

**A Feminine Crevice in the Male Genre:  
Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* vs. Sir  
Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella***

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**Abstract**

This paper studies two sonnet sequences: Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* from the French feminist perspective (especially Irigaray's idea of mimesis). Following those conventions set by Petrarch, most of the sonnet sequences in the sixteenth and the earlier seventeenth centuries focus on exploring the contradictory feelings a lover experiences when he sues a beautiful but aloof lady, and therefore, are usually regarded as a male genre. As Sidney's niece, Wroth was heavily influenced by Sidney and her sonnet sequence is seemingly a mimesis of Sidney's. Through a feminist scrutiny, this paper tries to show that Wroth's sonnet sequence is not only a repetition of this male genre but also subversion. Different from Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, which silences and effaces the beloved lady, Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, retrieving the female voice and subjectivity, helps us have a better and balanced view of the sonnet world in the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries.

**Keywords:** sonnet sequence, Petrarchan convention, sexual difference, male genre, mimesis, subversion

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