the ancient “rights” (37-40). He is so singular, nature “must make room” for him as a greater spirit who cannot occupy the same space as another (43-44).

As this “greater Spirit,” Cromwell is once more unrelatable; he has escaped the garden to overturn established systems and stands alone. So the poem next considers another approach, Cromwell as primarily a man with mental power: “And Hampton shows what part / He had of wiser Art” (47-48). Yet Cromwell’s mental wiles are also destructive, as they lure Charles out of Hampton Court so that he “[t]he Tragick scaffold might adorn” (54). This segue enables Marvell to consider the monarchical model, the archetypal master figure. This figure too is idealized; he does nothing “mean” or common”; he nobly bows to his fate in a sacrificial gesture. But this model is headless, and if the secretary is, as discussed in Chapter 1, the master’s eyes, ears, and mouth as well as his hand, a headless master equally decapitates the secretary. The body politic is destroyed but also the body personal, the body for which the secretary’s body substitutes.

Up to this point in the poem, Marvell is engaged in constructing a figure with whom a possible servitor could have a relationship based in the personal relation between individuals—
the relationship of friends, of entrusted secrets, and of enclosed space. Yet each attempt to 
construct Cromwell in a way that would enable such a relationship fails. He is too extreme a 
force; he cannot be enclosed, he is too physical and too wily. The model presented by Charles 
also fails. Therefore Marvell considers another avenue to a service relationship: an indirect, 
depersonalized relation instead of an intensely personal relationship. To make Cromwell more 
accessible, he again humanizes Cromwell as a man, a man who “does both act and know” (76), a 
construction that compresses the head/hand dichotomy and allows Marvell to position Cromwell 
himself as a servitor of the state. Cromwell is thus framed not as a master figure of completely 
inaccessible force but as a controlled figure who himself serves. He is “nor yet grown stiffer with 
Command, / But still in the Republick’s hand” (81-82); he “to the Commons Feet presents / A 
Kingdome, for his first years rents” (85-86), and “has his Sword and Spoyls ungirt, / To lay them 
at the Publick’s skirt” (89-90). This repetitive emphasis on the transfer of sources of Cromwell’s 
power to collective institutions or concepts—the Republic, the House of Commons, the public—
diffuses notions of Cromwell’s individual concentrated power into other bodies and makes it 
possible to approach a relationship with him as a more anonymous member of a larger field. 
Marvell writes, “How fit he is to sway / That can so well obey” (83-84); Cromwell can be a 
master figure with the overtones in “sway” of influence and dominance only if he is himself 
inserted into a service hierarchy. But the hierarchy no longer pyramidally culminates in an 
individual master power; it is anonymously scattered behind social and political concepts. 

This construction of Cromwell “tames” him, through Marvell’s use of a falcon metaphor:

So when the Falcon high

Falls heavy from the Sky,

She, having killed, no more does search,
But on the next green Bow to perch;

Where, when he first does lure,

The Falckner has her sure. (91-96)

It also tames him by making him a rather generic figure instead of an individual. Instead of “the Man” of line 28, he has become “one Man” in line 75, a transition from an specific individuated figure to one among many. He is good and just (79), but he becomes an unnamed soldier for the rest of the poem, even one who can lose his own identity by stepping into the shoes of other military figures: “A Caesar he ere long to Gaul, / To Italy an Hannibal” (101-102). In line 110, Cromwell becomes the “English hunter,” a mild term for one who at the beginning of the poem was three-forked lightning. The ending couplet of the poem is also generic; a well-used trope, Margoliouth calls it a “commonplace.”

As the poem presents alternative constructions of Cromwell, it retreats from those that are too problematic in terms of possible personalized service relationships. On one hand, they are too dangerous for the potential servitor; one cannot “enclose” with Cromwell. But on the other hand, there simply is no established way to relate to him. He is an overpowering force that foils time, history, justice, and divine right. Service relationships based on conceits that one can have such a close bond with a master as to become his invisible substitute are inadequate to the task and simply will not work. Consequently, one approach is to depersonalize the relationship and make it more anonymous and generic. It is possible to have a relationship with the more familiar figure of a good, just English hunter who ostensibly serves the public. The inscriptive secretary, as part of this public, thus takes a step back from the master figure and becomes an interface not only to the public but also of the public.
The context for Marvell’s poetic evaluation is appropriately one of succession and replacement, the moment when the secretary is pressed to determine how to represent his relation to a master figure. The summer of 1650 marked a particularly uncertain political moment in England, when any one of several futures was possible. Royalism and the establishment of Charles II was still a possibility, as was a form of republicanism or the emergence of Cromwell as a military dictator. The poem therefore evokes substitutions and replacements. Nature, Marvell writes, demands it: “Nature that hateth emptiness, / Allows of penetration less” (41-42).

The figure of Cromwell not only blasts Caesar’s head, but later becomes a form of him, as well as of Hannibal. The title of the poem invokes “return” poems that were written earlier for Charles I on his return from Scotland in 1641, again positioning Cromwell as a substitute for the king.

Myriad possibilities for succession float through the poem, but at the time it was not certain that Cromwell would emerge as a single dominant leader. His victories in the Scottish campaign lay ahead. Critics trying to determine Marvell’s political alliances at this time often justify his apparent sympathy in “An Horatian Ode” with both Cromwell and the king as reflective of the general uncertainty. Norbrook writes, “In a period of massive political upheaval, major discontinuities may have marked personal and poetic histories.” Another such discontinuity is at work in Marvell’s consideration of types of master figures and their implications. In “An Horatian Ode,” he reconfigures possible types of master figures, and his consideration of a depersonalized form of service is a break with earlier forms. But the poem remains a text of possibilities, of possible outcomes. Repositioning the secretarial relation is one possibility that depends on certain political outcomes, as well as on the textual construction of the master figure. Part of what Marvell does in “An Horatian Ode” is work out such possibilities
and consider the question of how to be a political interface in different ways. Laura Knoppers has argued that in “An Horatian Ode” Marvell does not present a new image of Cromwell but calls for an active reader to participate in the process of constructing a new republican hero and aesthetic. While I am not sure Marvell definitively constructs a masculinized, heroic Cromwell, I agree with Knoppers that “An Horatian Ode” is a poem of process. However, the poem concerns Marvell’s potential self-stabilization in relation to constructions of a master figure as much as, if not more than, it concerns itself with active readers, while his successful invisibility in Knoppers’ reading indicates his ability to enact a secretarial interface for representation.

Marvell’s next Cromwell poem is “The First Anniversary of the Government under O. C.,” which was printed and advertised in the January 18, 1655, edition of the government newspaper Mercurius Politicus. “The First Anniversary” continues the themes of “An Horatian Ode”; although it is more unconditional in its praise of Cromwell, it again portrays him as an unstoppable force and is concerned with issues of succession, this time in case of Cromwell’s death. While the poem is primarily a political panegyric in support and defense of Cromwell, it too contains elements that relate to secretarial concepts. As in “An Horatian Ode,” in “The First Anniversary” Marvell considers traditional aspects of secretarial service in light of the new order Cromwell represents, but with this poem, while he again redefines how a secretarial relationship with Cromwell might operate, he also publicly demonstrates his ability to write and rewrite the master figure of Cromwell—a display meant for Cromwell as well as for the public. As he manipulates various representations of Cromwell in the poem, he positions himself as an interpretive interface who maintains secretarial functions yet who works outside of a closeted, personal relationship, in a more public sphere.
“An Horatian Ode” was written in 1649; “The First Anniversary” was written at the end of 1654. In the intervening years Marvell continued to work as a tutor but also took steps to advance his diplomatic career. Worden writes, “After 1650 Marvell forwarded himself on two fronts,” as a poet and as a candidate for a post in diplomacy or foreign affairs. Marvell’s biographers have him leaving his post as tutor to Mary Fairfax, Lord Fairfax’s daughter, in Yorkshire and traveling to London at the end of 1652. He sought a government secretarial post; John Milton wrote a letter recommending Marvell to John Bradshaw, the lord-president of the Council of State, on February 21, 1653. In this letter, Milton describes Marvell as “a man whom both by report and the converse I have had with him of singular desert for the state to make use of, who also offers himself, if there be any employment for him.” Milton had been since 1649 the secretary for foreign tongues, and by this time was the Latin secretary only. His letter suggests that Marvell, with his command of languages, become his assistant (Milton’s previous assistant, Georg Weckherlin, had retired in December 1652). Although this particular post went to someone else, Marvell may have had some other experience of government service by this time; Worden speculates that he may have had a place in Oliver St. John’s 1651 embassy to The Netherlands, an imposing mission that sought an alliance with the Dutch. Worden hypothesizes that Marvell may have worked under John Thurloe, who was the secretary for the embassy, and who later, as secretary of state, appointed Marvell Latin secretary to the Council of State in 1657.

Whether Marvell was actually on the embassy or not, he wrote a short Latin poem dated 1651, “In Legationem Domini Oliveri St. John ad Provincias Foederatas” in commemoration. Worden’s comments on this poem suggest one or two interesting connections with traditional secretarial posture. At one point the poem tells St. John he does not need “to hide allowed
deceptions with shifting guile” because he can achieve the same ends by holding his tongue, a recommendation similar to Day’s exhortations to the secretary to “keep” the master’s secrets as a safe repository. Silence, not speech, becomes the instrument of the master figure’s will. But, as in “An Horatian Ode,” this kind of enclosed relationship with a master figure is by this time outmoded and suspect: Worden writes, “this is the kind of language [the reference to holding the tongue] . . . associated with the sealed and faithless world of courts and cabinets.” Worden finds its use surprising, as it recalls methods connected with royalism; it may also be another example of Marvell’s ongoing assessment in this period of the role of a secretary-diplomat and how secretarial aims are to be achieved. Later the poem tells the ambassador it is “not necessary to entrust secret meanings to paper,” again recommending keeping secrets in the body, in a connection with the secretarial body/cabinet.

In 1653, Marvell went to work as tutor to William Dutton, a protégé of Cromwell’s, at the house of John Oxenbridge in Eton. This brought him into close contact with Cromwell, with whom he corresponded regarding his pupil’s progress, and early in 1654 the Protectorate apparently commissioned Marvell to write three poems on the occasion of another embassy, this time to Sweden’s Queen Christina. One, “A Letter to Dr. Ingelo,” was sent to Sweden in the diplomatic mail. Although addressed to Nathaniel Ingelo, the chaplain on the trip and a friend of Marvell’s, the poem is written for the queen and urges the alliance that the Protector desires. The other two are brief Latin poems, “In Effigiem Oliveri Cromwell,” and “In eandem Regiae Sueciae transmissam,” written to accompany a portrait of Cromwell that was sent to the Swedish queen. These poems were “the first mark of official favour, at least as a poet, that Marvell had achieved,” and they combine the textual production of poetry with political service as Marvell was to go on to do in “The First Anniversary.”
Against the background of interest, and possibly experience, in a diplomatic or government secretarial post, “The First Anniversary” took shape at the end of 1654 and the beginning of 1655. The event it commemorates was the institution of the Instrument of Government in December 1653, which appointed Cromwell Lord Protector for life, thus making him both head of state and the commander-in-chief of the army, a hugely powerful position. The poem apparently was government approved; it was printed by the government printer Thomas Newcomb and advertised in *Mercurius Politicus* in January 1654. As Worden points out, this does not prove the poem had the government’s blessing or encouragement, but since Marvell had been tutor to Cromwell’s close connection Dutton for a year and a half and had been commissioned to write the poems to Queen Christina on Cromwell’s behalf, it seems unlikely that “The First Anniversary” was published “without, at least, covert approval in Whitehall.” Certainly, Worden notes, the “poem . . . says about Cromwell’s government of England what the protector would like to hear.”49 Pierre Legouis, too, sees Marvell as fairly enmeshed with Cromwell’s court by this time, describing “The First Anniversary” as Marvell’s “first effort on a large scale as Court poet.”50 However, the poem was published anonymously.

A long poem of 402 lines, “The First Anniversary” praises Cromwell, satirizes his enemies, and lauds his achievements. It portrays Cromwell as, variously, a classical architect of the nation and its governance, a biblical king, the millennial agent of the apocalypse, and the wonder of Europe. It chastises the English for not recognizing Cromwell’s greatness and particularly castigates his political opponents such as the Fifth Monarchists and the Levellers. As in “An Horatian Ode,” it portrays Cromwell as an ever-moving, phenomenal force that one can only hope to follow, and also as a man who has sacrificed his privacy for public service.
Critical approaches generally read the poem through its complex political context or debate whether the poem urges Cromwell to accept the crown and establish an hereditary succession, or whether it urges Cromwell to follow the model of Old Testament judges and refuse the crown. The poem is also read against the other two Cromwell poems, “An Horatian Ode” and “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.,” particularly the Ode. Worden, for instance, argues that in “The First Anniversary” Marvell sheds the tension of competing meanings found in “An Horatian Ode” in favor of wholehearted support of the Protectorate; Annabel Patterson, on the other hand, does not see “The First Anniversary” as a clear alternative to “An Horatian Ode,” noting that while “The First Anniversary” combines structures of classical encomium and Christian prophecy, the poem also seems to subvert them.

One of the main concerns of the poem is the issue of Cromwell’s successors and the question of who would or could follow in Cromwell’s footsteps if he died. In September 1654 Cromwell almost had died, in a coaching accident. The Count of Oldenburg had sent Cromwell a gift of six Friesland horses; Cromwell invited Thurloe to join him as he tried the team in Hyde Park. Cromwell took the reins, but the unfamiliar horses bolted. Cromwell fell from his seat on to the pole and from there to the ground, and was dragged some distance by the reins tangled around his leg before his shoe came off, releasing him. Adding to the danger, the pistol he had in his pocket went off. Cromwell was severely bruised and still suffering the effects of his fall as late as November 1654.

This accident was the subject of much commentary, including satirical lampoons of the buffoonish Cromwell who could not handle a few horses, much less the nation of England, as well as pious thanksgivings for his deliverance. Part of Marvell’s project in “The First Anniversary,” as Knoppers and others have pointed out, is to respond to these competing
discourses, to reframe them and to adjust readers’ views of Cromwell. But the attention to this episode and its implications is so marked in the poem that it seems to be primarily about this crisis and the crisis a different outcome would have precipitated, instead of about the achievements of Cromwell in his first year as Lord Protector. A description of the accident occupies the structural center of the poem, and Cromwell as charioteer is a thematic focus throughout. So in addition to rewriting the public script of Cromwell’s accident, this emphasis points to a specifically secretarial attitude in the poem, since the time of crisis for the master figure, in this case Cromwell, is also the time of critical opportunity for the secretarial servitor, who at such times is called upon to define his relationship with the master figure and to determine how he will enact his role. Cromwell’s extremity is Marvell’s opportunity, and the poem’s concern with Cromwell’s possible death and forms of succession, a concern which makes the poem more about the future than about Cromwell’s first year in office, shows how Marvell uses scenarios of Cromwell’s near death and fantasies of his actual death to put himself in a specific relation with the Lord Protector. However, the poem also suggests a lack of knowledge on Marvell’s part of Cromwell’s specific will, a gap that forces Marvell to consider only possibilities.

Marvell begins with a strategy of associating Cromwell with the biblical or cosmic. Throughout the poem, Cromwell is presented as a charioteer or coachman. In lines 7-8, “Cromwell alone with greater Vigour runs, / (Sun-like) the Stages of succeeding Suns,” introducing him as an Apollo or Phaethon; the word “stages” also evokes stages on a journey by coach, or even the stage-coach itself. This image continues, as “Indefatigable Cromwell hyes / And cuts his way still nearer to the skyes” (45-46) and “outwings the wind” (126). Marvell’s description of the accident begins at line 175, and, imagining Cromwell actually had died, ends
at lines 215-20 with the transformation of Cromwell into Elijah and his ascent into heaven in the chariot of Israel. Cromwell is the “Peoples Charioteer” (224) and the “sun” that pursues his “shining race” (326). Through such imagery, Marvell not only transforms versions of the accident and mythologizes Cromwell, but he keeps the accident at the forefront of the readers’ consciousness, while repeated references to succession, beginning with the puns on “sun” and “son” in lines 7-8, do the same thing. “Heavy Monarchs” leave their “earthy Projects” to their sons (15; 21). No one assumes Elijah’s mantle, as Elisha did in the biblical story; Marvell and his readers are only “left beneath with mantle rent” (220). The Old Testament judge Gideon, another representative of Cromwell, “would not be Lord, nor yet his Son” (256), in his refusal to be named king and establish hereditary rule, just as Cromwell did when he refused the crown in 1653.

Marvell stops short of recommending a form of succession; although his consideration of the issue is one of the secretarial aspects of the poem, his primary focus is on the vacuum that Cromwell’s death would create, and on the vacuum that did exist when people thought Cromwell had died in the accident. Cromwell’s fall is cosmically dire:

Thou *Cromwell* falling, not a stupid Tree,

Or Rock so savage, but it mourn’d for thee:

And all about was heard a Panique groan,

As if that Natures self were overthrown.

It seem’d the Earth did from the Center tear;

It seem’d the Sun was faln out of the Sphere:

Justice obstructed lay, and Reason fool’d;

Courage disheartened, and Religion cool’d. (201-08)
In the shift between line 206, in which the sun seemed to have fallen, and line 207, in which justice unconditionally lay obstructed, Marvell moves from treating Cromwell’s death as something that seemed to have happened to something that did happen. As Patterson observes, the “poet becomes trapped in his own fiction, and begins to describe Cromwell’s death as if it had actually occurred.”  

Marvell creates a poetic space in which Cromwell is dead and continues to be dead; he imagines Cromwell ascending to heaven like Elijah, while “We only mourned ourselves, in thine Ascent” (219). Marvell then extends this poetic suspension of Cromwell’s life, as before he establishes that Cromwell did not, in fact, die, he recaps Cromwell’s political history: his reluctant assumption of command of the army, his conduct in the war, his erection of the protectorate, his refusal of the crown, and the opposition he faces. Cromwell’s brush with death is not definitively over until lines 321-24:

But the great Captain, now the danger’s o’er,
Makes you for his sake Tremble one fit more;
And, to your spight, returning yet alive
Does with himself all that is good revive.

Readers of the poem of course knew that Cromwell survived the accident, but the poem holds him in suspension for 120 lines. As Patterson says, Marvell falls into his own fiction, in effect killing Cromwell and then resuscitating him. It seems a deliberate exercise in extended anxiety and uncertainty, since the emphasis is on Cromwell’s danger, not his escape. But Marvell tells us that such contemplation—and, apparently, vicarious experience of Cromwell’s death—is necessary to establish the right relation with him:

Let this one Sorrow interweave among
The other Glories of our yearly Song.
Like skilful Looms which through the costly thred
Of purling ore, a shining wave do shed:
So shall the Tears we on past Grief employ,
Still as they trickle, glitter in our Joy.
So with more Modesty we may be True,
And speak as of the Dead the Praises due. (181-88)

Fictive bereavement here becomes necessary to put the poet in the right stance and enable him to
“be true” with “more modesty” when praising the master figure. The poet must imagine the
master dead to get his portrayal exact; this is precisely Day’s point, that the secretary has to
contemplate the master’s death to determine how he will construct himself as the secretary. For
Patterson, the key word here is “modesty”; she writes, “Only from the perspective of fictive
bereavement can the poet achieve ‘modesty’ in his praise—a term that Marvell continually used
to denote an acceptable stance, and that seems to combine sobriety of tone with an unself-serving
agenda.” But in the line “modesty” serves the larger goal of being “true,” with its overlapping
implications of loyalty, fidelity, and truthfulness. These senses of “true” encompass the
traditional aspects of the secretarial relation to the master figure, and there is also the suggestion
of legitimacy and accuracy through being true. Imagined bereavement therefore is necessary not
only to enable but to guarantee accurate representation of the master figure, the goal of the
secretary and here also a carefully delineated goal for Marvell.

As in “An Horatian Ode,” however, it is not enough merely to imagine the master’s
death; while that creates a defining opportunity for the secretarial figure, Cromwell’s uniqueness
requires further adjustment of traditional structures. Once again, Marvell presents Cromwell as a
figure of dynamic movement, a phenomenon not of this world. As he “with greater Vigour runs,
“... the Stages of succeeding Suns,” he is unique: “Cromwell alone doth with new Lustre
spring, / And shines the Jewel of the yearly Ring” (11-12). As the architect of the
Commonwealth, he “hurles . . . the world about him round” (100), and in the Civil War he
“pow’rdst the fertile Storm” (236). In controlling time, he seems to stand outside it: “‘Tis he the
force of scatter’d Time contracts, / And in one Year the work of Ages acts” (13-14). Foreign
princes query, “Where did he learn those Arts that cost us dear? / Where below Earth, or where
above the Sphere?” (305-06), echoing his otherworldly stature.

Adding to the difficulties of relating to such a figure is the fact that Cromwell’s
uniqueness means that he transcends established hierarchical systems. Marvell positions him as a
self that cannot be ranked: “For to be Cromwell was a greater thing, / Than ought below, or yet
above a King” (225-26) The quoted foreign princes puzzle over his status, too:

He seems a King by long succession born,

And yet the same to be a King does scorn.

Abroad a King he seems, and something more,

At Home a Subject on the equal Floor. (387-90)

Such elusive status that resists hierarchical placement seems to erase any possibility of
establishing Cromwell as a “master” figure, itself a position of ranked stability, and without such
a master figure, self-definition as a secretary appears untenable. All Marvell can do is “hallow
far behind / Angelique Cromwell who outwings the wind” (125-26).

But the biggest challenge Cromwell, as Marvell constructs him, poses for a traditional
secretarial service relationship is the lack of opportunity he offers for private enclosure with him.
In earlier secretarial texts, the secretary/master relationship is enabled by and depends on
enclosure, such as the shared space of the closet or figuring the secretary as a cabinet that keeps
the master’s secrets. This space operates as a site of transfer and establishes an enclosed informational field that offers stability and stasis. But in “The First Anniversary” Cromwell is a figure not only of force, but of speed and movement, which, as noted, puts Marvell’s voice in the poem in the position of following, “hallowing” far behind. As in “An Horatian Ode,” the poem conveys the sense that one cannot “enclose” with Cromwell. Further, Marvell presents Cromwell as a ruling figure who lacks the sort of private self, or interiority tied to private space, that is the main channel for connection with a secretary. Day, for instance, in insisting that the secretary is the keeper of the master’s secrets, establishes the master as one who has secrets, a form of interior life that is then shared with the secretary. Robert Cecil compares consultation between master and secretary to “the mutuall affections of two lovers, undiscovered to their friends,” also emphasizing the private nature of the relationship. Robert Beale makes it clear that Tudor monarchs Henry and Elizabeth at times had private designs and tried to make the secretary the instrument of those designs. But in “The First Anniversary” Marvell disassociates Cromwell from an earlier, private personal self in favor of presenting him as a figure who abandoned a private self when he assumed a public role:

For all delight of Life thou then didst lose,

When to command, thou did thyself Depose;

Resigning up thy Privacy so dear,

To turn the headstrong Peoples Charioteer. (221-24)

The previous self is “deposed”; in lines 227-28 Marvell tells Cromwell, “thou rather didst thy Self depress / Yielding to Rule, because it made thee Less.” The Cromwellian self tied to privacy has been sacrificed in favor of public service, which is again tied to movement, as Cromwell is the “Peoples Charioteer.”
This manipulation of Cromwell’s status removes him from private, enclosed space and underwrites his difference from the discredited monarchical regime; Charles I had been notoriously associated with secret correspondence and plots, and while Mary Sidney Herbert could write flatteringly of Elizabeth I as a cabinet in “To the Angell Spirit,” a ruler of the Commonwealth could no longer be a cabinet of secrets. Marvell is writing a new model for a ruler, but this creates a problem for the would-be secretary, who is subsequently left without a way to know the master figure’s will. Cromwell is no longer tied to a private place, and, in earlier models, knowing the master’s will depended on access to his private space. Beale needed access to the Privy Chamber, Cecil needed private councils, and Day relied on the closet. The field of information that contains the master’s will and the secretary’s knowledge of that will is therefore a function of space, or place, a space Marvell erases in favor of constant movement. Far from being associated with a grounded space, in “The First Anniversary” Cromwell lacks association with any particular place. He is a figure of movement—the charioteer, the angel who “outwings the wind”—and an organizing principle who contracts the force of “scatter’d Time” and “hurles . . . the World about him round.” But even though he falls from his carriage in the poem he never figuratively lands anywhere. The one site that might logically be associated with him, the palace, is a place of silence due to his absence from it at the time of his fall: “A dismal silence through the Palace went, / And then loud Shreeks the vaulted Marbles rent” (209-210). This palatial silence converts to chaos; the shrieks that rend the “vaulted Marbles” are likened to those

Such as the dying Chorus sings by turns,

And to deaf Seas, and ruthless Tempests mourns,

When now they sink, and now the plundering Streams
Break up each Deck, and rip the oaken Seams. (211-214)

By likening those shrieking in the palace to a doomed stormed-tossed crew at sea, the poem converts even the palace into a site of movement and chaotic death. The implication is clear that, were Cromwell to die, foundations would not hold, but the lines also eliminate a potentially stable or fixed place for Cromwell.

Without this form of access, Marvell lacks knowledge of, and cannot write, Cromwell’s “will,” an important secretarial function. This lack of knowledge is evidenced by the poem’s lack of clarity on the issue of Cromwell’s assumption of the crown and the establishment of a hereditary succession. While the question of succession is a primary concern in the poem, Marvell steps back from endorsing a particular view or recommending a particular course to Cromwell. Often the poem seems clearly anti-monarchical, and therefore anti-hereditary succession. David Loewenstein has pointed out how the poem “repeatedly questions and diminishes the authority and achievements of earthly kings.” They are “unhappy Princes, ignorantly bred, / By Malice some, by Errour more misled” (117-18). “Heavy monarchs” accomplish little or nothing; “though they all Platonique years should raign, / In the same Posture would be found again” (15; 17-18). In lines 21-40 Marvell excoriates them as prideful, tyrannical, impious and incurious; consequently, “a useless time they tell, / And with vain Scepter strike the hourly Bell” (42-43). Later in the poem Marvell favorably compares Cromwell to the Old Testament figure Gideon, who, despite entreaties from the Israelites, refused to become king and establish a hereditary succession (249-56). Even the poem’s frequent use of the term “commonwealth” supports anti-monarchical tendencies.

At other points in the poem, however, Marvell seems to endorse Cromwell’s assumption of the crown. After stating how Gideon refused to reign: “No king might ever such a Force have
done; / Yet would not he be lord, nor yet his Son,” Marvell apparently praises Cromwell for doing the same: “Thou with the same strength, and an Heart as plain, / Didst (like thine Olive) still refuse to Reign” (255-56; 257-58). But in the next line Marvell questions this decision, asking “Though why should others all thy Labor spoil, / And Brambles be anointed with thine Oyl?” (259-60). He implies here that the oil of anointment belongs to Cromwell (“thine Oyl,” emphasis added), not to others, and that it would not be right if others stepped in.

At yet other points in the poem Marvell takes an apocalyptic view of Cromwell’s role, which renders moot the entire question of succession. In lines 131-40 Marvell imagines that Cromwell may be the instrument of final days. If, he writes, “in some happy Hour / High Grace should meet in one with highest Pow’r,” and the people bend to his will as to God’s, then “what wonderful Effect / From such a wish’d Conjuncture might reflect.” But this would precipitate the end of time:

Sure, the mysterious Work, where none withstand,

Would forthwith finish under such a Hand:

Fore-shortned Time its useless Course would stay,

And soon precipitate the latest Day. (137-40)

Marvell steps back from claiming Cromwell is the apocalyptic figure; the passage is heavily conditional and he immediately follows it with a retreat: “But a thick Cloud about that Morning lyes, / And intercepts the Beams of Mortal eyes” (141-42). But the suggestion that Cromwell’s rule may presage the “latest Day” eliminates the entire issue of succession.

The question of Cromwell’s successor had not been answered in 1653 and never would be settled constitutionally before his death in 1658. Cromwell had refused the crown in 1653, but his coaching accident brought into sharp relief the precarious nature of the regime and
Cromwell’s human reality. Patterson writes that “The First Anniversary” enforces recognition of Cromwell’s human status, the fragility of the regime, and the problem of succession, and that this realism is essential to the validity of the whole poem.\textsuperscript{60} But instead of stepping in with any kind of answer or advice, Marvell, in self-protective retreat, chooses to emphasize the empty void that would be left if Cromwell did die. In lines 215-20 Marvell transmutes the fallen Cromwell into the figure of Elijah, ascending to heaven in the “fiery Carr,” but he does not designate an Elisha, who assumed Elijah’s mantle. Cromwell’s death only leaves “our selves,” “Whom thou hadst left behind with Mantle rent” (219; 220). What is central to the poem is Cromwell’s death, not his replacement. His death simply leaves a vacuum.

Throughout the poem Marvell steps back from offering advice or counsel, even though he could easily take advantage of the opportunity the poem gives him to combine advice with evaluation, or at the least to express his own opinion. But he maintains a clouded vision as to what could or should happen upon Cromwell’s death. He never nominates a successor, looking beyond Cromwell’s death to a replacement, but instead simply emphasizes Cromwell’s absence. The lack of clarity on this point calls attention to itself by playing against the reader’s expectation, and this suggests that the poem’s ambiguity is not masking a deeply held opinion on Marvell’s part but operates as a direct expression of his lack of knowledge of Cromwell’s will. Because he does not share the enclosed, private relationship with Cromwell that would enable such knowledge, he cannot write the latter’s “will” in any form, only consider possibilities.

But while the poem points to a secretarial function that Marvell cannot perform, it also flamboyantly displays other functions that he can: specifically, and importantly, his ability to write the master figure in any way the master chooses. Marvell employs a wide variety of images and metaphors for Cromwell and rapidly shifts from classical allusion to biblical narrative to
martial metaphors to natural images. Cromwell is Apollonian, like the sun; he is Amphion, who organizes government like music. He is the Old Testament figures Elijah, Gideon, and Noah. He is the "lusty mate," the helmsman of the ship of state. He is a prince and an angel, a star and a cloud. This confusion of imagery has been interpreted in various ways. Donald M. Friedman, for instance, feels that these multiple definitions of Cromwell indicate that he remains indistinct to Marvell, that Marvell is in a sense groping for the man.\textsuperscript{61} Other critics see the poem as expressing Cromwell’s uniqueness and his position beyond traditional definition. For Patterson, the poem is an exercise in how to avoid or alter conventional definitions and postures as it attempts to create a new means of definition for a new type of leader; its variations are actually a demonstration of a lack of appropriate terminology to describe the Cromwellian phenomenon. M. L. Donnelly, on the other hand, sees in Marvell’s reliance on scriptural allusions a turn away from the discredited royalist iconography of mythical allusions, while Loewenstein reads the apocalyptic vision and providential language as Marvell’s imaginative attempt to negotiate the unsettled political and religious tensions which Cromwell himself personified and which threatened the fledgling regime.\textsuperscript{62} In these and other critical assessments the approach has been to reconcile the variations and differences in the poem in order to be able to read the poem as a cohesive statement. But it is possible that the sheer variety of representation the poem offers is, in part, the point; that Marvell, as in “An Horatian Ode,” is presenting a catalog of models as a demonstration of his ability to write Cromwell in a multiplicity of ways. The secretarial figure at this point may not know the master figure’s will, but he can display his ability to write the will and to author the master figure’s persona. The fact that the poem contains competing representations of Cromwell is a demonstration of capability embedded in encomium.
The poem also enacts another secretarial function, as it positions Marvell as an active and effective interface among various sources of information and opinion, a hub through which representations are adjusted and delivered. For one, the poem participates in a process of authorship with Cromwell himself; Cromwell used phrases from Marvell and Marvell used phrases from Cromwell. This similarity has been noted; Derek Hirst writes that Cromwell, addressing the Barebones Parliament in the summer of 1653, “sounded almost like a paraphrase of Marvell.” In an apocalyptic reference, Cromwell said, “This may be the door to usher in the things that God hath promised . . . But I may appear to be beyond my line; these things are dark,” a sentiment Marvell echoes in line 141, after envisioning Cromwell as the apocalyptic instrument, when he refers to the “thick Cloud” that “intercepts the Beams of Mortal eyes.” Worden also makes the point that “The First Anniversary” accords with Cromwell’s own representation of his rule. In 1654 Cromwell declared to Parliament that he had agreed to the office of protector because it “limited and bound me,” which Marvell alludes to in lines 227-28: “Therefore thou rather didst thyself depress, / Yielding to Rule.” For Worden, the poem also says what Cromwell cannot say, such as in lines 225-26: “For to be Cromwell was a greater thing, / Then ought below, or yet above a King.” The poem follows Cromwell’s lead in other respects; on liberty of conscience, and in its denouncements of Quakers and Fifth Monarchists (289; 293 ff.). Cromwell in turn appropriated imagery of the poem in the speech with which he dismissed Parliament at the end of January 1655. Both references are to the parable of Jotham in Judges 9; Marvell refers to the “brambles” and “ambitious shrubs” that would displace the olive (260; 264). Cromwell used similar terms to Parliament: “Instead of peace and settlement . . . weeds and nettles, briers and thorns have thriven under your shadow.” Such intertextuality signals a relationship between Marvell and Cromwell akin to that of the secretary and master; the
secretary is the channel for the master’s thoughts, his interface with the public, and the secretary also writes for the master, supporting the latter in self-representation.

Marvell’s poetic persona also acts as a diplomatic interface in the poem’s fifty-line speech of a foreign prince. At line 349 he begins this long peroration, expressive of foreign princes’ fear and awe of England and Cromwell. The English navy is “An hideous shole of wood-Leviathans,” and Cromwell a fearsome presence: “That one man still, although but nam’d, alarms / More then all Men, all Navies, and all Arms” (361; 375-76). This long speech, framed as a quotation, recaps Cromwell’s praise in images and figures of pre-Civil War royalist panegyric; it is a way to praise Cromwell with excessive hyperbole, but by putting the words in the mouths of others Cromwell is safely distanced from its extravagances. In addition, the poem suddenly seems nonpartisan, thus gaining credibility, as the admiration of Cromwell is ostensibly the attitude of a skeptical foreign prince. Through this conceit at the end of the poem, Cromwell becomes an object of display to foreign powers, who then comment on what they see. Marvell, as the broker for this transaction, stands in a secretarial position of transfer, as the point of presentation of the image to each party. The image of Cromwell he delivers to the foreign princes is reflected back in the speech, which Marvell delivers in turn not only to Cromwell but to the wider reading public, in a broadening of the field of reception. Marvell is the crucial interface here, as well as the controller of the image, as it passes back and forth between audiences.

Finally, the poem establishes Marvell as an organizing principle and interface between competing representations of Cromwell and the public. The fact that he serves this role through imitation is a further link to secretarial configurations, in which likeness is a means to legitimization. But, as in Sidney Herbert’s work, this imitation is no longer seamless duplication;
it is likeness with difference, which both legitimizes and draws attention to the mediator’s active part in the process of adaptation and transfer. Marvell consequently stands in the crucial position of the secretarial hub, as an instrument of transfer, redelivery, and reception. As he manipulates existing discourse, he rewrites Cromwell and repositions him in a public field, at the same time inviting readers to participate in political thinking. But here he becomes more than an inactive medium of transfer; he acts as an organizing principle for competing representations as he filters information between them. Knoppers has argued that “The First Anniversary” was written in large part as a response to the satire that burgeoned in the wake of Cromwell’s coaching accident. The events of the accident itself were much disputed, and Marvell’s poem provides a “counter-image” to negative lampoons. The poem thus becomes a participatory voice in a larger field of representative discourse, a voice that mediates contested images of satirical attacks and royalizing panegyric. For Knoppers, Marvell’s project in the poem is to show how representations of Cromwell are collective and participatory and to adjust these collective views through intervention. Donnelly, too, focuses on this mediating role, although she primarily considers Marvell’s appropriation of symbolic systems rather than his entrance into popular discourse. Donnelly explicates the ways in which Marvell adapts and adjusts established systems of representation, which had been thrown into some confusion by the Civil War, the regicide, and their aftermath. Marvell’s choices, in Donnelly’s view, indicate what symbolisms and identifications he judged his contemporaries would find plausible and persuasive. The poem thus becomes an “imitative economy,” which imitates, or copies, various typologies—royalist panegyric, classical myth, biblical narrative—just enough to legitimize Cromwell. Like Knoppers, Donnelly sees Marvell working to enable readers to read Cromwell correctly; once more, his role as an active interface is a crucial point.
Marvell’s shifting address in the poem subtly reinforces such a view of him as a site of mediation and transfer between multiple sources and audiences. The poem’s shifts between referring to Cromwell as “he” and directly addressing him as “thou” position the speaking voice between audiences, reinforcing its role as interface. For the reader who is not Cromwell, the technique of speaking directly to Cromwell reinforces the impression that the speaking voice is directly accessing Cromwell, and that it is somehow in his presence at the same time it is speaking to a third party. This helps legitimize the poem’s representation of Cromwell while it establishes a poetic space of origin for the speaking voice. This voice is technically invisible—the poem was published anonymously, thus publicly erasing an identifiable voice—but subtly asserts its presence through the occasional use of “I” in the poem. Furthermore, this “I” melds into “we” at times, which is used to represent both the collective entity of the public and a dual identity with Cromwell (161 ff.). At the end of the poem the poet assumes a oneness with Cromwell: “I yield, nor further will the Prize contend; / So that we both alike may miss our End” (397-98). This momentary connection again legitimates the speaking voice, as it also points to a secretarial identification with the master figure, who at this moment is doing the same thing; they both “alike” may miss their “end,” a fleeting erasure of difference. Again, as Sidney Herbert does, Marvell in “The First Anniversary” shifts between absence and presence, working in that space of transfer that becomes an active space of mediation under a pose of transparency.

“The First Anniversary” is unquestionably a poem of admiration and defense, lacking the ambivalent and ironic undertones of “An Horatian Ode.” Its portrait of Cromwell, Loewenstein writes, “deftly captures the novelty of the Protectorate itself, with its uneasy combination of godly rule and a semi-monarchical idea of the protector.”69 It is important to remember, however, that Marvell’s portrait was not the prevailing view, either of the Lord Protector or of
his government. The first year of the Protectorate had been shaky; while the poem portrays
Cromwell in supreme control, the regime was in fact undeniably fragile. The first Parliament
elected under the Protectorate was about to be dissolved at the time the poem was written; after
its failure in January 1655 Cromwell was dependent on naked military rule. The poem attempts
to address contemporary tensions between radical millenarianism and moderate Puritan reform
or settlement; it says what Cromwell wanted to hear and was published with apparent
government approval. It is not only a propaganda piece, however, given the tension between the
poem’s stabilization of Cromwell through its praise and its destabilization of him through its
erratically varying images and its focus on his possible death. But in “The First Anniversary”
Marvell demonstrates his capability to serve Cromwell through writing; he shows that he is, as
Milton writes, a “good man for the state to make use of.”

As in “An Horatian Ode,” in “The First Anniversary” Marvell presents Cromwell through
a series of types, but while “An Horatian Ode” is a private musing, “The First Anniversary” is a
public statement, one also made more directly to Cromwell as well as about him. It also offers
another opportunity for Marvell to evaluate how to enact a service relationship with Cromwell,
but in this poem Marvell’s approaches to the secretarial role mark a shift in how the role could be
defined. As in “An Horatian Ode,” such redefinitions are necessary due to the difficulties of
relating to a figure constructed in the way Marvell constructs Cromwell, a figure radically
different from preceding models and who is a phenomenon of action and movement. “The First
Anniversary” suggests some adjustments: to follow rather than be enclosed with the master
figure; to be ready to portray the master figure in any conceivable way; and to be a more public
interface who, as in “An Horatian Ode,” writes of and for the public as well as of and for the
master figure. More radically, the poem demonstrates a secretarial relationship that can find
ways to function in the absence of the foundation of place that enables an enclosed, personal relationship. Cromwell has no given place in the poem; he is a figure at once everywhere and yet never anywhere specific, and the poem emphasizes his near death and the vacuum his absence would provoke much more than it situates him in a defining context. For much of the poem Cromwell is figuratively dead, suspended in a death that the poem says must be imagined to put the speaker in the right relationship with Cromwell. This requirement of absence instead of presence changes the nature of the secretary/master relationship. Previously, the secretary’s function was not only to concretize the master figure in text but also to stabilize him in space, since earlier secretarial texts consistently placed the master figure in private space with the secretary, a foundational enclosure that guaranteed legitimacy and authenticity. But Marvell reverses that and makes the absence of the master figure necessary for legitimization; it is essential to imagine the death of Cromwell so that “with more Modesty we may be True” (emphasis added). Truth becomes a function of absence, rather than presence, enabling the secretarial figure to function and to write the master even in the master’s absence. This formulation shifts the field of information in which the secretary works; he is now a step removed from the intimate relationship and distanced from the master figure. This distance protects the secretary, who now operates in a field whose stability does not depend on the stability of the master figure. The master figure, in fact, may be increasingly unstable, but the secretary is detached from that instability, having shifted his role away from the master figure toward a bureaucratic position that functions more independently.

Marvell’s hopes of being a secretary in the administration of the Protectorate were to be fulfilled, but by the time he obtained a post Cromwell had only a year to live. Marvell entered the office of John Thurloe, secretary to the Council of State, in September 1657. Thurloe was
nominally his superior, but Marvell’s job was to assist Milton as secretary of foreign tongues, or Latin secretary. Since Latin was the language of international diplomacy and communication, Marvell’s duties involved translation between English and Latin, drafting letters and documents, and acting as a translator for foreign dignitaries in London. This position brought him much closer to Cromwell; Thurloe was a member of Cromwell’s inner circle and by this time Marvell is considered by many to himself be an intimate member of Cromwell’s court. He was certainly at this time close to the center of the administration and represented Cromwell and his government in diplomatic circles. Marvell had also done intelligence work for Thurloe when he traveled with William Dutton on the continent in 1656 and he continued to be involved in intelligence matters.

In September 1658, however, Cromwell died, and in the midst of his personal feelings and anxieties about the political future, Marvell wrote “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.,” apparently sometime between Cromwell’s death and January 1659. This elegy marked a return to more conventional forms, as opposed to the innovations of “An Horatian Ode” and “The First Anniversary”; Patterson writes, “Far from adjusting or arguing with conventions, Marvell seems to have fallen back into one of the best defined . . . the classical epicedion with its well-marked conventions.” Christopher Wortham also reads the poem as a traditional English funeral elegy, although highly individual and deeply felt. The poem has been largely dismissed by both literary critics and political analysts; Thomas Wheeler asserts that it “fails to engage us as poetry,” and Donnelly dismisses it as a “comparatively unsuccessful piece.” However, Nicholas Murray and Wortham both recognize the personal quality of the poem, Wortham noting that Marvell strives for a “sincerely personal expression of grief.”
The poem portrays Cromwell as a reluctant actor on the public stage, a man who would have preferred peace to war. It traces the events leading up to his death and locates the cause of death in Cromwell’s grief at his daughter Elizabeth’s death in August 1658. It recalls natural and supernatural portents of Cromwell’s death, such as a storm the night before he died, and notes that the date of Cromwell’s death, September 3, is also the date of two of his victories, those at Dunbar in 1650 and at Worcester in 1651. The poem’s speaker presents the response of survivors, who enumerate Cromwell’s virtues; laments what is no more; and closes with three passages of consolation: a promise of Cromwell’s immortality in the imagination and verse of the English soldier, a vision of Cromwell in Christian heaven, and an assertion of Cromwell’s reincarnation in his son and successor Richard.

This poem, like “An Horatian Ode” and “The First Anniversary,” examines the ways in which the speaker, or Marvell, can function as a secretary in relation to Cromwell. If in “The First Anniversary” Marvell suggests ways in which the secretary can function in the absence of the master figure, in “Upon the Death of O. C.” he, of necessity, puts that approach into practice. Two secretarial models operate in the poem: a nostalgic, idealized model that harks back to the late sixteenth-century ideas of Day and Faunt, based in affinity, intimacy, the sharing of hidden or secret selves, and presence; and the model Marvell began to describe in “The First Anniversary,” one that links the master’s absence with the truth of the master’s representation. As if recognizing the value of the first model, Marvell uses it as an instrument of redefinition of Cromwell, but, recognizing also the vulnerability of the secretary in that model, he himself as poetic speaker adheres to the second model, again insisting that the “true” Cromwell can only be known through his absence and positioning the secretary as the one who mediates that true expression.
The first model operates in the relationship between Elizabeth (called Eliza in the poem) and her father that Marvell describes in a long passage from line 29 to line 78. The two share a loving but fatal interdependence portrayed as closely akin to traditional secretarial ideals. Eliza is Cromwell’s darling; upon her maturity she is beautiful but, more importantly, “Through that [her beauty] sparkled her fairer mind; / When She with Smiles serene and Words discreet / His hidden Soul at ev’ry turn could meet” (40-42). The emphasis on mental conjunction and the link between linguistic discretion and knowledge of Cromwell’s “hidden Soul” connect their relationship to the discretion of the secretary who knows his master’s secrets. Like a secretary, Eliza has a privileged relationship with Cromwell; she knows him in ways others do not. She is the vehicle for his reproduction; Cromwell as grandfather “her Children sees / Hanging about her neck or at his knees” (49-50). There is a strong sense of doubling; what happens to one happens to the other. Eliza is Cromwell’s image; when she becomes ill, “A silent fire now wasts those Limbs of Wax, / And him within his tortur’d Image racks” (53-54). Her suffering becomes his suffering: “Like polish’d Mirrors, so his steely Brest / Had ev’ry Figure of her woes exprest” (73-74). Finally, her death becomes his death: “Fate could not either reach with single stroke, / But the dear Image fled the Mirrour broke” (77-78). The pair—she as his image, he as her mirror—reflect and construct each other; their intellectual relationship and fatal bond center on the reproduction of the image.

Figuring Cromwell in this way, as a man deeply connected to one who images him so completely that her death is his death, enables Marvell to produce a significant redefinition of Cromwell. In “An Horatian Ode” and “The First Anniversary,” Cromwell was a figure of dynamic movement; as a singular phenomenon, he outstripped human capability and left others in his wake. But in “Upon the Death of O. C.,” Cromwell is suddenly a man enmeshed in and
defined by human connections and relationships. His primary relationship is with Eliza, but he also connects, and even empathizes, with his enemies; although himself was never wounded in battle, “Pity it seem’d to hurt him more that felt / Each wound himself which he to others delt” (197-98). His connection through friendship established the Cromwellian house and name: “Friendship, that sacred virtue, long dos claime / The first foundation of his house and name” (201-02). Figured now as an affectionate, compassionate man, “His tendernesse extended unto all” (204). For “the children of the Highest” he “his life adventur’d every day,” and “their griefs struck deepest, if Eliza’s last” (212,214,216). Cromwell’s memory shall inspire the future English soldier, and he lives on in his son Richard (279-80; 305-11). Cromwell is emphatically mortal in the poem: “I saw him dead,” Marvell writes (247). This is done in an effort to humanize Cromwell, now that he is no longer the apocalyptic millennial figure but a mortal man, but it is also about recognizing that the secretarial relationship Cromwell has with his daughter enables this redefinition; it functions as a mechanism for representation. Once we see Cromwell redefined through his relation to Eliza, we can extend that redefinition to his relations with others.

Despite the utility of this model of representation, however, Marvell recognizes the way in which it requires the sacrifice of the secretarial figure and the way in which this sacrifice also erases the master figure. Eliza and Cromwell’s relationship enacts the idealized traditional secretarial dialogic; Eliza, the secretary figure, is completely subsumed in Cromwell. Because she is completely Cromwell’s image, there is no “Eliza,” only a reflection of Cromwell, which echoes the idea that a secretary, in becoming his master’s representational device, is himself erased. But that image consequently becomes the only thing propping up the master; in the absence of the image, there is no way to continue representation of the master figure and
therefore he too dies. The master figure and secretary are locked in an endlessly reflective representational dyad, the interruption of which ensures the disappearance of both: “the dear Image fled the Mirrour broke.” Marvell, seeking a way to perpetuate representation of the master and now also concerned with the survival of the secretary, thus turns again to the model he proposed in “The First Anniversary,” which links representation of the master to the master’s absence and the secretary’s presence in a space closer to the audience, with whom the secretary figure tends to identify. This model distances the secretary from dangerous intimacy and allows him to continue to function despite the death of the master. While the poet in “Upon the Death of O. C.” expresses personal grief and describes a personal relationship with Cromwell, the two of them do not have the kind of intimate relationship that Eliza and Cromwell have. In fact, the poet remains slightly removed from Cromwell. They do not share each other’s presence or space; the poet, as one of a group, is placed outside Cromwell’s private space: “Where we (so once we us’d) shall now no more, / To fetch day, presse about his chamber-door” (232-33). During Cromwell’s days the poet continued to follow Cromwell, as he “hallowed” behind him in “The First Anniversary”: “No more shall follow where he spent the dayes / In warre, in counsel, or in pray’r, and praise” (239-40). Even the most personal assertion in the poem, the act of witnessing in the lines “I saw him dead, a leaden slumber lyes, / And mortal sleep over those wakefull eyes,” is a stark statement of separation, the act of the I/eye seeing that which can no longer see (247-48). This emphasis on a remaining I/eye establishes the secretarial figure of the poet as a representational medium who functions despite—and in part because of—the master’s absence in death.

This positioning enables Marvell to again assert the link between the absence (or death) of the master figure and his “true” representation. If the secretarial model dependent on presence
enables us to see one truth of Cromwell—that he is a compassionate, loving man—the model that requires absence presents another truth of the man. As the poet gazes on the corpse and ponders the transitoriness of life, he realizes that Cromwell’s death presents an opportunity. Comparing Cromwell to a fallen oak, he writes:

The tree ere while foreshortened to our view
When fall’n shews taller yet than as it grew;
So shall his praise to after times encrease,
When truth shall be allow’d, and faction cease,
And his own shadows with him fall; the eye
Detracts from objects than itself more high:
But when death takes them from that envy’d state,
Seeing how little we confess, how greate. (269-276)

This passage suggests that the “reality” of the tree, representing Cromwell, can be realized only when it is fallen; as the hypothetical elegy in “The First Anniversary” suggested, death therefore becomes a precondition of a realizable truth that is both legitimate and authentic. Further, this truth can only be seen in the future, in “after times . . . [w]hen truth shall be allow’d,” suggesting that the secretary must survive into that future to mediate the true image. While the master figure lives, the “I” of line 273, which echoes the seeing “I” of line 247, sees wrongly, “detracts from objects than itself more high.” But after the death of the master figure, “[s]eeing how little we confess, how greate.” Not only does the eye continue to function, it becomes collective in line 276 (“we confess”), again identifying the secretarial figure with the audience rather than with the master figure. “Upon the Death of O. C.” thus sets up two competing ways of achieving the
“truth” of the master figure and ultimately opts for the model that relies on absence, rather than presence, to endorse “true” representation or re-imaging. This model does not prohibit the secretarial speaker from participating in other traditional forms of secretarial intervention, and Marvell, even while evaluating secretarial models, continues to act in secretarial ways. At the end of the poem he gestures toward Richard, Cromwell’s son, as Cromwell’s successor (305-324): Cromwell reportedly named Richard his successor on his deathbed, and by endorsing that choice (although he had no actual part in it) Marvell poetically enacts and ratifies the master figure’s will and inserts himself into the process of continuity and reproduction of the master figure. Further, in refashioning Cromwell as previously discussed, Marvell again acts as the interface who directs his audience in ways to view Cromwell properly. Knoppers has pointed out how, in this poem, Marvell limns a private, domestic Cromwell, rejecting the use of iconic royal effigies in favor of the image of Cromwell as a doting father and a withered corpse.74 Marvell also rejects possible images of Cromwell as an unrepentant regicide and autocrat in favor of presenting him as sensitive and spiritual. As in “The First Anniversary,” Marvell acts as the intermediary organizing principle for these competing views of Cromwell, while, through his frequent use of collective pronouns, he aligns himself with the audience for which he simultaneously shapes the image, a technique that allows him to erase himself even as he mediates the image. It is notable that he never allows an unmediated view of Cromwell; whether through the device of Eliza or his own presence, Cromwell is always a reflected or refracted image. In effect, Marvell constructs and presents the process of representation, and although he manipulates it he never discards it; the mediating figure is always necessary.
Elegies by their nature are always about the gap between the dead and those who survive; obviously the elegiac voice is that of a survivor. But in “Upon the Death of O. C,” given Marvell’s earlier professional aspirations toward, and eventual professional post with, Cromwell’s administration, and his gestures in the poem toward secretarial ideologies, we can read a formulation that shifts the stance of the representing figure away from the model Marvell gives us with Eliza, which recalls the models of Day and Faunt, toward a model that operates even in the absence of the master figure. Marvell made deliberate choices in this poem to create these specific models. For one, to cite Elizabeth’s death as the cause of Cromwell’s death was romantic license, as Cromwell’s health had been deteriorating for years and he had suffered recurring bouts of malaria since the invasion of Ireland. The model that requires the absence of the master figure also enables the survival of the secretary, distancing him from the dangerous interdependency of a representational relationship based on presence. But even as he contemplated his own survival in tumultuous political times and worked through some of those issues in the poem, Marvell continued to construct a secretarial relationship with Cromwell.

Perhaps Marvell’s last word on his professional relationship with Cromwell and his government comes from a passage in the second part of Marvell’s The Rehearsal Transpros’d, published in 1673. The Rehearsal Transpros’d, written during Marvell’s second tenure in Parliament as the member from Hull, was Marvell’s entry in the pamphlet wars over the question of religious toleration. The Rehearsal Transpros’d couched Marvell’s own appeal for toleration in humorous prose that satirized other pamphlets and played off of George Villiers’ dramatic burlesque The Reheasal (1672). Marvell wrote:

[F]or as to myself, I never had any, not the remotest relation to publick matters, nor correspondence with the persons then predominant, until the year 1657, when
indeed I enter’d into an imployment, for which I was not altogether improper, and which I consider’d to be the most innocent and inoffensive towards his Majesties affairs of any in that usurped and irregular Government, to which all men were then exposed. And this I accordingly discharg’d without disobliging any one person, there having been opportunity and indeavors since his Majesties happy return to have discover’d had it been otherwise.75

As Murray notes, “this is a very dubious passage,” containing at least one outright lie and certainly misrepresenting Marvell as a reluctant civil servant.76 But this construction of his service continues the depersonalization of the secretarial service relationship traceable through “An Horatian Ode,” “The First Anniversary,” and “Upon the Death of O. C.” “An imployment” is now anonymous; he worked for nameless “persons.” The nature of any master figure and a relationship with him have utterly no significance; Marvell implies that as a secretary he was able to discharge his duties independently of the nature of his employers and without subscribing to their ideology. This separation of the master figure and secretary enables the secretary to act with impunity and is of course a post-Restoration survival tactic, but it is one prefigured in the constructions of Marvell’s secretarial relationship with Cromwell in the earlier poems.

This separation between the secretarial Marvell and his Protectorate employment was necessary in 1673, but it also completes the process Marvell began and explored in the Cromwell poems. Perhaps Marvell was prescient, to have made the choices he did from the secretarial models available to him at midcentury. By the late 1650s he certainly could have returned to the model of a more personal secretarial relationship, particularly if he was a member of Cromwell’s intimate circle; in that case, he could have presented his working relationship with Cromwell and his government as based in friendship and proximity rather than absence. The organization of
Cromwell’s court also would have supported such a choice. Cromwell headed a regal court that used and respected the traditions of the English monarchy. Much of the public face of the Protectorate between 1653 and 1659 was consciously modeled on its Tudor and Stuart predecessors, and the wedding of Cromwell’s daughter Mary to Lord Fauconberg in 1657 marked a return to courtly and monarchical rule. By 1658 Whitehall felt like a real court and had revived traditions it had rejected in 1649. This made it seem more permanent, although royal imitation was a source of both legitimacy and ridicule. At this court, Cromwell did not rely on aristocratic affinities for his patronage, but he did award positions on a personal basis—that is, to family and friends. Cromwell himself had a powerful Secretary of State in Thurloe, who fell into the category of close friend and advisor. The two “acted as one,” conveying a sense of a traditional master/secretary relationship, but Thurloe survived the Restoration. Cromwell also had a personal private secretary, William Malyn, although his functions do not appear to have been significantly different from those performed by Thurloe’s secretariat.

However paradoxical it may seem to think of Cromwell’s rule as the last gasp of some forms of monarchy, it is true that the style of personal monarchy was on its way out, as systems of government bureaucracy were becoming more established. At the Restoration, Charles II received public revenues for the duties of public office, and feudal revenues were abolished. Ministries now needed to account to Parliament as well as to the king, and the institution of boards and departments further removed the business of government from the royal household. Marvell’s Cromwell poems appear to reflect this progression, as he separates the secretary from the master and allows him to function not only in the event of the master’s death, but because of it.
When we read Marvell’s Cromwell poems together as progressively exploring secretarial ideas of representation, we can see the connections between them. First, by choosing to explore issues of succession and replacement, Marvell provides himself with a specifically secretarial opportunity to determine how he will enact his service relationship with the master, as Day makes clear. In his exploration of this enactment, Marvell sees ways to formulate a secretarial relation that continues the goal of secretarial ideology—authentic representation by a seemingly transparent interface—yet gives the secretary more security. We can trace his development of this formulation in the Cromwell poems. “An Horatian Ode” presents an index of possibilities for a service relationship, and also a first hint of separation between secretary and master, as Marvell leans toward a generic construction of Cromwell instead of choosing to “enclose” with the phenomenal man. “The First Anniversary” takes another, firmer step out of the enclosed closet as it considers Cromwell’s vulnerability in the wake of his coaching accident. Here Marvell first suggests that the master’s absence can—and should—replace his presence as the means to true representation, an approach that provides self-protection while maintaining secretarial function. Finally, “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.” confirms the suggestion of “The First Anniversary.” While this poem, in its portrayal of the intensely private relationship between Eliza and Cromwell and its recasting of Cromwell as a man of feeling, conveys significant nostalgia for the enclosed, personal model of relationship, the fact of Cromwell’s death confirms the necessity for secretarial self-protection. Consequently the poem emphatically insists on the master’s absence as a prerequisite for true representational knowledge. Through these reworkings, Marvell opens up the enclosed space of the closet and minimizes the role secrecy plays in assuring representational authenticity. In addition, he shifts the informational field in which the secretary operates, a realignment that protects the secretary and demonstrates the
flexibility of the secretarial model as a transparent interface. In my next chapter, I will examine the ways in which John Milton capitalizes on this flexible model in his 1674 epic poem *Paradise Lost.*
Notes


2 Smith 1-2.


7 Starkey et al. 218.


12 Potter 61.
Qtd. in Potter 61.

For connections between Mary’s execution and that of Charles I, see John D. Staines, *The Tragic Histories of Mary Queen of Scots, 1560-1690* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) chapter 6.

On the publication of Charles I’s letters, see Potter 57-62.

Potter 173.

Potter 208.

Potter 175.


Starkey et al. 116.


Kishlansky 64. Cecil’s choice of James went against Henry VIII’s will, which barred Stuarts from inheriting the throne. His actions thus exemplify the power of the secretary to influence succession.

Croft 135.

Day 104-105.

Day 105.

Day 105.

Day 107.

Day 107-108.

Day 108.

Day 105.


See Donnelly; Patterson 33-36.

Norbrook, “Marvell’s ‘Horatian Ode’” 162.


*Poems and Letters* 302, note on lines 119-120.

Norbrook, “Marvell’s ‘Horatian Ode’” 152.


I have followed Margoliouth’s generally accepted dating.


44 Worden, Appendix A 399-404.

45 Worden, Literature and Politics 118-122.

46 Worden, Literature and Politics 119.

47 Worden, Literature and Politics 133.

48 Worden, Literature and Politics 133.

49 Worden, Literature and Politics 141.

50 Legouis 102.


52 Worden, Literature and Politics 138; Patterson 37.

53 Philip Aubrey, Mr. Secretary Thurloe: Cromwell’s Secretary of State 1652-1660 (London: Athlone, 1990) 49.

54 Knoppers 95.

55 Patterson 45.

56 Patterson 46.

57 Robert Cecil, The State and Dignitie of a Secretarie’s Place, with the peril thereof,” (London, 1642) 3.

58 While I am of the opinion that the poem does not endorse a specific view for the succession, other critics disagree with me; see Mazzeo, Zwicker, Wilson.

59 Loewenstein 151.
60 Patterson 45.


62 Patterson 38; Donnelly; Loewenstein 143-171.

63 Hirst 35-36.


65 Worden, *Literature and Politics* 144.


67 Knoppers 95.

68 Donnelly 166.

69 Loewenstein 167.

70 Hunt 133.

71 Hunt 121.

72 Worden, *Literature and Politics* 133. In the summer of 1656 Marvell was in Saumur, France, with William Dutton. Another Englishman, James Scudamore, who saw Marvell there, referred to him in a letter as Dutton’s “governour . . . one Mervill a notable English Italo-Machiavellian.” This points to Marvell’s apparently known status as a government agent; it also makes a connection with political secretaryship to which Marvell aspired. Letter dated 15 Aug. 1656, British Museum Add. MS 15858 f. 135. Qtd. in Murray 80.

73 Patterson 46; Wortham 43; Thomas Wheeler, *Andrew Marvell Revisited* (New York: Twayne, 1996) 112; Donnelly 167; Murray 92; Wortham 43.

74 Knoppers 152.

76 Murray 86.

77 Barclay 195.

78 Worden, *Literature and Politics* 152.

79 See Knoppers 7.

80 Barclay 201.


83 Starkey et al. 260.
Chapter Four

“And I perhaps am secret”: Eve as Secretary in *Paradise Lost*

The secretarial model, as described in late sixteenth-century texts, emphasizes the containment of information and knowledge to ensure security, authenticity, and legitimacy. This model functions as part of a social system for controlling information distribution; however, the construction has notable gaps. The transmittal space occupied by a secretary enables individual agency, and a secretary has the power to author and re-author his master. Even as written, secretarial ideology is paradoxical, as it struggles to make a secretary a friend and a servant, a duplicate of the master yet an original thinker.

As I have discussed, Mary Sidney Herbert takes advantage of the authorial opportunities embedded in transmittal space, opportunities easily accessible to women due to the gender-fluid nature of the transmittal position. In doing so, she slightly opens up the containment model, drawing attention to the fact that she is gaining authorial agency from her position as Sir Philip Sidney’s transmitter. Andrew Marvell opens up the model still further, disassociating the secretary from specific, enclosed space as he speculates on a representational relationship with a master figure who cannot be “contained.” In John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, however, the containment model is not simply exploited or explored. In this epic poem, it is undone, presented as inherently unfeasible and detrimental to the individual self-realization necessary for social progress. The agent of this undoing is Eve, who accesses and disperses the knowledge contained in the fruit of the tree of knowledge. In this chapter I argue that Eve is associated with a
secretarial position, presented as she is as Adam’s other self, formed of and for him and also to be the vehicle for his own self-imaging. In addition to being Adam’s other self, Eve also has a specific relation to knowledge—she and Adam are both charged with maintaining the structures of containment, as they are not to eat the fruit of the tree. This correlates with the specific duty of the secretary: not to transgress the designated boundaries of information structures. The maintenance of these structures, however, depends on the smooth operation of the other-self model, which confines one person in another to ensure continued containment. For Milton, this construction carries the seeds of its own destruction, and its inevitable failure leads to knowledge’s dispersal. This failure creates an opportunity for social redefinition, and Eve becomes the instrument of this redefinition as she exercises the transformational nature of the secretarial position. By the end of the poem she acquires a narrative agency that is no longer tied to a specific person or place but yet has roots traceable to secretarial origins. This narrative agency, no longer bound by another self, becomes self-directed, yet maintains secretarial cover, or invisibility.

The fact that Milton investigates individual agency through secretarial associations may be traceable to his own experience as a secretary for the Commonwealth. In 1649 Milton became part of the secretariat headed by Gaulter Frost, and although he was completely blind by the spring of 1652, he continued to work as Latin Secretary (or Secretary for Foreign Tongues) in the Commonwealth’s last years. Initially hired to work on foreign affairs and to write responses to Charles I’s *Eikon Basilike* as well as Claude Saumaise’s *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I*, Milton’s duties came to encompass much more. He translated into Latin official letters to foreign states, treaty negotiations, and other diplomatic exchanges. He translated letters from foreign governments into English. He attended council and committee meetings to translate for foreign
envoys and to familiarize himself with issues he would be asked to write about. He surveyed the papers of people suspected of treasonous or illegal acts. In all, he served as a diplomat, licenser, political polemicist, censor, translator, secretary to committees, investigator, interpreter, and composer of foreign correspondence.¹ Not a policy maker himself, he was in daily contact with those who were.

As a translator and interpreter, Milton inhabited the middle space of information flow, functioning as a pass-through for both English and foreign governments. As he renewed the oath of secrecy every year when he was reappointed to his office, he was familiar with the secrecy attached to this space and its functions. He was also aware of the secretary’s opportunities to influence and to insert his own views. In 1649 he wrote comments on documents of the Catholic Confederacy in Ireland. This was apparently an official document, “publisht by authority” and not over Milton’s name. But Barara Lewalski points out that Milton “tailored this quasi-official treatise to his own concerns,” emphasizing his own priorities.² At the same time Council secretaries were to express the will of the Council, they also were expected to use independent judgment and initiative, an opportunity Milton undoubtedly took advantage of.³ Consequently, as simultaneously a servitor acting as a government mouthpiece and an autonomous, opinionated individual, Milton lived the secretarial combination of self-effacement and self-assertion.

In Paradise Lost, however, self-assertion ultimately disrupts the traditional secretarial model, and secretarial agency becomes connected to transformational narrative strength. This is an extension of Marvell’s exploration of ways in which an individual, through forms of secretaryship, may become involved in political service while shielding himself from the potential fallout from political risk. But Marvell wrote his Cromwell poems before and during the active years of the Commonwealth, when, for him, participation in its republican approach to
government was not only desirable but possible. Milton, however, completed *Paradise Lost* after the failure of the Commonwealth and the restoration of the monarchy, and for him Eve’s secretarial agency becomes a means of disobedience, even rebellion, against structures that suppress the individual and try to control information flow.

Certainly *Paradise Lost* in general shows a great concern with the circulation of information, and, in addition to Eve, other figures are secretarial, notably the angels Raphael and Michael. In Book 5, God charges Raphael with delivering a warning to Adam about Satan’s presence in the garden. God is fairly specific about what he wants Raphael to do, telling the angel to converse with Adam as “friend to friend” (5.229) and “such discourse bring on / As may advise him of his happie state” (5.233-34). Raphael is to warn Adam “to beware / He swerve not too secure,” and to “tell him withall / His danger” (5.237-39). But God does not tell Raphael exactly what to say, leaving that and “such discourse” to the angel’s discretion. Raphael, as God’s messenger, must negotiate the tension between God’s specific message and his general instructions and enter the discretionary space of the secretary. And while God’s warning is compact, Raphael’s transmission of it is surrounded by discursive dilation. Raphael arrives in Eden in Book 5, and he and Adam talk of many things—food, angels, Satan’s rebellion, the war in heaven—before Raphael delivers God’s warning at the end of Book 6 (6.901). This is followed by more conversation in Books 7 and 8 before Raphael departs, once again reminding Adam to keep God’s “great command” (8.635). Michael, too, is God’s messenger. God sends him to drive Adam and Eve out of paradise and also, to soften the blow, to give Adam a prophetic view of history. How God gives this history to Michael is left unclear; God simply tells the angel to “reveale / To Adam what shall come in future dayes / As I shall thee enlighten” (11.113-15), nor is the method of transfer from Michael to Adam described. Michael removes
the “filme,” a consequence of the Fall, from Adam’s eyes and puts eye-drops from the Well of Life in them (11.416); he takes Adam’s hand and Adam simply “sees” history unfold before him.

Both Raphael and Michael partially enact secretarial function, but they primarily are delivery agents. They do not enact any of the identification with the master figure that is so foundational in sixteenth-century secretarial texts. Of course, no one can identify with God, and since there is no question about the legitimacy of the angels’ messages, that identification, which ensures authenticity, is not necessary. Their messages, however, are part of the practice of God’s institutional systems. Raphael’s message is a function of justice; God fulfills “all justice” by warning Adam of his danger (5.247), and Michael’s message is attached to the military occupation of paradise, as an adjunct to Michael’s primary charge to expel Adam and Eve with his “flaming Warriors” (11.101).

As deputies, Raphael and Michael function as part of Milton’s whole frame of information structures and circulation. But in the figure of Eve Milton can push his response to the failure of the Commonwealth further and consider how an imposed system that partly secures information by burying one individual in another is incompatible with individual self-realization. Milton demonstrates that this loss of self is an ideological prop that serves repressive government. Unlike Marvell, Milton works this through using a character, Eve, instead of himself. Given the Restoration, it is not surprising that he would do so, and the association of secretarial function with a fictional woman is made easier by the fact that such an association was already a part of the publishing landscape. Letter-writing books and conduct manuals, such as *The Secretary of Ladies*, by Jacques du Bosque (1638), and *The Female Secretary*, by Henry Care (1671), openly associated women with the term “secretary” and, as Milton does, opened up the secretarial model. I will discuss these guides at further length later in this chapter, but one
point to draw here is that these manuals fictionalize women as participants in information
networks. The guides are collections of letters to be used as templates or as expositions of proper
behavior, and they present their letters as written by real women. However, these women are not
named, and this ploy is a device to add verisimilitude to books written by men for a female
audience. Therefore these books build a cultural assumption that women are engaged in
information circulation and that portrayals of this activity may comfortably be fictional.

Given these contextual circumstances—Milton’s experience as secretary for the
Commonwealth, the fact that Paradise Lost was completed after the Restoration, and the fact
that, in the seventeenth century, it was increasingly commonplace to connect women with
secretaryship through fictional approaches—Eve becomes the figure through which Milton
explores the ramifications of the secretarial other-self model for the individual and for her
society. And from a critical perspective, reading Eve as secretarial gives us another way into the
long-standing debate over Eve’s primacy or secondariness in the poem.\textsuperscript{5} The secretarial position
holds primacy and subordination together in a tension that is theoretically nongenerative; the
secretary is at once the master’s other self, subordinated to the master’s image, and a
companionate equal, valued for his discretionary ability (his ability to make choices). In
considering how this tension fluctuates between Adam and Eve in their prelapsarian relationship,
we do not have to assign a hierarchical position to Eve, but simply consider how the other-self
model works, and eventually fails, for both members of the pair.

That model begins as a traditionally perfected dyad. The ideal and idealized secretary as
described by Angel Day and Nicholas Faunt is in many ways a figure of fantasy, specifically a
fantasy that relies on likeness to perfect the secretarial role. A secretary is a paragon of loyalty
and devotion who dedicates himself utterly to his master, and who in the process becomes
seamlessly identified with the master. This identification legitimizes the secretary’s representations of the master, as it constructs the secretary as the perfect “other self,” a figure who simultaneously is the master, as “his owne penne, his mouth, his eye, his eare,” and represents the master.6 Furthermore, as the one publicly designated as the sharer and keeper of his master’s secrets, the secretary is both a private reflection of the master’s interiority and a public representation (and representer) of it. In a sense, the secretary functions as a mechanism by which the master defines himself. Similarly, Eve in Paradise Lost is a product of male fantasy, specifically a male fantasy of likeness. In Book 8, in Adam’s narrative of Eve’s creation, he emphasizes that he wanted two things: a being of equal standing, for “fellowship”; and an agent for imaging, or duplicating, him. Adam stresses, “Among unequals what societie / Can sort, what harmonie or true delight?” (8.383-34).7 This harmony must be “mutual” (8.385) in order to create what Adam seeks: “Of fellowship I speak / Such as I seek, fit to participate / All rational delight” (8.389-91). Adam’s fantasy is not sexual; he desires a being like himself—equal, mutual, a participant in fellowship—for a relationship of the mind, of rational delight and of “conversation with his like to help, / Or solace his defects” (8.418-19). Adam also wants an agent for reproduction:

But man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection; and beget
Like of his like, his Image multipli’d,
In unitie defective, which requires
Collateral love, and deerest amitie. (8.422-26)

Reproduction again is a function of likeness, of a multiplicity of images of the primary, or master, figure, and the agent of this imaging participates in “collateral love” and “dearest
amitie.” This is not, at this point, a female figure; it more strongly suggests a figure of male friendship who somehow can image Adam. “Collateral love” and “amitie” are also prerequisites for the secretary/master relationship, according to Day and Faunt; through such emotive practice the secretary becomes more than a servant and achieves the status of friend: “By this measure nowe of Fidelitie, trust or loyall credit of a servant, in which place our Secretorie . . . standeth bounden by the first degree of his service, it maie secondlie be conjectured, in what respective estate, he ought for the residue of that which to his attendance appertaineth, bee accounted a Friend.”

God continues this emphasis on likeness when he promises Adam, “What next I bring shall please thee, be assur’d, / Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish exactly to thy hearts desire” (8.449-51). Adam and God both imagine that the perfect helpmate is the perfect likeness, a figure that links male fantasy and desire (Adam’s “wish” and “hearts desire”) with self-reflective duplication (“thy likeness” and “thy other self”) in a relationship that serves the primary male figure (“thy fit help”). The result, Eve, is a form of Adam himself; he describes her as “Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self / Before me” (8.495-96). In the phrase “my Self before me,” he articulates his narcissistic delight in being duplicated and extended; as Eve, in Book 4, is first attracted to her own image, here Adam loves himself in her. The speechless Eve, in Adam’s account, thus fulfills his fantasy’s function to image Adam and to enable him to realize himself.

In Book 4, Eve herself describes how she comes to fulfill this role. Her first remembered action is reflecting, and she recounts how she was drawn to her own image in a lake: “As I bent down to look, just opposite, / A Shape within the watry gleam appeered / Bending to look on me” (4.460-62). R. A. Shoaf reads this as illustrative of something essential in Eve’s nature: “It is Eve’s very essence to reflect, to image forth, to be a mirror . . . and therefore, quite
appropriately, even logically, the first thing she does upon wakening is to reflect.”9 Eve may be
drawn to fulfill her purpose, but the first object she applies that purpose to—her own image—is
an incorrect choice; although she says, “There I had fixt / Mine eyes till now, and pin’d with vain
desire” (4.465-66), she is led away from reflecting her own image and directed to Adam, whom
the voice that guides her describes as “hee / Whose image thou art” (4.471-72). The sequence
reinforces Eve’s role as the image(r) specifically of Adam, a role further emphasized when
Adam calls her “his [Adam’s] flesh, his bone” (4.483) and also “Part of my Soul” and “my other
half” (4.487, 488). While the guiding voice simply calls Eve an image of Adam, Adam’s mix of
a tangibly physical reproduction (Eve is his flesh and bone) with an intangible union (Eve is part
of his soul, his other half) recalls earlier secretarial formulations, which also combined
metaphors of the body with concepts such as love, trust, and loyalty to cement the
master/secretary bond.

With Eve’s acceptance of her status as Adam’s image and other self, she becomes his
sign, that is, an image that signals beyond itself. Just as the image of the secretary is transitive,
signaling a master figure, Eve signals Adam, having been successfully interpellated into that
status by the governing patriarchy of the guiding voice and Adam. Linda Gregerson has pointed
out that when Eve accepts her likeness to Adam she takes on a productive function; she assumes
the labor of imaging. Eve is thus a working commodity whose function is to image Adam to
himself.10 This status again invokes the working figure of the secretary. Milton frequently points
to the “other self” model as the basis for this working relationship between Adam and Eve.

From Book 4’s characterizations of Eve as Adam’s image, part of his soul, and other half, to
Book 8’s descriptions of Eve as Adam’s likeness and other self, the privileging of this model
continues the secretarial-like suggestion that accurate representation relies not only on similarity
but on duplication. Eve does at times subtly “double” Adam; her sleep in Book 11 parallels his sleep in Book 8, and in Book 10, when she calls him to her, she reverses his call to her in Book 4.

Eve displays her function as Adam’s image and reflection in the first words she speaks in *Paradise Lost*. Her speech follows Adam’s first utterance, in which he describes Eden as “infinitely good” and reminds her of their “easy charge” not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge (4.411-439; 414; 421). Eve replies,

O thou for whom
And from whom I was formd flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my Guide
And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.
For we to him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks (4.440-45)

Eve’s first words establish her in relation to Adam. She is both “for” him and “from” him, a phrase that hints at her service and at her status as Adam’s other self. Without Adam she is “to no end,” or has no purpose. Adam is her “guide,” suggesting his primacy, and her “head,” again in the sense of guide or director, but also evocative of physical doubling. While these first lines explain the position of the imager, the next lines display her function, as Eve endorses and agrees with what Adam has said: “What thou hast said is just and right.” Her agreement exemplifies her unity and accord with Adam, but her next line, “wee to him indeed all praises owe,” is also a reflective gesture through summary and repetition. Eve translates, or reconfigures, Adam’s speech and transmits it back to him, enabling him to experience himself through her. Eve narrates Adam to himself; as Shoaf suggests, her role is reflective, but she is not a completely
passive reflector—here we see her ability to reshape Adam and also endorse him. She does the same thing in lines 4.481-88, when she quotes what Adam said upon seeing her back to Adam. Because Adam does not correct her quotation of him, we assume it is correct; thus from their earliest appearance in *Paradise Lost* Milton establishes Eve as the reliable mediator of Adam, who narrates him back to himself and to the readers of the poem.

Eve is evocative of secretarial function in her role as Adam’s reflective other self and also in her relationship with Adam and the tree of knowledge. Variously referred to as the “Forbidden Tree” (1.2), the “Tree of Knowledge” (4.421), the “Tree of interdicted Knowledge” (5.52), and the “Tree of prohibition” (9.644), the tree represents a model of knowledge long associated with secretarial function: the model of conspicuously contained knowledge that communicates through absence, or secrecy. The traditional hallmark of the secretary is the fact that, as the keeper of his master’s secrets, he functions as a site of containment, and he communicates through secrecy and noncommunication. He represents knowledge which is not to be known, a model that is often associated with Adam and Eve. The poem’s narrator suggests that Adam and Eve will be “happiest if ye seek / No happier state, and know to know no more” (4.774-75). Eve asserts to Adam, “God is thy Law, thou mine; to know no more / Is womans happiest knowledge and her praise” (4.637-38); Adam echoes the sentiment in Book 8, when he tells Raphael that the mind should learn “[t]hat not to know at large of things remote / From use, obscure and subtle, but to know / That which before us lies in daily life, / Is the prime Wisdom” (8.191-94). Therefore Adam and Eve are specifically related to, and defined by, a model of knowledge that has always been key in secretarial constructions. Furthermore, their one “easy charge,” as Adam says, is not to eat the fruit of the tree; that is, not to breach the boundaries of the containment model, but to maintain them. This association of the pair with the preservation
of the containment model strongly aligns Adam and Eve with secretarial formulations; their charge is to maintain the very structures of knowledge that maintain the traditional model of the secretary.

This connection between a pair engaged in a reproductive, or representational, relationship and the containment of knowledge sets the stage for a consideration of the functionality of this model. Here Milton’s emphasis shifts from the ways in which Sidney Herbert and Marvell manipulate the secretarial model. Sidney Herbert and Marvell both maintain the primacy of the paired couple to legitimize representation. Sidney Herbert, writing at the same time secretarial texts were formulating their model, sticks closely to their ideal of the enclosed pair. She locates her agency in a privileged, private relationship with her brother, a relationship of textual overlap and even unity. She capitalizes on the idea that a seamless identification with a master figure is the surest way to legitimize the hidden agency of the textual manager or transmitter. Marvell, writing fifty years later, also focuses on the pair, but because Cromwell’s larger-than-life personality and politically precarious position makes an enclosed relationship with him problematic, Marvell opens up the space in which the pair operates. He ultimately manipulates the secretary/master structure to enable absence, rather than presence, to legitimize representation. While this positions the secretary as a satellite who is increasingly removed from the master figure, it maintains the pair as a key element in the representational structure. Even though, by the time of “A Poem upon the Death of O. C.,” the poet(secretary’s) access to Cromwell is severely curtailed, it is still crucial to his depiction; he is close to Cromwell, as he “presse[d] about his chamber door,” and he views him in death: “I saw him dead.” Therefore although the pair no longer share close, enclosed space, their dyadic relationship still legitimizes
the secretary’s portrayal of the master. The two may be separated, but there remains a form of seamless understanding that privileges the secretary’s position.

While for Marvell the problem with the traditional secretarial model is the space it delineates, for Milton the problem is the pair itself. In *Paradise Lost*, the containment model of knowledge that relies on a unified, enclosed pair to maintain it is not at risk because it requires private enclosure, which may become problematic, but because it relies on a pair that is constructed as a seamless unity. Adam and Eve are presented as two halves of a whole; they represent the seamless “other self” model that traditionally guarantees the security—i.e., the continued containment—of knowledge. They do not fail at this because they are physically too close, or because the space they inhabit needs manipulating in some way; they fail because they act out the paradox inherent in the ideal secretarial model, which is that the figure of the secretary is at once secondary and equal, completely subsumed in the master and yet autonomous, a figure of agency and judgment. Eve, who is both of and for Adam, represents this paradox, as she is at once buried in the figure of Adam and an individual who exercises choice and will.

As the embodiment of the theoretical model, Adam and Eve would always be in accord, and their accordance, as intended, would guarantee the security of knowledge. Eve, as Adam’s other self, would not make independent decisions he would not make, but would fulfill her function of reflecting Adam. But the underlying tension between figure of Eve as self-less—that is, as a seamless unity with Adam—and as an autonomous self conflicts with the actual practice of the theoretical model. This conflict is not new; it exists in secretarial texts themselves, as they blithely unite contradictory functions in the figure of the secretary. He is to be the master’s “owne penne, his mouth, his eye, his eare,” but he is also to be no mere scribe; he is indeed
valued for his ability to think and to counsel. As I discussed in Chapter 3, a secretary was specifically charged with discretion and agency, particularly at times of peril to the master. But the texts, particularly Day’s, are not concerned with reconciling this impossible ideal with actual practice. Their primary goal is to construct a theoretical figure of the perfect secretary to allay anxiety about those very realities; hence his status as servant and friend, second self and independent agent. But Milton, having established the theoretical model, explores the tensions it creates between two individuals and demonstrates that the theory undoes itself in practice.

The failure of the other-self model is a progression over the course of the poem. Sometimes the ideal relationship does work; at times Adam and Eve are in accord, and Eve fulfills her role in approved secretarial ways. For a long stretch of the poem, from Books 5 to 8, she is peripheral to Adam and Raphael, and Milton mystifies our sense of her presence so that she seems, as a secretary theoretically would, simultaneously there and not-there. But at other times the model does not work, when Eve exerts her individual will and makes choices Adam would not make. At such times the inherent slippage between the other-self model as theorized and as it is enacted becomes apparent, as does the ability of the mediating or imaging figure to exercise forms of authority over the master figure or, in other words, to disrupt the hierarchy it inhabits.

By considering the simultaneously reciprocal and hierarchical nature of the secretarial relationship as enacted by Adam and Eve, I am entering, in a tangential way, the ongoing critical discussion of Eve’s position in the poem, which often focuses on whether she is secondary to Adam, is equal to him, or even achieves a form of supremacy over him. Questions of mutuality, equality, and hierarchy in Adam and Eve’s marriage have been extensively explored from many angles. For Diane McColley, for example, Eve possesses an individual psychology, although the
harmonious creative pair of Adam and Eve is the central configuration. As one of this pair of Edenic artists, Eve enjoys equality in the given hierarchy, and even at times wields artistic supremacy over Adam. Mary Nyquist, on the other hand, considering *Paradise Lost’s* competing versions of Eve’s creation in Book 4 and Book 8, argues that the poem authorizes Adam’s version of Eve’s genesis. As the result of Adam’s desire, and therefore a manifestation of Adam, Eve’s subjectivity must be secondary, and her personhood is part of Adam’s rather than wholly her own. In representing Adam’s subjectivity, Eve is necessarily subjected herself, and normative subjectivity is therefore male. Linda Gregerson, while agreeing with Nyquist that mutuality and reciprocity between the sexes in *Paradise Lost* does not entail equality, sees Eve’s hierarchical placement as exemplary of every Christian’s right relation to God; therefore her very “secondariness” makes her the normative postlapsarian subject: “the subject is now a she.” Considering the disjunctions between Nyquist’s and Gregerson’s arguments, Karen Edwards rejects readings of Eve that regard her as a vehicle for gendered subjectivity. For Edwards, Eve is a site of representational crisis, since she is a fantasy (specifically Adam’s fantasy) and therefore can be neither represented nor embodied.

Other critics have considered the interplay between Adam and Eve’s equality and hierarchy in ways that do not focus on assigning gender to subjectivity. Su Fang Ng, considering the family dynamics in *Paradise Lost*, argues that Milton actually privileges secondariness in the poem. Ng traces a pattern of lesser figures displacing greater ones and suggests that this demonstrates the flexibility of family roles. Because merit determines influence more than hierarchy, for Ng, secondariness in the poem is “reconceived as something good,” and the position of second may actually be better than first. Katherine Eggert has opened up the tendency to draw gendered boundaries around Eve’s subjectivity by tracing the genealogy of the
freedom that Eve seeks—a freedom to which *Paradise Lost* is “deeply committed,” Eggert asserts—from Eve back through republican antimonarchists, to the disgruntled Miltonic ex-husband, to the Lady in “A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle” (“Comus”), to the figure of Elizabeth I. Arguing that “one-to-one alignment, according to sex, between the husbands and wives of the divorce tracts and *Paradise Lost* is not the only way to explore the subjectivity in the poem, and . . . the relation between gender and subjectivity is thus even more complicated than it looks,” Eggert crosses gender lines as she connects Eve’s attributes of queenship, which ultimately form a foundation in Paradise for a republican government, with both male and female forerunners.

In considering Eve as a secretarial figure who is part of a pair directly concerned with knowledge, and specifically the security of knowledge, I am particularly interested in Ng’s and Eggert’s arguments. As I argued in Chapter 1, I too see the secondary position of a secretary as a privileged position. Secretaries, although second in a service relationship, have access to agency that their very secondariness gives them. Their status as invisible secret-keepers, cloaked in their master’s persona, gives them agency and representational authority. Like Eve in Ng’s argument, their position is privileged because of the fact it is secondary, not despite it. Connecting Eve to secretarial function thus gives us another way to see how secondariness works in the poem; through this lens the secretarial theoretical construction of secondariness is the cause of hierarchical undoing, for as an individual Eve does not sustain both secondary status and identification as a master’s other self at the same time. But instead of relapsing into submission, the other self—in this case Eve—achieves its own form of autonomy as it reconfigures the pair’s relationship to knowledge.
Similarly, my argument, like Eggert’s, opens up the gendered aspects of Eve’s status. As a figure responsible for the containment or dispersal of knowledge, Eve occupies the gender-fluid realm of information management. This does not unsex or un-gender her, but it places her secretarial associations in a non-gender-specific sphere. Like Eggert, I see Eve’s forerunners as both masculine and feminine, the secretary and the domestic housewife, whose activities in information management are so similar despite gendered labels. Eve also is framed by seventeenth-century “secretaries,” letter-writing manuals that connect women to secretaryship in fictional personae. Seeing Eve’s activity as secretarial, then, removes the need to rigidly apply gender to it, as it occupies a realm in which both men and women function in the same way.

Some of this gender crossover is related to the fact that Milton’s ideas of marriage, as developed in his divorce tracts *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644) and *Tetrachordon* (1645), are similar to ideas of the secretary/master bond. The marital relationship Milton describes in the divorce tracts emphasizes mental compatibility, conversational exchange, and likeness. The essential bond in marriage seems to be the soul’s “pure and more inbred desire of joyning to it self in conjugall fellowship a fit conversing soul.” In addition to being a “fit conversing soul,” a wife is “an intimate and speaking help,” “a ready and reviving associate,” and the “copartner of a sweet and gladsome society.” Milton’s emphasis on speech—“conversation,” he writes, “is the chiefest and noblest end of marriage”—underlines the essential communicative exchange between the partners, akin to the secretary and master’s sphere of transfer and exchange. What enables and even legitimizes this exchange again parallels the secretarial basis of likeness; in *Tetrachordon*, Milton writes, “... [w]hat is it then must make them one flesh, but likenes, but fitness of mindfulness and disposition, which may breed the Spirit of concord, and union between
them.” Miltonic marriage, then, is a fellowship of mind and spirit, just as is the secretary and master relationship.

This similarity between secretarial formulations and Miltonic marriage is most likely due to the fact that the writers of secretarial texts and Milton both drew on the Renaissance model of male friendship to shape their companionate relationships. Day, for instance, in *The English Secretary*, makes the explicit point that the close bond between secretary and master creates friendship:

> By this measure nowe of Fidelitie, trust or loyall credit of a servant, in which place our Secretorie, as you see standeth bounden by the first degree of his service, it maie secondlie be conjectured, in what respective estate, he ought for the residue of that which to his attendance appertaineth, bee accounted a Friend.

But because the friendship model insisted on equality, both Day and Milton face the same problem: reconciling ideas of equal reciprocity between parties situated in an unequal relationship, either the service hierarchy of employer and employee, or the gender hierarchy of marriage. Day simply tries to erase inequality: “the limits of Friendship (as it might be obiected) are streight,” he writes, “and there can be no Friend where an inequalitie remaineth.” Richard Rambuss notes, “Day thus suggests that the ‘simpathie of affections,’ which exists between his model secretary and master goes a long way in effacing social inequality: the secretary is ‘himselfe in reputation a Gentleman’ if the man he serves is one, Day declares.” Consequently, what seems to be a hierarchy is erased in favor of equality. Milton, however, is faced with putting the ideal, as articulated by Adam: “Among unequals what society / Can sort, what harmony or true delight?” into practice, in which marriage automatically imposes a position of
gendered subordination on Eve (8.383-84). However, her gendered position as a wife does not necessarily gender her relation to knowledge.

The question I am considering, then, is how Adam and Eve work in relation to their responsibilities toward knowledge, and how associating Eve with secretarial ideas allows Milton to reconfigure the containment model for knowledge. As I said, he conducts that reconfiguration gradually. As we read the poem, Adam and Eve try to sustain that model, but aspects of its instability and fragility are suggested as early as Book 4. The model functions best in Books 5 through 8, although it begins to crack at the end of Book 8, and of course it falls apart in Book 9. Its failure means that Adam and Eve must reconfigure their relation to each other and to knowledge, which they do in the remainder of the poem.

One of the most concise expressions of confusion over Eve’s status in relation to Adam comes in Book 5, when Adam calls her “Heaven’s last best gift” (5.19). Because she is the last gift, she seems secondary, but at the same time last can be a position of supremacy, or even necessity. The next word, “best,” seems to affirm an aspect of Eve’s primacy, but Eve’s status as a gift reconnects her with secondary status and objectifies her as a commodity transferred between two men. Eve may be last and best, but as a gift she is definitely for Adam and not, in this line, of him. This line, with its complex reverberations between primacy and subservience, encapsulates much of the slippage between Eve’s privileged status as Adam’s other self, which she is so often called in the poem, and her status as a lesser being, one who serves Adam. But Book 4, when it introduces Adam and Eve, also introduces the slippage between the ideal and the real aspects of the other-self model. Our first view of the pair rapidly moves between likeness and difference. At first, they are alike. They are simply shapes, and they are not differentiated. They are both of noble shape, “erect and tall” (4.285), they are both “clad / In naked majestie”
and they both reflect their source: “in thir looks Divine / The image of thir glorious Maker shon” (4.291-92). The initial emphasis is on what they share and on their likeness. But then we abruptly plunge into difference: “though both / Not equal, as their sex not equal seemd” (4.295-96), and difference is immediately linked with inequality. In line 299—“Hee for God only, shee for God in him”—difference also establishes hierarchy, or a scale of relation to God. As Michael Schoenfeldt has observed, this introduction of Adam and Eve is a “baffling blend of mutuality and hierarchy”; I would add it is also an intriguing blend of likeness and difference. Likeness and difference are also linked with imaging, as both Adam and Eve image God, but they do not, in this first description, accurately image each other.

Book 4 continues to shift our perception of Eve’s status in relation to Adam. After Adam calls her his “sole partner” (4.411) and Eve describes herself as “flesh of thy [Adam’s] flesh” (4.441)—both phrases suggestive of equal mutuality—Eve is the first of the pair to emphasize their difference: “I . . . enjoy / So farr the happier Lot, enjoying thee / Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou / Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find” (4. 445-48). She enjoys a supremacy of happiness because of their difference, calling Adam pre-eminent, and she portrays herself as not like Adam, who has no “like consort.” The likeness Eve established just a few lines earlier, in her statement that she was formed from Adam and for Adam, who is her “head” (4.443)—all images that erase difference—is here contradicted, just as Adam and Eve’s initial likeness was disrupted by “though both / Not equal.” Our sense of likeness, then, is that it is fragile, easily disrupted, and unstable. Likeness, or a sense of unity between Adam and Eve, does not hold, any more than their difference does, as Book 4 continues to shift back and forth between the two.
Interestingly, Eve’s statement of difference immediately precedes, and consequently contextualizes, her narration of her first memories and how she came to accept Adam (4.449-91). It is her story of how Adam did find a “like consort,” or at least his “other half,” as she quotes him as saying (4.488). In this narrative, we are again presented with varying configurations of likeness and difference. Drawn to her reflection, Eve initially mistakes the likeness of her image for difference, that is, for someone else. When she is corrected by the divine voice and led to Adam, whom the voice describes as “he / Whose image thou art” (4.471-2), despite the fact that Eve is Adam’s image she is immediately struck by his difference, thinking him “less faire, / Less winning soft, less amiable milde” (4.478-79). Eve rejects this difference: “back I turned” (4.480). Not until Adam appeals to her on the basis of what they share—their likeness, not their differences—does she yield. He describes her as an aspect of himself: “Whom thou fli’st, of him thou art, / His flesh, his bone” (4.482-83). He makes her a spiritual self-aspect, as well as a physical one; Eve is “part of my Soul,” he says, and his other half (4.487). Eve consequently is a form of an other self, and it is on the basis of this likeness that she reverses her turn and yields to Adam. Likeness here is privileged in several ways: it determines the right relation between Adam and Eve, and it is also established as necessary for Eve’s compliance. Therefore, and as secretarial manuals also would have it, it is necessary for the secure containment of knowledge. At the same time, some problems are implicit in this use of likeness. If Eve is Adam’s other self, why does it take two men to get her to recognize that fact? Why is there an element of coercion in getting the male’s other half to cooperate with him? At the moment of Eve’s concession, she and Adam join hands, but Adam’s hand “seized” Eve’s, and she “yielded,” terms evocative of force (4. 489). Further, Eve may be Adam’s other self, but she dictates the terms of her submission, as Schoenfeldt has pointed out. Therefore the other-self model, from the start,
contains problematic tensions, as its practice reveals the difficulty of holding together likeness and difference. Although the other self seems to be the correct end, it has to be the correct other self, and Eve’s assigned role as Adam’s image(r) and as his partner in their task of guaranteeing the security of knowledge, relies, as does the secretary’s, on her apparent submission to masculine command and the acceptance of hierarchy that exists simultaneously with mutuality and equality.

With Eve’s surrender to Adam, the other-self model seems to be in place and functioning, an impression that continues in Book 4 when Adam and Eve prepare to retire for the night. When Adam proposes rest, Eve’s response evokes the desired unity:

My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst
Unargu’d I obey; so God ordains,
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
Is womans happiest knowledge and her praise.
With thee conversing I forget all time,
All seasons and their change, all please alike. (4.635-40)

In calling Adam her author and disposer, Eve suggests that her will is enveloped in his; he can “author,” or create her and, as her disposer, arrange her action or determine her end. She obeys unquestioningly, and this obedience to the other-self model is here directly linked with knowledge that is contained or bordered; Eve’s expression indicates an awareness of the limits of what she should know. Her speech also emphasizes the pair—“with thee conversing I forget all time”—in a relationship of exchange that places them outside time, suggesting they inhabit their own uniquely private space that no one else may share. This is the other-self model, with hints of secretaryship, in action: one’s will wrapped in another’s, the sharing of private space, a
relationship of spoken exchange, and the connection with knowledge with clearly drawn boundaries. But as he did earlier in Book 4, Milton follows this expression of Adam and Eve’s unity with an example of their difference. In line 657, Eve asks Adam about the stars: “But wherfore all night long shine these, for whom / This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes” (4.657-58). In his lengthy response, Adam demonstrates that he knows things Eve does not know, destabilizing the sense of their unity.

After Book 4’s rapid, unbalancing shifts between Adam and Eve’s likeness and difference, the other-self model seems to settle down and operate fairly well for most of Books 5 through 8. These books recount the angel Raphael’s visit to Adam and Eve, and they focus primarily on informational exchange between Adam and Raphael, with Eve, as a third party, somewhat peripheral but still an active listener. But for a long stretch of the poem Milton fails to be specific about where Eve actually is, and what she hears or does not hear, and this ambiguity creates a sense of Eve as simultaneously there and not there, in a notably secretarial formulation in conjunction with a statesmanlike meeting. Milton establishes this ambiguity gradually. When, in Book 5, Adam and Eve see Raphael approaching, they are very much a pair and seem quite domestic. Adam is immediately concerned with presenting their visitor with appropriate hospitality, and he asks Eve to prepare food and drink: “But goe with speed, / And what thy stores contain, bring forth and poure / Abundance” (5.314-15). Eve, although she corrects Adam as to the nature of their “stores” (5.322), prepares refreshments with exemplary housewifely care. She serves Raphael and Adam—“meanwhile at Table Eve / Ministerd naked, and thir flowing cups / With pleasant liquors crown’d”—but there is no further reference to her until line 50 in Book 7 (5.443-45).
This positioning of Eve appears to place her firmly in a gendered position of housewifery and serving. But Eve’s actions are also evocative of the facilitating role of a secretary. She is notably present at this manly meeting; Robert Fallon, in his description of Milton’s own secretarial duties, points out, “The secretary must be present at meetings and aware of issues to fulfill his function.” Faunt refers to the secretary as “this servaunt” who is charged with “orderinge the papers and clearinge the table.” According to Fallon, Gaulter Frost, a central figure in the Commonwealth’s secretariat to the Council of State, was, in addition to other duties, “general house-keeper and errand boy, charged with providing sufficient chairs, . . . securing doors, and performing numerous other nondescript chores.” In her ministerial duties Eve is also secretarial, as she supports Adam and Raphael’s meeting. Consequently we can recognize such actions as not necessarily determined by gender as housewifely, but as tasks determined by a service role that may be done by either men or women. Strengthening this association of Eve with a secretarial role is Milton’s use of the word “ministered” for Eve’s hospitality, with its political and diplomatic associations that overlay its religious sense.

Although from line 7.50 on it seems clear that Eve has been with the two men all along, listening, her position is confused a bit by the fact that in Book 6 Raphael tells Adam “warn thy weaker,” implying either that Eve is not present or that Raphael is not aware of her presence (6.908-09). But when Adam echoes Raphael at the beginning of Book 7, saying Raphael is sent “to forewarne us timely,” his use of the word “us” implies that Eve is there, as do the lines “He with his consorted Eve / The story heard attentive” (7.73-74; 50-51). So Eve is somewhere, but the question of why Raphael did not seem aware of her presence is not settled until Book 8, when we learn that Eve has been “retir’d in sight” (8.41). Although the phrase itself is ambiguous, it suggests something peripheral about Eve’s position, and it perhaps explains why
Eve was less visible, or less present, to Raphael in Book 6. Yet the line also links perception with such a peripheral position; Eve may be slightly removed from the center, but from that position she exercises perception and personal choice. Adam, by “his count’nance seemd / Entring on studious thoughts abstruse, which Eve / Perceaving where she sat retir’d in sight . . . Rose, and went forth among her Fruits and Flours” (8.39-44, emphasis mine). The poem is quick to say, however, that Eve does not leave because her understanding is weak—“Yet went she not, as not with such discourse / Delighted, or not capable her eare / Of what was high”—but because she prefers to hear things from Adam: “Her Husband the Relater she preferr’d / Before the Angel” (8.48-50; 52-53). This passage, then, in addition to affirming Eve’s intelligence, gives her the ability to choose how she will obtain knowledge. It reaffirms Adam and Eve as a paired site for information delivery, but it also subtly disrupts the pair by giving Eve opportunity to choose a delivery option different from the one Adam participates in. Eve’s departure maintains a sense of Adam’s intellectual superiority, but it also gives her a measure of individual autonomy.

At some unspecified point Eve returns, as we learn in Book 9 when she tells Adam she overheard Raphael’s final warning, “As in a shadie nook I stood behind” (9.277). Again Eve is associated with the periphery, or semi-hidden space. What we as readers took as Eve’s erasure in Book 8—her absence—now turns into a sense of her presence at a critical moment. These shifts between our sense of Eve as there and not there underscore a sense of her as a presence that can, at least temporarily, erase itself, or at least wink in and out of our awareness while maintaining a relationship to the transmission of knowledge.

While in Books 5 through 8 Eve thus maintains the secretarial model—she facilitates, is a silent listener, and occupies peripheral space—toward the end of Book 8 Adam’s construction of the other-self model shows significant cracks. First of all, his account of his first encounter with
Eve differs from her account of their first meeting. Eve appears to Adam like a dream vision; on his first waking glimpse of her he thinks of her as “Such as I saw her in my dream” (8.482). But this first glimpse happens as Eve is led by the divine voice to Adam, and thus Adam enters Eve’s story in its middle, after her encounter with her reflection. Adam describes her as not “uniformd / Of nuptial Sanctitie and marriage Rites: / Grace was in all her steps, Heav’n in her Eye, / In every gesture dignitie and love” (8.486-89). It is not clear whether Adam means love for him or love in a general sense, but in Eve’s story this first, guided approach to Adam was a moment of passive uncertainty; as she says, “What could I doe, / . . . invisibly thus led?” (4.475-76). Adam next quotes himself, repeating the speech of thanks he gave to God for the gift of Eve (8.491-99), and says, “She heard me thus” (8.500). Eve, however, makes no mention of having heard this speech, and the reader is left to wonder if she did hear it and chose to omit it from her story, or if she did not hear it and Adam is imposing an alternative version of events here. Adam does recount Eve’s initial turn away from him, but he puts it down to “the conscience of her worth, / That would be woo’d, and not unsought be won” (8.502-3), while of course Eve bluntly says she turned because she thought Adam “less faire, / Less winning soft, less amiablie milde” than her reflected image (4.477-79). Adam’s gloss thus seems more revealing of his attitudes than of Eve’s motivations, since presumably Eve’s account more accurately portrays her state of mind. We must also recall that Eve told her story to Adam in Book 4; he knows her version, so here he either willfully ignores it or absent-mindedly forgets to make any allowance for it in his version of events.

Adam’s description of this meeting follows his account of how he longed for a companion, an equal for “social communication” (8.429). When he thanks God for giving him this “fairest” gift, “my Self / Before me” (8.495-96), he seems to have received a simulacrum
that is in some way equal to him. But this sense of Eve’s likeness to Adam is immediately undermined by the narrative differences in Adam’s story, which indicate not only Adam and Eve’s ability to individually shape narrative, but their different perceptions of the same events. Perception and narration thus become individual capabilities, independent of a determinative other; differences become defining characteristics, in opposition to likeness, despite Adam’s insistence that Eve is his other self.

When the dazzled Adam refers to Eve as “my Self before me,” he also seems to invert the hierarchy of “Hee for God only, shee for God in him” (4.299). If Eve is “before” Adam, her position suggests precedence, and Adam does in fact continue to elevate Eve. Although he says he understands her natural inferiority—“For well I understand in the prime end / Of Nature her th’inferiour”—at the same time he cannot help feeling that she is better: “yet when I approach / Her loveliness, so absolute she seems / And in her self compleat, so well to k / Now / What she wills to do or say, / Seems wisest, virtousest, discreetest, best” (8. 540-41; 546-550). He also links this perceived interiority and autonomy with knowledge:

All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her  
Looses discount’nanc’t, and like folly shewes:  
Authority and Reason on her waite,  
As one intended first, not after made  
Occasionally . . . (8.551-56)

Adam links Eve with changes in knowledge; somehow her mere presence initiates transformation. Higher knowledge falls, wisdom shows like folly, authority and reason wait on Eve as if she has right of first place. For Adam, Eve is an agent of inversion and altered
perception—knowledge is degraded and wisdom “shows” like folly, hinting that it is the
onlooker who suddenly mis-sees. Raphael corrects Adam, pointing out his error and
admonishing him not to attribute “overmuch to things / Less excellent” (8.565-66). But in
another sense Adam is right. Eve embodies two concepts of personhood; as Adam’s re-formed
matter she shares an identification with him and may be seen as subsumed in him, but she is also
a being defined by difference, an autonomous individual. Eve has fluid boundaries; at times she
is distinctly bordered, but at other times she merges with Adam. In this instance, however, Adam
formulates a bordered concept of Eve that elevates her over him. Furthermore, Eve does have the
ability to re-form knowledge, and she will exercise that ability in Book 9.

The fact that Adam is confused—and, if we believe Raphael, in error—about Eve’s status
and capabilities is evidence of the weakness of the other-self model. It is easy to think that Eve is
the weak link in the model’s failure, that her role is to self-determine her position in relation to a
stable Adam at all times, and that her failure to do so leads to the model’s breakdown. But here
we see that both partners in the pair suffer from the unsustainability of the model. In fact, Adam
is the first to show the pressures of this unsustainability, and he is the first to articulate them. His
words clearly set up the events of Book 9, when he refrains from exercising aggressive authority
over Eve and allows her to enact her idea of separation, but they also indicate that flaws in the
other-self model affect both members of the pair. Both consequently contribute to the model’s
failure, but only because the model is unsustainable to begin with.

This sense of the weakness of the paired model contributes to the Fall’s inevitability in
Book 9, when the separation of Adam and Eve, or the disruption of the pair, results in the
diffusion of what is supposed to be contained knowledge. Eve is the agent of this
reconfiguration, which is destructive but also transformative; consequently the resulting
transformation may be linked to a form of secretarial agency. Secretaries, although ideally formulated to maintain enclosed structures of information retention and circulation, may always be agents of choice, with the ability to disrupt those structures. They particularly may exercise choice in relation to secrecy and publication, the two expressions of the enclosed model, and secrecy or publication is the exact choice Eve faces immediately after eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The Fall and its aftermath, then, become a time of redefinition of the way knowledge moves around, and accompanying this change is a change in the relationship of the individual to the pair. For both Adam and Eve, the other-self model fails, but it fails differently for each. Eve falls because she breaks out of the model and asserts individual choice; Adam falls because he clings to the model and takes Eve’s misstep on himself.

Book 9 begins its progression to the Fall by remapping the geography of the pair and separating them. The initiating agent of this separation is Eve, who proposes that separation would help them keep up with their gardening labors; “Thou therefore now advise / Or hear what to my minde first thoughts present, / Let us divide our labours,” she suggests to Adam (9.213-14). The phrase “first thoughts” indicates Eve’s initiation of thought as well as action, doubly indicating that the other-self model is under pressure. Adam, however, seeks to preserve the pair, pointing out that God made them “to delight,” and “delight to Reason joyn’d. / These paths and Bowers doubt not but our joynt hands / Will keep from Wilderness with ease” (9.242-45). His repetition of “joyn’d” and “joynt”—words derived from “conjugal”—serves as a counterpoint to Eve’s suggestion of separation, framing the conflict between the two. When Eve persists, she suggests that independence and the other-self model may be equally secure: “Let us not then suspect our happie State / Left so imperfect by the Maker wise, / As not secure to single or combin’d,” in an echo of previous constructions that tried to reconcile individuality with the
other-self model (9.337-39). Adam maintains the superiority of the paired model, however, although recognizing that it is, paradoxically, a function of individual will and choice: “But if thou think, trial unsought may finde / Us both securer than thus warnd thou seemst, / Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more” (9.370-72).

Such tension between maintaining the structures of containment and dismantling them continues in Satan’s temptation of Eve. Part of Satan’s lure is the prospect of opening up knowledge; he asks Eve, “Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast / Is open?” and also argues, “[I]f they all things, who enclos’d / Knowledge of Good and Evil in this tree, / That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains / Wisdom without their leave?” (9.691-92; 722-25). Opening up the model seems to be part of Eve’s purpose, even though that purpose is self-deceptive; after she eats the fruit, she pledges that the tree’s fruit shall be “offer’d free to all,” and she thanks experience, saying, “thou op’nst wisdom’s way, / And giv’st access” (9.802; 809-10).

Eve’s action effectively destroys the containment model of knowledge and renders the other-self model inoperative. When Eve eats the fruit, she, presumably, is acting in a way Adam would not act, and therefore is no longer his other self. This split is reflected in Eve’s first speech after her act, in which she considers choosing between secrecy and publication (that is, telling Adam), and the implications of her choice for her relationship with Adam. She considers keeping her new-found knowledge secret, both to God—“And I perhaps am secret; Heav’n is high, / High and remote to see from thence distinct / Each thing on Earth”—and to Adam—“shall I to [Adam] make known / As yet my change?” (9.811-13; 816-17). Concealment of her act from Adam would enable her to determine for herself how she could appear to him:

But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appeer? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with mee, or rather not,
But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power
Without Copartner? (9.816-21)

Withholding her experience would, she thinks, rectify her perceived lack: “so as to add what wants / In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love, / And render me more equal, and perhaps, / . . . somtime / Superior” (9.821-25). Eve’s impulse to maintain secrecy, always a mandate for a secretary, is now a wrongful impulse; without the construction of the pair, secrecy and knowledge serve personal gain, which threatens to invert proper hierarchy. Eve’s assumption that she even could keep her act secret from Adam and that she could appear to him in a different “sort” from what has become her new reality further indicates the erasure of the other-self model, in which the notion of disguise for one of the participants is impossible. Further, Eve’s consideration of a possible “sort” suggests she entertains the possibility that she may choose from several alternate identities, in a multiplicity that shatters notions of a stable other self that exists in relation to another. Eve’s thoughts emphasize the separation that has now occurred and the inoperability of the other-self model once knowledge is dispersed.

Eve chooses to share her experience with Adam, because after she contemplates keeping it from him in an effort to be “more equal,” she is alarmed by the thought that she could die and then Adam would wed another Eve: “but what if God hath seen, / And Death ensue? then I shall be no more, / And Adam wedded to another Eve, / Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct; / A death to think” (9.826-30). The fact that Eve can now conceive of being copied—an ironic fear for a secretary—illustrates the infeasibility of the other-self model at this point. In envisioning a
return to that model, Eve assumes she would be the one to be copied, forgetting that “Eve” is actually a copy of Adam. This has the simultaneous effect of suggesting “Eve,” the original and her potential copies, are discrete entities, and revealing that the supposed other self is its own illusion. If substitution is possible, then there is no definitive other self, just the one self that is the source of the fantasy of a seamless duplicative other.

Adam, however, until he too tastes the fruit does not participate in Eve’s new ways of thinking. He himself is still operating in the other-self model and therefore considers Eve’s action to be his action even before he eats the fruit: “mee with thee hath ruined,” he thinks to himself upon hearing what Eve has done, unable to contemplate a life without her (9.906). But because the other-self model no longer has any utility, Adam’s participation in it is actually wrong. To fulfill his obedience to God, Adam must choose not to act with Eve, and he must reject the other-self model. The fact that he does not, and does not even consider it, exposes some of the danger inherent in the model, the maintenance of which now threatens divine intention. These dangers are again emphasized when Adam articulates his position to Eve. Saying he has fixed his lot with hers, and will die if need be, he continues,

So forcible within my heart I feel
The Bond of Nature draw me to my owne,
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine,
Our State cannot be severd, we are one,
One Flesh; to loose thee were to loose my self. (9.955-59)

The other-self model has led to Adam’s over-identification with Eve; here Adam’s identity seems to be subsumed in hers in an inversion of the secretary-master relationship. Adam is “overturned,” and abdicates even his ownership of Eve to her. Shoaf has suggested that Eve’s
greatest defect is her confusion with Adam, that she is overly “collateral” and insufficiently apart. This cuts both ways, however; Adam here has an opportunity to maintain God’s mandate, but fails because he cannot separate from Eve and assumes that her action is his action. Indeed, in Adam’s view, actually eating the fruit is unnecessary to cause his fall. This sense of Adam’s over-identification with Eve comes again when Eve invites him to eat, saying, “on my experience, Adam, freely taste,” and Adam accepts her offer to remake him in her new image.

Even God endorses discarding the other-self model. In Book 10, God asks Adam, “Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey / Before his voice?” (10.145-46). God reproaches Adam for eating the fruit and reiterates the gender hierarchy, saying Eve was “unseemly to beare rule, which was thy part / And person, had’st thou known thy self aright” (10.155-56). Adam’s failing was not to know Eve as separate from himself, and God’s sternness here suggests Adam was in error even in his prelapsarian relationship with Eve, when he so freely considered her his other self. Consequently, the paired configuration of the other-self model was problematic all along, the inevitable cause of the failure to contain knowledge.

Because Paradise Lost is a story of redemption after error, the destruction of the other-self model in the Fall creates the opportunity for Adam and Eve to redefine their relationship to each other and to God, and to initiate new modes of human behavior, such as repentance, humility, and forgiveness. Significantly, Eve is the first to seize the opportunity for transformation in Book 10, when she begs Adam’s forgiveness and moves him to abandon his anger and bitterness and forgive her, in the first step toward accepting their new condition. Eve, with her secretarial associations, thus becomes the figure who effects and guides events, assuming a role that inflects narrative. Eve is the appropriate figure to take on this role, because
the poem has already established her transformational ability that seems to be a form of innate knowledge. In Book 5, when she prepares for Raphael’s visit, she not only gathers fruits but transforms her organic materials in various ways; she “crushes” the grapes, she “tempers” creams from kernels, and she “strews” the ground with fragrant blossoms (5.343-49). She acts upon these items, changing their constituency and that of the environment, using knowledge she apparently simply has, that no one has taught her or demonstrated for her. Similarly, in Book 8, when Eve leaves Raphael and Adam to walk among her fruits and flowers and “visit how they prosper’d,” her presence changes their condition; “bud and bloom . . . at her coming sprung / And toucht by her fair tendance gladlier grew” (8.44; 45-47). Her touch evokes change and growth, just as later she will help Adam grow emotionally into human maturity. Again, this quality in Eve is innate; it seems her very nature is transformational. This association continues in Book 9, when Eve observes to Adam that despite their efforts to “lop, . . . prune, or prop, or bind,” the garden burgeons with “wanton growth” (9.210; 211). Eve is the one who catalogs the forms their efforts take, and she exhibits an understanding of (and ability to describe) what they do and its effects on the materials at hand. Once again, her knowledge is innate and transformational.

In contrast to such natural and organic associations with knowledge is the model of knowledge predominately associated with Adam, in which he participates in a top-down progression of knowledge transfer. Typically, God directs an angel to visit Adam and tell him things. In Book 5, God sends Raphael to warn Adam, and during his lengthy conversation with Raphael in Books 5 through 8, Adam absorbs a lot of information about the nature of angels, the war in heaven and the creation of the world. Adam is an active learner, however; he eagerly questions Raphael and thus participates to an extent in forming his own curriculum. In Books 11
and 12 Adam is again the receiving “vessel” for knowledge, when God sends the angel Michael to “reveale / To Adam what shall come in future dayes” (11.113-14). Adam soaks up the information, and finally says, “Greatly instructed I shall hence depart / Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill / Of knowledge, what this vessel can containe” (12.557-60). The implication from “what this vessel can containe” is that there is a limit to Adam’s capacity for knowledge, an implication reinforced by Adam’s next line: “Beyond which it was my folly to aspire” (12.561). There is also a limit to what Adam should “aspire” to know. For both Eve and Adam, knowledge is associated with limits. Eve tells Adam, “God is thy Law, thou mine; to know no more / Is womans happiest knowledge . . .” (4.637-38). “To know no more” seems also to be man’s happiest lot; just as Adam tells Raphael that to know “that which before us lies in daily life,” and not more, is “the prime Wisdom,” he also tells Michael it was his folly to aspire to know more that he can properly “containe” (8.194). Adam thus participates in a reconstruction of sorts of the containment model of knowledge, and is directed to include Eve; Michael tells him, “. . . thou at season fit / Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard” (12.598-99). But the reassertion of containment exists in tension with Eve’s innate forms of knowledge, which are also associated with abundance—with unstinting supplies of food and the “wanton growth” of nature. Because Adam’s acquired knowledge follows an academic “deposit” model and is not transformative in the ways Eve’s knowledge can be, Adam may be seen as indicative of a masculine style of learning, against Eve’s more intuitive style. But Eve’s transformative style is also linked to secretaryship in a way that Adam’s, although his involves transfer, is not.

Certainly Eve’s transformational abilities consistently are linked to traditionally feminine domestic activities: food preparation, gardening, and tending a nursery, with the latter’s
suggestion of child rearing as well as plant tending. In Book 9 her transformation of the containment model of knowledge, through her act of eating the fruit, is also domestic, given the connections between secretarial-like information management and the feminine domestic realm. These connections had actually become more overt by the mid- to late seventeenth century. As I discussed in Chapter 1, information management, described in notably secretarial terms in late sixteenth-century domestic manuals, was always part of housewifely duties; however, this participation was masked under gendered labels—men were secretaries and women were housewives. But by the mid-seventeenth century, women were increasingly associated with the term “secretary,” a usage that destabilized the earlier gender distinction. As I mentioned earlier, du Bosque’s *The Secretary of Ladies* and Care’s *The Female Secretary* directly connected women to ideas of secretaryship, as “secretaries,” or collections of letters, became accessories to female behavior. These books were explicitly connected to the tradition of manuals written for men. Care, for instance, suggests that a reader may suspect him of plagiarizing Loveday and Balzac, two authors of earlier manuals, at once identifying his text with the generic tradition while asserting his authorship (“The Preface”). The *Secretary of Ladies* also links its contents to the masculine tradition, in the anonymous prefatory “Advertisement to the Reader, by a friend of the Collector.” It states, “Be not astonished to see this collection come out in print, hee that hath tane the paines, to make it had reason to thinke that after you had read the letters of so many ingenious men, you would take it well to see these offers of women.” The tradition of men’s letters is here seen as enabling women’s epistolary efforts, while the latter are presented as a natural successor to the former. Women therefore become included in the secretary tradition, where the word “secretary” denotes the text itself as well as the secretarial person. Du Bosque himself writes, in “The Authors Epistle to Madam de Pisieux,” “Refuse not your favor to these
 faire unknowne, which enter not into the world, but to vindicate the honour of dames, and to make it appeare that Letters are not the peculiar heritage of one sexe; and that men are out, when they vant themselves sole Monarchs in the Empire of the sciences,” thus widening the embrace of secretaryship, or letter writing, to include women.33

_The Secretary of Ladies_ was the first manual to appear that was intended for the use of women. On one hand a letter-writing manual that presents its contents as models to be imitated, it is also a conduct book that advocates specific attitudes and behaviors, as encoded in its series of friendship letters exchanged between two aristocratic women after one of them retires from the court to the country.34 _The Female Secretary_, on the other hand, is clearly framed as a helpful manual.35 The subhead on the title page states, “With Plain, yet more Exact and Pertinent Rules and Instructions for the Indicting and Directing Letters in general, than any Extant. By Henry Care, Translator of _Female Pre-Eminence._” This description echoes Day’s _The English Secretary_, which states, “The English Secretary. Or, plaine and direct Method, for the enditing of all manner of Epistles or Letters, as well Familiar as others: distinguished by their diversities under their several titles, The like whereof hath never hitherto beeene published.” The two employ the common marketing strategy of claiming to be both plain and exact, as well as superior to existing manuals; Care’s use of this tactic also links his manual to the tradition of manuals written for men, another extension of the genre to females. In addition, he bases his authority for his authorship on the fact that he has already published (albeit as the translator) a book about women, suggesting he has expertise in books relevant to a female audience.36 It is interesting here that Care bases his authority for writing about women in connection with ideas of secretaryship not from any experience himself as a letter writer, grammarian, or secretary, but from the fact that he knows about women, or at least feminine topics. This approach shapes the
Both texts raise questions concerning who, or what, is the female secretary (or the secretary of ladies), and they suggest several ideas circulating in conjunction with uses of the word “secretary” in connection with women. First of all, a secretary is the book itself; letter-writing manuals were commonly titled “secretary,” such as Day’s *The English Secretary* or Jean Puget de la Serre’s *The Secretary in Fashion* (1638). In these titles, as in *The Female Secretary* and *The Secretary of Ladies*, the secretary is at once the manual and the person who might perform letter-writing functions. As a secretary, the book maintains ideas of secretarial authority screened by an ostensibly secondary role; as it directs women in what to write and how to write, it both forms and meets correspondence needs of its readers. In Care and du Bosque’s manuals, the book also becomes specifically female while it remains part of its masculine generic tradition.

Second, Care and du Bosque, since they act as collectors and/or authors, are themselves acting as secretaries, or as mechanisms for transfer whose function they tend to erase. Both pose as interfaces between originating women writers and their female audience. Care underlines this position when he claims to have “consulted the best authors” and when he suggests in the preface, “How doth anybody know, but that he [Care, the author] writ it at the Command of a Mistress, who had resolved to own it herself; till on a Second reading she grew ashamed on’t.” This pose that the hidden author behind the letters might have been a woman who disowned her authorship recalls Beale’s anxiety in his 1592 treatise about the ways in which authorship and ownership can be passed back and forth between a principal and a secretary. Both Care and du Bosque blur the origins of their material; ownership here is undeterminable. Further, if each is
the secretary of his title, gender boundaries dissolve, so they both may be seen as writing as women for women. This puts them in the position of acting simultaneously as secretaries for their obscure originators and for the women who use the book, since they write letters for the latter. They self-erase as they hide behind a stance as merely a collector or behind imaginary personas designated by initials; consequently they court an identity as simultaneously present and absent.

Third, the letters themselves are secretaries; that is, they are sites of transfer that create presence out of absence. Care writes that letters are “the remedie of absence” and that they “unlock our breasts with silence, and Let in our friends though never so remote unto our bosom.”37 He presents the standard conceit that writing is a substitute for speaking: “. . . everything that can be discoursed of, or spoken to a friend present, may . . . be written to him in his absence.”38 This construction erases a letter’s separate existence; it is simply another form of speech. But Care then goes on to endow a letter with its own presence:

Some have advised strongly to imagine the Person we write to, present; and then to set down in our Letter what we would say to him if he were by; . . . Yet I conceive there cannot but be expected much more exactness in a Letter where the writers genius is supposed to have been assisted with leisure, and the examen of his eyes, than in a transient verbal discourse . . . .39

In other words, epistolary expression should be better than speech. This difference gives the letter its own existence and construes it as a vehicle which, like a secretary, is somehow there and yet not there. Finally, a reader or user of the manual may function as her own secretary; in using the models for her own correspondence, she transfers an originating voice to another person. Her appropriation of the original as her own voice signifies the ability of the transferring
figure to usurp the authority of a master figure; yet it is also an act of self-erasure, as it is not her voice that circulates, but another’s.

These books overtly associate women with secretarial practice, while at the same time they break down the other-self model and expand ideas of secretaryship. Particularly in *The Female Secretary*, a secretarial position may be one among many positions in a profusion of layered voices and transitional mechanisms. However, these books also maintain the secretarial screen, or cover. The secretarial position was always covered, whether by a master or a husband; in these texts it also may be covered through anonymity, imaginary personas, or by the compiler/author of the text. When Care writes, “How doth anybody know, but that he [Care, the author] writ it at the Command of a Mistress, who had resolved to own it herself; till on a Second reading she grew ashamed on’t,” he suggests that he is covering a possible mistress-author who no longer wishes to be associated with the work. His coy inquiry, “How doth anybody know?” if this is the case, not only titillates but opens up the realm of possibilities for the origins of his secretarial text. The secretarial position, in Care’s book, no longer guarantees the authenticity of a single originating voice; it obscures its origins behind multiple possibilities that diffuse but maintain secretarial cover.

Eve, then, in her association with secretarial practice and her relation to knowledge, is not transgressively entering a male world of activity but is operating in a feminine domestic world, which now more openly includes such practice. But Eve goes beyond the model that Care presents. While Care’s authorial layerings maintain cover for the secretarial position, when Eve transforms knowledge she uncovers the secretarial other self. As in Care, this uncovering is connected to shame and misbehavior. It becomes necessary for Care to cover for his possible lady author because, “on a Second reading she grew ashamed on’t”; when Adam and Eve are
uncovered to each other—that is, feel they are naked—they too are ashamed, and don fig leaves
in an attempt “to hide / Their guilt and dreaded shame” (9.1113-14). Their fall also uncovers
them to God, who in turn re-covers them when he clothes them (10.216-17). These coverings no
longer maintain the submerged other-self position, however; rather, they become emblematic of
its destruction.

Adam articulates the connection between concealment and the other-self model when he
finally abandons the latter. When asked by God if he has eaten the forbidden fruit, Adam
sketches out the choice he faces: “either to undergoe / My self the total Crime, or to accuse / My
other self, the partner of my life; / Whose failing . . . / I should conceal, and not expose to blame” (10.126-30). As Adam recognizes, if Eve is his other self, he should conceal her; like Care, he
should cover her shame. But Adam does not maintain the other-self model. Instead, Eve becomes
“this Woman,” a generic female who gave him the apple (10.137). Significantly, Adam’s
reference to Eve as his other self in line 10.127 marks the last time he uses the term “other self”
for her; because he decides to uncover her, the model is gone.

The uncovered Eve, however, is the one to instigate change, and thus begins her
association with narrative direction. At first Adam would choose to abandon their relationship.
He resorts to vindictive against Eve; she becomes “thou Serpent,” and “this fair defect / Of
Nature” (10.867; 891-92). Adam wishes to eliminate women, wondering why God did not “find
some other way to generate / Mankind?” (10.894-95). Eve, however, in keeping with her
transformational nature, seeks to redefine their relationship. In her supplication for Adam’s
forgiveness, she pleads, “Between us two let there be peace, both joyning, / As joyn’d in
injuries,” a suggestion of the joining of two individuals, not the re-creation of one by another
(10.924-25). She asks Adam to direct his anger toward the serpent, not her, and takes all the
blame for the Fall on herself (10.926-36). In offering a new model for their relationship, Eve asks Adam to change the way he thinks about things, and he does so: “his anger all he lost,” and he and Eve reconcile (10.945).41

Eve continues to suggest various narratives, that is, different outcomes that could replace their situation. She suggests she and Adam die: “Let us seek Death, . . . or supply / With our own hands his Office on our selves,” as this would prevent their founding a “woful Race” (10.1001-02; 984). Adam, however, persuades her otherwise, and Eve is increasingly associated with a futurity that depends on her generative power. Adam reminds her, “thy Seed shall bruise / The Serpents head,” and calls her “Mother of all mankind, / Mother of all things living, since by thee / Man is to live” (10.1031-32; 11.158-61). The angel Michael, too, reminds Adam of “[t]he great deliverance by her Seed to come / (For by the Womans seed) on all Mankind,” and Eve herself finally acknowledges, “By mee the Promis’d Seed shall all restore” (12.600-01; 623).

This emphasis on the future is reflected in Michael’s long exposition of history in Books 11 and 12. At the end of this, the nature of paradise itself is transformed to a paradise within; Michael tells Adam he shall possess “a paradise within thee, happier farr” (12.587). The suggestion is that Adam, in a process begun by Eve, must find new attitudes and ways of behaving that were not necessary in the physical paradise; now he must build a psychological paradise, the paradise within. Once again, Adam is encouraged to change and approach life differently. Eve too is implicated in this re-creation of Adam. Michael puts her to sleep before he begins his historical narrative in Book 11 and tells Adam, “let Eve . . . / Here sleep below while thou to foresight wak’st, / As once thou slepstst, while Shee to life was formd” (11.367-69). Because this scenario so neatly reenacts Eve’s creation, there is a hint here that the sleeping Eve, as Adam was for her, is instrumental in Adam’s new awakening, or rebirth.42 Cumulatively, then,
in Books 10, 11, and 12, Eve, God, and God’s agent Michael are intent on transforming or reshaping Adam. Eve not only begins this process in Book 10, when she moves him to forgive her, but continues to be a part of it.

Eve’s connection to transformation and progress, including narrative progress, is an essential part of the conclusion of *Paradise Lost*. Milton also maintains her connection with knowledge, positioning Eve at the end as an authoritative figure of knowing. Eve’s is the final speech in the poem, and the first line of her speech to Adam is, “Whence thou returnst, and whither wentst, I know” (12.610, emphasis mine). She identifies the source of her knowledge as God—“For God is also in sleep, and Dreams advise”—but her knowledge encompasses Adam’s entire emotional journey since Book 9 as well as his physical journey with Michael (12.611). Eve knows where Adam went and where he returns from, and this line establishes her as the authority on Adam, in a reconfiguration of her role as Adam’s arbiter. She no longer is Adam’s other self, but she is cognizant of Adam in a way that reestablishes her legitimacy as an interface between Adam and the world. In fulfillment of this function, she tells Adam what to do, directing his entry into the world as well as defining her relationship to him:

... but now lead on;

In mee is no delay; with thee to goe,

Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,

Is to go hence unwilling; (12.614-17)

Eve also becomes the narrator of their existence up to this point. Just as in her first speech in Book 4, when she narrated Adam back to himself, in her last speech she summarizes their history and gives it back to Adam:

... thou to mee
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my wilful crime art banisht hence,
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence; though all by mee is lost,
Such favour I unworthie am voutsaft,
By mee the Promis’d Seed shall all restore. (12.617-23)

Beginning with the fact and nature of their love, then reminding us of Eve’s fall, and finally
touching on the promise of the future, these lines compress *Paradise Lost* into a reiteration of
Adam’s experience, spoken for Adam. Eve thus retains a secretarial function for Adam while
gaining association with narrative authority, an authority tacitly endorsed by Adam’s silence.
While Eve and Adam still comprise a representational pair, Eve is no longer Adam’s other self;
she speaks from a different place of knowledge of Adam, a form of knowledge connected to
movement (“whence thou returnst, and whither wentst”) rather than static enclosure. The
secretarial figure is consequently unmoored from specific space but retains representational and
narrative agency. This new configuration finds expression in the poem’s final lines; Eve and
Adam leave the garden hand in hand, but their way is solitary, in a suggestion of both individual
solitude and the solitude of the paired couple, within which an autonomous individual freely
functions.

In her solicitude for Adam after the Fall, and in the fact that she essentially takes charge
of Adam at the end of the poem, directing him out of the garden, Eve demonstrates the
transformational and discretionary function of the secretary that is called into play when the
master is in peril. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Day specifically identifies times of peril to the
master as times for the secretary to exercise choice, or his “discretion,” as to how he can best
enact his role. In other words, times of peril are times of redefinition, but the secretary, not the master, is the arbiter of that redefinition. Eve, although no longer Adam’s other self, redefines their relationship, and, as Eggert says, “ushers herself and her spouse out of the depths of despair into the wide world.” Eve thus becomes the figure who directs narrative, and through Eve this narrative authority is connected to secretarial function. She also chooses to re-cover her new authority; by calling on Adam to “lead on,” Eve repositions him as the master figure and herself as the one who follows. In that way, her authority, although its source is in her transformational power, once again seems to be located in Adam.

Secretaries always have the power to write, rewrite, or manipulate representations of the master. Secretarial texts attempt to suppress this power with the other-self model, devised to ensure that the secretary will not transgress his given boundaries. But Eve steps over secretarial boundaries when she disobeys the order of authority, which also seeks to control the availability of knowledge. In opening up the containment model and dispersing knowledge, Eve’s sin is the secretarial sin that texts such as Day’s guard against. Eve’s real sin is not dispersing knowledge, however, but exposing the fragility of the established hierarchy. Her act reveals it as unable to control her transformative powers and as not innately powerful, but propped up by a system of suppression of individual ability. Eve’s disruptive challenge to this system demonstrates the ability of an individual to challenge existing power structures and to play a part in re-ordering them. For Eve, self-determination seems not to matter as much as the opportunity to use her natural abilities to transform her materials, be they food, plants, or Adam. Only when she is allowed to do so is order restored. As Ng has argued, at the end of the poem Eve articulates the desire for political renewal and change, and Eve is also the agent of that renewal. Her words, “By
mee the Promis’d Seed shall all restore,” promise a public renewal (“all restore”) and, as Ng writes, a “godly reordering of the civic space.”

For Eve to bring about this renewal, however, both the other-self configuration that is part of the containment model of knowledge, and the containment model itself, have to fail. These mechanisms overly consolidate knowledge into too few sources and limit Eve’s ability to act; only when Eve is freer to exercise her transformational ability can civic harmony be achieved. Therefore the other-self model and the containment model are dismantled, so that individual agency and generative capability may more fully operate. For Milton, these containment structures become organically unfeasible; the other-self model fails because of its inherent flaws, and once it fails the larger containment model can no longer exist. The process is inevitable, natural, and necessary.

Eve’s individual authority that emerges in *Paradise Lost* is directly linked to secretarial constructions, to the idea that a person who has a specific intermediary role in relation to knowledge can be designated another’s other self and become an invisible, cloaked figure who yet has the ability to transform material. Eve, as such a figure, takes on a role increasingly associated with women, and therefore she embodies the feminine agency that becomes part of the social determination of information circulation, as well as the narrative authority that derives from that determination. This narrative voice discards its secretarial link to specific and enclosed space, just as Eve at the end of *Paradise Lost* is nowhere, precisely; she has been expelled from the garden but has not yet arrived anywhere else. Her final spatial association is with the entire world—“the World was all before them”—instead of the secretarial closet (12.646). But her influence on narrative retains secretarial coverage. Eve re-covers herself when she directs Adam to lead on and positions herself as a follower. But this act of coverage no longer includes
absorption into a master figure. Instead, because Eve directs her own position, it becomes a strategy to enable her narrative agency to function more efficiently in the context of social structures that still prevail. This newly invisible voice, then, directs its own authority, rather than submerging it in another’s. Consequently, the failure of the other-self model paves the way for the emergence of a covered voice that speaks with self-directed narrative agency; that is, operates independently of another person or a specific place. This voice may be female or male, and while it may freely mediate narrative, it no longer guarantees it, making it a suitable vehicle for novelistic narrative voices that develop for the fictional novel in the eighteenth century.
Notes


3 Fallon 179.

4 Jacques du Bosque, The Secretary of Ladies, Or A new collection of letters and answers composed by Moderne Ladies and Gentlewomen, Collected by Mr Du Bosque, trans. I. H. (Jerome Hainhofer) (London, 1638); Henry Care, The Female Secretary, or, Choice New Letters wherein each degree of Women may be accommodated with Variety of Presidents for the expressing themselves aptly and handsomly on any Occasion proper to their sex. (London: Printed by Thomas Ratcliffe and Mary Daniel, for Henry Million, 1671).


10 Gregerson 161.

11 Faunt 501.

12 McColley 112, 102.

13 Nyquist 99; Gregerson 153, 197.


Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 310-338. Schoenfeldt argues that Eve exercises a form of “empowering submission” similar to that delineated in Renaissance conduct manuals such as Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier*, and he suggests that apparent submission actually enables forms of agency and power.

16 Eggert 180.

17 Eggert 193, 194.


22 Day 111.

23 Day 111.


25 See Nyquist 106 for a discussion of Eve’s status as a gift between men.

26 Schoenfeldt 320.

27 Schoenfeldt 321.

28 Fallon 179.
29 Faunt 502.
30 Fallon 172-73.
31 Shoaf 134.
32 Robert Loveday was the author of *Loveday's letters domestick and forrein. To several persons, occasionally distributed in subjects philosophicall, historicall & moral*, (London, 1659); Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac was the author of *New Epistles of Monsieur de Balzac*, trans. sir Richard Baker (1637).
33 du Bosque A5.
35 *The Female Secretary* consists of two parts: exemplary letters and a section of instruction on letter writing. There are eighty-four model letters, which fall into the general categories of friendship, courtship, and family matters. See Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, “‘Proper to their Sex’: Letter-Writing Instruction and Epistolary Model Dialogues in Henry Care’s *The Female Secretary*,” *Instructional Writing in English*, eds. Matti Peikola, Janne Skaffari, and Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2009) 125-140.
37 Care 136-137.
38 Care 138.
39 Care 139.
That notions of secretaryship were also including women is also borne out by Hannah Woolley’s claim that she was a secretary to her employer; see Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewoman’s Companion* (London, 1673) 8. It is also possible that Milton’s daughters at times served as his amanuenses. See Lewalski 407-408.

In her action, as Schoenfeldt has written, Eve also generates social behavior, as she authors “the social application of supplicatory posture,” another effect of her transformational and generative quality. See Schoenfeldt 133.

Eggert makes the same point, suggesting, “Increasingly, as the poem moves to its end, it seems that . . . Eve’s mind has actually brought Adam into existence . . . .” Eggert too associates Eve with psychological as well as physical progress: “What there is of outward- and onward-directed human motion in the poem is entirely at Eve’s instigation—not only the human fall into sin, but also their apprehension of choice, possibility, and even joy.” See Eggert 195.

Eggert 200.

Ng 167.
Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have shown how useful the secretarial model of the late sixteenth century is in literary works by Mary Sidney Herbert, Andrew Marvell, and John Milton. For these writers, the model proves flexible and adaptable as they formulate their ideas of authorship and the relation of the individual to larger social and political structures. By way of conclusion, I consider here how the model continues to be useful in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and I propose that the secretarial model contributes to the development of third-party narration in the early novel. Novelistic narration, of course, is the transfer of information by an intermediary voice that intervenes between reader and events in the story, so its connection with secretaryship is natural; indeed, scholars have recognized seventeenth-century letter-writing manuals and conduct books as forerunners of the novel.¹ It is my contention, however, that we can look further back, to late sixteenth-century ideas of secretaryship, for specific concepts that inform early novelistic narrative.

The epistolary novel, a popular early form of the novel, is a good place to start evaluating how secretarial ideas persist in literary forms. Because these novels are written as a series of letters, they are a natural fit with secretarial function. Furthermore, their secretarial lineage is easy to draw, as they are close to letter-writing manuals and seventeenth-century “secretaries” themselves. As I discussed in Chapter 4, “secretaries” were letter-writing guides/conduct books often written for women, such as Jacques du Bosque’s The Secretary of Ladies (1638) and Henry Care’s The Female Secretary (1671). Other titles include The Young Secretary’s Guide, by John Hill (1687), and The Lover’s Secretary (Anonymous, 1692). These guides directly connect the tradition of letter-writing guides written for men, such as Angel Day’s The English Secretary
(1599), to women, and they overtly associate the term “secretary” with women. But the ways in which these guides manipulate and develop the secretarial tradition became particularly useful for epistolary novels. First, they overlap fact with fiction and with fictional personae. Letter-writing guides had always contained templates, not actual letters, but in sixteenth-century guides such as *The English Secretary* it is clear that the author of the templates is the author of the guide, who wants to teach his rhetorical skills. The authors of seventeenth-century guides, in contrast, hide themselves behind the fiction that the letters in their guides are actual letters written by other people, and they assign names or initials to the letters to maintain this artifice. Care, in his introduction, even suggests that he is covering for another author who is reluctant to be associated with the work. That most of these fictional letter-writers are female further associates women with the mix of fiction presented as fact, and women secretaries become the hidden, or covered, agents of information circulation.

This association makes it easy for women writers to step into an intermediary position as authors of epistolary novels, which also participate in the fiction that their contents are letters written by other people. This blurring of the line between fact and fiction through letters is what Aphra Behn does in her epistolary novel *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister*, which, published anonymously, appeared in three parts between 1684 and 1687. *Love-Letters* tells the story of the forbidden passion of the lovers Philander and Sylvia—forbidden because Philander is married to Sylvia’s sister, a fact that does not prevent the pair from eventually eloping.² The book is based on real events, both the scandal of Ford Lord Grey’s elopement with his sister-in-law Lady Henrietta Berkeley and the Monmouth Rebellion, a plot by Charles II’s illegitimate son James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, and his supporters to seize the throne in place of James II. A transcript of Lord Grey’s 1682 trial for abduction circulated widely, and Behn’s novel draws on
the trial and the lovers’ actual letters, which were used as evidence. Behn also creates composite characters from political personages of the time, and the character Cesario represents the duke.

Behn frames her novel as originating from an entirely different source, however. In the dedicatory letter to Part I, she claims that *Love-Letters* is a translation of a French “little Book of Letters,” *L’Intregue de Philander et Silvia*, which she came across in Paris. She claims to have translated the letters “as faithfully as I could,” although she admits that when Philander “speaks of ingratitude of Cesario to the King, I have added a word or two to his character that might render it a little more parallel to that of a modern Prince in our Age.” The conceit that *Love-Letters* is a translation provides some protection for the author, who can claim that the events recounted took place in France, and it connects *Love-Letters* with French influence on the genre of the “secret history.” This framing device also makes particularly secretarial connections. It positions the author-translator as the means by which letters more widely circulate, and it establishes her as both an intermediary in that circulation and a mediator, at times, of the letters’ contents. In this very first sentence of the book she admits to adding a “word or two to his character” to make it more seemly. In other words, although claiming to be a faithful translator, she is also an interventionist. The idea of translation also connects the book to activities of decoding and sharing secret information, a transgressive act of the secretary.

Part I, unusually for the time, is purely epistolary; the only voices are those of the two lovers, in their letters to each other (although the translator, if one accepts that a translator exists, is another, invisible, voice). In Parts II and III, a third-person voice joins those two, in accompanying exposition and narrative that interrupts as it connects the sequence of letters. This third voice does not define itself, and it is unclear whether it is the anonymous translator or if it is a third fictional persona who has knowledge of the lovers and their letters. It is also unclear
where this voice comes from. Are we to think it was part of the original French book, or did the
translator add it? Certainly this voice is intimately acquainted with the lovers’ emotions and
motives. In an introduction to a letter by Philander, the narrator explains that the letter is meant
to move its recipient to compassion; the narrator attributes grief and anger to Sylvia after she
misinterprets a letter and thinks Philander has deserted her. But this voice also is essentially
secretarial. It is a transmitter that has authorial capabilities as it intervenes in its transmission of
the letters to the reader and as it positions, interrupts, and consequently molds the reception of
those letters and the characters they represent. The fact that this narrative voice is free-floating
and not attached to a definitive source makes it similar to Eve’s detached narrative agency;
secretarial narrative now no longer has to be anchored in another person. At the same time,
however, the voice maintains its sense of secretarial insider knowledge. In secretarial texts, the
secretary is a carrier of legitimacy and authenticity; he is an authorizing agent who is invisible,
as a transparent interface. This formulation is particularly useful for third-party novelistic
narration, as it enables the nonspecific voice to carry authority while also artfully displaying the
secretary’s inside, or secret, knowledge.

This unattached yet privileged voice is also specifically secretarial due to its
disembodiment, an aspect of the secretarial tradition that becomes particularly important for
women writers. Because the secretary is subsumed in his master’s body, as the master’s eyes,
ears, hands and voice, the secretary has no body of his own. Love-Letters underlines this idea on
the title page to Part II, which states that it is “The Second Part by the same Hand.” While this
phrase establishes continuity, it also erases the author-translator’s body, reducing it to a hand.
Catherine Gallagher has argued that early women writers wrote from just such a disembodied
place: “The [eighteenth-century] literary marketplace is often the setting for what might be called
the authors’ vanishing acts . . . [female] writers appear mainly through their . . . displacements and disappearances in literary and economic exchanges.6 Gallagher’s description of writers as “author-selves” whose disembodiment is required by the specific exchanges of their careers is remarkably evocative of the disembodied secretarial position. Gallagher, who writes extensively on Behn in Nobody’s Story, credits Behn’s ability to separate herself from her physical being in her writing for Behn’s untarnished success in the marketplace.7 A connection between disembodiment and authorship has figured in other critical arguments. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, in The Imaginary Puritan, read Samuel Richardson’s novel Pamela (1740-1741) as a captivity narrative, arguing it traces the same pattern of exile and return as Mary Rowlandson’s A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (1682). My interest in their argument lies in their view of Rowlandson and Pamela as incipient authors; for Armstrong and Tennenhouse, the two women, one real, one fictional, begin as wordless objects of exchange among men and evolve into bodiless subjects of writing.8 The sixteenth-century formulation of secretaryship thus transfers in early narrative to the female body, whether real or fictional, and this female body becomes the narrating female author or author-figure. As Gallagher points out, the disembodied female author morphs into later novels’ disembodied fictional narration; what we are familiar with now as an omniscient narrator is a voice that speaks from nowhere.

It is not new to identify seventeenth-century letter-writing guides as one of the many forerunners of the early novel. Lennard Davis has argued that the early novel had its origins in what he calls the “news/novels discourse,” or fictions that insisted on their historicity. These include newsbooks, broadside ballads, criminal literature, handbills, and even statutes. For Davis, the dynamic these establish between fact and fiction is a hallmark of the early novel.9
However, we can trace a more specific genealogy for novelistic narration and for forms of female authorship if we look further back to late sixteenth-century information-management theory as expressed in texts that describe the secretary’s role. This theory paradoxically combines two contradictory aspects in the secretarial figure: he is a master figure’s other self, transparent, subsumed, and bodiless, but he is also a figure with independent agency and the ability to rewrite the master or to disrupt the circuits of information distribution he is supposed to seamlessly participate in. These two aspects continue to work together in the omniscient narrative voice. The other-self model is the source for the authenticity and legitimacy of an omniscient narrator; it makes it a voice we tend to trust and to believe. The other-self model is also the source for the invisibility and disembodiment of the narrative voice, for its status as a transparent interface. Finally, the other-self model is the basis for the narrative voice’s knowledge, for its secret, insider information that contributes to its omniscience. On the other hand, the model of the secretary as a figure with agency enables the narrative voice to become its readers’ guide, to frame, direct, and interpret the content it transmits and to create meaning in conjunction with that transmission. Just as the sixteenth-century secretary could, the omniscient voice acts as both intermediary, as it conveys narrative, and mediator, as it shapes narrative.
Notes


2 The OED cites 1676 as the first use of “philander” as a “lover” or “flirt.” Behn seems to be hinting at what would be its later sense of adultery.

3 I use the female pronoun to refer to the author of *Love-Letters*, but I have the benefit of knowing that Behn is the author. The book was published anonymously, so the author-translator’s sex was unknown to Behn’s contemporary readers. Behn was not publicly known as the author until after her death.


5 *Love-Letters* 130, 141.


7 Gallagher 8.


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