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Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*:
Private Space, Public Performance and Torture

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A Thesis

in

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of

English

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ABSTRACT

Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*: Private Space, Public Performance and Torture

Shannon Welch

This thesis examines Lady Mary Wroth's revision of the Petrarchan sonnet form in **Pamphilia to Amphilanthus**. It examines Wroth's construction of a private textual space through the absence of social and political referents and her emphasis on Pamphilia's inner thoughts and emotion. This construction of a psychic space for Pamphilia allows Wroth to resist the performative aspect of other Petrarchan sequences. Her resistance of performance involves the reinvention of the Diana / Actaeon myth, the reconstitution of the male gaze, and the elimination of the blazon. As well, the thesis examines how **Pamphilia to Amphilanthus** manifests the power of the court through the figure of torture, in spite of Wroth's attempt to create a textual space removed from courtly influence. It also includes a discussion of Wroth's attempt to appease the actual crown in the *Crowne of Sonnets* and her inability to sustain this renewed vision of the court and its power.

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Part One : Introduction

I can't imagine the reader who could get through *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* without boredom¹.

Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is one of the first sonnet sequences written by a woman. Nonetheless, Elizabeth Hanson's statement regarding the sequence's lack of interest suggests why Wroth's writing, until recently, has been largely ignored. The writing is boring. *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* lacks the cohesive narrative and social and political allusions that would make it a compelling text. As well, the humour and eroticism of other sequences are absent, eclipsed instead by a predominantly melancholic tone. The repetitive nature of the sonnets and the narrow scope of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus'* content emphasise its monotony. Pamphilia, in spite of the fact that Wroth positions her as Amphilanthus' lover and a Petrarchan poet, is painfully constant -- not a glance in either direction in Amphilanthus' absence. In constructing such a heroine Wroth effectively evades any direct commentary on what today we would call "gender issues".

Although this would appear to leave little to recommend *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, it is the absences in the text that suggest the value of further examination of the sequence. The text, lacking the social and political references of male-authored sequences, is thus different from the traditional sonnet form. The sequence does, in fact, sporadically reward the reader with an elegantly turned phrase or conceit. However, it is the occasional literary curiosity within the sonnets that makes the sequence engaging. For example, Wroth's graphic descriptions of the torture of Pamphilia's heart and sonnet P40's use of miscarriage as a metaphor for unjust tyrants,

¹ See Hanson, 177.

suggest a relationship between love and political power that lies beyond the text. While Wroth avoids any overt commentary on the forces that dictate her position as a female writer and courtier, these breaks in the "constancy" of the sequence gesture toward Wroth's repressed critique of "gender issues". In *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, Wroth revises the sonnet form, removing it from the public and political arena and placing it within a more private, psychological space. In doing so, she resists the performative aspect of other sonnet sequences. Consequently, while the writing itself may not engender the kind of intrigue suggested by other sonnets, it does represent a glimpse of the trials of female authorship and Wroth's transformation of the Petrarchan sonnet.

After an introduction that deals with how male-authored sequences were read during the late sixteenth century and the prohibitions surrounding female authorship, I will examine Wroth's construction of a private textual space within *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* and discuss how this private space allows her to resist the performative aspect of other Petrarchan sequences. Further, I will discuss how, in spite of Wroth's revision of the Petrarchan form in order to construct a textual space removed from the influence of the court, the sequence manifests the inexorable power of the court, examined here through the figure of torture.

A Brief History

Lady Mary Wroth², born October 18 in either 1586 or 1587, inherited a powerful literary and political legacy. Her parents, Sir Robert Sidney and Barbara Gamage, enjoyed significant positions in the courts of both Elizabeth and James I. Barbara Gamage served as patron for several

² See Josephine Robert's Poems for a complete history of Wroth and her texts, 3-72.

literary works (Roberts 5) and Robert Sidney was the author of a little-known volume of sixty-six poems (7). Lady Mary Wroth eventually married a man with little interest in the arts or writing. She nonetheless pursued her literary career in which her Sidney heritage proved to be an important impetus. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Lady Mary retained the Sidney family coat of arms (11). Her uncle, Sir Philip Sidney's writing was of crucial importance. As Roberts points out "in each of the three major genres of her work, she emulated the forms earlier used by her uncle -- the sonnet sequence, pastoral romance, and pastoral drama" (59). Mary Wroth's aunt, Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, also served as an important literary mentor. The Countess produced several translations from French and Italian, as well as a metrical version of the Psalms (15). She was also a significant patron of both literature and the sciences. However, it was not only Wroth's predecessors who provided inspiration and encouragement. According to Lamb, "there is evidence of a flourishing literary culture within the immediate circle of her cousins, at least two of whom wrote numerous poems in manuscript" (150). Mary Wroth's cousin, Elizabeth Sidney, and her cousin and lover, William Herbert, both circulated their poetry in manuscript form. As well as these familial influences, Lady Mary became acquainted with Ben Jonson through her courtly activities, particularly her participation in *The Masque of Blackness* (Roberts 15). In many respects Wroth was raised in a uniquely literary milieu. The examples of her uncle and father and the mentorship of her aunt were not a circumstance common to female writers in the Renaissance.

While it seems certain that Mary Wroth's lineage served as a foundation for her literary pursuits, her experiences in and out of the court appear to have influenced her writing as well. At the age of eighteen, Mary Sidney married Robert Wroth -- a man who had gained the favour of King James. In the years following, Mary Wroth became one of Queen Anne's favourites, appearing in the *Masque of Blackness* (1605) and the *Masque of Beauty* (1608), along with other courtly

entertainments. As well as being a member of the inner circle of the court, Mary Wroth acted as both poet and patron during the period of her marriage (14). Wroth's husband, Robert Wroth, died in 1614, leaving Mary in tremendous debt (23). Her situation became increasingly strained in 1616 when the death of her only son prevented her from using the estates he would have inherited. In the period following her husband's death, she suffered a decline in social status (26) and the subsequent birth of two illegitimate children to her cousin, William Herbert, exacerbated her isolation from the court³. Wroth, nevertheless, kept in contact with the court, though more as an observer than a direct participant. She was a member of the official procession at Queen Anne's funeral in 1619 and "received a nominal mark of royal concern when James issues a warrant in 1621 to the Earl of Salisbury to provide her with deer from the king's forest" (Roberts 27). However, Wroth's days of being an active member of the court seem to have become less and less frequent after the death of her husband as she spent more and more time dealing with creditors.

Three texts are attributed to Wroth: *The Countesse of Montgomery's Urania*, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and *Love's Victorie*. While Wroth's sonnets appear to have been circulating in manuscript form as early as 1613, the *Urania* and *Love's Victorie* were probably written a few years after her husband's death -- between 1618 and 1620⁴ (Roberts 44-45). The characters of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus appear in both the sonnets and the *Urania*. However, in the *Urania*, Pamphilia's vow of constancy to Amphilanthus is tested through a series of trials and separations. The complex plot of the romance is supported by numerous additional characters -- all members of an imaginary royal family. Lady Mary may have wished to identify Pamphilia, whose name means "all-loving", with one of the woman writers of antiquity -- Pamphila (Roberts 42). According to Roberts, Lady Mary's contemporaries regarded Pamphilia as autobiographical (43). In comparison, Amphilanthus, whose name means "lover of two", is less identifiable. Wroth seems

³ See also Lamb, 149.

⁴ See Roberts, Poems, regarding the similarities between the Urania and Love's Victorie, 38.

to provide a clue in the *Urania*, indicating that Pamphilia and Amphilanthus are first cousins; suggesting his identity as William Herbert, "but it is important to note that Lady Mary provides few explicit indicators within the poems, in contrast to Sidney in the 'Rich' sonnets of *Astrophil and Stella*" (Roberts 43).

How Sonnets were Read in the Late 16th and 17th Centuries

Ostensibly, sonnets appear to be intimate texts exchanged between the poet / lover and his beloved. However, the popularity of sonnet sequences, circulated in both manuscript and printed form, in the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign suggests that they functioned as more than simple tokens of love. According to Wall, their popularity may have been a response to the erosion of class boundaries caused by the advent of printing ("Disclosures" 43-44); "By inscribing an exclusive social world through the fictional exchange of love sonnets -- one that was increasingly threatened by the more inclusive realm of print publication -- a threatened coterie system attempted to reproduce itself through its cultural productions" (Imprint 54).

The physical size of the sonnet facilitated its use in both the activities of courtship and courtiership; "Easily transcribed, framed within other contexts, attached to gifts, and read aloud in social settings, the physical size of the sonnet made it popular as coterie occasional verse and indispensable to both courtly love and the system of patronage" (Wall, Imprint 29). Petrarchan sonnets were highly social texts, capable of providing ambitious courtiers with access to the court⁵. However, the language of love also provided a means "for socially, economically and politically importunate Englishmen to express their unhappy condition in the context of a display of literary mastery" (Marotti 408)⁶. According to Marotti, sonnets allowed courtiers to express political

⁵ See Waller, English Poetry, 17, 80.

⁶ See Marotti, 398. See also Low, 23-25 and Kegl, 12-13.

ambition and envy through the socially more acceptable terms of amorous hope and jealousy (399). Gary Waller, points out that "the vocabulary, postures and assumptions of the letters of Elizabethan courtiers are, like their poetry, essentially aimed at ceremonial display, while silently acknowledging their barely repressed concerns with competition from other courtiers, their fears of banishment and exclusion" (17). Through the veiled language of unrequited love courtiers could simultaneously seek approbation from the monarch and voice their frustrations with the court.

Philip Sidney's sonnet 27 illustrates this conflation of political ambition with the language of love:

But one worse fault, Ambition, I confesse,
That makes me oft my best friends overpasse,
Unseene, unheard, while thought to highest place
Bends all his powers, even unto Stella's grace (11-14).

Although the conclusion of the sonnet suggests that the poet's love of Stella takes precedence over his ambition, the implication is that ambition and love are not wholly separate⁷. Similarly, sonnet 30 confirms that Sidney's love for Stella is inextricably tied to politics. This sonnet, in its references to "the Turkish new-moone" (1), "Poles' right king" (3), and the "Scottish Court" (11), figures Sidney's own political interests⁸. However, again the final lines defer to his love for Stella:

These questions busie wits to me do frame;
I, cumbred with good manners, answer do,
But know not how, for still I thinke of you (12-14).

Sidney implies that he has chosen his private love over public affairs. However, Quilligan suggests that this is Sidney's way of "rewriting his political frustrations, imposed from above by a queen jealous of the prerogatives he as a courtier had very insistently resisted, Sidney claims that his choice not to be a famous statesman was his own" (189). Evidently, private love and public

⁷ See Marotti, 402.

⁸ See Marotti, 401.

affairs are fundamentally connected as Sidney must respond to the questions of the " busie wits" even while contemplating Stella⁹.

In the context of the sonnet sequence, the relationship between the male poet and his female beloved often functions as a coded representation of the relation between the courtier and his monarch. Low points out that such a relationship of dependency is not altogether altruistic; "Men court patrons and mistresses because they want some material return, financial or sexual, or both. They want to satisfy their lusts, to seek position, power, and social aggrandisement" (23). From this perspective, the sonnets represent the courtier's dependence on the monarch, figured through his submission to the female beloved, and his attempts to influence her:

One can identify a set of homologies between lover/beloved, suitor/patron and courtier/prince. As the lover must have absolute loyalty to his beloved, the courtier must have absolute loyalty to his prince; as the lover is apparently totally subjected to his lady, the courtier must appear to be totally subjected to his prince. But at the same time, both lover and courtier can attempt to influence and even to subject the beloved / prince to their own will through their accomplishments (Jones and Stallybrass, 64).

Consequently, the love relation expressed within sonnet sequences does not represent the actual relationship between the poet and his female mistress, but instead the poet / courtier and the court. The poet's constancy and obedience, along with his attempts to seduce, symbolise the life of a courtier in the service of a prince who is not easily influenced.

The female mistress of the sonnets is at the center of this negotiation of power between the monarch and the courtier. As long as the sonnet mistress remains elusive the poet can continue to

⁹ Patricia Fumerton proposes a similar connection between the public (political) and private life of the courtier. She aligns the interconnected nature of ambition and love with Elizabeth herself; "This secrecy of Elizabeth's - this private, inward turning that simultaneously takes a public form like politics - characterizes not simply Elizabeth but the Elizabethan age for which she was the focus" (95). I will discuss Fumerton's argument further in the section on Performance.

speaking, and as a result, she functions as a symbol of his unattainable social and political goals. For example, in the case of Philip Sidney, Lady Rich, or Stella, symbolises political and social prominence. Accordingly, his desire for her, and her subsequent rejection, suggest both his ambition and his inability to attain his political goals¹⁰. In spite of her insistent rejection of the poet, the female sonnet mistress also serves as a representation of the potential redistribution of power. According to Jones and Stallybrass, "Sidney's sequence, like nearly all sonnet sequences, is based on a formula by which the man is subjected to his lady while, at the same time, the situation enables him to pour forth his eloquence in an attempt to influence her"¹¹ (63). However, this redistribution of power is not simply a product of the poet's attempt to wield political influence through the production of sonnets, but is also manifested in his authorial control of the female beloved:

The overt plot of the sequence in which Stella denies Astrophil any final fulfilment . . . may repeat Sidney's public defeat in politics, but, by the same token, it is the author's total control over Stella as a (silent) character in his plot which enacts his masculine, social mastery. Such a redistribution of power is at issue in any sonnet sequence (Quilligan 185).

Ultimately, the sonnet mistress becomes a crucial symbol of how the courtier might exercise political influence. Her inaccessible body mediates what would otherwise be the degrading necessity of appealing to the monarch's favour (Kelly 44). Through her the courtier can voice his ambition in socially acceptable terms.

The coded amorous language of sonnet sequences functioned as an effective social and political tool for male courtiers wishing to appease the monarch and surreptitiously express their dissatisfactions with the court. However, the popularity of such sequences lasted for only a short

¹⁰ See Marotti, 400.

¹¹ Jones and Stallybrass further point out that with the decline in the need for brute strength, the use of compliment, wit and persuasion, qualities learnt in the process of writing sonnet sequences, became increasingly important, 63.

period and with the shift from Elizabethan to Jacobean rule in 1603 they appear to have lost their importance as a means of manifesting political ambition¹². According to Marotti:

Instead of a Queen who recognised the reality of ambition, manipulated it, and allowed it to be expressed in the language of love, there was a King on the English throne, a man whose earlier sonnets to his wife were perfunctory performances and who misread the ambitions and designs of many of his courtiers as love and affection for his person (421).

Perils of Publication

Although sonnets commonly circulated in manuscript form, the advent of printing and mass publication necessitated a pretext for such an undesirable act of display¹³. Wall suggests that the use of the female body as a sign for the text was a means of circumventing the social stigma attached to the act of writing:

Writing for the general public was seen not only as a socially unacceptable act of self-display, but also a debasement of the courtier who sought a lower-class audience. The courtier had invested him/her self in a system that depended on excluding a large segment of the population. . . . Printing threatened to disrupt those social boundaries ("Disclosures" 37).

This representation of text as female body was reinforced by the female names attached to sonnet sequences¹⁴. According to Wall, "So feminized, the book became an appropriate object of male desire: desirable in its own right in the marketplace of sonnet sellers and buyers" (*Imprint* 69).

¹² See Marotti, 420-21. See also Quilligan, 182-83 and Wall, "Disclosures", 43.

¹³ See Wall, *Imprint*. Wall's book, particularly "Chapter One: Turning Sonnet", offers a much more detailed and complete discussion of what she describes as the "masculinized notion of authorship" (282).

¹⁴ See Wall, *Imprint*, 61-62. Wall points out that "those collections that officially had two names - a man's and a woman's - were commonly renamed by their readers to reflect the force of this gendered entitlement" (62).

Moreover, "Naming books as women constituted a mutually reinforcing moment of commodification, in which the overt display and objectification of equivalent merchandisable goods policed a women's cultural standing, while at the same time identifying the book within a sanctioned existing cultural definition: as a *femme covert* necessarily in need of supervision by the more authoritative and masculine force of the writer and /or publisher" (Wall Imprint 62). The representation of the text as a female object concealed its public and political role and instead positioned the act of reading as one that transgressed the poet's private contemplation of his beloved.

This construction of the text as female allowed the author and / or publisher to avoid the stigma of publication by positioning the reader as a voyeur observing the private body of the sonnet mistress¹⁵. This was accomplished through the conflation of woman and text. Sonnet 3 of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, exemplifies this technique:

Even thus: in Stella's face I read
What love and beauty be; then all my deed
But copying is, what in her nature writes (12-14).

Sidney casts Stella as the text that he can read and copy. Similarly, in the *Amoretti*, Spenser writes:

You frame my thoughts and fashion me within;
You stop my tongue, and teach my heart to speak (Sonnet 6 9-10).

Here it is the beauty of the female beloved that is inextricably bound to the act of writing. It is she who can teach the poet's "heart to speak". The sonnets align writing with private moments of gazing on the beloved's face or the poet's private contemplation of the woman. As a result of the implicit association of women with private space¹⁶, the reader is positioned as transgressive -- a

¹⁵ See Wall, "Disclosures", 38 - 50.

¹⁶ See Stallybrass, 127. See also Newman, 9.

voyeur. A position, which is further eroticized by the blazons typical of most sequences. The elision of text and female body is reinforced by prefaces, which commonly describe the text as a wanton woman and the act of publication as akin to rape¹⁷.

Although this form of negotiation of the stigma of publication proved effective for male authors, it presented yet another obstacle for female authors. There is little conclusive information regarding the circumstances surrounding the publication of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Lady Mary Wroth, in her letter to the Duke of Buckingham, states that the books "from the first were solde against my minde I never purposing to have them published" (Roberts 236). As well, the absence of the usual dedications and prefatory notes, and the lack of evidence that Wroth ever read the proofs of her book¹⁸, suggest that the publication proceeded without the usual authorial involvement. In support of this, the actual printer of the *Urania*, Augustine Mathewes, had been fined on several previous occasions for printing books without a license (Roberts 76). However, if the *Urania* was published without Wroth's permission, there is no record of legal proceedings to prevent the publication. Moreover, in spite of Wroth's offer to have the manuscripts of the *Urania* withdrawn, twenty-one copies remain today (Roberts 71). Some critics have argued that Wroth intended to publish the romance as a means of paying her debts (Travitsky 135). However, Roberts points out that in the early seventeenth century an author could expect little financial return for publication¹⁹. Lamb suggests that "Wroth's relationship to her work was probably unclear even to her contemporaries" (153). Considering the cultural pressures against female authorship, it is not surprising that Wroth might attempt to conceal her intent.

¹⁷ See Wall's discussion of the preface to *Astrophil and Stella*, "Disclosures", 36.

¹⁸ See Josephine Roberts' introduction to *Poems* for a complete discussion, 57, 70. See also Lamb, 153.

¹⁹ As an example of this, Roberts points out that Milton was initially paid only five pounds for the publication of *Paradise Lost*, *Poems*, 35.

Whether or not she intended to publish, Wroth would have been aware of the risks involved in putting pen to paper. Her uncle, Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence was published without authorisation in 1591 (Marotti 408). What is important, perhaps, given the lack of definitive information regarding Wroth's intentions, is that she meant the sonnets to be read. Roberts cites evidence that Wroth's poems were circulating in manuscript form by 1613²⁰. Both Ben Jonson and the Scottish writer, William Drummond, wrote poems commending her poetry (Roberts 17-18). As well, other anonymous poems exist which make reference to her literary activities and patronage. In making her writing public, either in manuscript or printed form, Wroth did, in fact, participate to some degree in the **publication** of her writing. Nonetheless, the response she received after the publication of the *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* in 1621 illustrates the prohibitions that constrained women's authorship and suggests why she would conceal her willingness to publish.

Edward Denny's response to an unflattering episode in the *Urania* that alluded to his brutality in the treatment of his daughter was to describe Wroth as a "Hermophrodite in show, in deed a monster" and to admonish her to "leave idle bookes alone / For wise and worthy women have writte none" (Roberts 32). Denny's attack is explicitly gendered. Stallybrass explains that "The surveillance of women concentrated on three specific areas: the mouth, chastity, the threshold of the house. These three areas were frequently collapsed into each other" (126). Thus, in writing, Wroth opened herself to accusations of inappropriate behaviour and promiscuity. Even Ben Jonson's sonnet to Wroth, although complimentary in nature, may hint at her illicit sexuality:

I that have beene a lover, and could shew it,
Though not in these, in rithmes not wholly dumbe,

²⁰ See Roberts for examples of poems written about Wroth and her literary efforts or patronage, *Poems*, 19. See also, Masten, 69. See also Lamb, 151. In contrast to Roberts assertion that the sonnets circulated in manuscript form, Masten suggests that the Folger manuscript of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* represents a fair copy for Wroth's own use. I would argue, nonetheless, that the various references to Wroth in other literary works demonstrate that at least some of her poetry was circulating and being read.

Since I exscribe your Sonnets, am become

A better lover, and much better Poet (Roberts 59-60).

Jonson's poem implies that Wroth's sonnets have not only improved his skill as a poet, but also as a lover. Lamb points out that Jonson's description of every line as a "Venus Ceston" seems inconsistent with the content of the sonnets, "which consists largely of sad poems by an abandoned woman narrator written in conventions that were by then old-fashioned" (Gender 155). Although Jonson appears to have been a positive influence for Wroth, Denny's allusions illustrate the dubious ways in which a female writer's gender could be made to signify.

In spite of Wroth's professed inability to comprehend the "strang constructions" (Roberts 236) made of the *Urania*, she, nonetheless, chose to withdraw it from publication. In her letter to the Duke of Buckingham she writes, "I have with all care caused the sale of them to bee forbidden, and the books left to bee shut up, for thos that are abroad, I will likewise doe my best to gett them in" (Roberts 236). Although it is tempting to ascribe such difficulties to the gender of the writer, Hanson points out that "the scandal generated by the text seems to have had much more to do with who [sic] she hit than with the writer's gender or what she reveals about herself" (178)²¹. While Wroth's gender was an easy target for Denny, it was not the fact that she had written, but rather what she had written. According to Denny, Wroth's "wrathfull spite conceived an Idell book / Brought forth a foole which like the damme doth look" (Roberts 32). Apparently, in Denny's view, the book and its "damme" were inextricably linked. Nevertheless, it seems likely, given *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*' absence of allusion and topicality, that had the sequence been published without the *Urania*, Wroth's writing career might have continued unchecked.

²¹ Compare Hanson's discussion of George Gascoigne's, *Hundreth Sundrie Flowers*, which was also withdrawn, 178.

The Public/Private Division

In order to circumvent the kinds of cultural pressures embodied in Edward Denny's statement that "wise and worthy women have writte none", Wroth makes use of the emergent division between public and private space. Stone notes that during the Renaissance there was "increasing stress laid upon personal privacy" (169). Architecturally, the increasing division between public and private areas of operation was manifested in a proliferation of smaller rooms. According to Stone, "the motive was partly to obtain privacy for individual members of the family, but, more especially to provide the family itself with some escape from the prying eyes and ears of the ubiquitous servants" (169). While this dealt with the practical problem of close living quarters, the evolving perception of public and private space also affected the view of the body and the self. For example, Stallybrass points out that,

The adoption of handkerchiefs, forks, separate eating bowls in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a means of establishing social purity through bodily purity. The enclosure of the body, the "cleansing" of the orifices, emphasised the borders of a closed individuality at the same time as it separated off the social elite from the "vulgar" (125).

Similarly, Patricia Fumerton notes the specialized tableware used for the void (the serving of decorative sugar molds and sweetmeats after or between the courses of a feast)²² (111, 123, 129-30). She observes, "a movement toward differentiation, detachment, or segmentation" (123) which is manifested in architecture and place settings and other aspects of the Renaissance banquet. Such changes allowed for distinctions to be made between individuals, as well as classes and genders.

Previously, the body was understood as permeable, its borders not firmly closed; "One could be possessed by someone else's soul; a magician or a sorceress could affect one's thoughts, feelings,

and bodily movements, sometimes even without physical contact"(Davis 56). This shift in the perception of the division between body and soul allowed for the possibility of a more private self -- a self separate from the social relations of the body politic. Francis Barker outlines this transformation toward self-recognition. According to Barker, the modern understanding of the division between public and private coincides with the "disappearance of the body from public view" (14). This "disappearance of the body" describes a shift away from "pre-bourgeois subjection" (31) where subjectivity is defined by social position and rank -- a formulation of space where an interior self, which will distance the external world, is unimaginable. In comparison, Barker suggests that texts of the seventeenth century begin to trace an interiority they cannot ultimately fulfil (37). According to Barker, a symptom of this not yet entirely visible public / private split is the figure of the dismembered body. The body, emblematic of the discursive order it supersedes, is "frequently presented in fragments, or in the process of its effective dismemberment" (24-25). This fragmentation suggests the encroachment of a modern subjectivity -- one that confines the body to private space.

In male-authored sonnet sequences, it was through the mediating figure of the female mistress that the division between public and private space could be imaged. Jones and Stallybrass point out that it is through her [the sonnet mistress] that "it is possible to envision a retreat from the claustrophobic court and its 'curious wits' into a world of private desire" (67). Similarly, Shullenberger describes sonnets as the only pure space -- a space away from "this persistent sense of social intrusiveness" (49). Although for women, private space was not necessarily representative of freedom²², Wroth, nonetheless, used the emergent division between public and private to construct a textual space for Pamphilia -- one that could resist the social stigmas attached to female speech and writing. Wroth's construction of a private textual space allows her to

²² See Fumerton, Cultural Aesthetics, for a complete history of the void, 111-13.

²³ See Stallybrass, 125.

circumvent the association between sonnet writing and political favour, but simultaneously enables her to voice her dissatisfactions with the court.

Part Two: Private Space in the Sonnets

With no predecessors to model her new Petrarchan poet on Wroth creates a textual space that favours Pamphilia's voice, simultaneously repressing the social constraints that would interfere with her speech. It has been argued that, to varying degrees, Wroth constructs a new female subject in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. I would suggest, instead, that Wroth creates what might be described as a neutered female. *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* traces the shadowy boundaries of Pamphilia's psyche and does away with the dangerous exterior trappings of female flesh. Wroth's emphasis on Pamphilia's inner emotion avoids depicting her in ways that might transgress societal norms.

Jeff Masten describes the text of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* as an "almost inscrutable private language" (67), noting the extreme lack of social referents²⁴ that might sustain the reader's interest. Generally, the seemingly private nature of the text, signalled by Pamphilia's isolation and the overriding atmosphere of darkness, night and sleep²⁵, is read as Wroth's thematization of the circumstances that surround her writing. For example, Wendy Wall states that the speaker's "inscription of absence as the central force in the sequence indicates that Wroth transforms the restrictions of poetic discourse into its very theme" (335). The implication is that Wroth's expulsion of the material world is intended to reveal the "evacuated territory" that Wroth, and consequently Pamphilia, inhabit. According to Wall, Wroth's intent is to demonstrate the linguistic void from which she writes as a female author attempting to construct a female speaking subject (334). Masten, on the other hand, reads the absences in the text as

²⁴ See Roberts, "The Biographical Problem of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", 48-49, and Gary Waller, "Mary Wroth and the Sidney Family Romance", 53, for an alternate argument.

²⁵ Beilin reads the sonnets as becoming progressively more "dark and confined", apparently an indication of Pamphilia's increasingly desperate state of mind (236). However, I see no obvious progression throughout the sequence. Pamphilia is consistently miserable. See also Ann Rosalind Jones, "Self as Spectacle", 146-47, and Jeff Masten, 70-71.

representative of the actual experience of its circulation as a manuscript (67). Here, Masten cites the manuscript history of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* as indicative of Wroth's attempt to contain both her text and to figure "control over herself as a potentially trafficable woman" (82). In comparison, Ann Rosalind Jones sees the emptiness of the text as a metaphor for Wroth's "sacrifice of the sunshine of social life to the dark night of the constant woman's ascesis" (146). In this configuration Pamphilia's isolation implies the values which distinguish her from the court and hint at Wroth's wish to be reinstated in the court (147).

Such all-encompassing interpretations rarely distinguish between the *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Although the *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* were produced in a similar social context, the content of the two texts is strikingly different. The private space Wroth constructs in the sonnets is a means of specifically negotiating Petrarchan poetics. Elizabeth Hanson states, "if we want to read the absence of topical reference in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* as a gendered strategy we must also acknowledge that Wroth adopted this strategy not as a woman struggling to write at all but as a writer working within the specific generic context of the sequence" (179). She further points out the specific problems posed by the first-person, erotic voice of Petrarchan sonnets (183)²⁶. The private nature of the text is less a product of her social circumstances (or restrictions) than a representation of Wroth's attempt at creating a space for the female psyche using the emergent public/private division. The textual space of the sonnets, located in Pamphilia's "thought", effectively eliminates all social constraints and referents that would compete with Pamphilia's position as poet/lover and Wroth's as writer. Wroth constructs a space where she can distance herself from both the act of writing and the signifying power of the female body.

²⁶ See Hanson's discussion of the fate of Mary Stuart regarding the dangers of Petrarchan poetry, 179-83.

This distancing begins with the inward turn of the opening sonnet²⁷, which is initiated under the cover of darkness:

When nights black mantle could most darknes prove,
And sleepe deaths Image did my senceses hier
From knowledg of my self (P1 1-3).

During her dream vision Pamphilia is separated from her "self". No longer attached to her physical body, she is transformed into a "lover" (14). This metamorphosis is made complete by the transplant of a burning heart into Pamphilia's chest²⁸. Pamphilia's transformation into poet/lover is a wholly private experience that excludes even Amphilanthus. The conclusion confirms Pamphilia's withdrawal into this private space:

I, waking hop'd as dreames itt would depart
Yett since: O mee a lover I have been (13-14).

Wroth does not present Pamphilia as a writer struggling to find words to describe her beloved, but as one literally caught in the private dilemma of love²⁹ -- a lover unable to wake from a dream. Heather Dubrow reads the dream vision as indicative of Pamphilia's "absence of agency" (139), suggesting that Pamphilia chooses passivity rather than having it imposed upon her. However, the dream actually initiates a form of agency by creating a secure textual space. By distancing Pamphilia from her physical body and taking the heart and thrusting it inward, Wroth opens a textual space located beyond the visible and public realm.

Hanson points out that the speaker of the initial sonnet is conspicuously without gender (185). Apparently this is "Wroth's resistance to letting social codes (especially gendered ones) signify within her poetry" (186). However, this is not simply an attempt to construct an androgynous

²⁷ See Fienberg regarding the first sonnet's allusions to Petrarch and Dante, 185.

²⁸ Fienberg interprets the heart transplant as a metaphor for the speaker laying claim to her own body, 185.

²⁹ Compare Masten, 70.

speaker, but a repression of the female body itself. Throughout the sequence Pamphilia is denied physical form and unlike the typical female persona of the sonnets nothing is known about her external appearance. Sonnet P48 epitomises Pamphilia's distance from her physical body:

Then look on mee; I ame to thes adrest,
I, ame the soule that feeles the greatest smart;
I, ame the hartles trunk of harts depart (5-7).

In one of the more assertive lines of the sequence, Pamphilia exposes herself as a "soule" as compared to her "hartles trunk." Masten reads Pamphilia's "hartles trunk" as embodying the potential for a female subject -- the gutted body representative of her "refusal to circulate as a Petrarchan sign" (74-75). Fienberg offers a similar interpretation suggesting that the sonnet points to a new inner authenticity that can be translated into a female subject (182). The contrast between Pamphilia's gutted body and her spirit suggests the importance of Pamphilia's psyche rather than her body. Wroth proposes that Pamphilia is essentially bodiless, leaving the reader with the impression that Pamphilia's emotion, and the text that is a product of this emotion, are located in her "soule." Nonetheless, the conclusion of the sonnet reveals Wroth's awareness of the impossibility of constructing a truly private text. Pamphilia states,

I should nott have bin made this stage of woe
Wher sad disasters have theyr open showe (P48 12-13).

Although Wroth recognises that a written manuscript is an inherently public gesture -- once the words are written down they are difficult to keep contained -- she demonstrates her resistance to the text being part of the public spectacle³⁰. Pamphilia is a spiritual essence and "should nott" be understood as part of the spectacle of the stage.

³⁰ Jones ("The Self as Spectacle") offers a radically different reading. She proposes that the sonnet "stages Pamphilia's mistreatment as an explicitly theatrical scene, soliciting the sympathy of witnesses she imagines as an audience at an execution, then in a playhouse" (140). However, this reading is based on assumptions about Wroth's desire to use the sonnets to reinstate herself within the court that are difficult to prove given the circumstances surrounding the publication and circulation of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*.

Wroth's emphasis on Pamphilia's "soule" allows her to distance herself from the act of writing and focus instead on her inner emotion. Throughout the sequence Wroth promotes the truth and sincerity of what remains unseen. For example, sonnet P54 begins, "O stay mine eyes, shed not the fruitles teares" (1). The eyes, a symbol for the visible world, are "stayed" or turned in on themselves and Pamphilia reveals that "true sorrow" is kept inside:

True sorrow, never outward wayling beares;
Bee rul'd by mee, keepe all the rest in store,
Til noe roome is that may containe one more,
Then in that sea of teares, drowne haples mee (8-11).

This sonnet echoes the inward momentum of the first sonnet. In keeping her grief private, Pamphilia effectively drowns into herself. By drowning herself in her tears, Wroth implies that Pamphilia is separate from the "mee" of the sonnet -- in other words, her body. The conclusion proposes that if Pamphilia can successfully do away with her "self" she can be free, stating, "This dunn, wee shall from torments freed be" (14). Wroth uses emotion to define Pamphilia as a Petrarchan subject and simultaneously suppress her physical body.

This is demonstrated by the following sonnet, which uses fire as a metaphor to suggest Pamphilia's interior passion. Again Wroth points out the fallibility of the eyes in fully affirming her love:

Mine eyes can scarce sustaine the flames my hart
Doth trust in them my passions to impart,
And languishingly strive to show my love (P55 9-11).

Pamphilia's eyes languish in the heat of such passionate emotion and are increasingly unable to show her love. Consequently the true emotion is contained and the conclusion of the sonnet consolidates this image:

My breath nott able to breathe least part

Of that increasing fuell of my smart;

Yett love I will till I but ashes prove (12-14).

Pamphilia is breathless, and consequently speechless. The fire that burns inside her is part of her private experience and cannot escape through her mouth or her eyes. In fact, Wroth's reference to "eyes" might also be understood as a comment on her writing -- her "I's". This line (9) implies that her writing cannot sustain her emotion, in spite of the fact that Pamphilia "trusts" them (her "I's") to show her love. Finally her overwhelming love results in the dissolution of her physical body. Pamphilia's body is burnt to ashes, but love, nonetheless, triumphs and remains.

Song P61 epitomises Wroth's positioning of Pamphilia in an interior space where her sincerity is measured by her inner emotion rather than her words. She describes herself as one who has "all truth preserv'd" (10) and "whose soule knowes nott how to rang" (15), emphasising the constancy of her love for Amphilanthus. She asks him to "maintaine in your thoughts my love" (2). The wooing of the absent Amphilanthus is a process that is entirely internalised³¹. As Janet MacArthur argues: "Pamphilia's pursuit of Amphilanthus would make her appear unchaste as well, but an unchaste Pamphilia would have made the poem uniquely anti-Petrarchan and would have destroyed its androgynous poetics" (14). Pamphilia's desire for Amphilanthus is part of the realm of thought rather than public spectacle.

The following song (P62) summarises the ideal that guides Wroth through the text; "Learne to guide your course by art / Chang your eyes into your hart" (13-14). Pamphilia's path is that of her psyche. Her map is not her eyes, but her heart. The text reflects the attempt to change "eyes"

³¹ Dubrow, on the other hand, proposes that Amphilanthus is not absent but dispersed amongst many characters. His "dismemberment" represents a gendered revision of the Petrarchan mode, 149. See also Jones, "Self as Spectacle", 144.

("I's") into heartfelt emotion contained in a private textual space:

And patient bee

Till fruitles jealousie gives leave

By safest absence to receave

What you would see (15-18).

The jealousy that plagues Pamphilia is an amorphous visitor from the public sphere. It is not attached to anything in particular but serves to focus her inwardness. The lines of the song are unclear. Is it "jealousie" or Pamphilia who will be absent? In either case, the implication that absence equals safety suggests that it is less what Pamphilia "would see" and more what she will not see by absenting herself from the public realm.

The concluding sonnet of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* reiterates Wroth's positioning of Pamphilia in an interior space. The first line, "My muse now hapy, lay thy self to rest" (P103 1), seems an appropriate counterpoint to the dream vision of the beginning. Pamphilia's private vision has sustained her throughout the sequence and now she may return to sleep. She says she will not "wake to new unrest" (4), leaving the dream and the writing behind. Nonetheless, if she chooses to reflect upon love, "bee those thoughts adrest / To truth" (5-6)³². Again it is the inner feeling that Wroth highlights. The writing may be happily left, but it is Pamphilia's thought that will be a source of "true joye" (7). In fact, while the text of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* appears to be a product of Pamphilia's heart which is "free from changing thought" (P9 6), the "young beeginers" (10) of the final sonnet have a different source:

Leave the discourse of Venus, and her sunn

To young beeginers, and theyr brains inspire

³² Beilin reads this concluding sonnet as indicative of Wroth's "celebration of divine love" (242) and her affirmation of women's chastity, modesty and constancy. Although there are moments in the sonnets that suggest a more spiritual interpretation, I feel such a reading is truly a leap of faith.

With storys of great love, and from that fire

Gett heat to write the fortunes they have wunn (9-12).

Wroth downplays the act of writing. It does not spring from the heart but the brain. The "storys" of the "beeginers" are trivialised and have little relation to Pamphilia's "hart-held" (P6 12) sentiment³³. By giving the "young beeginers" only myth and literature as their inspiration, she removes herself as writer both from scrutiny and circulation.

Pamphilia's "thoughts" are the immutable landmarks of the private space Wroth constructs -- the indelible markers of her psyche. In Pamphilia's sleep of the initial sonnet "thoughts did move / Swifter then most swiftnes need require" (3-4). Even in the darkness of her vision of Venus and Cupid, Pamphilia's thoughts take precedence over her physical location. This stress is also depicted in another poem by Wroth's comparison of Pamphilia and a traveller "who tired sought / In places distant farr, yett found noe end / Of paine or labour" (P11 1-3). However, while the traveller suffers from physical exhaustion, Pamphilia is tired with her "mind" (9). The traveller finds happiness through "ease of limms" (10). In comparison, Pamphilia's content is internal:

I, greatest hapines that I doe find

Beeleefe for fayth, while hope in pleasure swimms (11-12).

Wroth suggests that Pamphilia voyages in her mind and that the satisfactory destination, presumably her heart, is also internal. Even when the world of the court is evoked, as in sonnet P26, Pamphilia's reflections focus on her internal pursuits. She is in a space "free from eyes" (5) and characterised by "daylike night" (6). There Pamphilia leaves courtly activities like hunting and hawking to "poore vanities" (8):

When every one to pleasing pastime hies

Some hunt, some hauke, some play, while some delight

³³ Compare also Dubrow, 156.

In sweet discourse, and musique showes joyes might
Yett I my thoughts doe farr above thes prise" (1-4).

Pamphilia eschews public pursuits of pleasure in order to discourse with her "spiritt" (11) and chase her "thoughts" (9). For each of the public entertainments of the court Wroth provides a comparable private pursuit for Pamphilia. Fienberg sees the comparison between the court and Pamphilia's activities as gendered and suggests that the "speaker redefines the terms that allow her to create her own subjectivity" (186). Similarly, Masten also attributes masculine qualities to the activities, arguing that Wroth repudiates "the rhetorical trappings and metaphorical suites of male Petrarchan discourse" (73). Hanson points out that neither sweet discourse nor music is especially masculine and instead reads the sonnet as Wroth's rejection of any form of social activity (183). According to Hanson, Wroth's withdrawal indicates her "refusal to install the desiring subject in a social context" (186). While I agree that Wroth avoids placing Pamphilia within a social context in order to repress the contradictions associated with a female Petrarchan speaker, this refusal should not be understood as merely negative. Rather Pamphilia's private space in opposition to the court may be understood as food in itself. The final couplet, written in the form of two questions, serves to stress Pamphilia's reflective nature as representative of her private space, in opposition to that of the court.

In distancing Pamphilia from the activities of the court, Wroth effectively rejects all public displays of love. The image of the court that Wroth creates is characterised by deception and external display as opposed to Pamphilia's inner pathos. Pamphilia states that, "T'is nott a showe of sighes, or teares can prove / Who loves" (P46 9-10), citing the deceptive quality of publicly shown "fained love" (10). Instead, it is "in the soule true love in safety lies" (12). Sonnet P9 clarifies the separation between Pamphilia's interior space and any written representation of her pain. She states, "I seeke for some smale ease by lines, which bought / Increase the paine; grieffe

is not cur'd by art" (3-4), indicating the distance between the public and unsatisfactory act of writing and what is in Pamphilia's heart, which is "true, and free from changing thought" (P9 6). This sentiment is confirmed in sonnet P45 where Pamphilia states, "For wher most feeling is, words are more scant" (10). For Wroth, the act of writing is too closely connected to the "fained love" and "outward shoves" of the court to prove satisfactory.

Not only is the language of the court suspect, but Pamphilia's as well:

Nor can I as those pleasant witts enjoy

My owne fram'd words, which I account the dross

Of purer thoughts, or reckon them as moss

While they (witt sick) them selves to breath imploy (P 45 5-8).

This suspicion regarding writing and public activity in general serves to emphasize the inherent truthfulness of Pamphilia's "thoughts" in comparison to the words of the "pleasant witts" of the court who are, according to Wroth, "witt sick" (8)³⁴. The following sonnet in the sequence elaborates Wroth's disdain for "outward shoves" (P46 2). Here she rejects the affectations of the court: "kissing, toying, or by swearings glose" (3) as being unrelated to true love. In particular the reference to "swearings glose" (to veil with specious comment) (Roberts 115), reiterates her suspicions regarding public speech³⁵. Later, Wroth compares Petrarchan poetry or "ancient fictions" to the "disguised pleasures" of the stage: To mee it seems as ancient fictions make / The starrs all fashions, and all shapes partake / While in my thoughts true forme of love shall live" (P100 13-14). The emphasis remains on the sincerity and truth of Pamphilia's private thoughts.

³⁴ Beilin interprets the reference to "fram'd words . . ." as indicative of the insufficiency of sonnet language to measure up to Pamphilia's ideas or true identity, 238. See also Dubrow's discussion of genre and gender regarding Wroth's hesitancy to write, 147-51. See Masten, 73.

³⁵ Beilin reads Pamphilia's rejection of courtly activity as an indication of her chaste love - a repudiation of male courtship, 235.

With this emphasis on inner truth and emotion, the signifying power of the female gender within the sonnets is reduced. There is no space for a full-fledged female subject in these poems, but they do open a literary space for the female psyche.

Sonnets and Miniatures

Wroth's emphasis on the private nature of the text of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* allows her to promote Pamphilia as a sincere and constant character. However, it is not unusual for sonnet sequences to emphasize the author's inner and consequently more sincere or truthful emotion. In his discussion of the literary practices of the Renaissance, Jean Marie Goulemot states that "the truth of what is said is grounded in the intimate and the private, in that which is hidden from public view" (384). However, Wroth's text is distinctive in the way she uses textual space to create this sense of Pamphilia's sincerity. Male authors describe their struggles to represent true emotion in language using references to the act of writing as well as contrasting their "internal and social existences" (Ferry 159)³⁶. *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* appears to share a similar preoccupation with interior emotion. However, what distinguishes this text from male-authored sequences is the absence of the topicality³⁷ that would create a truly public textual space. Patricia Fumerton's article, "'Secret' Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets," offers some insights into the use and accessibility of textual public and private space for male authors. Fumerton's discussion of the "publication"³⁸ of sonnets and miniatures coupled with Joan Kelly's³⁹ observations regarding women in the Renaissance

³⁶See in particular Ferry where she discusses how the authors explore the "ambiguous and shifting relationships between words and what is in the heart" (123). See also Fienberg, 176-77.

³⁷By "topicality" I mean any overt clues as to *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus'* social or political context, as well as punning on names, topical allusions and biographical hints as to the identities of the lovers.

³⁸Fumerton discusses the publication of miniatures and sonnets in architectural terms. In order to view the sonnet or miniature one would have to pass through various public rooms and antechambers, "Elizabethan Miniatures", 108-09.

³⁹See Kelly's, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?", in Women, History and Theory.

suggest reasons for Wroth's creation of a textual private space in her elaboration of Pamphilia's sincerity.

During the reign of Elizabeth, buildings were increasingly divided into smaller rooms in an attempt to promote greater privacy⁴⁰. Typically the bedchamber or closet, where both sonnets and miniatures were carefully locked away, was located at the end of a series of public rooms (Fumerton 97-98). In order to view the miniature one would have had to penetrate a series of public rooms, thus passing from public to seemingly more private space within the house⁴¹. This was less necessary when, later, miniatures came to be worn within the court. However, the ornamental or "public" case that enclosed the portrait still had to be penetrated for the private image to be revealed. According to Fumerton, "Everything about the miniature, in sum, suggests secret self-expression through public 'rooms' of self-display: decorative boxes enclose the private self of the miniature within the bedroom, or enameled gold locket encase and carry it into court, and within, layers of ornamental colors and patterns cover and point to self-truth (whether suggested by a plain face or an inner, beating heart)" (106). It was through the revelation of the portrait contained within the miniature that courtiers could make a show of revealing their private, more sincere, selves.

Like miniature portraits contained within an ornamental case, sonnets offered a progression from public show to private self-expression. For example, "the prefatory letters and signatures to sonnets form the outermost 'room' or 'case' enclosing the poet's love" (Fumerton 110). In order for sonnets to be "published" the reader must necessarily be able to penetrate the artifice, that is to decipher the dedications, riddles and anagrams, that surround the beloved's written portrait. According to Fumerton, in creating this progression from public

⁴⁰See also Stone, 169.

display to private portrait, the miniature or sonnet responds to a need for the expression of the inner, private self (98), the "sincere inner self" (116) that is revealed when the layers of artifice and rhetoric are peeled away. However, this so-called inner self is not particularly private as it is contingent upon the display of the public self and, ultimately, is nothing more than artifice and rhetoric (Fumerton 111,126). Although the progression from public to private creates the impression that the author is exposing intimate details about his beloved, ultimately, all that is uncovered is a simple portrait and nothing more.

The progression from textual public space to private space structures male-authored sequences. The reader is lead into the author's private revelations through letters, dedications, and other forms of Petrarchan rhetoric. As well, Fumerton observes that male authors achieve the representation of the inner self through comparison to the outer world of the court (118). Like the ornamental casing which surrounds the private portrait in a miniature, the sonnets themselves form a frame for the intimate details that lie beyond the poetry: "Taken together, the successive sonnets in the sequence themselves form an ornamental pattern encircling and pointing to the 'space', the white parchment, that is the ground of the poet's love" (Fumerton 121). This "ornamental pattern" is established through references to public places, events or figures, as well as the artifice that is used to embellish the beauty of the beloved mistress. Such references and embellishments are largely absent in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and the sequence is structured in such a way as to limit its accessibility to the public⁴². In fact, "sequence" appears to be something of a misnomer with regards to *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. The sonnets lack any apparent narrative structure and

⁴¹ Fienberg notes an increased value in interiority and points out Drayton's comment that "nothing is esteemed in this lunatic age but what is kept in cabinets" (177).

⁴² See also Fumerton's discussion of Sidney's sonnet 11, 114. As well, Fumerton notes that Sidney's "true love is verbally encased through the use of a 'poem-within-a-poem'" (117). This type of textual strategy is absent in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*.

instead are loosely grouped modes of reflection upon her love for Amphilanthus⁴³. The attributes that make other sequences obviously political and public writings are absent, tying the poetry's existence more closely to the private sphere of Pamphilia's psyche.

Women like Stella became convenient mediators in the constrained political environment created by the shift away from feudalism and courtiers' increased dependence on the monarch. Kelly explains how this relationship is illustrated by the sonnet sequences of the time:

In a structured hierarchy of superior and inferior, she [the female beloved] seems to be served by the courtier. But this love theory really made her serve -- and stand as a symbol of how the relation of domination may be reversed, so that the prince could be made to serve the interests of the courtier. The Renaissance lady is not desired, not loved for herself. Rendered passive and chaste, she merely mediates the courtier's safe transcendence of an otherwise demeaning necessity" (44).

Although the male poet / courtier had to demonstrate his apparent acquiescence to the whims of the monarch⁴⁴, he was relatively free within the private domain. On the other hand, the love theory espoused by the sonnets "bound the lady to chastity, to the merely procreative sex of political marriage, just as her weighty and costly costume came to conceal and constrain her body while it displayed her husband's noble rank" (Kelly 46)⁴⁵. The expectation of female chastity and the use of the female body to mediate the male courtier's expression of his inner, most sincere self as a means of appeasing the monarch was not a relationship easily reversed. In order to construct a textual space for Pamphilia, Wroth had to reverse a social

⁴³ Hanson briefly discusses the various arguments that attempt to impose a unifying structure on the sonnets, concluding instead that the sequence represents several "discrete projects" and generally lacks narrative, topical reference and internal thematic development (190).

⁴⁴ See also Marotti, 398-99.

⁴⁵ Similarly, Waller, in "Emergence", points out that Petrarchan poetry "elevated the woman only to subjugate her" (247).

structure that saw her as the object of the poet's love, not the poet.

Wroth does not position Pamphilia as either master or mistress. Beilin suggests that is because Wroth cannot simply reverse the Petrarchan roles and proposes that the sonnets are "an attempt to define how a woman's poetry can reveal her passions and predicaments" (235-36). In comparison, Masten reads Pamphilia's refusal to construct herself as a Petrarchan sign as an indication of her refusal to circulate and a repudiation of Petrarchan discourse (75). Although my argument bears some similarities to Masten's, I believe Wroth is not engaged in a conscious repudiation of Petrarchan discourse, but rather has reinvented Petrarchanism by removing transgressive elements to construct a space for Pamphilia's psyche. The text seems to be a product of Pamphilia's inner self and in this intensely private space the terms master and mistress are meaningless. Consequently, because Pamphilia is not represented as the master nor as the creator of the sonnets⁴⁶, the text lacks the references to writing, ink, leaves that would locate it in the public exchange of manuscript texts (Wall 41)⁴⁷. In fact, Wroth's references to "fram'd words" (P45 6) that "number to deseave" (P94 30) characterize writing as deceptive and an unsatisfactory way of translating Pamphilia's emotion. Conversely, because she is not represented as the sonnet mistress there are no references to her beauty or appearance. Blazons are conspicuously absent from the sequence. Sonnet P26, nonetheless, offers a reinvention of the blazon. Wroth describes Pamphilia's inner characteristics rather than external beauty -- her "thoughts", "minde", and "spiritt" (9,10,11). The poem illustrates Wroth's rejection of the body-as-sign and proposes a space where Pamphilia's psyche might signify.

⁴⁶It is interesting to note that in comparison to Fumerton's observation about male-authored sequences (123) the language of "limning" is absent from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. While this suggests that Wroth did not wish to emphasize the act of creating the sonnets, it may simply be a result of miniatures being out of fashion at the time of the writing.

⁴⁷ See also Masten, 68.

Wroth recognizes the inherent conflict in inscribing a female as the author of the sonnets. Sonnet P67 reiterates this confusion between Pamphilia as sonnet mistress and Pamphilia as poet / lover. She states, "I might have binn an Image of delight, / As now a Tombe for sad misfortunes spite" (12-13). Wroth also associates Pamphilia's figurative death with writing:

Butt fond child, had hee had a care to save
As first to conquer, this my pleasures grave
Had nott bin now to testify my woe (P67 9-11).

Pamphilia's testament of woe, presumably the sonnets, is linked to her "pleasures grave" (10). Wroth recognizes that in figuring Pamphilia as a poet/lover she must forgo her role as decorative object (sonnet mistress or miniature portrait). Instead the sonnets become an alternative kind of case. However, in Wroth's formulation, they enclose the darkness of the tomb -- a space charted by Pamphilia's psyche rather than the eye.

Song 1 (P7) demonstrates a similar association between writing and death. Pamphilia recalls the story of a shepherdess disappointed in love. By describing the "lines" as belonging to the shepherdess Wroth further displaces any association between Pamphilia and the act of writing. The shepherdess writes the tale of her inconstant lover on the bark of trees⁴⁸. However, this writing, already safely contained within the pastoral setting, will only be read,

If some such lover come
Who may them right conceive,
And place them on my tombe (P 7 42-44).

Again the female author is transformed into a "tombe" to which her writing is attached. Unlike a male author's perception of himself as a creator who allows his audience a glimpse of a more private self, Wroth can only take on the role of author by containing the act within her textual psyche.

Wroth's association of death with writing is consolidated through her images of creation. Her depiction of birth illustrates a conception of creation as dangerous and private. It does not focus on process or product, but rather on private pain. Wroth's inability to invoke the public/private division in the same way as a male author is epitomized by the birth metaphors common to male-authored sequences. For example, at the beginning of the *Amoretti*, Spenser writes,

Unquiet thought, whom at first I bred
of th'inward bale of my love-pined heart,
and sithence have with sighs and sorrows fed
till greater than my womb thou waxen art (Sonnet 2 1-4).

Apparently, the writing is about to break forth from the poet's womb. Similarly, Sidney is "great with child to speak" in the introductory sonnet of *Astrophil and Stella*. In this conception of writing, the reader has only to patiently await the birth of the poem. This may appear to reverse the progression from public to private⁴⁸, in that the writing contained within the "womb" of the poet progresses outwards into the public eye. Nonetheless, it remains a revelation of the poet's inner self facilitated by a fleshy metaphor.

In comparison, Wroth does not romanticize birth and writing, and in fact sonnet P40 offers an antagonistic view of birth:

Faulce hope which feeds but to destroy, and spill
What itt first breeds; unaturall to the birth
Of thine owne wombe; conceaving butt to kill (1-3).

⁴⁸ See also Dubrow (159), as well as Masten's comments regarding a similar scenario in the *Urania* (79).

⁴⁹ See Fumerton, 122.

Birth⁵⁰ is a symbol of betrayal, of "faulce hope." It does not produce anything to be viewed by an expectant reader. It is part of a private predicament that begins and ends in the darkness of the womb. In sonnet P87, Wroth refers to "A timeles, and unseasonable birth / Planted in ill, in wurse time springing found, / Which hemlock like might feed a sick-witts mirthe" (5-7). Here birth is associated with the dangerous, hemlock-fed, "witts" of the court. Wroth perceives the kind of display associated with birth (as a metaphor for creation) as dangerous. To "birth" the sonnets would be to leave them vulnerable to the betrayals of the public world of the court. The contrast between birth as a metaphor for creation versus birth as an image of silent betrayal demonstrates how, for the male author, the reader may observe both the public and private spaces he inhabits -- the inner self may be revealed to the public eye. On the other hand, the reader of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* must intrude upon the private experience of miscarriage and ultimately find his or her own way out of this private domain.

Unlike male poets who painlessly birth their poems, in sonnet P15 Wroth describes the conditions that will enable Pamphilia to continue writing. Here Wroth draws attention to the fact that on some level Pamphilia is obviously made of flesh and blood. However, these references to "blood" and "food" only emphasize that Pamphilia is a "soule" or "spiritt" (3), her existence somehow contingent on Amphilanthus' approbation:

An easy thing itt is to shed the blood

Of one, who att your will, yeelds to the grave (5-6).

Wroth, in her reference to death, describes Pamphilia's (living) body as secondary to her ability to praise Amphilanthus:

Then sacrifices mee nott in hidden fire,

⁵⁰ Fienberg reads this birth metaphor as Wroth's reclamation of her own body, 183. See also Waller's discussion of childbearing in "Sidney Family Romance", 40-41.

Or stop the breath which did your praises move (10-11).

Wroth's aversion to being sacrificed in the "hidden fire" is not a wish to preserve Pamphilia's physical body, but the desire to keep her interior whole.

While Pamphilia can easily cast off her flesh and blood form, she must maintain her innerness in order to continue praising (read: writing about) Amphilanthus. The final line of the sonnet confirms the relationship between writing and the dissolution of the body. Pamphilia states that she "Camaelion-like would live, and love" (P15 14). The chameleon is an appropriate symbol of Pamphilia's bodiless state as it was believed to live on air and exist for long periods without food (Roberts 94). Such a comparison may seem unlikely in that Pamphilia does require food and, in fact, her living body is in some ways sustained by Amphilanthus. However, Amphilanthus is much like the air that feeds the chameleon -- he is without form or substance and Pamphilia is sustained by his absence. The sonnet, in its transformation of Pamphilia into an Amphilanthus-praising chameleon, implies that Pamphilia's writing is dependent upon her ability to remain bodiless and live on air.

A similar sentiment is demonstrated in sonnet P25. Wroth compares the offerings of the Indians who worship Phoebus to her hidden sacrifices. The sonnet concludes:

Then lett mee weare the marke of Cupids might

In hart as they in skin of Phoebus light

Nott ceasing offrings to love while I Live (12-14).

The suggestion is that as long as Pamphilia keeps her "offerings" to love (the sonnets) hidden, she can continue to write. The creation of an obvious division between Pamphilia and both the public world, and her own body, allows Pamphilia a voice as a Petrarchan poet.

However, Pamphilia's voice is determined by her "thoughts." Wroth illustrates the importance of Pamphilia's psychological landscape through the Petrarchan conceit of the shipwrecked lover in sonnet P68. In spite of the fact that within the physical realm she is "lost, shipwrackt, spoyl'd" (9), her inner realm, where "thoughts have scope, / Which wander may" (10-11), provides considerably more liberty. Thus, Pamphilia's freedom -- presumably her freedom to write -- is connected to her ability to speak (and think) within the circumscribed environment of her psyche. In song 3 she restates the importance of her thoughts; "Therfor deerly my thoughts cherish / Never lett such thinking perish" (11-12).

Her thoughts are aligned with her freedom:

Let me thinking still be free:

Nor leave thy might untill my death

Butt let me thinking yield up breath (22-24).

The inability to think poses a greater threat than death. While the act of writing is framed in negative terms throughout *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, inner emotion signals liberty.

By positioning Pamphilia in a private space and emphasizing her thoughts and inner emotion, Wroth frees her from the passive position of the sonnet mistress and transforms her into a literary chameleon -- taking on the necessary colors to camouflage herself from public predators.

Part Three: An Examination of the Idea of Performance

Male authors could evade the prohibitions surrounding publication and performance by figuring their texts as female bodies. However, because the gendering of texts was based on a firmly established male/female hierarchy, it could not simply be reversed in the hands of a female writer⁵¹. Women were obliged to discover other means of negotiating the transgressive act of writing. As I have suggested, Wroth uses the private textual space of the sonnets to avoid becoming part of what she terms "this stage of woe" (P48 12). Gary Waller states, "the Petrarchan love poem is a theater of desire -- one in which men have the active roles and the women are assigned silent, mnemonic functions and are notable primarily for their absence in the script" (Waller "Emergence" 242). In reinventing the function of performance in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* Wroth creates what might be described as a theater of the interior. Pamphilia performs, not as the object of desire, but instead as an actor on the stage of her psyche, separate from the public domain. She takes possession of the male gaze and redirects it inwards. *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* proposes a new vision of the female role within the sonnets -- a private performance on the stage of the soul⁵².

Various references to Wroth's poetry suggest that at least some of the sonnets that compose *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* were being circulated in manuscript form long before the publication of the *Urania* (Roberts 18-19). It is unrealistic to propose that Wroth's writing was intended to be kept entirely private. Nonetheless, Wroth's anxieties regarding publication and her desire to construct a private text are registered through her wariness of the stage. The association between writing and the stage is confirmed in sonnet P100 where Pamphilia compares "stage play" (11) to "ancient fictions" (12). It is not surprising that

⁵¹ See Joan Kelly's comments regarding the function of the woman in Renaissance love poetry.

⁵² See Weidemann, for an alternate perspective on female performance.

Wroth associates publication with theatrical performance as both represent women acting inappropriately within the public sphere. In general, "theatrical self-display is often denounced as incompatible with proper feminine behavior in the discourse of the Jacobean theater" (Weidemann 194). Women were not allowed upon the public stage, and for the most part their roles in court masques were largely decorative⁵³ (Weidemann 194-95). Female performance typically fell into one of two categories: the jeweled and costumed vision of the court masque intended to beguile the male audience or the boy in women's clothing on the public stage. "The injunction against women's speech in masques effectively promoted the myth of a coherent gender identity, identifying real women's bodies (when they appeared on stage at all) as essentialized sites of submission" (Weidemann 195). The role of the sonnet mistress was similar to the role of women in court masques. In both the female, as an object of the gaze, is expected to be decorative and largely silent. If Wroth positions Pamphilia as an object, the text becomes performance -- either innocuously decorative or conspicuously inappropriate. Instead, the sonnets resist any associations with the public sphere and hence the stage. The textual private space Wroth constructs allows her to distance herself from the performative aspect of the sonnets. Resistance to the type of female performance demonstrated in other sonnet sequences and masques manifests itself in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* in a reinvention of the Diana / Actaeon myth, and through the reconstitution of the male gaze and the elimination of the blazon. These revisions are elaborated by Wroth's drama, *Love's Victorie*.

Love's Victorie was written around the same time as the *Urania* (1620). Like the *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, it depicts various forms of love. *Love's Victorie* was never published and currently exists in only two manuscript forms (Cerasano 94). Moreover, the

⁵³ See also Patricia Fumerton, "Consuming the Void: Jacobean Banquets and Masques", in Cultural Aesthetics, for a discussion of the role of the masque in proclaiming the private self (136).

fact that it remained unpublished lends credence to the suggestion that Wroth did not intend to publish the *Urania* or the sonnets (Roberts 57). Wroth's play, nonetheless, attests to her interest in the theater and masques. It is possible that the play was performed by Wroth's friends and family (Cerasano 93). However, the play also demonstrates Wroth's awareness of women's circumscribed areas of action.

Presumably, in a culture where female courtiers regularly performed in masques, the distinction between acting and writing as types of performance would not be remarkable. However, sonnet P25 which refers to "the Indians, scorched with the sunne" (1), sets out the dilemma regarding writing and performance that Wroth must negotiate in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. This dilemma is the distinction between performance which positions the female body as object of the male gaze and woman - as - director or author (rather than object) of performance. It is likely that this sonnet refers in some degree to her participation in Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness* where Wroth and other ladies of the court disguised themselves as black, Ethiopian nymphs (Roberts 12)⁵⁴. However, rather than interpret this as a sentimental reminiscence of Wroth's better days in the court, one might read it as her awareness of the paradoxical nature of her role as masque performer, in comparison to her role as a writer of sonnets.

As a member of the Jacobean court Wroth would have participated in and watched various masques. Nevertheless, women's performance in the masques was extremely limited. Although the female players may have worn extravagant costumes, "they never asserted themselves in speaking roles" (Weidemann 195). As a result, Wroth's participation would

⁵⁴ See Lamb's comments regarding Wroth's participation in the masque and her eventual fall from courtly grace, in *Gender and Authorship*, 149. As well, Ann Rosalind Jones proposes that references to blackness and night throughout the sequence "intertwine her poetic structures with [Ben] Jonson's script [*The Masque of Blackness*] and Inigo Jone's designs" (144). Although it is likely that the Indians are reminiscent of Wroth's masque experience, Jone's assertion is not clearly substantiated by the other sonnets.

have heightened her awareness that generally women were to be seen and admired, but not heard. The "Indians" in sonnet P25 embody this form of socially acceptable female performance. The Indians are evidently part of the visible world as they "to blacknes runn" (5). They represent the silent spectacle of the masque and as such their performance is well received:

Like to the Indians, scorched with the sunne,
The sunn which they doe as theyr God adore (1-2).

On the other hand, Wroth's "worship" (4) of love, manifested by the sonnets, does not merit the same response; "I worship him, less favors have I wunn" (4). The image of the Indians worshipping the sun could not belong anywhere else in Renaissance society than on the stage and the second quatrain confirms Wroth's awareness of the acceptability of their performance; "Better are they who thus to blacknes runn" (5). In comparison, Pamphilia describes herself as "pale, and white . . . with griefs store" (7). Just as the Indians' "blaknes" suggests their visibility, Pamphilia's whiteness hints at the whiteness of the page of the sonnets which is literally filled with "griefs store." The acceptable display of the Indians results in "theyr sacrifices receavd's in sight / Of theyr chose sainte" (9-10). In contrast, Wroth describes Pamphilia's offerings, the sonnets, as being "hid as worthless rite" (10). Weidemann views the sonnet as a metaphor for two distinct female selves, which compose the "theatrical woman" (201). However, although P25 does depict the inherent conflict between Wroth's role as performer, and her role as writer, this comparison is unique in the sequence. Rather than "staging identity" (201) as Weidemann proposes, Wroth conceals her

public identity in order to describe her inner self⁵⁵. Accordingly, the contradiction implied by the sonnet alludes to Wroth's awareness that her writing does not carry the same currency as courtly performance.

The association between "worthless" and Wroth and "rite" and write seems inevitable and emphasizes the dilemma posed by sonnet P25. Pamphilia voices Wroth's wish; "Grant mee to see wher I my offrings give" (11). This stresses Wroth's desire that her writing be accepted in similar way to the Indians' sacrifices. However, the concluding stanza recognizes that the sonnets cannot be understood in the same way as a masque performance and require some form of negotiation to render them acceptable:

Then lett mee weare the marke of Cupids might

In hart as they in skin of Phoebus light

Nott ceasing offrings to love while I Live (12-14).

Rather than the overt display of the Indians darkened skin, Pamphilia wishes to wear Cupid's mark "in hart." Pamphilia's "sacrifices" -- the sonnets -- must be part of Pamphilia's private experience. Sonnet P25 illustrates how the sonnets reinvent the idea of performance. Wroth describes how Pamphilia will contain her writing within her private realm, symbolized by her heart, recognizing that her "worthless rite" cannot be made visible in the same way as the Indians' sacrifices⁵⁶. In Wroth's renegotiation, Pamphilia's "performance" of her love for

⁵⁵ Although Masten's argument regarding Wroth's "repudiation of love theatrically displayed" (71) is similar to my own, Masten's tendency is to gender the "million that make showe of love" (P41 14) as male, whereas I interpret this as more of an all-encompassing reference to the public domain. Masten states that "we can read the figures against which [Wroth] established herself (the Indians, the hunters and hawkers) as representations of the male speakers of the popular English Petrarchan tradition" (71). This kind of gendered argument seems inherently flawed in that the "Indians" are more likely incarnations of the female performers in the *Masque of Blackness* and the "hunters and hawkers" suggest courtly entertainments that would have been enjoyed by both sexes.

⁵⁶ Fienberg states that Wroth's puns on her name "encode the intimate entanglement of the activity of writing and the creation of female subjectivity" (187-88). She further proposes that Wroth's use of the Indians is a means of reclaiming her experience of a male pastime (the masque) (188). Although it seems likely that the poem is biographical to some degree, I believe it illustrates what Wroth cannot do as a female writer rather than "reclaiming poetic invention" (188) in as forceful as way as Fienberg implies.

Amphilanthus remains hidden.

Wroth's revision of the idea of performance is exemplified by the final act of *Love's Victorie*. Here Wroth's description of the "rites" of the lovers, Philisses and Musella, echoes Pamphilia's "rite" in the sonnet. In the same way that Pamphilia is unable to reveal her true love publicly in contrast to the "Indians", Philisses and Musella must confine the revelation of their love to the Temple of Love.

Venus and great Cupid, hear,
Take our sacrifices clear!
Where not rites we only give,
But our hearts wherein you live (V iv 1-4).

Wroth is aware that her writing, which she represents as "offerings", transgresses what is considered acceptable feminine behavior in Renaissance society. Similarly, Philisses and Musella are conscious of the transgressive nature of their love, as Musella is supposed to marry Rustic. The pre-arranged marriage is the product of her father's will:

Alas, I've urged her, till that she with tears
Did vow and grieve she could not mend my state
Agreed upon by my father's will, which bears
Sway in her breast and duty in me (V i 11-14).

Musella's explanation of the impossibility of breaking the marriage contract stresses her lack of liberty in the male / female hierarchy. It also underscores the foundation upon which female obedience and silence are built. In order to escape these restrictions Philisses and Musella must hide the "rites" of their love in the temple.

The scene in the temple also distinguishes between performance and the private nature of true love. Although the rites performed within the temple are already at one remove from the

world of the shepherds, Philesses and Musella differentiate between the performance of the rites and their love; "Where not rites we only give, / But our hearts wherein you live" (V iv 3-4). Their words emphasize the importance of what is in their hearts and stress the audience's recognition of the greater importance of their heartfelt emotion as opposed to the visible performance of the rites. Both the sonnet and the play revise the idea of performance. Instead of the usual association of performance with public show, the truly revealing moments in the texts occur within private space -- the heart, the temple. The gaze of the audience or reader is drawn inward and penetrates the sacred temple or the soul.

Similarly, in the sonnets, the identity of Pamphilia the poet is invested in the private space of the text. Consequently, the self who performs the sonnets is distinct from Pamphilia's other selves. As I mentioned previously, the introductory sonnet illustrates the beginning of this division as Pamphilia is separated from knowledge of herself. The sonnet seems to imply that Pamphilia, or at least part of her, has moved into a different realm. Sonnet P52 invokes a similar division of "self" to protect Pamphilia from the "multituds of questions" (2) which appear to come from the outside. Unable to escape the "tounge torture" (8), Pamphilia feigns possession:

. . . Alas I ame possesst,
And mad folks senceles ar of wisdomes right,
The hellish spirit absence doth arest
All my poore sences to his cruel might,
Spare mee then till I ame my self, and blest (10-14).

Again Pamphilia constructs another version of self to avoid participating in the public realm. Here she can remain within the space of the sonnets -- a space controlled by Amphilanthus'

"absence" -- by pretending to be mad⁵⁷. Arguably, to feign madness is simply another form of performance. However, pretending to be mad positions Pamphilia firmly in the psychological realm and denies any further performance as she "will fright / That Divell speach" (P52 9-10). The distinction between the Indians' public sacrifice and Pamphilia's "offerings" is reinforced by the suggestion that the creation of the sonnets involves a self that turns in on itself, a self that speaks into "absence", not from the stage. Pamphilia wishes only to "quarrell with [her] brest" (P52 3) and, as a result, the sonnets are described as Pamphilia's internal dialogue.

Pamphilia's abhorrence of " That Divell speach" alludes to her distrust of the court. Not only do references to the court help position Pamphilia as a sincere character within a private textual space, but they also demonstrate the dangers of these public spectacles. For example, sonnet P64 depicts a court scene with Love as the feature juggler:

Love like a jugler, comes to play his prise,
And all minds draw his wonders to admire,
To see how cunningly hee, wanting eyes,
Can yett deseave the best sight of desire (1-4).

Although the deceptive nature of Love is ostensibly the emphasis of the sonnet, the courtly setting suggests Wroth's wariness of this kind of performance. Although there is little protection from Cupid's manipulation of her heart, men in the visible realm prove equally deceiving: "For men can only by their sliights abuse / The sight with nimble and delightful skill" (11-12). The sonnet also implies that once love becomes public performance Pamphilia loses control of it; "But if hee play, his gaine is our lost will: / Yett childlike, wee can nott his

⁵⁷ See Masten, 75. See also, Mitchell's comments on the "hysterical women." Mitchell states, "Hysteria is the woman's refusal of the organization of sexuality under patriarchal capitalism. It is simultaneously what a woman can do both to be feminine and to refuse femininity, within patriarchal discourse" (427).

sports refuse" (14). Pamphilia's wariness of courtly entertainment is likely indicative of Wroth's own experiences. According to Weidemann, "skill and ability at games would have been the available means to preserve [Wroth's] standing at court" (198). Courtly performance would be like walking a tightrope hoping not to fall from grace and as such it would not offer the ideal space for the revelation of true love. Sonnet P26 demonstrates Pamphilia's preference for privacy, suggesting that the activities of her "thoughts," "minde," and "spiritt" (9,10,11) have precedence over courtly frivolity. The sonnet concludes with the question that the sequence attempts to answer:

O God, say I, can thes fond pleasures move?

Or musique bee butt in sweet thoughts of love? (13-14).

The questions imply that the court's "fond pleasures" do not offer true satisfaction. "Musique" exists in thoughts of love rather than entertainment. *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* represents this internal music, and as a result, the performance of Pamphilia's love is inextricably private, unlike the performance of the blackened Indians.

Diana and Actaeon

The dilemma between performance and writing illustrated by sonnet P25 has an explanatory story in a different configuration -- the story of Diana and Actaeon. The myth can be read as a paradigm for performance as it exists in male-authored sequences. In the original version of the Diana / Actaeon myth, Actaeon comes upon the chaste goddess bathing. Actaeon is, of course, transfixed by her divine beauty and his desire. Diana, shamed and angered by this intrusion, transforms Actaeon into a stag and he is pursued and torn apart by his own hunting dogs. Diana, in this incarnation, represents the threat of a powerful female and embodies the male fear of castration and dismemberment. The myth also demonstrates the link between sight and desire. In her article, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme,"

Nancy Vickers discusses how, beginning with Petrarch, this myth has been reworked to eliminate Diana's threat of dismemberment and castration:

Petrarch's Actaeon, having read his Ovid, realizes what will ensue: his response to the threat of imminent dismemberment is the neutralization, through descriptive dismemberment, of the threat. He transforms the visible totality into scattered words, the body into signs; his description, at one remove from his experience, safely permits and perpetuates his fascination (103).

The verbal dismemberment of Diana in Petrarch is the genesis of the blazon. The threat of the female other may be contained by scattering her in words throughout the text⁵⁸. Diana subsequently becomes Laura or Stella, or any female beloved, and is dispersed into her very attractive parts -- eyes, hands, skin, breasts.

Wroth, on the other hand, in her reinvention of the Diana / Actaeon scenario, constructs a more autonomous role for Pamphilia. The Diana of Petrarch's version of the myth is caught and controlled by the male gaze, denying her the totality she requires to meet his gaze as an equal or even to speak. The Diana / Actaeon myth, as well as its by-products -- the gaze and the blazon -- is relevant to *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* because of the myth's notable absence. Wroth could not have simply taken on the role of Actaeon -- the blazoning or dismemberment of Amphilanthus would have represented an unthinkable reversal of the male / female hierarchy. As well, for a female Actaeon there would be the detrimental association of the gaze with desire. Although Diana is not wholly absent from the sonnets, the paradigm structured by the Diana / Actaeon myth is. Wroth does not blazon Amphilanthus, nor does she recreate the desiring male gaze. She does, however, use Diana as a model for a renewed

⁵⁸ See Vickers, 98-99, 105. See also Wall, "Disclosures", 44-45, Janet MacArthur, 16, and Waller's comments on the gaze and the blazon in "Emergence", 250.

vision of women -- a vision that does not cast Pamphilia in the role of silent female performer to be gazed upon voyeuristically by Actaeon / Amphilanthus.

Diana, instead, becomes a symbol for male betrayal and an exemplar for female control. The goddess also provides the foundation for Wroth's revisioning of the idea of performance. Diana is the rationale behind the private nature of Pamphilia's "performance" of the sonnets. The goddess appears only once in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, unaccompanied by Actaeon. In sonnet P70 Love (Cupid) appears personified as "chast Diana's gaine" (2). Diana informs Love that he is a thief and a murderer, "Vowing the untaught Lad should noe reliefe / From her receive, who glory'd in fond pain" (3-4). Wroth's version of Diana recognizes the deceitful nature of love embodied by Cupid. In comparison to the silenced version of the goddess in other sequences, Wroth's Diana is unwilling to be manipulated by the justifications offered by Cupid for his actions. However, in spite of the fact that Wroth's version of Diana is able to "discourse" (11) with love, she is nonetheless betrayed:

The Nymphs unty'd him, and his chains tooke off
Thinking him safe; butt hee loose, made a scofe
Smiling, and scorning them, flew to the wood (12-14).

This episode implies Wroth's awareness of Diana's impotence in contemporary sonnet sequences. It suggests that in spite of Diana's recognition of Love's true nature, she remains powerless to act. Although Diana avoids dismemberment, she cannot avoid Cupid's betrayal.

This sense of impotence and betrayal is echoed in a later song by another mythical figure -- Philomele:

Philomeale in this arbour
Makes now her loving harbour

Yett of her state complaining

Her notes in mildness straining

Which though sweet

Yett doe meete

Her former luckles payning (P93 15-21).

Both Diana and Philomele manage to remain relatively whole in the face of the male threat, in contrast to the breasts, arms, eyes and hands of male-authored sequences⁵⁹. However, Wroth recognizes their relative powerlessness -- Philomele's "sweet" notes are unable to effectively erase "her former luckles payning." Rather than emphasize the desirable appearance of Diana as in other sequences, Wroth illustrates the undesirable consequences of women being seen by men.

Dalina, in *Love's Victorie*, voices the sentiments symbolized by the fate of Diana and Philomele in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*:

This is the reason men are grown so coy,

When they perceive we make their smiles our joy;

Let them alone, and they will seek and sue,

But yield to them and they'll with scorn pursue.

Hold awhile off, they'll kneel, nay, follow you,

And vow and swear. Yet, all their oaths untrue (III ii 145-50).

The belief that the oaths uttered by both Love and men ultimately prove untrue is evinced by the fates of Diana and Philomele. Silvesta confirms this conviction in *Love's Victorie* as Forester tries to convince her that he only wishes her sight and nothing more. She states, "No, no, I ne'er believe your fond-made oath" (II i 41) echoing Dalina's statement that all

⁵⁹See Lamb, 26. See also Fienberg regarding Wroth's creation of a community of women embodied by persona like Philomele and Diana, 188.

male vows are untrue. These instances of deception reinforce the notion that love, and man, the purveyor of this love, is deceitful. Wroth insinuates that when women allow themselves to be seen by desiring men the consequences are invariably painful. As a result, Silvesta, Diana's acolyte, demonstrates an awareness of this threat, offering a new approach to combating the destructive effects of male desire, that is, chastity.

Wroth's use of mythical figures to symbolize male deceit in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* serves to displace sentiments that might have hazardous consequences. Pamphilia bears too direct a connection with Wroth should the sonnets escape into the public realm. It is interesting to note that even within the drama Dalina's commentary on the untruth of male oaths is revealed only to a gathering of female shepherdesses. Although the audience is privy to this information, it is staged as though it is intended to be contained within the group of women. Dalina's comments would undoubtedly have negative consequences if heard by the male shepherds. However, the form of the drama does allow for Wroth's sentiments to be more directly stated. A play is much less portable than individual sonnets and more likely to remain contained within Wroth's close circle of friends and their sympathetic knowledge of her situation. Moreover, as in the case of Dalina and the shepherdesses, she can clearly stage the intended audience. As well, it is difficult to assign the words of all the female characters to a single writer. As a result, opinions that form the subtext of the sonnets may be pointedly voiced in *Love's Victorie*.

This distinction between the play and the sonnets offers an explanation for Wroth's greater development of the role of Diana in *Love's Victorie*. In both texts Wroth evades Diana's usual fate of (literary) dismemberment in the hands of male authors by keeping her away from Actaeon. This in turn provides a justification that extends beyond simple societal

expectations for Pamphilia's and Silvesta's chastity⁶⁰. In the case of Silvesta, as a consequence of her betrayal by Philesses, she has chosen chastity. On the other hand, Pamphilia is constant in spite of Amphilanthus' philandering. Both Silvesta and Pamphilia achieve a certain amount of control through their rejection of the world of men.

Love's Victorie illustrates what Pamphilia can only in part attain because of her love for Amphilanthus. Forester describes Silvesta's decision to become chaste as though she has been forced to change:

And more she loved, more cruel still he grew;
Till at the length thus tyrant-like he proved,
Forcing that change which makes my poor heart rue (I ii 186-89).

However, while the male version of Silvesta's alteration suggests that she is more or less a victim of unfortunate circumstance, Silvesta offers a different interpretation:

I with Dian stand,
Against Love's changing and blind foolery,
To hold with happy and blessed chastity.
For love is idle, happiness there's none
When freedom's lost and chastity is gone (I ii 88-92).

Silvesta's words imply that Diana is a suitable symbol for her recognition of "Love's changing and blind foolery." Moreover, "blessed chastity" offers her freedom that she cannot experience if she is bound to a man. As a follower of Diana, she has achieved liberty:

I have won Chastity in place of Love.
Now Love's as far from me as never known,

⁶⁰ For various perspectives on constancy see: Weidemann, 202-03, Masten, 182, Hanson, 182, Lamb, 166-67, Dubrow, 146, and MacArthur who makes an interesting connection between Pamphilia's constancy and that of Elizabeth, 18-19.

Then basely tied, now freely am mine own (I ii 118-20).

Silvesta's implication of being "mine own" is perhaps a tantalizing possibility in a society where women are tied to fathers and husbands with limited rights of their own.

Silvesta, safely located in the pastoral setting of the play, can willingly remove herself from the commerce in women. However, this is a liberty not available to all female characters. For example, Musella is bound unhappily to be married to Rustic. In comparison, although Pamphilia resides within a textually constructed private space, she is nonetheless aware of her inability to remove herself entirely from the world where women have little power over their fates in love:

Yett firme love holds my senses in such band
As since dispis'd, I with sorrow marry;
Then if with grief I now must coupled bee
Sorrow I'll wed: Dispaire thus governs mee (P10 11-14).

Wroth's reference to marriage suggests that women are inextricably tied to love and thus to the world of men, and that they must in some ways resign themselves to their fate. While Silvesta's choice is based upon a complete repudiation of the male world, which guarantees her a certain liberty, Pamphilia is unable to give up her love for Amphilanthus, although she does circumvent some prohibitions by describing herself as chaste and constant. In the final sonnet Pamphilia tells her muse she can now "Sleepe in the quiett of a faithfull love" (P103 2). Wroth clearly associates Pamphilia's love for Amphilanthus with a loss of liberty; Pamphilia states, "I love, and must: So farwell liberty" (P16 14). Pamphilia's bondage to love is evidently not a source of unadulterated joy -- her freedom has been replaced by pain; "And thy faire showes made mee a lover prove / When I my freedome did, for paine refuse" (P8 12). Pamphilia can only partially replicate Silvesta's freedom, which is based on a complete rejection of love and the world of men.

Although the sonnets only briefly mention Diana, Wroth's interpretation of her as representative of betrayal and chastity is elaborated through her follower, Silvesta, in *Love's Victory*. The version of chastity espoused by the drama and the sonnets is one where the woman remains unseen. Silvesta and Pamphilia recognize the conditional nature of women's freedom -- it is predicated on chastity or constancy and containment within a space unseen by men. As a result, Wroth revises the Diana/Actaeon myth, not through simple role reversal and the blazoning of Amphilanthus, but instead by removing both Actaeon and Amphilanthus. Silvesta voices the dangers of being seen in response to Forester's wish to "have your sight" (II i 37):

Protest you may that there shall nothing be

By you imagined 'gainst my chastity,

But this I doubt . . . (II i 44-46).

Silvesta's freedom is founded on her avoidance of the male gaze and her chastity. Pamphilia creates a similar kind of autonomy in her redirection of the gaze inwards. The two types of chastity exemplified by Silvesta and Pamphilia offer two versions of the Diana / Actaeon myth. If, in the case of Silvesta, she can remain unseen by man (love), she is guaranteed her freedom. However, if she cannot wholly absent herself from love, as in the case of Pamphilia, she must renegotiate the gaze of Actaeon (man) in order to remain whole.

If we take the Diana / Actaeon myth as representative, at least to some degree, of the male / female love relation espoused in sonnet sequences, then Wroth must rewrite the myth if Pamphilia is to remain whole. Thus the myth as it exists in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* goes something like this: Diana creates a scenario where Actaeon believes he has discovered her. However, instead of seeing her naked body, he sees her soul. Transfixed by the extreme intimacy of this vision he is reduced to silence and she speaks . . .

In order to restructure the love relation in this way, Wroth must first renegotiate the link between sight and desire. It is evident from the sonnets that sight represents a danger. For example, in sonnet P5 Pamphilia states, "The Sun most pleasing blinds the strongest eye / If too much look'd on, breaking the sights string" (P5 5-6). The connection between desire and sight is confirmed in the final stanza of the poem; "Desire, sight, Eyes, lips, seeke, see, prove, and find / You love may win, butt curses if unkind" (12-13). The scattered list of vocabulary suggests the relationship between sight and desire and the dismemberment of the body into eyes and lips. Hanson describes this as a "string of nouns and verbs as disarticulated as puzzle pieces" (186). While Hanson's assertion that Wroth's attempt to suppress contradiction throughout the sequence results in some "syntactical difficulties" (186) is accurate, I suggest that this particular line is symbolic of the destructive and dismembering effects of love rather than a literary blunder. As well, the sonnet suggests the inherent danger of this kind of vision -- "sweet lips" (11) can be poisonous and eyes can "sting" (9). A subsequent sonnet confirms the connection between sight and desire:

Yett envy nott though I on earth beelow
Enjoy a sight which moves in mee more fire;
I doe confess such beauty breeds desire (P47 3-5).

Wroth's conviction that sight is the cause of Pamphilia's jealousy is also demonstrated in sonnet P98. For Pamphilia her external vision of the image of Amphilanthus is a source of both fear and desire:

When I beeheld the Image of my deere
With greedy lookes mine eyes would that way bend,
Fear and desire did inwardly contend (1-3).

Pamphilia is able to resolve these conflicting emotions by redirecting her gaze inwards, stating, "Yett in my hart unseene of jealous eye / The truer Image shall in triumph lye" (13-14).

While the Diana / Actaeon myth identifies the dangers of sight, *Love's Victorie* describes the male point of view that necessitates the redirection of Pamphilia's gaze. Wroth's conspicuous absenting of Amphilanthus and Silvesta's awareness of the dangers of being seen hint at the prohibitions surrounding women who actively pursue love. While Wroth's depiction of Pamphilia gestures at the restrictions that bound women's behavior in love, *Love's Victorie* actually voices the rationale behind Pamphilia's chastity/constancy. For example, as Musella contemplates how to reveal her love to Philesses, her friend remarks, "Indeed a woman to make love is ill" (III i 79). Moreover, Climeana's revelation of her love for Lissius is met with a response that pointedly illustrates the expectation of women's silence and passivity:

Is this for a maid
To follow and to haunt me thus? You blame
Me for disdain, but see not your own shame!
Fie, I do blush for you! A woman woo?
The most unfittest, shameful'st thing to do! (III ii 184-88).

In order for a woman to "woo" she would have to actively return the male gaze, thus revealing her desire. Although Lissius' views are pointedly anti-marriage, the other female characters escape his condemnation because they subscribe to his ideal of female behavior. Lissius' description of women demonstrates the constraints that inform Pamphilia's love for Amphilanthus:

Thus it moves: that a man should be so fon.
As to be tied t'a woman's faithless breed!
For we should women love but as our sheep,
Who being kind and gentle give us ease,
But cross, or straying, stubborn or unmeek,
Shunned as the wolf, which most our flocks disease (II i 65-70).

In Lissius' terms women should be like sheep, patiently unflinching under the shepherd's observation. Women who speak their love like Climeana are denounced.

Pamphilia to Amphilanthus eliminates the blazon typical of male-authored sonnets by turning Pamphilia's gaze inward and redirecting that of the audience⁶¹: "Learne to guide your course by art / Chang your eyes into your hart" (P62 13-14). In the transformation of the eyes into the lover's "hart", Wroth denies Pamphilia sight except to look inwards. Wall suggests that male-authored texts make use of the female body to register their inwardness (45-47). However, while male interiority is predicated on the availability of female body parts, Pamphilia's is constructed through the elimination of sight entirely.

When last I saw thee, I did not thee see,

Itt was thine Image, which in my thoughts lay (1-2).

Wroth makes it clear that Pamphilia does not actually see Amphilanthus, but his "Image"⁶². Her experience of Amphilanthus is not that of the spectacle, but instead a vision. Pamphilia wishes to remain asleep as it is favorable to her; "soe kind my sleepe / That gladly thee presents into my thought" (9-10).

Wroth's reinterpretation of the gaze not only affects Pamphilia but also the role of the reader as audience to the sonnets. Pamphilia draws the reader in saying, "Then looke on mee" (P48 5), but simultaneously Wroth constructs a scenario where the reader has intruded upon a very private scene; "I, ame the soule that feeles the greatest smart" (P48 6)⁶³. The space Wroth creates for the reader is that of the soul. Jones, however, describes Pamphilia as "an orator using public space to denounce injustice" (149). She proposes that Pamphilia "calls upon the

⁶¹ MacArthur reads the absence of the blazon in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* as Wroth's writing in Lacan's "Name-of-the-Father"; Wroth "must submit or identify with the Father's Laws, repressing her sexual desire and negating her own difference" (179).

⁶² See Dubrow, 145, and Hanson, 184.

⁶³ See Jones, "Self as Spectacle", for an alternative reading of P48, 149.

gaze of a public to make a case for her innocence and merit, and she invokes a tragic setting to reinforce that innocence through direct, even aggressive control of audience perspective" (150). I propose that Wroth redirects the gaze by positioning the reader as interloper, rather than spectator, thus rejecting the performative aspect of the sonnets.

In P100, for example, Pamphilia is positioned in darkness, surrounded by the blank walls of "haples rooms" (3). The overriding sense of darkness and Pamphilia's isolation offer a revealing contrast to the "disguised pleasures" of the stage:

Butt stage play like disguised pleasures give;

To mee itt seems as ancient fictions make

The starrs all fashions, and all shapes partake

While in my thoughts true forme of love shall live (P100 11-14).

The reference to "ancient fictions" implies previous sonnet sequences. The sonnet implies that the fictions that make the "starrs all fashions" are like stage play. Pamphilia rejects this form of display in favor of situating her love in her thoughts. Wroth's disdain for display and her emphasis on her thoughts create the impression that the reader has intruded upon a private moment rather than a public performance⁶⁴.

Nonetheless, the positioning of the audience / reader as interloper is somewhat deceptive. Wroth controls the gaze, drawing it inward, but creates the impression of having little control -- it is the gaze of an intruder. Wall suggests that the reader of male-authored texts is placed in the position of "voyeur" (38). However, her assessment reveals it is the "many textual layers surrounding the work [that] make the act of reading seem to move inward -- through public casings toward a

⁶⁴ Masten interprets Wroth's reference to stars as a means of writing against Philip Sidney's sequence. In Masten's formulation the "haples roomes" signify Wroth's reclamation of "the traditionally non-discursive space of a "darke" lady" (73-74). I would argue that Wroth is constructing a textual space specifically for Pamphilia's psyche, rather than reclaiming an existing one.

secluded interiority" (39). Although the positioning of the reader in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is similar to these male-authored texts, it is not evinced through the use of textual public and private space. Instead, Wroth elaborates Pamphilia's interiority. Pamphilia exerts control over the reader by redirecting the gaze. Musella, in *Love's Victorie*, demonstrates the necessity for this type of duplicity⁶⁵. In revealing her love for Philesses to Silvesta, Musella complains, "Sometimes I fain would speak, then straight forbear, / Knowing it most unfit" (III i 78-79). Musella is clearly aware that women are supposed to remain silent and passive in the Renaissance love equation. However, Silvesta devises a means for Musella to thwart these restrictions. She tells Musella that Philisses habitually walks alone in the forest bemoaning his unrequited state. Apparently, Musella can avoid the difficulties inherent in actually proclaiming her love if she simply overhears him:

Now, since you love so much, come here and find
Him in these woes, and show yourself but kind.
You soon shall see a heart so truly won
As you it would not it miss to be undone (III i 85-88).

This plan is successful and Musella reveals her love to Philesses without appearing unduly forward. Silvesta, too, demonstrates the function of the interloping audience. In the final act of the play Silvesta intrudes upon Philisses and Musella as they prepare to sacrifice themselves for love:

O, hold your hands! I knew your minds and have
Brought fitter means to wed you to your grave.
Let not those hands be spotted with your blood (V iv 57-59).

⁶⁵ See Lamb's comments regarding the displacement of the storyteller's (writer's) guilt in the *Urania*, 176-80. Lamb's formulation of a "double-audience" proposes that characters in the *Urania* "often find relief for intense emotional pain by setting feeling to meter, only to be overheard or read by compassionate audiences" (180). I believe the sonnets attempt a similar strategy. However, the first person format does not allow Wroth to specifically script in the audiences response.

The fact that women are often confined to surreptitious action in the drama suggests Wroth's awareness of the societal expectations that reinforced women's' passivity.

Although in the sonnets Wroth can only script one side of the equation, the reader is placed in the position of hearing something ostensibly meant to be hidden or private. Wroth emphatically points to the private nature of Pamphilia's thoughts, her disdain for outward shows, as well as the private space constructed in the sonnets. In doing so, Wroth removes herself from the "stage of woe"⁶⁶, yet at the same time controls the reader's gaze, drawing it into Pamphilia's private world. The act of writing thus appears unintentional and as blameless as it is private. The positioning of the audience / reader as intruder allows Wroth to transform the gaze. Rather than following in the footsteps of Diana, figuratively dismembered by Actaeon⁶⁷, Wroth creates a scenario where only Diana's soul is revealed. Humbled by the private nature of this vision, Actaeon remains -- silenced, watching, and Diana is allowed to speak.

⁶⁶ See also Fienberg, 182.

⁶⁷ See also Vickers, 104.

Part Four: Torture

Pamphilia to Amphilanthus is not a means of suing for political favor -- pleas cleverly disguised as the pursuit of the beloved. Amphilanthus is absent and Pamphilia appears to prefer her isolation to the frivolities of the court. However, in spite of the fact that political references are largely absent, the sonnets, nonetheless, speak about Wroth's political circumstances, both in terms of courtly position and the associated risks of writing. Just as private space is used to promote the idea of Pamphilia's sincerity, it also serves to contrast the capricious nature of Pamphilia's political environment. The private realm that Wroth creates in the sonnets contrasts with the entertainments and deceptions of the court. Cupid, as the monarch presiding over the court of love, suggests the experience of the relationship between a monarch and his subjects -- or perhaps Wroth's own experience of being edged out of James' court. Wroth's extensive use of the metaphors of torture and torment suggests that the writing is not without political undertones. These metaphors serve a double function, emphasising again the sincerity of the writing while simultaneously describing the dangers of the court. Wroth attempts to represent Pamphilia as a martyr -- a prisoner of love -- trapped within the "strang cage" of the sonnets. The torments she endures reveal the dangerous nature of those who have imprisoned her and the crown of sonnets functions as an appeal to her captors -- a confession.

Pamphilia as Prisoner

I'll not martyr thee,

Nor mark thee for a strumpet, but usage

Of more humility torment thy soul,

And kill thee, even with kindness. (*A Woman Killed with Kindness* p.71 l.154-56)

Even the husband in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is aware that a violent demise for his wife, however merited, would have the effect of restoring her honour in some way. If she were to suffer or be punished she would be transformed into a "martyr." Nonetheless, it is not uncommon in Medieval and Renaissance literature for the honour of a female character to be established through her death. For example, several of the characters in Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la cité des dames*, are tortured and put to death for their speech, as well as Elizabeth Cary's *Mariam*, and the female martyrs that appear in Amelia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*⁶⁸. Ferguson proposes that these stories that martyr the female subject are a means of counteracting the association between female speech and wantonness; "If, on the one hand, the martyr stories suggest that powerful female speech need not be associated with the idea of sexual sin, they suggest, on the other hand, that the female body itself must be sacrificed in exchange for both divine grace and for eloquence" (105). It is this system of exchange that Wroth employs in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Pamphilia is clearly set apart from the court, which has the effect of emphasising her sincerity. As well, the reader is given the impression that Pamphilia prefers to be preoccupied with her thoughts rather than with the activities of the public sphere. Still, the sonnets suggest the involuntary aspect of her occupation of private space. Wroth's description of Pamphilia as a martyr and a prisoner stresses the external political forces that circumscribe her actions⁶⁹. Based on Ferguson's formulation, such a characterisation of Pamphilia allows her greater freedom to speak through the sacrifice or seeming imprisonment of her body.

In the opening sonnet of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, Pamphilia's heart is "martir'd" (P1 12). Apparently, it is the capture of her heart by Venus and Cupid that impels her to speak about her

⁶⁸ See Ferguson, 104-05.

⁶⁹ See Jones, "Self as Spectacle", 137. Jones suggests that Wroth "stages Pamphilia's captivity as a spectacle through which she resists her own disappearance into the categories of failed courtier and silenced women" (137). While I agree that Wroth has intentionally positioned Pamphilia as a "captive", I would argue that this serves as a subtle commentary on the forces that act upon and control her, rather than a "spectacle".

love for Amphilanthus. While the martyring of Pamphilia's heart inaugurates her withdrawal into private space, it also hints at a want of freedom within this space. Like the women of other Renaissance stories Wroth reveals the necessity of absenting Pamphilia's physical body in exchange for "divine grace and for eloquence" (Ferguson 105). However, not only is Pamphilia denied bodily form, she is also denied personal liberty. For example, in sonnet P16 Pamphilia asks,

Am I thus conquered? have I lost the powers

That to withstand, which joy's to ruin mee?

Must I bee still while itt my strength devowres

And captive leads mee prisoner, bound, unfree? (P16 1-4).

The first stanzas of sonnet P16 outline the negative aspects of Pamphilia's bondage to love and suggest her apprehension; "Must wee bee servile, doing what hee list?" (10). Nevertheless, the conclusion is a reversal of this sentiment; "I love, and must: So farewell liberty" (14). Pamphilia seemingly accepts the relationship between love and the loss of personal freedom -- a loss which, in essence, renders her a "prisoner, bound, unfree" (4).

While the loss of liberty is not an uncommon theme in Petrarchan poetry⁷⁰, Pamphilia's loss of freedom is predicated on a distinctive relationship with love itself rather than with Amphilanthus⁷¹. In fact, the figure of Love appears to be a rather obvious stand-in for a less than benevolent monarch who oversees, in the case of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, the court of love. Wroth describes Pamphilia's experience of love in political terms. Pamphilia's understanding of love is one of conquest and control. For example, in sonnet P3 Pamphilia asks love to "Shine in those eyes which conquer'd have my hart" (3). These eyes, "Two starrs of Heaven" (P2 9), which

⁷⁰ See Roberts' notes on P16, 95.

⁷¹ See MacArthur's discussion of Lacan with regards to Wroth's loyalty to "the Father's law". MacArthur suggests that Wroth holds "Amphilanthus rather than ideology responsible for Pamphilia's symbolic suffering" (17). Although my argument is not based on Lacan's formulation, my suggestion that Amphilanthus and love are stand-ins for external tensions bears some similarities.

presumably belong to Amphilanthus, do not share the pleasant attributes one might expect from a Petrarchan beloved; "Shining, and burning . . . Which wounding, even in hurts are deem'd delights" (P2 11-12). Amphilanthus' eyes burn and wound and ultimately conquer Pamphilia. However, in spite of the destructive nature of Amphilanthus' love, Pamphilia appears to have little choice but to remain constant:

Lodg in that brest, and pittie moving see
For flames which in mine burne in truest smart
Exiling thoughts that touch inconstancie,
Or those which waste nott in the constant art (P3 5-8).

The sonnet seems to insinuate that inconstancy is punished by exile. Wroth positions Pamphilia as subordinate to love -- a conquered subject who must seek "pitty" (5) or risk punishment -- a punishment not unlike Wroth's experience as an out-of-favor courtier. Sonnet P3 illustrates how forces outside the carefully constructed space of the sonnets exert control over Pamphilia's fortune. Wroth's description of Pamphilia as love's "servant" (12) and her reference to "love's crowne" (13) imply that Pamphilia's fate is not solely in the hands of her beloved but in some higher power manifested by the figure of love.

Wroth conflates the language of love with the language of conquest. Pamphilia is both the prize and the prisoner of this struggle. Pamphilia states,

Noe towne was wunn by a more plotted slight
Then I by you, who may my fortune write
In the embers of that fire which ruind mee (P3 9-11).

Through the metaphor of a vanquished town, Pamphilia's role in love is seen as property⁷² -- easily destroyed by any conquering force. The town, as a representation of public space,

⁷² See Swift's similar observation in the *Urania*, 167. See also Masten's comments regarding "the traffic in women" (78). See also, Waller, "Struggling into Discourse", 250.

intimates Pamphilia's loss of position in the public sphere; she is now confined to the darkness of "Hell" (8). Although "Hope" is ostensibly responsible for Pamphilia's ruin, she seeks legal retribution:

Thus Hope, your fault-hood calls you to be tried (P31 12).

The following sonnet reinforces Wroth's political vocabulary:

Am I the only purchase thou canst winn?

Was I ordain'd to give dispaire her fill

Or fittest I should mounte misfortunes hill

Who in the plaine of joy can-nott live in? (P32 5-8).

Again Wroth figures Pamphilia as political territory, describing her as a "purchase" (5) that might be won or conquered. The suggestion that Pamphilia has been "ordain'd" to fulfil her unfortunate position illustrates Wroth's understanding of the relationship between public office and private misery. The concluding lines demonstrate Pamphilia's martyr-like attitude. She welcomes Grief, stating, "Since I must suffer, for an others rest" (10). Pamphilia's willingness to suffer "torments" (14) and the underlying political tone of the sequence locate her as a martyr in some indeterminate conflict.

The frequent conflation of the language of love and political conquest displays Wroth's use of the Petrarchan love relation as a means of describing the injustices of the court. It is tempting to characterise these circumstances biographically as a result of Wroth's declining position within the court and her unhappy marriage⁷³. However, the intensely private nature of the poetry does not make this an obvious interpretation. For example, in sonnet P4, Pamphilia states,

⁷³ See Swift, regarding the circumstances of Wroth's marriage, 166, 168-71, as well as Lamb's comments regarding marriage in the *Urania*, (*Gender and Authorship*), 146. See also Waller, "Sidney Family Romance", 41-42.

And most, when as a memory to good
Molested me, which still as witness stood,
Of those best dayes, in former time I knew (P4 9-11).

The vague references in the poem may refer specifically to Wroth's loss of prestige within the court. However, the importance of the sonnet is what it reveals about the forces that act upon Pamphilia in her misfortune. Pamphilia states, "Then I alas with bitter sobs, and paine, / Privately groan'd" (5-6). Although her misery is a private experience, the phantoms of Pamphilia's "best dayes" remain to observe her downfall. That she is "molested"⁷⁴ by her memories emphasizes Pamphilia's helplessness and inability to escape the forces that have orchestrated her misfortune.

This assumption is substantiated by Wroth's depiction of Pamphilia as a "bannish'd creature" (1) in sonnet P44:

What pleasure can a bannish'd creature have
In all the pastimes that invented are
By witt or learning (1-3).

Wroth's reference to pastimes invented by "witt or learning" (3) undoubtedly indicates the court and her description of Pamphilia as "banished" implies courtly power. Here Pamphilia retreats from "lothed company"(7) rather than her own memories. Nonetheless, this private space is more like a "wellcome grave"(5) than the shelter Pamphilia craves. Finally, Pamphilia concludes that she must bind her "fortunes" with "mischief" (13). Again Wroth depicts her fate as controlled by external, intractable forces. In comparison, Masten reads this sonnet (P44) as indicative of Wroth's sense of banishment from Petrarchan language (72). However, Masten's argument is predicated on the assumption that "pastimes" are male activities. I propose, instead, that "witt and learning" are not obviously gendered, nor a transparent reference to Petrarchan poetics.

⁷⁴ Waller suggests that Wroth's use of the term molested represents her "struggles to avoid the constructing of sexual relations by patterns of domination and submission" (54-55).

Wroth's depiction of Pamphilia as molested and banished suggests that Pamphilia's isolation is a symptom of the court and its influence⁷⁵.

Sonnet P10 resonates with sonnet P44 in its reference to "pleasures" (P10 1). The initial line of the sonnet appears to address an ambiguous audience:

Bee you all pleas'd? your pleasures grieve nott mee:

Doe you delight? I envy nott your joy (P10 1-2).

The delights and pleasures of the sonnet seem to imply courtly entertainments. As well, "you all" (1) suggests several people, not an individual addressee. The delights of the court are contrasted with Pamphilia's "sad misfortune" (5) and "crosses" which "rule" (6) her.

Dispaire takes place, disdaine hath gott the hand;

Yett firme love holds my senses in such band

As since dispis'd, I with sorrow marry;

Then if with grief I now must coupled bee

Sorrow I'll wed: Dispaire thus governs mee (10-14).

Pamphilia's predicament is illustrated as though she has been conquered, rather than betrayed in her love for Amphilanthus. For example, "dispaire", "disdaine", and love are all depicted as having gained possession of some aspect of Pamphilia. Ultimately, she weds sorrow and the political vocabulary reasserts itself -- she is *governed* by despair. It is tempting to align the reference to marriage with Wroth's purportedly unhappy marriage. An alternate interpretation, in the absence of any obvious reference to Wroth's husband, might be that Wroth is hinting at the forces that act upon women like Pamphilia (or Wroth herself). Peter Stallybrass points out that the actual relationship between men and women was "one of female subordination to father or husband" (64). Apparently, "even the silence of the sonneteer's beloved has more in common with the prince's silence, in which his every look must be interrogated for the slightest sign of

⁷⁵ See also Nona Fienberg, 175-6.

favor or disfavor, than with the forced silence and obedience of a daughter or a wife" (Stallybrass 64). Stallybrass' argument supports my suggestion that Wroth's sonnets are more likely to allude to her political circumstances than to a romantic relationship with Amphilanthus. Consequently, Pamphilia is wed to the politics that govern her position on the exterior of the court.

Wroth's depiction of Pamphilia as a martyr or a prisoner or banished serves a double purpose. As a prisoner whose heart has been martyred, Pamphilia is clearly separate from the public world of the court -- literally imprisoned within the textual space of the sonnets. Figuring Pamphilia as a prisoner allows Pamphilia to speak with impunity as she is seemingly trapped within private space. Wall proposes reasons for such a manipulation; "Writers and printers generally suffered economic hardship, social ridicule, and dangerous entanglements with the state. Mostly, they could be 'dismembered' (made non-members) by being excluded socially from the sources of power. By shifting the perspective so that the 'guilty crime' lay with the spectator, the guilt of the writing itself is shielded" (52). However, this does not merely enable Pamphilia's voice but also facilitates Wroth's subtle condemnation of the power of the court. The political vocabulary and allusions to the court and its entertainments reveal Pamphilia's experience of courtly power. Wroth suggests that Pamphilia's isolation is a function of a perception of women as property or territory. Because Pamphilia is, in fact, a "conquest" rather than the beloved mistress, Wroth collapses the distinction between private love and political conflict. Wroth uses Pamphilia's experience of love, where she must sacrifice both her body and her freedom, as a metaphor for her experience of courtly power.

Torture

Wroth's positioning of Pamphilia as a martyr is reinforced by the suffering she endures. It is impossible to ignore the graphic references to torture in the first part of *Pamphilia to*

*Amphilanthus*⁷⁶. The metaphor of torture, like the construction of textual private space, emphasizes Pamphilia's sincerity. As illustrated by *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, the act of torture confers a degree of honor on its victim; "O to redeem my honour / I would have this hand cut off, these my breasts seared, / Be racked, strappadoed, put to any torment" (*A Woman Killed with Kindness* sc.13 l.135-37). Using Foucault's argument that torture and truth are inherently connected -- "in the practice of torture, pain, confrontation and truth were bound together" (41) -- we can read Wroth's representation of Pamphilia as a tortured prisoner, martyred by love, as guaranteeing the truth of the sonnets. The sonnets become an interrogation in which information is elicited under duress. Such a depiction also draws attention to Pamphilia while implying that she is contained within this imprisoning textual space and it is, in fact, the reader who observes through the bars⁷⁷.

Pamphilia to Amphilanthus offers a variation on Foucault's conception of the ritual of torture;

Torture forms part of a ritual . . . It is intended, either by the scar it leaves on the body, or by the spectacle that accompanies it, to brand the victim with infamy; even if its function is to "purge" the crime, torture does not reconcile; it traces around or, rather, on the very body of the condemned man signs that must not be effaced; in any case men will remember public exhibition, the pillory and pain duly observed (Foucault Discipline and Punish 34).

Wroth draws the idea of torture and torment out of its public, exhibitionist context and places it within the psychic space of the poetry. It, nonetheless, serves a similar purpose in that it represents Pamphilia's emotional turmoil and brands her in a way that proves unforgettable for

⁷⁶ See Swift for references to torture and imprisonment in the *Urania*, 167.

⁷⁷ In comparison, Jones, in "The Self as Spectacle", suggests Wroth "draws on the more popular dramatic spectacle - tragedy, as it figures the spectacularly suffering bodies of women - to add intensity to her complaints" (144). While I agree that such depictions of women add intensity, I think Wroth's source might just as easily be the real consequences suffered by women who chose to act outside societal expectations.

her audience. Wroth's references to torture suggest the forces that act upon Pamphilia from the outside world. While these allusions emphasize Pamphilia's sincerity, they also image the intractable pressure of the court, culminating in an attempt to appease as demonstrated by the crown of sonnets⁷⁸.

Sonnets P5 and P6 demonstrate how Wroth uses political language to evince the dangers of the public realm⁷⁹. For example, in sonnet P5 Pamphilia asks, "Can firme desire a painfull torment try? . . . Or can sweet lips in treason hidden ly?" (2,4). Wroth conflates the language of love -- sweet lips and desire -- with that of torture and treason. The next sonnet provides answers for Pamphilia's questions, aligning love with "disdaine" (1) and "cruelty" (2). Here she addresses her audience stating, "Yett wretched I, all torturs beare from thee" (P6 8). Apparently Pamphilia's suffering is the product of the addressee's "will" (10) and even death has little to offer. The sonnet does not give the impression that it is a private dialogue with Amphilanthus. In fact, the personification of Grief and Scorn as witnesses of Pamphilia's tortures implies a larger audience. As well, the word "pleasure" (2) is reminiscent of Wroth's references to courtly pleasures in other sonnets. This breakdown between Pamphilia's seemingly private dilemma in love and political consequences like torture and treason facilitates Wroth's commentary on the forces that act upon Pamphilia.

Sonnet P41 clearly outlines the essence of Wroth's dilemma. Here she makes use of a relatively graphic image of torture to describe her emotional anguish:

What torments hast thou sufferd while above

⁷⁸ See Marotti, 398-400. Marotti points out that sonnets by male authors "reflect courtly striving for the rewards available in hierarchical societies that functioned according to systems of patronage and that allowed (at least limited) forms of social mobility" (398). Although Marotti's formulation applies specifically to male authors, it does demonstrate how sonnets might be made to speak about the writer's social / political circumstances.

⁷⁹ See Jones, 147-49.

Joy, thou tortur'd wert with racks which longing beares

Pinch'd with desires which yett butt wishing reares

Firme in my faith, in constancy to move (P41 5-8).

Pamphilia's constancy in the face of her heart being "pinch'd" and racked offers a poignant image of female honor. However, in the first quatrain Wroth asks her heart to "wittnes" (1) that she can love, stating that her "blood" should be "Borne testimony of the paines I prove" (3, 4). The sense that Pamphilia is somehow on trial reinforces Wroth's representation of her as a martyr. As well, although Pamphilia's pain should be caused by Amphilanthus, the second half of the sonnet belies this idea:

Yett it is sayd that sure love can nott bee

Wher soe small showe of passion is descried,

When thy chiefe paine is that I must itt hide

From all save only one who showld itt see (9-12).

It seems that the torture Pamphilia experiences is not directly caused by Amphilanthus, but by the need to keep her love hidden. Although Wroth uses this emphasis on the private expression of love to stress Pamphilia's sincerity, she implies at the same time that her experience of love is tied to the public realm. Wroth's reference to what is "sayd" (9) hints at the ongoing judgments of those who surround Pamphilia. Given the importance of appearance within court culture, Wroth's concern with what must be hidden is not far fetched. As well, her exaggeration of the "*million that make show of love*" (14) demonstrates the intensity with which she feels this external presence⁸⁰.

The relationship between the personal and the political is succinctly stated in sonnet P40; "Hope kills the hart, and tirants shed the blood" (12). This sonnet reveals the entangled relationships

⁸⁰ Compare Jones, 148.

that "govern" Pamphilia's experience of love. The poem begins with Wroth's depiction of miscarriage, which is compared to the actions of "Tirants" (5):

Soe Tirants doe who faulsly ruling earth
Outwardly grace them, and with profitts fill
Advance those who appointed are to death
To make theyr greater falle to please theyr will (5-8).

The private dilemma of miscarriage is collapsed into the political manipulations of tyrants. Wroth proposes that Pamphilia is at odds with both the betrayals of her body and the body politic. According to Wroth, Pamphilia's internal state appears to be inextricably linked to the public realm. Although it is hope that "kills the hart", it is tyrants who "shed the blood" (12). Fienberg's argument is similar to my own (183-84). She points out that, "Not love, but physical and political betrayal, and biological and social oppression impel this sonnet" (183). Fienberg also notes, regarding the sonnet's description of miscarriage, that Wroth's son, had he lived, might have spared her the financial difficulties of her later years. While the sequence proposes that Pamphilia's isolation is somehow preferable to the "faulscest lovers" (P14 19) of the court and their deceptions, Wroth nonetheless inscribes a condemnation of such miscarriage of power:

Thus shadow they theyr wicked vile intent
Coulering evill with a show of good
While in faire showes theyr malice soe is spent (P40 9-11).

However, it is not simply the "wicked vile intent" of the tyrants that tortures Pamphilia and sheds her blood, but instead what the actions of the tyrants represent.

Wroth's depiction of the tyrants in sonnet P40 suggests the dangers of the misinterpretation of signs. The tyrants deceive with "faire showes" (11) in order that their victims have "farder downe to slide" (14). For Wroth the creative process, imaged through birth, poses similar risks. In the same way that her body may delude her because she misinterprets its signs, she too can be

misread. Sonnet P52 reveals Pamphilia's sense that she is being interrogated by an ambiguous audience. The sonnet reveals that it is not physical torture that torments Pamphilia, but her fear of being made vulnerable through speech. However, much like the "*million* that make show of love" (P41 14), the "*multituds* of questions" (P52 2) seem to come, not from Amphilanthus, but the court.

Good now bee still, and doe nott mee torment

With multituds of questions, bee att rest,

And only lett mee quarrell with my brest (1-3).

Pamphilia clearly wishes to escape this questioning which she describes as "tongue torture" (8)⁸¹. In desperation she evades "That Divell speech" (10) by pretending that she is possessed. Such a dramatic evasion gestures toward her fear of being misunderstood -- better to appear mad⁸².

The final reference to torture occurs in sonnet P66. Again Wroth describes Pamphilia's emotional state in visceral political language; "Noe rack can strech my hart more" (6). Although Wroth suggests that Pamphilia has reached the limits of her endurance; the sonnet recognizes the unique conditions of her imprisonment. Pamphilia asks,

O in how strang a cage ame I kept in?

Noe little signe of favour can I prove

⁸¹ An interesting comparison might be made between Wroth's "tongue torture" and Lamb and Newman's comments regarding the interrogation of witches. Lamb states, "becoming an alien other also created a space for women's speech . . . a system of interrogation created for women a defined position, however ghastly, as speaking subjects. Their words were listened to with eager attention and meticulously recorded in writing, before these women accused of witchcraft were removed from the courtroom and burned" (*Gender and Authorship*, 13). Similarly, Newman observes the importance of interpretation in determining the fate of witches; "The witch's marks, her behaviors and activities, are not evident and obvious, not presence, but depend on reading and interpretation" (56). Given the unpleasant results of this kind of interrogation and misreading of signs, it is not surprising that Pamphilia would prefer to "quarrell with her brest" (3).

⁸² Compare Masten, 75. Wall (*Imprint*) interprets this as Wroth's representation of the linguistic void from which she struggles to create a female subjectivity, 333-34. Although Wall's argument differs from mine, her statement that, "the poem makes clear that the speaker takes her terms of identification from her outer public . . . as a means of describing her private unblest state" (334), reinforces my suggestion that Wroth's references to torture and speech emphasize the dangers of the public domain.

But must bee way'd, and turnd to wronging love,

And with each humor must my state begin (P66 11-14)

Pamphilia comes to the realization that her "strang cage" is bounded by interpretation, not steel bars⁶³. She is unable to find favour because her "signe[s]" are continually misinterpreted or "turned to wronging love". As a result, her "state" is dependent upon the monarch's "humor". Similarly, Jones suggests that Wroth's vocabulary of torture breaks down "the opposition between unrequited love as a private dilemma and the pursuit of favor as a public one: her figures for internal anxiety correspond to her social entrapment as bankrupt widow exiled from court" (148). Consequently, Wroth describes Pamphilia as trapped within the sonnets, not because she risks physical harm in the public realm, but because of the consequences of being misunderstood.

Although the sonnets write against the unwieldy power exerted by the court, they also hint at Wroth's desire to appease this power. For the most part, Pamphilia repudiates the excesses of the court. However, a few sonnets suggest that she is not entirely eager to remain in isolation. These subtle references come to fruition in the crown of sonnets which represents a departure from the strategy Wroth uses throughout the rest of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. For example, in sonnet P12 Pamphilia asks, "You endless torments that my rest oppress / How long will you delight in my sad paine?" (1-2). Apparently, Pamphilia's distress is a result of the "disdaine" (4) that she feels and her lack of "favour" (3). These politically tinged allusions culminate in a request for assistance:

Give nott just cause for mee to say a place

Is found for rage alone on mee to move;

O quickly end, and doe nott long debate

My needfull ayde, least help do come too late (P12 11-14).

⁶³ In comparison, Beilin reads Wroth's image of Pamphilia in a cage as indicative of her psychological disintegration, 236.

Wroth's use of the terms "just cause" and "debate" reinforce the idea that this entreaty is directed to the court rather than as a heart felt plea to Amphilanthus. Ostensibly, the sonnet addresses Cupid, stating, "Lett nott the blame of cruelty disgrace / The honor'd title of your Godhed" (10-11). However, based on the courtly description of Cupid's "title", it seems reasonable that Love may be symbolic of an actual "Godhed".

Song P58 offers a similar request for aid. However, this time it is addressed to the figure of Venus. Pamphilia points out her long and devoted service to Venus, as well as her suffering; "Yett, all thes torments from your hands noe help procures" (12). Here Pamphilia attempts to influence Cupid by flattering Venus:

Command that wayward child your sonn to grant your right,
And that his bowe, and shafts hee yeeld to your fayre sight
To you who have the eyes of joye the hart of love (13-15).

In his ability to both save and destroy, the figure of Cupid bears a striking resemblance to the "Tirants" of sonnet P40. Pamphilia urges Venus to "Rule him" (19), stating, "Lett him nott triumph that hee can both hurt and save" (17). The final line of the song illustrates the importance of Venus' assistance. Pamphilia reproaches Venus declaring, "Since hee that hurt you, hee alas may murder mee" (20). Wroth inscribes the hierarchy of courtly power into the poetry. While Venus may escape with minor wounds, Pamphilia, being lower down on the pecking order, risks more serious consequences.

However, in spite of these appeals the sonnets do not represent Wroth's attempt to reinstate herself within the court. It seems rather optimistic to assume a sonnet sequence would conceal the other societal taboos Wroth appears to have broken -- the affair with her cousin, illegitimate

children, and mounting debt⁸⁴. Instead, Wroth's graphic metaphors of torture draw attention to the power of the court. Although she constructs a private psychological space within the sonnets in order to facilitate Pamphilia's speech, she cannot resist describing the forces that govern her experience of love. The very vagueness of this description connotes the power that the court and its monarch wield. As long as Pamphilia remains a prisoner, she does not pose a threat and may continue to speak.

The Crowne

I have said little about the "Crowne" of sonnets in the previous sections. Although *A Crowne of Sonnets dedicated to Love* contains similar stylistic elements to the rest of the sequence, the contents seem to represent a dramatic departure⁸⁵. Rather than emphasize the fickle and deceptive nature of the court, the crown represents Wroth's attempt to appease the actual crown⁸⁶ and write herself out of her "strang cage" -- in other words, the "strang labourinth" (P77 l) of the sonnets⁸⁷. Wroth's revised strategy is signaled by sonnet P76:

O pardon, Cupid I confess my fault
Then mercy grant mee in soe just a kind
For treason never lodged in my mind (1-3).

Pamphilia's confession, in the face of having been racked, pinched and generally tormented, seems fitting. She withdraws her condemnation of Cupid, confessing her "fault" and begs for mercy. Consistent with the political undertones of the rest of the sequence, Wroth images Pamphilia's wrongdoing as "treason" (3). This is a complete reversal, as the Cupid previously

⁸⁴ See Roberts, *Poems*, 26.

⁸⁵ See Roberts' comments regarding the relationship between Wroth's crown and those of her uncle, Philip and her father, Robert Sidney, in *Poems*, 127.

⁸⁶ See Dubrow, 149-50. See Jones, 144.

⁸⁷ See Dubrow's comments regarding the labyrinthine structure of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, 134.

described by Pamphilia was not well known for his "mercy" (2)⁸⁸. This reality is obviously not entirely forgotten as Pamphilia realizes that it is Cupid's "fury" (8) that her "harne hath wrought" (8). Pamphilia's recognition of Cupid's power in sonnet P76 foreshadows the inability of the crown to successfully transform him⁸⁹.

Nonetheless, rather than blaming Cupid for his tyrannical nature, Pamphilia states that it is, instead, "her folly" (5):

I curse that thought, and hand which that first fram'd

For which by thee I ame most justly blam'd,

Butt now that hand shall guided bee aright (9-11).

Again Wroth implies that it is the interpretation of what she has written that has created her difficulties. Even here Wroth seems to draw a distinction between appearance and what is hidden. Pamphilia states that she is "*justly* blam'd" for what her hand has "fram'd". The implication being that she is guilty of creating the physical object -- the sonnets. However, there also appears to be the insinuation that perhaps the inherent meaning of the text is exempt from this blame. The suggestion that her hand will now be "guided" gestures toward her hope that the crown will somehow be correctly understood and will guide her out of the "labourinth"⁹⁰. Thus, Wroth constructs,

. . . a crowne unto thy endless prayse

Which shall thy glory, and thy greatnes raise

More then thes poore things could thy honor spite (P76 12-14).

Pamphilia's confession takes the form of a crown of "endless prayse" for Cupid. However, such a

⁸⁸ See Roberts (45) and Beilin's (237) comments regarding the shift from the childish, Anacreontic figure of Cupid to the more mature version of the crown.

⁸⁹ Compare Dubrow, 151.

⁹⁰ Jones, in "The Self as Spectacle", reads the figure of the labourinth as demonstrative of "the entrapping anxiety of courtiers in their quest for favor" (150). See also Waller, "Sidney Family Romance", 54 and Dubrow, 151-55.

dramatic departure from the previous tyrannical incarnation of Cupid proves unsustainable.

The beginning of the sequence of fourteen sonnets that form the crown illustrates Wroth's uncertainty regarding her new strategy to appease:

In this strang labourinth how shall I turne?

Wayes are on all sides while the way I miss (P77 1-2).

Pamphilia is paralyzed by doubt. The "suspition" (5) and "shame" (6) that hinder her progress emphasize that the sonnets represent a largely interior struggle. The "labourinth" is an appropriate symbol for Pamphilia's imprisonment because, much like her "strang cage", escape is not as simple as finding the right key. The conclusion of the first sonnet suggests that Pamphilia must abandon her doubts:

Yett that which most my troubled sence doth move

Is to leave all, and take the thread of love (13-14).

However, even her invocation to "take the thread of love" (14) and its allusion to the myth of Ariadne and Theseus hint at her skepticism regarding this new tact.

At first glance, the "thread of love" is a hopeful gesture. According to the myth, it was this thread that led Theseus out of the labourinth after defeating the minotaur, in order to be reunited with Ariadne. Although the myth has several versions⁹¹, the end result is that Ariadne is deserted by Theseus and she dies. While the mythical allusions may foreshadow the uncertain conclusion of the crown, at least initially, the thread "leads unto the soules content" (P78 2). Pamphilia's content springs from a renewed vision of the court of love and its ruler:

Love is the shining starr of blessings light;

⁹¹ See Hamilton, 151-52. In the first version of the myth Theseus deserts Ariadne asleep on an island. In the second, Theseus leaves Ariadne on the island because she is seasick. When he returns he discovers that she has died.

The fervent fire of zeale, the roote of peace,
The lasting lampe fed with the oyle of right;
Image of fayth, and wombe for joyes increase (9-12).

The unmistakable biblical allusions suggest a radically different version of Cupid⁹². Beilin reads the crown as successfully glorifying divine love; "In the crown, there is no language of discord or suffering, only the language of harmony and joy, because [Pamphilia's] constancy now exists in its true, timeless, unchangeable setting" (238). However, while sonnet P78 suggests the potential for transcendence, in its references to the "lasting lampe" and "wombe", the religious imagery is not sustained throughout the crown.

In P79, Cupid is no longer the manipulative, tyrannical force that torments Pamphilia, but instead "His flames are joyes" (P79 1). Rather than depict her as the unwilling conquest, Wroth transforms her into a faithful servant in "his brave court" (14):

Please him, and serve him, glory in his might,
And firme hee'll bee, as innosencye white,
Cleere as th'ayre, warme as sunn beames, as day light,
Just as truthe, constant as fate, joy'd to requite (9-12).

However, Wroth's renewed image of Cupid seems too good to be true for as the crown progresses it begins to deteriorate. The disintegration of Pamphilia's unattainable ideal is identified in the following sonnet, signaled by Wroth's mention of a "secound Chaose" (P80 7). Subsequently, Cupid's idealized persona is tempered by his "pleasing sting" (11), "hapy smarting", and "smale paine" (12). As well, it is his "powers gaine" (10) to "pierce your tender hart" (13). These images, which gesture toward the torments Pamphilia associates with Love in the rest of the sequence, suggest a gradual return to Wroth's original version of Cupid. Just as the earth draws

⁹² See Dubrow, 154.

nearer to its "second Chouse", the destruction of Pamphilia's conception of love offers to free her from her servitude in Love's "brave court" (P79 14).

Although the sonnets that follow P80 describe the beneficence of Cupid, indications of Pamphilia's doubt begin to reappear. For example, P81 begins, "And burne, yett burning you will love the smart" (1), suggesting the damaging and yet inevitable effects of love. The sonnet describes Cupid's concern for his victim's happiness and proposes that he is a guide to "joyings" (9) and that he "best can learne / Us means how to deserve" (10-11). Although the sonnet concludes on an equally positive note, the pun on the word "profit"⁹³ (14) hints at other potential meanings:

Thus wee may gaine since living in blest love

Hee may our profit, and owr Tuter prove (13-14).

Pamphilia's subservience to Cupid might be profitable for her, in that she will gain Amphilanthus' love, but the word may also allude to his ability to influence the future as a prophet. While both potentialities initially seem desirable, on further consideration they describe Wroth's awareness that Cupid, metaphorically speaking, wields a tremendous amount of power and that ultimately it is left in his hands to determine whether she is worthy of his munificence.

A similar sentiment is more clearly stated in the following sonnet. Pamphilia states, "How blest bee they then, who his favors prove" (P82 14). Sonnets P82 and P83 describe the relationship between self-worth and the favour or approval of Cupid -- a dependence not unlike that of the courtier to his monarch⁹⁴. Apparently Cupid in his role of "Tuter" and "profit" (P82 1) has the

⁹³ See Roberts' note for P81, 130.

⁹⁴ See Stallybrass, 65. Stallybrass points out that, "the sufferings of the lover, then, function as a displacement of the sufferings of the courtier" (65). While I am not sure that Stallybrass' formulation of the poet / monarch relationship is completely accurate when discussing Wroth's writing, I believe that because the crown represents an attempt to appease Cupid (as a stand in for the omnipresent monarch), his comments have more relevance here than in the rest of the sequence.

ability to "make you see / That in your self, which you knew nott before" (9-10). However, this realization of hidden gifts is dependent upon Cupid's "favours" (14). Wroth's choice of the word "millions" in the final couplet is reminiscent of the "million that make show of love" (P41 14) and draws attention to the distinction between those who have found favour within the court and Pamphilia's isolation. The following sonnet concludes, "Hee that shunns love doth love him self the less" (P83 14). Wroth clearly describes the relationship between finding favour with love and self-worth. However, the conclusion also implies that there is a choice to be made, that Pamphilia is not simply a servant in Love's court. Unlike Wroth's initial idealistic view of Cupid, Pamphilia's ability to choose proposes a more human range of consequences.

Following Wroth's implication that it is Pamphilia, not Cupid, who controls her destiny, indications of the imperfections of the court begin to penetrate the crown. Sonnets P84 and P85 describe the effects of "jelousie" (P84 8) and "lust" (P85 9). Although these "follyes" (P85 2) are caused by Venus, Cupid is not wholly exonerated; "What faults hee hath, in her, did still begin" (P85 7). Wroth is unable to sustain the idealized version of Cupid and his court. Instead the sonnets depict a more imperfect version of love:

This childe for love, who ought like monster borne

Bee from the court of Love, and reason torne (P85 13-14).

Wroth suggests that the court is divided by the competing interests of love and lust. In spite of the fact that Wroth continues to maintain the virtues of Cupid, the sonnets demonstrate that the court is vulnerable to "impostures" (P86 11). Pamphilia warns, "Butt wantones, and all those errors shun, / Which wrongers bee, impostures, and alone / Maintainers of all follyes ill begun" (P86 10-12). The subsequent sonnet links these "follyes" to the "sick-witts" (P87 7) of the court⁹⁵. The court is described as a poisonous garden -- an "unwholesome ground" (P86 13),

⁹⁵ Compare with the "witts" (5) of sonnet P45.

reverting back to the depiction of the court that pervades the rest of the sequence. According to Pamphilia, courtly appearances are deceiving; "shady pleasures showe, but true borne fires / Ar quite quench'd out" (P87 10-11). The concluding couplet of this sonnet abruptly attempts to return to Wroth's original purpose -- to glorify Cupid:

O noe lett love his glory have and might

Bee given to him who triumphs in his right (P87 13-14).

Pamphilia's exclamation of "O noe" at the beginning of this line suggests her dismay at the rapid deterioration of the crown's professed purpose.

Wroth attempts to halt the deterioration of the crown with a renewed vision of Love's purity. Sonnet P88 sets up another more fruitful garden metaphor. Here Pamphilia demonstrates her wish to "lett love his glory have" (P87 13):

Bee given to him who triumphs in his right

Nor vading bee, butt like those blossoms fayre

Which fall for good, and lose theyr coulers bright

Yett dy nott, butt with fruite theyr loss repaire (P88 1-4).

The sonnet sets up the implicit comparison between the "sick-witts" of the previous sonnet and Pamphilia. Wroth suggests that Pamphilia is a "blossom fayre" and that her separation from the court, that is, the loss of her "coulers", has literally born "fruite" -- the sonnets. What follows reiterates Pamphilia's desire to be forgiven and to appease Cupid:

Thus love to bee devine doth heere apeere

Free from all fogs butt shining faire, and cleere (13-14).

Momentarily, Pamphilia is granted a vision, "free from all fogs", of divine love.

But once again the crown's momentum falters and political allusions creep in. Initially sonnet P89 serves as a glowing resumé for Cupid. Pamphilia states,

In love the titles only have they fill
Of happy life maintainer, and the meere
Defence of right, the punisher of skill,
And fraude; from whence directions doth appeere (5-8).

The qualities attributed to Cupid are those of a "Great King" (11), quite unlike the "tirants [who] shed the blood" (P40). Pamphilia seems to have effectively reversed her previously treasonous attitudes. However, the final lines cast doubt upon Cupid as "kinde, and juste" (10). Pamphilia offers the crown, her self and all that she has to Cupid; "Except my hart which you beestow'd beefore" (14). Wroth's reference to the initial martyring of Pamphilia's heart recalls Cupid's power, and Pamphilia's position as a site of conquest. This idea is further developed in the subsequent sonnet:

Except my hart which you beestow'd beefore,
And for a signe of conquest gave away
As worthles to bee kept in your choyse store
Yett one more spotles with you doth nott stay (P90 1-4).

Wroth's depiction of what Cupid has done with Pamphilia's heart is reminiscent of the cruel treatment she describes in the rest of the sequence. Pamphilia's idealistic notion of Cupid diminishes as she recalls that in fact she is merely another "conquest" and that her heart is "worthles".

Wroth cannot sustain her apology to her idealized Cupid and signs of the capriciousness of the court assert themselves. The concluding sonnet of the crown recognizes that in spite of Pamphilia's constancy and "pure thoughts" (P90 6), she is nonetheless victimized by the court:

Yett other mischiefs faile nott to attend,
As enimies to you, my foes must bee;

Curst jealousie doth all her forces bend

To my undoing; thus my harmes I see (9-12).

Apparently Pamphilia's deference to Cupid makes little difference in a world where all of her "foes" look to her "undoing". In spite of her attempts to idealize Cupid, Wroth is unable to free Pamphilia from her isolation from the court. Consequently, although she burns "fervently" (13) in Love, she remains unable to escape "this strang labourinth" (14). Lamb proposes that the inconclusive ending of the crown is necessary if Wroth is to continue writing; "This deferral or denial of solution is necessary for the generation of the poetry in the sequence, for her last poem links her conquest over her inner turmoil with the cessation of her writing" (166). On the other hand, I do not see the connection between the crown and the rest of the sequence as conclusively as Lamb does. The crown exists as a separate discreet project within the sequence as a whole. Structurally, it is cyclic and describes Pamphilia's fluctuating fortunes in its divine vision and gradual deterioration. Moreover, the deferral of a solution at the end of the crown reflects the political realities of a courtier and may not simply be a pretext to continue writing. The final couplet implies that no amount of supplication can influence Love's will and that, ultimately, Pamphilia is simply a worthless conquest in the eyes of the court⁹⁶.

Whatever the hopes, desires and vacillations, the entire sequence ends with what might be described as quiet resignation: "And thus leave off, what's past shoves you can love, / Now lett your constancy your honor prove" (P103 13-14). The conclusion of P94 demonstrates Wroth's conviction that as objectionable as Pamphilia's suffering might be, she is better off than those who "lye" (36). Ultimately, Pamphilia's obsession with constancy in love is perhaps a veiled wish for consistent treatment in the court.

⁹⁶ Dubrow reads the conclusion of P90 as demonstrating "the appearance once again of the dilemmas of Petrarchanism - a discourse grounded in repetition, a discourse that inspires counter-discourses based on reenactment" (155). Beilin offers an alternative, and unlikely reading, suggesting that in P90 a divinely inspired Pamphilia questions how "she will ever adjust to life in the labyrinthine world" (240).

The sonnets are a "labourinth" of conflicting necessities. Wroth attempts to navigate Petrarchan poetics and societal expectations through the construction of a textual space that denies Pamphilia's physical realities and, instead, traces her psychological realm. Success and failure, by the end, are indistinguishable.

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