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# HEROIC VIRTUE: MARY WROTH'S *URANIA* AND *PAMPHILIA TO AMPHILANTHUS*

AT FIRST GLANCE, Elizabeth Cary's *Mariam*, Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, and Mary Wroth's *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* seem to be widely differing works. Wroth's secular settings, her concern with chivalry, statecraft, war, and love suggest a very different temperament and literary orientation from those of her fellow authors. As the first English woman to write a romance and a sonnet sequence, Wroth did indeed break new ground, but her work participates no less in the attempts of women writers to restore the spirituality and redeem the virtue of their sex.

Indeed, the spirit in which Lanyer glorified the Countess of Cumberland's active virtue or in which Cary apotheosized Mariam's patience is very much like the spirit in which Wroth develops constancy as the preeminent virtue of her main character, Pamphilia. Constancy, long associated with woman's chastity, piety, and obedience, reappears in the *Urania* and in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* as the heroic virtue capable of transforming a lovelorn woman into a great queen, a poet, and finally, a transcendent image of divine love.

Born in 1586 to Robert Sidney and Barbara Gamage, Mary Sidney Wroth acquired a formidable social and literary inheritance, one she seems to have borne willingly and well. Sidneys, as dedicators always reminded her, were literary giants; they were also public servants. Her uncle, Philip Sidney, had died fighting for England and was among the fore-

most Elizabethan writers; her aunt, the Countess of Pembroke, exalted for her piety, learning, and virtue, had served in the Elizabethan court; her father was continually occupied, to his own financial ruin, on Queen Elizabeth's and King James's business, and was also a poet. Philip Sidney's romance, *Arcadia*, his sonnet sequence, *Astrophil and Stella*, the Countess of Pembroke's translations, occasional poetry, and her Psalms, and Robert Sidney's sonnet sequence are all variously reflected in Mary Wroth's work, particularly in her choice of genre.

Although the picture is incomplete, information about Wroth appears in the Sidney family letters and in state papers.[1] The eldest of four girls and two boys, she grew up at Penshurst in a close-knit, happy family. Her mother, memorialized for her hospitality in Jonson's "To Penshurst," was greatly attached to her children and household, and despite her own probable illiteracy, seems to have supervised her daughter's education.[2] In 1599, his faithful steward, Rowland Whyte, wrote to Robert Sidney that

> Mrs. *Mary* is grown so tall, and soe goodly of her Yeares, as that your Lordship cannot beleve yt, unles you saw yt; and surely will prove an excellent Creature. My Lady sees them well taught, and brought up in Learning, and Qualities, fitt for theire Birth and Condicion.[3]

By 1602, Mary Sidney was appearing at court, dancing before the queen.[4] In 1604, she married Sir Robert Wroth and continued to move in court circles; however, a letter from Robert Sidney to his wife suggests that the marriage may not have been an early success, and Ben Jonson later remarked to William Drummond that "My Lord Lisles daughter, my Lady Wroth is unworthily maried on a Jealous husband."[5] In 1614, Dudley Carleton wrote to his wife that "Sir Robert Wroths lady after long longing hath brought him a sonne," but one month later he writes that Sir Robert had died of "a gangrene *in pudendis* leaving a younge widow with 1200$^{li}$ joynter, and a young sonne not a moneth old: and his estate charged with 23000$^{li}$ debt."[6] Wroth's son died in 1616, leaving her alone and bereft even of her husband's estate which went to the

next heir. Further references to her indebtedness exist through 1628.[7] Such difficulties were probably intensified by Wroth's unconventional behavior, for as Josephine Roberts's research has shown, Wroth had an affair with her cousin, William, Earl of Pembroke, by whom she had two children. Roberts suggests that the characters of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus may reflect Wroth's portrait of herself and Pembroke, although she rightly cautions against a strictly autobiographical reading.[8]

What Wroth's actual patronage of writers—another Sidneian activity—may have been is unclear, particularly given her husband's impecunious estate. Every dedication revolves around her Sidneian identity, from Nathaniel Baxter's designation of her as Agape, "Chaste, holy, modest, divine and perfect,/Arcadian *Sydney* gave thee this aspect . . ." to Robert Jones's insistence that "It is hereditarie to your whole house, not onely to be truely Honourable in your selves, but to be the favourers and furtherers of all honest and vertuous endevours in others. . . ."[9] Baxter's 1606 work, *Sir Philip Sydneys Ourania*, while exploiting references to all Sidney relatives, specifically gives Mary Wroth a "Heroycall disposition." Whether or not he intended anything beyond flattery, Baxter associates Wroth at a very early date with her own particular literary theme. Although she may have begun earlier, not until 1613 does a dedication imply she is a writer.[10]

Wroth's relationship with Ben Jonson seems to have been one of mutual admiration. She appeared in his 1605 *Masque of Blacknesse* and 1608 *Masque of Beautie*; he dedicated *The Alchemist* to her; and to her he addressed two rather conventional epigrams praising her as the "faire crowne of your faire sex," a worthy bearer of the Sidney name, and as the possessor of all the virtues of "a *Nymph*, a *Muse*, a *Grace*." In one of his rare sonnets, Jonson praises her sonnets, claiming the unlikely truth that since he has copied them out, "I . . . am become/A better lover, and much better Poet."[11] The instruction may well have gone the other way, however, for some key Jonsonian themes, steadfastness, and "the centered self" may have influenced Wroth's conception of heroic virtue.[12]

In 1621, just after her mother and her aunt died, Wroth's prose romance, named after her cousin Philip Herbert's wife, *The Countesse of Montgomeries Urania*, and the sonnet sequence, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, were published together. But a scandal blew up over the volume, and in December of the same year, Wroth withdrew the book from sale. Lord Edward Denny claimed she had slandered him, his daughter, Honora, and his son-in-law, Lord Hay, in the episode concerning the drunken and abusive Sirelius. Denny and Wroth exchanged insulting verses, and in a letter, Denny advised her to "redeem the time with writing as large a volume of heavenly lays and holy love as you have of lascivious tales and amorous toys; that at the last you may follow the example of your virtuous and learned aunt."[13] Although Denny's charges probably had some foundation, Wroth denied them; but perhaps lacking support, she backed down from her vigorous self-defense and withdrew the book. If the *Urania* does contain other contemporary portraits, few courtiers would have come to her aid, but Wroth had by this time retired from the court. She seems to have lived the rest of her life in the country, and died around 1640.

How much Wroth's rather difficult life may have spurred her on to her brief but prolific writing career is conjecture. While it is tempting to imagine her feverishly writing more than a hundred sonnets, a romance that would fill 558 folio pages (plus a manuscript continuation), and a pastoral drama to occupy her lonely hours of widowhood, she may well have begun her work much earlier, perhaps as an alternative to an unhappy and, for a long time, childless marriage. How much the romance reflects her experiences at court, her relationships with Wroth and Pembroke, and her family life is less relevant here than a consideration of how she actually tackled problems that had beset literary women throughout this period. By her choice of genres, she was able to solve them rather well. Because she imagines Pamphilia, a fictional character who is chaste, obedient, and patient, she appears to support the traditional conditions of woman's virtue; and yet this same character is heroic, transcending all the injunctions

to privacy, domesticity, and silence. In Wroth's sonnet sequence, Pamphilia becomes her poetic persona, through whom she successfully adapts the hitherto exclusively male love sonnet.[14]

In choosing to write a prose romance, Wroth had the guidance of her uncle's work and the tacit blessing of her learned and pious aunt: it was, after all, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* and she had been its first editor and publisher. But more important, Wroth selected a form that freed her from the woman writer's biggest limitation, the adherence to a feminine decorum that demanded only pious forms to express pious subject matter. Aemilia Lanyer had partially escaped her limits, but Wroth breached the wall.

The conflict between romance and feminine decorum had been explicitly recognized by Margaret Tyler who in 1578 translated from Spanish the prose romance, *The Mirrour of Princely Deeds and Knighthood*. Tyler felt impelled to defend her choice of "a story prophane, and a matter more manlike then becometh my sexe."[15] Its "manlinesse" she challenges, first, because her interest is less in war itself than in the virtues of magnanimity and courage displayed in battle; and second, because both the fear of war and armed victory concern women as well as men. Critics might suggest "divinitie" would more suit her years and "matters more easy and ordinary in common talke" her situation as a "gentlewoman," but Tyler has nevertheless bowed to the familiar pressure of "friends" and translated a Spanish romance. If men dedicated works of fiction, war, medicine, law, government, and divinity to women, she reasons, women may read them; and if they read them, why not write on these subjects?[16] Her critics, she hopes, would not offer the alternative "either not to write or to write of divinitie" (Aiv v). But not until Mary Wroth would a woman writer take up the matter of romance as a potentially "feminine" genre. This meant, of course, that the work would not be entirely secular, and indeed, in her main character, Pamphilia, Wroth created another variation on a familiar figure, the true Christian woman.

Sidney's *Arcadia* had earlier confirmed the romance as a

serious genre, for like pastoral poetry, which "underneath the prettie tales of wolves and sheepe can enclude the whole considerations of wrong doing and patience," romance could convey a whole range of moral and spiritual issues.[17] Almost forty years later, Wroth recognized it as a genre giving her the scope to write literally about women's thoughts, feelings, and deeds as no woman had before, and even to extend their sphere of action; in addition, she could still convey a serious doctrine, the importance of constancy in all aspects of human affairs.

That both the romance and the sonnet sequence were out of vogue by 1620 is significant here. Worn-out forms may encourage knee-jerk imitation and engender parody, both of which appear in Wroth's versions. More to the point, their demise meant that the first woman to write in these genres had greater freedom to adapt them to her special perspective than if she had followed a current fashion.[18]

While Wroth exploits the conventions of the Elizabethan prose romance—a huge number of characters, many of them stock figures of the pastoral, dozens of locations, flexible time sequence, parallel scenes, debates, the interweaving of poetry—she also develops in her romance a way to see woman as hero outside of the normal masculine standards of heroism, which she challenges. Elizabethan romance offered a variety of stock female characters, from the Amazonian warrior (whether legitimate or cross-dressed) to the faithful, domestic Penelope, from the scheming lustful queen to the innocent lovelorn shepherdess, from the beloved court lady to the nymph of Diana. In almost all cases, these characters are stereotyped idealizations if virtuous, and stereotyped vilifications if not. Writers had devoted most of their energy to developing the adventures of men, limiting the range of feminine behavior, and relegating women to subordinate, reactive, or symbolic roles. Few writers developed their narrative around active feminine virtue.[19] Similarly, the conventions of sonnet sequences had been built around the male experience of loving a shadowy Stella, Coelia, Phillis, Chloris, or Parthenope, with all the attendant rhetoric and imagery of pas-

sion, praise, desire, guilt, despair, or fulfillment. The sonnet lady may have radiated virtue and chastity, or perhaps faithlessness and cruelty, or represented an ineffable truth or idea; few poets associated constancy of any kind with the lady, preferring to keep that attribute for themselves, and if anything, to accuse her of change.[20]

It is notable that given romance conventions, Wroth rejected the option to give the starring role to an Amazonian hero, a woman warrior who could fight and win her way through knightly adventures. Perhaps the shadow of Spenser's Britomart was too long, or perhaps the associations with Sidney's Pyrocles-Zelmane too undermining. Instead, she created the noble Pamphilia, Queen of Pamphilia, virtuous monarch, constant lover, and poet. Pamphilia appears in a range of situations from the plighting of her lifelong faith to her country, to expressing friendship for other women, to feeling jealousy, to being an allegorical figure of Constancy itself. Most important, Pamphilia is also a poet and her moments of deepest feeling inevitably come forth in verse. Wroth exploited both the dynamism of the romance to develop the heroic ideal of constancy, and the contemplativeness of the sonnet to make constancy divine: in these works, Pamphilia acts a double role, performing her virtuous deeds and then as Wroth's surrogate, transforming her experiences into art.

## The Countesse of Montgomeries Urania

The genre of romance not only gave Wroth imaginative scope, but fiction also provided the freedom to explore men's and women's behavior in a setting where almost anything could occur. Although partly bound by her own conservative conception of the nature of woman, Wroth gave her subject a vivid and sometimes comic treatment by offering frequent debates, parallel episodes, and contrasting characters. And if Wroth's own opinions on men and women may not be extrapolated from every action of every character, by listening to the narrator's voice, by considering the placement and tone of an episode, and by looking at the romance as a whole, we

can reach some conclusions about the world she portrays. Moreover, in Pamphilia we have the stimulus of reading the first extended fictional portrait in English of a woman by a woman, and of trying to understand the mixture of psychological "realism" and fantasy that makes up her character.

But before plunging into the *Urania* itself, a brief look at the influence of Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* will highlight Wroth's concept of the female hero. The complicated relationship of *Urania* to the *Arcadia* deserves a full-length study; here, only two of the most relevant connections are considered.[21]

First, Wroth's hero, Pamphilia, descends from two of the more complex female characters in Elizabethan romance, Pamela and Philoclea; indeed, her very name recalls theirs. In the *Arcadia*, Pamela and Philoclea reflect the archetypal opposition of Diana or armed chastity and Venus or love. Through the character of Kalender, Sidney reveals that "love plaide in *Philocleas* eyes and threatened in *Pamelas* . . . *Philoclea* so bashfull . . . so humble, that she will put all pride out of countenance . . . *Pamela* of high thoughts, who avoides not pride with not knowing her excellencies, but by making that one of her excellencies to be voide of pride; her mother's wisdome, greatness, nobilitie, but . . . knit with a more constant temper."[22] Pamela displays a virtuous self-sufficiency, while Philoclea invites relationship. When Pyrocles, disguised as the Amazon Zelmane, first sees the two sisters, he marks Pamela's "riche *Diamond* set but in a blacke horne, the worde I have since read is this; *yet still my selfe*" (I, 90). Of his beloved Philoclea, he claims she is "the ornament of the Earth, the modell of heaven, the Triumphe of Nature, the light of beauty, Queene of Love . . . her haire . . . drawne up into a net, able to take *Jupiter* when he was in the forme of an Eagle. . ." (I, 90). While Philoclea is sweet, soft, and humble, Pamela is majestic and stern, likely to become "angry Love, and lowring beautie, shewing disdain" (III, 355) for Musidorus who attempted to kiss her. Pamela's severest test is resisting the wicked Cecropia, when, despite physical and mental tortures, she reveals the virtues of chastity, fortitude, patience, righteous anger, piety, and constancy (III, Chapter

10).[23] Partly for plot, partly for the contrast between passive and active virtue, Sidney created two opposing female characters as sisters. In the *Urania* Wroth draws on his creations, but unites them in one female character, Pamphilia, thus giving birth to a philosophically complex, emotionally conflicted, and more varied, more profound, more significant female hero.

Second, Wroth named her eponymous character after Sidney's Urania, a character who never actually appears in the *Arcadia*. She is a "fair shepherdess," a "heavenly beauty" whose offstage appearance to the shepherds, Strephon and Claius, as she embarked on the seas inspired immediate love and devotion. Her picture appears later in the tournament procession as

> a young mayd, which sate pulling out a thorne out of a Lambs foote, with her looke so attentive uppon it, as if that little foote could have bene the circle of her thoughts; her apparell so poore, as it had nothing but the inside to adorne it; a shephooke lying by her with a bottle upon it. But with al that povertie, beauty plaid the prince, and commanded as many harts as the greatest Queene there did. (I, 104)

Significantly, she draws to her cause the meekest and poorest, including the half-naked shepherd boy, Lalus. The clear Christological references—the thorn, the lamb, the sheephook, her poverty, her charity, her humble, devoted followers—indicate that Sidney conferred considerable significance on his Urania. In Wroth's romance, despite the title, Urania appears not as the central heroic figure, but perhaps in deference to Sidney, as the embodiment of a spiritual principle conceptually close to his. While she first appears as a poor shepherdess, Urania soon takes her rightful royal position as a princess, sister of Amphilanthus and cousin of Pamphilia, and attempts to dissuade her relations from passionate love and to teach the doctrine of divine love. Her role and her influence on Pamphilia's constancy will appear later in this chapter.

The intricacy, richness, and sheer cumulative weight of the *Urania* cannot be contained in one chapter, and thus only those scenes which best reveal Wroth's unique development of feminine heroic virtue will be discussed here. But since, as Charlotte Kohler once said, "the firmest mind could not keep disentangled all the countless manicoloured threads of the innumerable plots, which spread out, one from another, fanwise, and enmesh all in their tangles," and because the work is not widely known, the immediately necessary details of plot and character will be provided.[24]

If we step back from the many characters and events of the *Urania*, the dizzying images of activity and the unceasing shifts in location begin to resolve into the larger theme of change. Change occasions the romance's countless unhappy love affairs, whether they fail through fickle emotions or through death. Change produces political revolutions, veering alliances, and the eternal alternation between peace and war. Indeed, late in the romance, the unhappy Pelarina refers to the source of all her woes as "I know not what Devill, but the great one himselfe, Change."[25] At certain points in the narrative, Wroth invites the reader to consider mutability as characteristic of humankind itself, but in particular, she consistently blames the male characters for inconstancy and deviation from reason.

Against this chaos, Wroth develops Pamphilia as the embodiment of constancy. Continually, Wroth reveals her not only as a virtuous woman in love, but also as a woman who transcends love to devote herself to the public good. On one hand, Pamphilia's constancy to her beloved Amphilanthus appears to be active and all-consuming, rooted in high principles of selflessness and love of virtue, and only because of the essentially mutable nature of the world does it doom her to continual unhappiness. Pamphilia's constancy to her kingdom, on the other hand, brings peace and happiness, recalling the "golden age" of the late Elizabeth I, whose best public attributes Pamphilia echoes.[26]

Constancy is a recurrent theme in Renaissance art and literature, appearing as an active means to transcend the woes

of a mutable world seemingly ruled by fortune. In explaining an impresa "Of Resolution and true Constancie," Henry Peacham writes that "though Fortune frowne," the constant soul "stands irremooved streight,/Laughing to scorne, the paper blastes of Fate."[27] This concept is close to Ben Jonson's ideal of the virtuous soul "that is round within himselfe, and streight," who "Need seeke no other strength, no other height;/Fortune upon him breakes her selfe, if ill,/And what would hurt his vertue makes it still." Those men and women whom Jonson praises reject the "turning world . . . Giddy with change" and "keeping a just course," withdraw to their own spiritual centers.[28] Wroth's constancy evolves from similar principles, but her main interest seems to be in the specific conflicts experienced by the constant soul in the mutable world. Anatomizing woman's constancy in ways uncommon to literature—in love, in the public sphere, in poetry, and in divinity—Wroth goes to some lengths to show a woman's particular internal dilemmas when she loves, rules, writes, and believes with unwavering constancy.

To emphasize that constancy is the cornerstone of Pamphilia's character, Wroth, early in the romance, composes an allegorical episode that defines the later course of events. Wroth shows the complexity of constancy here by developing three simultaneous aspects of the virtue: Pamphilia appears with Amphilanthus as a constant lover; dressed in a style strongly reminiscent of Elizabeth I, she is a constant queen; and finally, she appears as an emblem of the constancy of divine love.

By the end of Book I, many of the characters find themselves shipwrecked on the Isle of Cyprus, Venus's kingdom, where is found the Throne of Love, and where lovers are magically enchanted by love's power. Only the most constant lady and the most valiant knight can free them: Amphilanthus arrives first, followed by Pamphilia, and they prepare to end the enchantment. Pamphilia appears

> in a Gowne of light Tawny or Murrey, embrodered with the richest, and perfectest Pearle for roundnesse and

> whitenes, the work contrived into knots and Garlands; on her head she wore a crowne of Diamonds, without foiles, to shew her clearenesse, such as needed no foile to set forth the true brightnesse of it: her haire . . . was prettily intertwind betweene the Diamonds in many places, making them (though of the greatest value) appeare but like glasse set in gold. Her necke was modestly bare, yet made all discerne, it was not to be beheld with eyes of freedome: her left Glove was off, holding the king by the hand, who held most hearts. He was in Ashcolour, witnessing his repentance, yet was his cloake, and the rest of his suite so sumptuously embroidred with gold, as spake for him, that his repentance was most glorious. . . . (141)

Here, Pamphilia closely resembles the elaborate glory and careful symbolism of Elizabeth's portraits, and if we also recall the conceit of certain entertainments that Elizabeth could break spells, Pamphilia's likeness is even more pronounced.[29] Elizabeth herself drew on the tradition of the constant ruler with her motto, *Semper eadem*, and in the emblems of the phoenix and the crowned pillar associated with her in portraits and entertainments.[30] But as Pamphilia is a constant queen, so is she a constant lover, and Wroth clearly differentiates her from Amphilanthus throughout this episode by accentuating her constancy and his repentance, in this case for loving another woman, Antissia; and by distinguishing her constancy from his valor or "worth." He is conspicuously not constant, and indeed, later in Book II, we find that his name actually "signifieth the lover of two" (250).

Pamphilia and Amphilanthus proceed to the three towers of the House of Love. On the first "Desire" is written in gold, and when Amphilanthus knocks, the gate opens and they proceed through to the next tower. This one displays "Love" written in rubies, and they open the gate to the next tower. Here, "*Constancy* stood holding the keyes, which *Pamphilia* tooke; at which instant *Constancy* vanished, as metamorphosing herself into her breast" (141). The very virtue itself

now has its seat in Pamphilia's heart, inextricably tying her future course to its precepts. She hands the keys to Amphilanthus who opens the last gate into the gardens where the imprisoned lovers stand. A voice intones, "Loyallest, and therefore most incomparable *Pamphilia*, release the Ladies ... and thou *Amphilanthus*, the valliantest and worthiest of thy sexe, give freedome to the knights ... and thus is *Love* by love and worth released." Here, constancy is attached to women and valor to men, and often the *Urania* will describe a world ruled by valiant but changeable knights and princes who initiate most of the loves and wars; the ladies and princesses are more often endowed with a constant, steadfast disposition. This is certainly not to say that the female characters are merely reactive, and there are indeed some constant male characters and some faithless ladies. But apart from Cyprus, Wroth continually draws attention to the changeable nature of her male characters, as in passages like the following, describing a book Pamphilia reads:

> the subject was Love, and the story she then was reading, the affection of a Lady to a brave Gentleman, who equally loved, but being a man, it was necessary for him to exceede a woman in all things, so much as inconstancie was found fit for him to excell her in, hee left her for a new. (264)

Even stronger are the later words of a lovelorn lady, describing the other sex:

> the kindliest, lovingst, passionatest, worthiest, loveliest, valiantest, sweetest, and best man, will, and must change, not that he, it may bee, doth it purposely, but tis their naturall infirmitie, and cannot be helped. (375)

With some humor, Wroth seems to reverse the conventional literary attributes of the sexes, reinforcing her view with a sometimes satiric perspective on male valor. Describing the difficulties mounted knights are having going uphill, Wroth remarks: "Here with much difficulty and paine (which to adventurous knights is called pleasure, their life being a mere

vexation, wilfully disguised to content) they got downe . . ." (324). That knightly adventures may not in deed define true valor, but rather lead to disruption and chaos—especially when seen from a woman's point of view—is a perspective that the *Urania* invites the reader to take. The romance's glorification of constancy suggests that a less martial virtue demands as great a dedication and discipline, and more important, ultimately spreads peace rather than war.

To return to the Cyprus episode, the religious aspect of the scene evolves during a series of feasts to celebrate the release of love's prisoners, the last feast being given by the king of Cyprus himself. He, impressed by such worthy Christian princes, decides to convert and is christened with his wife, daughter, and son by Amphilanthus, "and so became the whole Island Christians" (142). Allegorically, the conversion of the ruler of Venus's stronghold represents the transformation of worldly love to the love of God, and such a metamorphosis foreshadows the evolution to occur in Pamphilia herself during the course of her sonnet sequence. During the action of *Urania*, however, Wroth depicts in Pamphilia the plight of the constant soul enmeshed in an inconstant world, examining Pamphilia's roles as lover and as queen.

Such episodes in which Pamphilia performs specific deeds, or in which the iconography vividly depicts her nature explicitly convey Pamphilia's heroic constancy. More subtle and perhaps more psychologically modern are Wroth's adaptations of conventional tropes to reveal the inner conflicts of a virtuous woman who is as majestic and self-sufficient as Pamela, yet as desirous to love as Philoclea.

Despite Amphilanthus's attachments to other women, Pamphilia remains entirely faithful, and so must suffer absence, jealousy, and the alternation of devotion and abandonment that Amphilanthus proffers her. Wroth dissects Pamphilia's woes in minute detail, showing scene after scene in which Pamphilia probes her love, her sufferings, her lover's actions, and inevitably concludes with a mournful poem to express her sorrow. In a typical scene, early in the romance, before Amphilanthus knows she loves him, Pamphilia wan-

ders into a conventional poetic landscape of trees and a brook, realizes that the scene reflects her own state of mind, and "Seeing this place delicate without, as shee was faire, and darke within as her sorrowes, shee went into the thickest part of it . . ." (74).

Musing on Cupid's cruelty, she regrets her modesty in not telling Amphilanthus openly that she loves him, "but soone was that thought recalled, and blamed with the greatest condemnation, acknowledging her losse in this kinde to proceed from vertue" (75). In language that Pamphilia herself will use in her sonnets, the narrator tells us that she is "the most distressed, secret, and constant Lover that ever *Venus* or her blind Sonne bestowed a wound or dart upon." To herself, Pamphilia soliloquizes, "for all these disorderly passions, keepe still thy soule from thought of change . . . and let me rather hate my selfe for this unquietnesse; and yet unjustly shall I doe too in that, since how can I condemne my heart, for having vertuously and worthily chosen?" (75). She concludes by carving a sonnet on the bark of an ash tree, as have melancholy lovers throughout all literature.

Pamphilia's quandary, expressed in the trope of Venus and blind Cupid wounding her heart, is that passion disrupts the order of a virtuous soul and challenges Pamphilia's principles to the core. Entering the grove, she journeyed into the darkest part of herself, and can acknowledge that her own virtue—her modesty, constancy, and silence—have caused much of her grief; but to regret her fall into passion is also to regret loving the virtue and worth she recognizes in Amphilanthus. Pamphilia resolves to seek solace in art, to write sad sonnets to confirm her constant spirit. Perhaps at this point the male hero of romance would dedicate himself to wooing the beloved or at least to performing valorous deeds. Or he might decline into melancholy. Wroth rejects such paths for Pamphilia, choosing not to make her a Britomart seeking her Artegall, nor yet to immobilize her by lovesickness; instead, she reinforces Pamphilia's adherence to patience and fortitude, reiterates her dedication to poetry, and gives her a kingdom to rule.

Consistently, Wroth returns to Pamphilia's queenliness as the best representation of her heroism. She probes the nature of Pamphilia's rule not only by imagining adventures for her, but by introducing parallel episodes involving other characters. One such narrative, perhaps one of the best, is the story of another queen, Nereana of Stalamina, who is an instructive contrast to Pamphilia's virtue. Nereana visits Pamphilia to seek redress against Steriamus who has rejected her love because he loves Pamphilia. Pamphilia tells Nereana that she is

> the first that ever I heard of, who take so knight-like a search in hand; men being us'd to follow scornefull Ladies, but you to wander after a passionate, or disdainefull Prince, it is great pitie for you. Yet *Madam* so much I praise you for it, as I would incourage you to proceede, since never feare of winning him, when so many excellencies may speake for you: as great beauty, high birth, rich possessions, absolute commend, and what is most, matchlesse love, and loyaltie . . . (163)

Pamphilia's praise proves to be misplaced, however, and may indeed have been ironic, for Nereana, resuming her search, assumes "the part of an adventurous lover, as *Pamphilia* in jest had call'd her . . ." (165). But the narrator seems to disapprove fully of women acting like men, for she plunges Nereana into nightmarish experiences meant to strip her and the reader of illusions about women playing men's roles, and to reveal the source of Nereana's adventurousness not as constancy, but as its opposite, pride.

Leaving Pamphilia, Nereana is cast by a storm onto Sicily, where the love-maddened Allanus attacks her, recreates her as a parody of the buskined Venus, and hounds her through the landscape of love ("a cleere spring . . . in the middest of a faire meadow, the ground painted over with all sorts of dainty flowers . . .") so that now the pursuer is pursued, knowing no rest or peace (166). Eventually her ordeal expunges her former "masculine" assurance. Living alone in a cave, eating herbs and roots, Nereana grows "as humble, as before

proud," and "extremity forcing her, contented with patience, and patiently contented . . ." she returns to essential womanliness by merely contemplating her love (287).

But Wroth still wants to show the important difference between love rooted in constancy and love based on pride. In the next twist of her story, the virtuous king Perissus rescues Nereana, but mistaking his courtesy for passion, she rushes headlong into another delusion. Once again dressed as a queen, "she began to grow to her wonted accustomed humours; like a garden never so delicate when well kept under, will without keeping grow ruinous" (289). Conceiving of herself as the "favorite of the loving Gods, and Goddesses," Nereana returns to her kingdom of Stalamina, but unlike the noble queen, Pamphilia, beloved of her people, Nereana finds her sister chosen queen in her absence; she is imprisoned and fed meagerly to "keepe downe her fancy."

As Pamphilia's alter ego, Nereana reveals Pamphilia's nature as a woman, a lover, and a queen. Having in the past imprisoned her sister and threatened her with death, Nereana taught her people to fear her rule. When she returns, some of her subjects wish to restore her, but eventually because "pride could not gaine obedience, nor scorne, command," and because they feared her revenge, her people choose to violate the law rather than risk her retribution, and Nereana is deposed. Nereana's pride links her behavior as a woman, a lover, and a ruler, just as Pamphilia's constancy guides the varied aspects of her life. Wroth opposes pride and constancy by showing in her narrative that at the root of Nereana's pride is love of the self, while at the root of Pamphilia's constancy is love of another, a selflessness that appears continually in the *Urania* until it is finally consecrated in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*.

While drawing a pointed moral from Nereana's story, Wroth eventually allows it to end happily. Her subjects realize the importance of honoring the succession, and recanting their treason, they restore Nereana to the throne. She, having been truly humbled by "poore living and neglect," exhibits the appropriate gravity and demeanor for her station and becomes

"an excellent Governess, and brave Lady, being able to overrule her old passions . . ." (421). The change in Nereana from "adventurous lover" to "excellent Governess" reflects Wroth's view of a woman's potential, which is not to become manly, but actively and publicly to exercise her best womanly qualities.

Part of Wroth's technique is to develop her ideas in such parallel stories and characters, but she also relies on another romance convention, the debate. The nature of Pamphilia's constancy, its foundation in humility and selflessness, and its resulting misery for her, do not go unchallenged in the *Urania*. At times, she wanders into self-doubt, asking herself whether she was born to suffer because of her "rare excellent qualitie of constancy" (395). But when questioned directly, Pamphilia always defends her constancy and her love. However, in Book III, her cousin and Amphilanthus's sister, Urania, criticizes Pamphilia for loving at all. Pamphilia remarks that all the stories show how even the "most excellent men have been lovers and are subject to this passion" (399). With some acerbity, Urania counters that she considers "it was a blemish to their other excelling vertues." When Pamphilia wonders why Urania is so bitter, Urania responds with the classic argument against passion, one that enlarges upon the very problem Pamphilia had always recognized about falling in love. Urania is not passion's "slave," and indeed scorns Cupid for "a proud, then puling Babe"; she believes that only "want of courage and judgement" subjects the lover to such a deity (399-400).

To this critique, Pamphilia justly remarks that such clear-eyed reason cannot rule love and its attendant despair and martyrdom. More important, she loves Amphilanthus because of his virtues, independently of whether he loves her. Idealistically, Pamphilia asks nothing for herself but to be able to love virtue, and to "still maintaine a vertuous constancy." Even more caustically, Urania returns

> Tis pittie . . . that ever that fruitlesse thing Constancy was taught you as a vertue, since for vertues sake you

> will love it, as having true possession of your soule, but understand, this vertue hath limits to hold it in, being a vertue, but thus that it is a vice in them that breake it, but those with whom it is broken, are by the breach free to leave or choose againe where more staidnes may be found; besides it is a dangerous thing to hold that opinion, which in time will prove flat heresie. (400)

The narrator directs the reader here by remarking, "Thus did the divine *Urania* againe by her excellent wit conquer . . . ," so that what we will eventually realize is not that Pamphilia's whole devotion to constancy is "fruitlesse," nor that Urania is encouraging her to abandon Amphilanthus for another man. (This becomes clear when we hear a shepherd comically praise variety in love, for constancy is "the foolishest unprofitable whining vertue," 484.) Rather, Pamphilia should indeed "choose againe where more staidnes may be found" and only in this way may she avoid "flat heresie." The meaning inherent in Urania's words is that constancy to Amphilanthus suffers the limits of ordinary human mutability and will naturally bring Pamphilia unhappiness. Something more "staid" to love is the divine, and the heresy is to love and be constant to man before God, to set up blind Cupid as deity instead. The full force of Urania's words does not register in Pamphilia until the meditative atmosphere of her sonnets which distill the experience of loving Amphilanthus and redirecting her constancy to divine love.[31]

Shortly after this exchange, Wroth again accentuates the importance of Pamphilia's virtue by providing her with a regal procession, reminiscent of an Elizabethan progress. But here, she intertwines Pamphilia's roles as lover and queen, thus emphasizing both the importance of Pamphilia's existence beyond her love for Amphilanthus and the momentary nature of any of their encounters. While all her subjects come "from all parts to see her, and joy in her presence," Pamphilia's unhappiness prevents her from enjoying anything, "yet she lost not her selfe; for her government continued just and brave, like that Lady she was, wherein she shewed her

heart was not to be stur'd, though her private fortunes shooke round about her" (411). Even when threatened by the King of Celicia who attacks her kingdom to win her love, her strength as a queen never falters, so that "her Counsell admired her magnanimity . . ." (429). They also admire her practicality in sending for Amphilanthus to rescue the country. Naturally, he defeats the invading king in single combat, and the lovers enjoy a brief interlude of love, hunting together and wandering through yet another landscape of love.

On one of these excursions, they meet a shepherd who, not recognizing Pamphilia, unabashedly delivers his opinions of her as a monarch and a woman, again setting off her one aspect against the other. She is, he says, beloved by the humble and feared by the great, "curteous, affable," and wise; and yet, she has fallen in love:

> shee is upright and just, in her government mild, and loving to her subjects, she loves all good exercises as well abroad, as at home; shee hath indeed they say, a brave and manlike spirit, and wonderous wise shee is; yet for all these good parts, shee could not keepe out of *Cupids* clawes. . . . (483)

The shepherd concludes by remarking tartly that as Pamphilia's beloved has "as it is said, a prety humour of changing, wee doe not wish him to her, least wee should loose her" (494).

Here again, as if to reinforce the importance of Pamphilia's constancy beyond her love for Amphilanthus, Wroth provides details, echoes, and allusions to associate her with the past glory of Elizabeth I. Emphasizing the love of her people, Wroth echoes the adulation Elizabeth received in her lifetime as well as her posthumous veneration. The legend surrounding Elizabeth claimed she always placed her country first, especially when the question of love and marriage arose, and that as she loved the commoner so was she feared by the noble. "I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart of a King, and of a king of England too," she claimed at Tilbury, and her justice was

proclaimed in her iconography as Astraea.[32] All these attributes Pamphilia reflects, but it is Elizabeth's love for and constancy to her subjects that resonate most clearly in the Queen of Pamphilia.

It is significant that throughout the long course of the *Urania*, Pamphilia and Amphilanthus never marry. As early as Book II, Pamphilia reveals that her idea of marriage has little to do with knights, but everything to do with her position as queen. To her father she explains why she will not marry:

> his Majestie had once married her before which was to the kingdome of *Pamphilia* from which Husband shee could not bee divorced, nor ever would have other, if it might please him to give her leave, to enjoy that happinesse; and besides, besought his permission, for my Lord (said shee) my people looke for me, and I must needs be with them. (218)

This is a clear allusion to Elizabeth, who spoke of herself as England's wife. According to Camden's *History*, when asked if she would marry, Elizabeth replied:

> Yea, to satisfie you, I have already joyned my self in Marriage to an Husband, namely, the Kingdom of England. And behold (said she) which I marvell ye have forgotten, the Pledge of this my Wedlock and Marriage with my Kingdom. (And therewith she drew the Ring from her Finger, and shewed it, wherewith at her Coronation she had in a set form of words solemnly given her self in Marriage to her Kingdom.)[33]

Wroth found in the late queen the model of an ideal ruler and woman of virtue, and perhaps her nostalgia for that "golden" age of Elizabeth also influenced her choice of forms, the romance and the sonnet sequence, both so inextricably identified with the Elizabethan era. Certainly, the image of Elizabeth shadowing Pamphilia throughout the romance reinforces the significance of Pamphilia's constancy beyond her devotion to Amphilanthus.[34] If Pamphilia is "already bestowed upon her people and had married herselfe to them"

(220), she cannot also be united to Amphilanthus, and in fact, their love belongs to a lesser sphere, quite separate from Pamphilia's consecration as a queen, and eventually its worldliness demands its purgation.

Near the end of the romance, Wroth provides a momentary view of the ramifications of Pamphilia's constancy and Amphilanthus's infidelities with two parallel scenes, experienced in turn by both lovers, featuring the "hell of deceit" and the two witches, Musalina and Lucenia, with whom Amphilanthus had been involved previously. Shortly after their love interlude, Amphilanthus disappears during a stag hunt, and though Pamphilia searches for him, significantly all she finds is a black-clad huntress, a faithful older woman whose lover has left her for someone younger. Going into the most deserted part of the woods, Pamphilia finds a trail of blood that leads her to a dead boar and to a place "made round like a Crowne of mighty stones" (493). On the biggest stone is Amphilanthus's battered, bloody armor, and his sword struck deeply into the rock. Sure that Amphilanthus is dead, Pamphilia succumbs to grief, but then seeing a ring in the rock, she pulls it and discovers inside "a place like a Hell of flames and fire, and as if many walking and throwing pieces of men and women up and downe in the flames, partly burnt, and they still stirring the fire, and more brought in . . ." (494). And there stands Amphilanthus, with his chest ripped open and "Pamphilia" written on his heart, and a crowned and enthroned Musalina about to raze that name with a sword. Though eager to save Amphilanthus, and though she burns with "as hot flames as those she saw," Pamphilia is helpless because "Faithfull lovers keepe from hence/None but false ones here can enter." Her torment is to see his nature, but to be powerless to assist him or change him. She has no choice but to return to court where "more like a religious, then a court life, she lived some yeares."

The parallel episode, Amphilanthus's alternate version of this adventure, follows some time later and is related by the squire of the Duke of Burgundy, one of Amphilanthus's allies. In his account, when separated from Pamphilia at the stag

hunt, Amphilanthus was told that she had been stolen by thieves. Searching for her, he reaches an obscure part of the wood and the "Crowne of mighty stones." Killing an attacking boar, Amphilanthus is immediately set upon by many armed men who magically vanish when he has killed the one "young man unarm'd" who had most vigorously attacked him. Amphilanthus hears Pamphilia's voice cry, "Farewell, Amphilanthus," and instead of a young man "hee saw to his thinking *Pamphilia* slaine" (553). Despite his efforts, she is carried into the rock, and when he strikes the stone, his sword sticks there. Pulling a ring in the rock, he finds Pamphilia dead "lying within an arch, her breast open and in it his name made, in little flames being like pretty lamps which made the letters, as if set round with diamonds, and so cleare it was, as hee distinctly saw the letters ingraven at the bottome in characters of bloud . . ." (554). Unable to enter the cave to rescue Pamphilia, Amphilanthus sees only the words, "This no wonder's of much waight,/'Tis the hell of deepe deceit" (554). But whose deceit becomes clear when suddenly Musalina materializes, calling for help, and "she must be followed, *Pamphilia* is forgotten, and now may lie and burne in the Cave, *Lucenia* must bee rescued also, her hee saw madly carried by a savage man. . . ." Completely enchanted by the two witches, yet protected from mortal danger by "the divine powers" (554), Amphilanthus follows the ladies to Tenedos, becomes unenchanted, and lives there "in much pleasure" (555).

In these two "magical" or allegorical episodes, Wroth encapsulates the story of Pamphilia's faith and Amphilanthus's perennial infidelity, but indicates that more is at stake than mere disappointment in love. These scenes completely reverse the trope of the beloved raising the lover to a vision of heavenly love and vividly show the moral and spiritual peril implied both by inconstancy and continued constancy to a mutable being. In Pamphilia's version, she realizes the horrors that lie beneath the surface of her love. Inconstancy is betrayal of the beloved (whose name or image is engraved on the heart) and even death itself, since Musalina's sword will ensure

"his heart as the wound to perish." Because she is forbidden to enter the hellish world of deceit, Pamphilia's constancy is reaffirmed as a moral and spiritual state, providing her with the strength to maintain faith, to resist change, and to continue to love virtue.

But Wroth only clarifies the danger of her continued attachment in Amphilanthus's account of the scene. His vision includes his murdering Pamphilia, her descent into the hell of deceit, and the portrayal of his name written on her heart in letters of flame fed by her blood. As the victim of inconstancy, yet maintaining her own constant love, Pamphilia risks spiritual death. Her constancy, as Urania warned, will become a "dangerous thing" and, in time, "flat heresie."[35]

Wroth does not rescue her characters from their spiritual hell, nor does she resolve their problems. Much more about constancy appears in Pamphilia's sonnet sequence, but the printed *Urania* concludes with a highly ironic reunion between the lovers, particularly considering its juxtaposition to the scenes of hell. Since Amphilanthus has just promised his regent and council to return to Germany very shortly, it is obvious that he will not remain long with Pamphilia. Nevertheless, Wroth designs their rendezvous on an ironic background of "sweet Ayre, pleasant Fields, Brookes; Meddowes, Springs, Flowres," and a "dainty Spring" into which Pamphilia weeps medicinal tears (557).[36] Almost parodying a farewell scene, the narrator claims, "never was such affection exprest, never so truly felt, to the company, they together, returned, he leading her, or rather imbracing her, with his conquering armes, and protesting the water he dranke being mixed with her teares, had so infused constancy and perfect truth of love in it, as in him it had wrought the like effect . . ." (557-58). Fifteen lines later, he is leaving for Germany, and Pamphilia is to go only as far as Italy with him to visit his mother. The narrator reminds us that words are only air to Amphilanthus by wryly noting that the lovers return briefly to the wood to revisit the hell of deceit, "but now no more to be abused." Amphilanthus destroys the "Crowne of mighty stones," the monument to his "former ficklenes," but the

problem does not lie in a pile of stones, but in the morality which they represented. The journey of Pamphilia and Amphilanthus, if they adhere to their present course, will only be a continuation and repetition of what has already passed. As she first conceived of these characters, Wroth could never unite them.

In Pamphilia, Wroth achieved the most detailed portrait yet drawn of woman's constancy. Her picture is not simple, largely because Pamphilia is not merely the stereotyped helpless lovelorn lady: she is a queen, a poet, and a strong woman. In what Wroth defines as women's terms, she is heroic in her duty and obedience to the state, despite private grief, and in her devotion, despite suffering, to constancy. Ironically, her virtue is also her flaw, and this conundrum is the main subject of her sonnets, where Wroth eventually proposes yet another role for her hero, that of the divine poet.

## Pamphilia to Amphilanthus

In this revival of the Elizabethan sonnet sequence, Wroth used much of the conventional language and imagery of sequences from the 1590s, yet she radically changed the tradition by making her sonneteer a woman. Wroth's choice of genre raises a number of interesting problems about poetry and gender. Because sonnet sequences had been written so exclusively by male poets, Wroth cannot ignore the conventions established by the male poet-lover, and, as in other sequences, she directs sonnets to love, night, sleep, the stars, day, hope, grief, and absence, and uses familiar images like "night's blacke Mantle," "my woe-kild heart," "the fires of love," "Loves swift wings," "that Sea of teares," "such store of sighes," as well as the ubiquitous oppositions of the *petrarchisti*:

> Can pleasing sight misfortune ever bring?
> Can firme desire a painefull torment try?
> Can winning eyes prove to the hart a sting?
> Or can sweet lips in treason hidden ly?
> (Sonnet 5, 87)[37]

But while *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* resembles the Elizabethan sequences, its contexts make it significantly different. Unlike the poems of many other sonneteers, Pamphilia's sonnets are not designed to woo and win her lover nor to express attachment to his physical charm. Instead, Pamphilia's sequence explores the nature of constancy, her own greatest attribute, to the almost complete exclusion of poetry directly concerning her beloved. Here are no *blasons*, indeed, almost no mention of Amphilanthus's physical presence; after the title, his name is not mentioned again. Such an omission means the customary language of courtship is absent from most of the sequence; only in the last sonnets, in which Pamphilia redirects her love and constancy to the divine, does that language, refurbished and renewed, appear.

Our understanding of this sequence is increased by studying it from several different perspectives: its immediate literary context as companion piece to the *Urania*; the poetic innovations required to adapt the genre to a female sonneteer; its relationship to the tradition of women's writing now a century old; its belated relationship to the Elizabethan sequences; and the possible familial influences.[38] On all accounts, through her sonneteer (Pamphilia), Wroth expands the possibilities of a female poetic voice to encompass passion, purgation, and vision. The first half of the sequence records Pamphilia's already familiar sufferings for love, while in a crown of fourteen sonnets near the end of the sequence, she fulfills Urania's exhortation by directing her constancy beyond Amphilanthus to the divine. If she explores the psychology of woman's passion to a much greater extent than her aunt, the end of her sequence finds an appropriate analogy in the Countess of Pembroke's Psalms.

As an integral part of the *Urania*, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* reflects the characterization of Pamphilia as constant, chaste, and modest, and underscores her heroic adherence to these virtues. In the sonnet sequence appear both extremes of Pamphilia's experience, a vision of the hell of deep deceit and the promise of divine love, as well as Pamphilia's parallel realization that the true home for her constancy is not inconstant

man but the God of Love. The structure of the sequence reflects these two different modes and the changes in Pamphilia's poetic vision. For the first 48 sonnets and 7 songs, the design is perfectly regular: 6 sonnets followed by a song. These sonnets include the most familiar images of Elizabethan sonnet style and numerous Sidneian echoes. Such careful arrangement suddenly dissolves into scattered songs and sonnets, and wholeness only reappears with a crown of 14 sonnets, a perfect circle dedicated to praising love, and then the sequence concludes with Pamphilia's acknowledgment of her true poetic vocation.[39]

The sonnets arranged in eight groups of six anatomize the heart and mind of the weeping Pamphilia, mourning the absent Amphilanthus, yet ever constant to her love. The regular ordering of the sonnets is ironic, belying the disorder of Pamphilia's mind in the throes of grief, jealousy, and despair. Here, the very Cupid about whom Urania had warned Pamphilia ranges freely, imaging the fires of passion controlling Pamphilia's life and art. This is yet another version of Astrophil's "murthering boy," and his "babish tricks" and "Purblinde charmes" recall the woes of a whole tradition of long, but self-inflicted, suffering in love.

Detailing the psychology of passionate and unrequited love, Pamphilia makes wholehearted use of the familiar paraphernalia of lovesickness. Over and over again the verbs reveal her suffering: "I for mercy cry" "I groaned," "I suffer'd," "All night I weepe," "Sorrow Ile wed," "I weepe, I cry, I sigh, I mourne, I grieve." Yet with this agony is the clear self-consciousness of a poet-lover who will obey love's "charmes . . . but love nott want of eyes" (Sonnet 7, 90). She is knowingly enthralled to this Cupid, the blind, imperious, playful, "fond Childe" responsible for burning hearts and servitude to love, who is also the tyrannical power capable of protracted cruelty (Sonnet 11, 92). In the very first sonnet of the sequence, echoes of the hell of deep deceit resound as Pamphilia describes a dream of her fall into love. Venus appears in her chariot "drawne by wing'd desire," accompanied by Cupid who adds fire to the burning hearts she

holds. "Butt one hart flaming more then all the rest" is placed in Pamphilia's breast and "martir'd my poore hart."

What Pamphilia insists on here, as she did all the way through the *Urania*, is her constancy, her decision to be faithful to love despite all vicissitudes. In the first song, sung by a constant shepherdess, Pamphilia transfers the expression of passion to a persona who articulates an extreme that Pamphilia projects for herself, dying for love. The shepherdess asks for the epitaph, "She who still constant lov'd/Now dead with cruell care,/Kil'd with unkind dispaire,/And change, her end heere prov'd" (89). The scenes of hell in the *Urania* have already portrayed the danger of obsessive devotion, and in these early sonnets a despairing Pamphilia actually contemplates death "since you will nott save" (Sonnet 6, 88).

But if such a pose and such language recall other sonnet lovers, Pamphilia differs from her male predecessors. First, she does not woo. The title may be *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, but she addresses sonnets not to him but to sleep, night, grief, shades, time, or Cupid. Amphilanthus lives in her imagination, in shadows, but Pamphilia never mentions his name, never describes him, never considers his physical attractions. The only reward she desires exists totally within the bounds of a chaste love: the transfer of his heart to her, where it will "see the sacrifises made/Of pure, and spottles love . . ." (Sonnet 26, 102). She explicitly rejects a love manifested in "fond, and outward showes/Of kissing, toying . . ."; initiated by "face and lookes"; maintained by "sighes, or teares"; lasting only as long as "favors" are dispensed (Sonnet 40, 110). As in the *Urania*, Pamphilia declines to assume the male role of courtship, and bound by the ideals and decorum of womanly modesty, humility, and chastity, she uses her poetic art to present these virtues and to reveal what happens when they are wounded by passion. In Sonnets 34 and 36, for instance, her modesty and silence cause her to hide her love, and then suffer pain for concealing it.

Second, while Pamphilia's imagery echoes her predecessors, she resembles neither traditional sonnet ladies nor their lovers, for she is a woman *and* a poet, who, possessing and believing

in the virtues of constancy and chastity, expresses how she suffers in a world subject to time, fortune, and mutability; and it is indeed a man's world, in which she cannot hope for a requited constancy and chastity from him. But because the story emanates from the woman's point of view, she does not merely present idealized female virtue, but reveals what it is like to bear that virtue when in love with inconstant man. Here is no simple reversal of male and female roles, but an attempt to define how a woman's poetry can reveal her passions and predicaments.

At this point, the sequence disintegrates formally and psychologically with a new series of sonnets increasingly dark and confined, reminiscent of the hell of deep deceit. Shadows and a constriction of spirit appear when the poet contemplates "bace jealousie;/O in how strang a cage ame I kept in?" (Sonnet 4, 121); and when she calls herself a "Tombe for sad misfortunes spite" (Sonnet 5, 122). Claustrophobia threatens when she images how "my paine, still smother'd in my grieved brest,/Seekes for some ease, yett cannot passage find/To bee discharg'd of this unwellcome ghest" (Sonnet 6, 122). Evoking near-panic from the simile of a ship sinking deeper in the sand "the more she strives," Pamphilia's verbs to convey her state of mind are "Sunk, and devour'd, and swallow'd." Once, the poet had imagined that she could never be tied by love, but yet she finds herself in "lovers slaverie" and "bound" not to try to free herself (Sonnet 10, 124). Her state of mind grows more desperate, more in need of release.

In the last two songs before the crown of sonnets, Pamphilia presents the source of her captivity, the conventionally moralized blind boy Cupid. Song 16 details his tricks and flattery, and his pleasure in deception (125). Song 17 underlines Cupid's danger with an insistent refrain, "So though his delights are pritty,/To dwell in them would bee pitty" (126). Such warning of the "pitty" resulting from worldly pleasure becomes in the last stanza a fervent exhortation, "Doe not dwell in them for pitty." But the last sonnet before the crown marks the turning point, for having exhausted the poetry of suffering, Pamphilia suddenly curses the thought and hand which

first wrote against Cupid, and now "that hand shall guided bee aright,/And give a crowne unto thy endless prayse,/Which shall thy glory, and thy greatnes raise,/More then thes poore things could thy honor spite" (126).[40]

Here, Wroth evokes the familiar iconography of two Cupids, one to represent sensual love, the other the love of virtue—a traditional opposition she could have learned from many sources. Alciati explains the antithesis of the two figures in the emblems concerning the triumph of Anteros over Eros, identified respectively as love of virtue and love. In the first emblem, Anteros denounces voluptuousness, and while wearing the wreath of wisdom, kindles instead the fires of learning. In the second emblem, Anteros binds Eros to a tree, consuming his fire with a new fire.[41] While the interpretation of Anteros as the opposite and destroyer of Eros was an anomaly in the main classical tradition of Anteros as mutual love, it was a departure known well to Renaissance scholars and to such diverse writers as Marguerite de Navarre and Ben Jonson.[42] Although the convention in sonnet sequences was to present Cupid only as an image of voluptuous love, Wroth uses the two opposing Cupids to illustrate the extraordinary turn which Pamphilia's love takes.[43]

Although Pamphilia had never succumbed to lust, she was enchained to the love of an earthly being. She gains her release only by rejecting blind Cupid and by turning to praise the divine Cupid; by rejecting old sonnet language and becoming the poet of divine love. It almost goes without saying that other sonneteers have moved from the entanglements of sublunary love to contemplation of the divine. But in each case, the beloved lady performs an important function for the poet: loving Laura eventually brings Petrarch to love God. The poet's language of love for a lady may ironically mask "higher" love, or by rejecting earthly love for his lady, the poet may strive to love the divine. On her part, the lady can offend, torment, inspire, teach, or turn the poet's attention inward or upward.[44] In Wroth's sequence, however, the beloved man is not there at all. Sonnet language does not exist here to woo him or even to reject him, but almost as if to

show its own tiredness and inefficacy. In Sonnet 39, Pamphilia had described "My owne fram'd words, which I account the dross/Of purer thoughts, or recken them as moss/While they (witt-sicke) them selves to breath imploy" (110). So far, conventional sonnet language has not measured up to Pamphilia's ideas, nor expressed her true identity.

As a chaste, constant woman, Pamphilia finds her vocation as a lover and a love-poet limited; she needs a role and a language less trammeled by considerations of gender, less worn by the century-long experiences of male sonneteers. Innovating by extending the crown of sonnets to a full fourteen, Wroth uses the unmistakable connectedness of the form to reveal a new integrity within Pamphilia. Rather than anatomize her constancy in continual conflict with fortune, time, and mutability, Pamphilia will now reveal its origins in "true virtue," in divine love. In the crown, there is no language of discord or suffering, only the language of harmony and joy, because her constancy now exists in its true, timeless, unchangeable setting.

The first sonnet marks the transition from love poet to divine poet, encapsulating the dark, constricting, even hellish experience of the last sixty sonnets in the image of the "strang labourinth." Disorienting, thwarting, isolating, the labyrinth represents the world of continued doubt and woe from which she has come. But now she will "leave all, and take the thread of love," which in Sonnet 2 "straite leades unto the soules content" (128). Suddenly all those sonnets of night, shadows, absence, and despair disappear and the world, guided by chastity, gleams with light, fire, plenitude, and hope:

> Love is the shining starr of blessings light;
> 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. (128)

Briefly recalling the wise virgins with their lamps filled with oil, Pamphilia vividly contrasts this love with blind, peevish boy-Cupid; more, this love is an essence "Cleere as th'ayre, warme as sunn beames, as day light/Just as truthe, constant

as fate . . ." (Sonnet 3, 129). This love does not inflict pain by its momentary meetings, but its heavenly fires will last until the end of the world. And so, "although, itt pierce your tender hart,/And burne, yett burning you will love the smart" (Sonnet 4, 130).

Unlike its earthly shadow, the fire of divine love abolishes sin, and possesses "vertues which inspire/Soules with devine love—which showes his chaste art." This love has salutary effects, for "He may our profitt, and owr Tuter prove" (Sonnet 5, 130).[45] More, while earthly fire destroys—as does the fire of the hell of deep deceit—"this doth aspire,/Increase, and foster all delights above" (Sonnet 7, 131). This love transcends the "briers/Of jelousie" so troublesome to Pamphilia earlier, and more important, distinguishes (as many male sonneteers do not) mere coldness from true chastity which indeed moves "vertuouse love" (Sonnet 8, 131).

Measuring how far the sequence has come is Sonnet 9 which rejects "*Venus* follyes" and praises "her sunn; wher sinn/Never did dwell" [1621, "her Sonne"]. The Christological echoes are deliberate, for Pamphilia excoriates the false Cupid, that "Monster" of lust; and rejecting the ills of "fraile, dull earth" and fading blossoms, she urges lovers to choose the "fruit" which repairs or redeems the loss. To envision the divine Cupid, an essence of light and fire, is to be moved by God, also the "lord commander of all harts," and to him, the poet offers her constant soul, her poetry of praise and "all that I have more" (Sonnet 13, 134). In the final sonnet, Pamphilia gives her constancy its proper home, for she offers up to divine love her "faith untouch'd," and her heart "where constancy beares sway." Unlike the first sonnet in the sequence, this one attests to her freedom from the pangs of earthly desire.

But the vision must end, and it is time to move out of the circle of the crown, back into time and mutability. Emerging from heavenly contemplation, the poet recognizes the foes of divine love lying in wait, like "Curst jealousie." The last couplet, while it repeats the first lines of the crown, also adds the word "fervently": "Soe though in Love I fervently doe

burne,/In this strange labourinth how shall I turne?" The question in Sonnet 1 concerned "burning" in love for Amphilanthus, and so blindly seeking her way through the twisting labyrinth. But in Sonnet 14, the poet burns fervently in divine love and, poetically inspired by that love, wonders how she will ever readjust to life in the labyrinthine world.

In the last few songs and sonnets after the crown, we too must ponder how her divine vision has affected Pamphilia as poet and as lover. While the first song after the crown is not overtly divine, its diction clearly resonates of the spiritual: "Sweet," "injoye," "bright," "sunn," "spring," "delight," "pleasures," "bliss," "faithfull," "just," "joyes," "gladnesse," "flames of faith," "burne," "life," "blessed," "light"—all the language of the crown of sonnets, but apparently in the quite different context of a traditional song from lover to beloved, "Sweet, lett mee injoye thy sight. . ." (135). Perhaps Pamphilia has learned that divine love may be shadowed in sublunary love, so that the language itself is deliberately ambiguous, meant to refer both to mortal love, and more secretly, to love of the divine.

The first song may be yet another expression of faithful love, but coming after the crown, its last three lines are arresting:

> And grant mee lyfe which is your sight,
> Wherin I more blessed live,
> Then graced with the sunns faire light. (135)

Clearly a spiritual reading is possible here, and is reinforced later by the couplet of Sonnet 4 which suggests that "the truer Image" lies unseen in her heart (140). If all the forces of jealousy, that is, the powers that work against selfless or true virtue, are massed against her, the solution is to preserve her "true love" hidden within her heart and under her apparent meaning. Perhaps the most convincing example of such doubling of language is in the seventh sonnet, which follows two sonnets referring to hidden meanings: "Soe wrong may shadow mee, till truth doe smile,/And justice (sun-like) hath those vapors tyde" (140); "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" (141). The sonnet to "deere love" begins by expressing both love and pain, but concludes with language connotative of much more:

> When all alone, I thinke upon thy paine,
> How thou doest traveile owr best selves to gaine;
> Then howerly thy lessons I doe learne,
>
> Think on thy glory, which shall still assend
> Untill the world come to a finall end,
> And then shall we thy lasting powre deserne.
> (Sonnet 7, 141)

This could just barely refer to Cupid, but again the Christological echoes dominate and recall the apocalyptic vision of crown Sonnet 4 which precedes the establishment of the Kingdom of Love.

By suggesting that the reality at the core of Pamphilia's language is divine love, Wroth creates a poetry that expresses not merely woman's love for man, but the wise virgin's love for her bridegroom. Having seen how this parable inspired the imaginations of so many women writers, we should not be surprised to hear it echo at the heart of the first real love poetry by a woman.

Having purged her love and her language in the crown of sonnets, Pamphilia's subsequent poems include her love of God. Yet the poetry of those fourteen sonnets seems to have been both a beginning and an end. The last sonnet in the sequence, "My muse now hapy, lay thy self to rest," is a farewell without regret to the poetry of passion:

> Leave the discource of Venus, and her sunn
> To young beeginers, and theyr brains inspire
> With storys of great love, and from that fire
> Gett heat to write the fortunes they have wunn.
> (Sonnet 9, 142)

Instead her muse will study "those thoughts adrest/To truth, which shall eternall goodnes prove." In the past, Pamphilia's

poems have shown how truly she could love Amphilanthus. Now, and for the future, she has found the true source of her constancy, and recalling that divine virtue, she instructs her muse, "Now lett your constancy your honor prove."

In *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, Wroth glorifies a love which affirms and sanctifies the primacy of woman's virtue, for chastity, modesty, and constancy, so afflicted in the world, triumph in the celebration of divine love. If Wroth was influenced in many of her sonnets by other sequences, like those of her father and uncle, she finally gave her homage to divine poetry, as did her aunt in the Psalms.

Perhaps Wroth's most important accomplishment in the *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* was to expand the possibilities open to women writers. Her generous imagination and her sheer stamina produced two big works that are almost encyclopedic in their treatment of love and virtue. In particular, by seriously projecting women's actions, feelings, and dilemmas, Wroth developed a female hero without equal in Elizabethan romance. That this character is a poet only adds to her significance, for in her name, Wroth composed lyric poetry as no English woman had before.

And yet, despite her innovations, and contrary to Lord Denny's bitter opinion, Wroth preserves important aspects of traditional feminine literary decorum. If, for instance, her romance treats love affairs, they are not merely as Denny claimed, "lascivious tales and amorous toys," but rather, images of the mutable world, placed clearly in a moral framework acceptable to Renaissance concepts of order. Like the Countess of Pembroke in her translation, *Antonie*, Wroth vividly represents passion and violence at least partly to clarify their nature and their proper place in human affairs. The fact that Pamphilia's very heroism grows out of her adherence to the traditional feminine virtues indicates that Wroth elaborates rather than contravenes the conventions.

But Pamphilia is fundamentally an Elizabethan heroine, not only because she is modeled after Queen Elizabeth, but because through her Wroth evolved a feminine perspective on themes, images, and genres that defined the literature of

the preceding era. Wroth's references to the past also indicate closure, the final evolution of the female hero whose poetic beginnings may be seen in the Countess of Pembroke's Clorinda and Elizabeth. In fact, the lyric impulse to praise, glorify and apotheosize women, and the fictional treatment of heroic virtue, appear not to have concerned Wroth's Jacobean sisters who instead took up the basic issues of the woman question and women's essential feminine roles.

redeemed; also the holy Church; it is often cited for its strength, because it withstands weight, and it especially signifies the victory of the Saints after this life]. "Potest etiam cedrus designare Apostolos & Prophetas, propter vitae eorum excellentiam, & doctrinae sublimitatem, qua aedificant ecclesiam Dei. . . . Cedrus magna, quam plantavit Deus, Christum designare potest: & etiam Ecclesiam . . ." [The cedar signifies the Apostles and Prophets, because of the excellence of their life and the loftiness of their teaching, by which they build the church of God; the great cedar, which God planted, may signify Christ and also the Church]. Hieronymus Lauretus, *Silva Allegoriarum Totius Sacrae Scripturae* (Barcelona, 1570), rpt. 10th ed. 1681 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971), pp. 763, 223.

28. The female figure in nature has a classical history, although Lanyer's version differs quite notably. In discussing Marvell's "Upon Appleton House," Rosalie Colie mentions Waller's poem to Penshurst as a "feminine type" of house-poem, and notes that "the feminine house-poem takes its major conceit from the pastoral compliment to a lady who is said to improve nature by her presence in it, a thematic commonplace (cf. Virgil, *Ecl.* VII, 45-48) Leishman has called simply 'pastoral hyperbole.' " *My Echoing Song. Andrew Marvell's Poetry of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 284. Lanyer anticipates something of Marvell's concept of Mary Fairfax in "Upon Appleton House." See also Ruth Wallerstein, "Marvell's 'Upon Appleton House' and 'The Garden,' " *Seventeenth Century Poetic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950), p. 299; and Marien-Sofie Rostvig, "Upon Appleton House," *Marvell: Modern Judgements*, ed. Michael Wilding (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 219, 229.

## Chapter Eight

1. Josephine Roberts writes the most complete biography to date in her edition of *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), pp. 3-40. See also Roberts, "The Biographical Problem of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*," *TSWL* 1 (1982), 43-51.

2. Robert Sidney wrote to Lady Sidney from Flushing in 1597, urging her not to bring the three oldest children over with her: "I know yowr Delight in them, makes yow not Care, what is best for them; and rather than you will part with them, yow wil not heare of any Place, where to leave them behind yow." He wishes her to send Mary and Kate to the Countess of Huntington and the Countess of Warwick for their education, for "though I cannot find Fault hether unto, with their Bringing up, yet I know now every Day more and more, it wil bee fit for them to bee owt of their Fathers Hows. For heer they cannot learne, what they may do in other Places. . . ." He concludes by reassuring his wife that "I know also, that a better, and more carefull Mother there is not, then you are; and indeed, I doe not feare any Thing so much as your to much Fondnes." *Letters and Memorials of State . . . of the Sidney Family*, ed. Arthur Collins

(London, 1746), II, 43. The letter is mistitled "Sir Thomas Sydney to his Lady." Peter J. Croft discusses Barbara Sidney's illiteracy and her close relationship with her husband in *The Poems of Robert Sidney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 69-81.

3. *Letters and Memorials*, II, 153.

4. On December 28, 1602, Rowland Whyte wrote to Robert Sidney that "Mrs. *Mary* upon *St. Stevens* Day, in the Afternoone, dawnced before the Queen two Galliards, with one Mr. *Palmer*, the admirable Dawncer of this Tyme; both were much commended by her Majestie, then she dawnced with hym a Corante. . . ." Ibid., p. 262.

5. See Roberts, *Poems*, pp. 11-12. Jonson's remark appears in *Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden* in *Works*, I, 142, line 355.

6. *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman E. McClure (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), pp. 512, 519.

7. *CSPD*, James I, 1623–1625, pp. 155, 344, 473. *CSPD*, Charles I, 1627–1628, p. 136. *CSPD*, Charles I, 1628–1629, p. 44. Most entries refer to her receiving royal protection from her creditors.

8. Roberts, *Poems*, pp. 24-26 and pp. 43-44; "Biographical Problem," pp. 48-51.

9. Nathaniel Baxter, *Sir Philip Sydneys Ourania* (London, 1606), A4. Robert Jones, *The Muses Garden for Delight Or the fift Booke of Ayres* (London, 1610).

10. In dedicating his elegy on her brother, William Sidney, to the Sidney family, Joshua Sylvester writes of Mary Wroth that she is a Sidney "In whom, her *Uncle*'s noble Veine renewes. . . ." "An Elegiac Epistle Consolatorie . . . ," in *Lachrymae Lachrymarum* (London, 1613), H2.

11. Ben Jonson, *Epigrammes* CIII and CV in *Works*, VIII, 66-68; "A Sonnet, To the noble Lady, the Lady MARY WROTH," *The Underwood*, XXVIII, in *Works*, VIII, 182.

12. See Thomas M. Greene, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," *SEL* 10 (1970), 325-48, and below.

13. See Josephine Roberts, "An Unpublished Literary Quarrel Concerning the Suppression of Mary Wroth's *Urania* (1621)," *N&Q* 222 (1977), 532-35, and *Poems*, pp. 31-35; Paul Salzman, "Contemporary References in Mary Wroth's *Urania*," *RES* 29 (1978), 178-81. John Chamberlain sent Denny's "bitter verses" to Dudley Carleton on March 9, 1622, "for that in her book of Urania she doth palpablie and grossely play upon him and his late daughter the Lady Hayes, besides many others she makes bold with, and they say takes great libertie or rather licence to traduce whom she please, and thincks she daunces in a net: I have seen an aunswer of hers to these rimes, but I thought yt not worth the writing out." *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 427.

14. The basis for discussion here is the 1621 volume containing *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. The manuscript continuation of *Urania*, now in the Newberry Library, reflects some change in Wroth's original

plans for her main characters, but the relation between the two parts must be discussed elsewhere. According to Josephine Roberts, a critical edition of the manuscript play, *Love's Victorie*, is being prepared from the complete copy in private hands in England. A copy lacking part of Act One and all of Act Five is in the Huntington Library; Roberts publishes the songs from the play in *Poems*, pp. 210-15.

15. Margaret Tyler, *The Mirrour of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* (London, 1578), A3.

16. Tyler joins a perennial debate. Following Vives, many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers banned romances for women readers, but at the end of the sixteenth century, many romances were being dedicated to women in general or to specific figures. See Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient*, pp. 71-82. Nevertheless, given the usual content of romance, Tyler probably overstates the easy transition between reading and writing.

17. Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* in *Works*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), vol. 3, p. 22.

18. In another interesting case of "lateness," L. A. Beaurline argues that Ben Jonson attempted to revive the comic romance in his late play, *The New Inne* (1629), giving the Caroline audience what he thought they wanted, while still adapting the form to teach what he wanted about "love and virtuous action." *Jonson and Elizabethan Comedy: Essays in Dramatic Rhetoric* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1978), pp. 257-74.

19. Romantic heroines tend to be like Lodge's Rosalynde, "the paragon of all earthly perfection," meaning that they are beautiful, chaste, and wise, and spend all their time involved in the love plot. In Lodge's *Margarite of America*, the quietly chaste Margarite is finally murdered by her false lover. Interesting figures like Lady Porcia in Barnabe Riche's *The Straunge and Wonderful Adventures of Don Simonides* also die early because they have no living love interest, and so they evolve into symbols. In "Feminine Identity in Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*," *ELR* 14 (1984), 328-46, Carolyn Ruth Swift argues that Wroth modifies romance convention by giving women new roles and by blaming their unhappiness on male inconstancy, although not without contradictions.

20. See William Percy, *Sonnets to the Fairest Coelia*, particularly Sonnet 19, "It shall be said I died for COELIA," which ends, "One solace I shall find, when I am over;/ It will be known I died a constant lover." See also Richard Linche's *Diella*, Sonnet 35, "End this enchantment, Love! of my desires!" in which the lover says, "Constant have I been, still in Fancy fast,/ ordained by heavens to doat upon my Fair."

21. In "Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*," Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 16 (1975), pp. 51-60, Graham Parry calls the *Urania* "an imitation of the *Arcadia*" (p. 52) and claims "it is written in a style that is almost indistinguishable from Sidney's: the passage of thirty years between the two books is not apparent in the prose" (p. 54). Later, however, he judges that "it is fairly evident that Urania has lost the phil-

osophic garb of the *Arcadia* and has become the central figure in an infinitely convoluted history that lacks the intellectual strength of Sidney's work. Lady Mary tells a good story, but one that lacks resonance, or suggestion of veiled meaning or spiritual allegory" (p. 55). Naomi Miller's Harvard dissertation, "The Strange Labyrinth: Pattern as Process in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* and Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*" (1987) studies the relationship between *Arcadia* and *Urania*.

22. Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembrokes Arcadia 1590* in *Works*, ed. Feuillerat, vol. 1, Book 1, p. 20. Hereafter cited in the text by book and page number.

23. In "The Heroic Ideal in Sidney's Revised *Arcadia*," *SEL* 10 (1970), 63-82, Myron Turner argues convincingly that Pamela is Sidney's "ideal woman," who unites and balances "pride and humility, magnanimous self-sufficiency and Christian dependence on God . . ." (p. 73).

24. Kohler, *The Elizabethan Woman of Letters*, p. 209.

25. *The Countesse of Montgomeries Urania*, written by the right honorable the Lady Mary Wroth, Daughter to the right Noble Robert Earle of Leicester, And Neece to the ever famous, and renowned S^r^ Phillip Sidney knight. And to the most exelent Lady Mary Countesse of Pembroke late deceased. (London, 1621), p. 452. Hereafter cited in the text.

26. See Swift, "Feminine Identity," pp. 336-37, for a discussion of constancy in love. I emphasize the importance of Pamphilia's public aspect.

27. Henry Peacham, *Minerva Britanna 1612*, English Emblem Books 5 (Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1969), p. 167. In another emblem, "Manlie Constancie" is pictured as a "mightie Rock" amid waves, weathering a great storm (p. 158). In a work well known to Jonson, Cesare Ripa defines Constancy as "una dispositione ferma di non cedere a dolori corporali, ne lasciarsi vincere a tristezza, o fatica; ne a travaglio alcuno per la via della virtu, in tutte l'attione." *Iconologia* (Padua, 1611; rpt New York: Garland Publishing, 1976), p. 98. Shakespeare develops the idea of "persistive constancy" in Agamemnon's speech in *Troilus and Cressida* I.iii.17-30.

28. Ben Jonson, *Epigrammes* XCVIII, *Works*, VIII, 63. See Richard Peterson, *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), Chapter Two, "The Stand: Noble Natures Raised." In "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," Thomas Greene writes that "Virtually all the heroes and heroines (the terms are not misapplied) of the verse seem to possess this quality of fixed stability" (p. 330). For discussion of Jonson and references, I am indebted to John Lemly.

29. Wroth's description particularly recalls the "Pelican" portrait of Elizabeth in which her gown is reddish-brown, sewn with pearls, embroidered with leaves and flowers, and decorated with bows; she holds a glove in her left hand. However, each of these features appears separately in almost every portrait. In *The English Icon* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), Roy Strong gives murrey as a color emblematic of steadfastness in love and tawney of melancholy and mourning (p. 34), so that Pamphilia's dress

reflects her destiny. The pearl has a long association with purity and divinity; Lynn Staley Johnson notes that "in exegetical literature, the pearl of great price is a symbol for purity, grace, Christ, healing, penance, and Christian doctrine. . . ." *The Voice of the "Gawain"-Poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. 262. Spenser made Arthur's shield out of "Diamond perfect pure and cleene" (*FQ* I.vii.33). The possibility of a religious interpretation of Pamphilia's appearance is strengthened by her subsequent actions. See René Graziani, " 'The Rainbow Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth and Its Religious Symbolism," *JWCI* 35(1972), 247-59. In "Masques Performed before the Queen, 1592," Elizabeth frees ladies from "Unconstancie." John Nichols, ed., *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth* (London: John Nichols and Son, 1823), III, 199. In "The Princely Pleasures at the Courte at Kenelwoorth" in 1575, the lady in the lake is freed from Sir Bruce sans pitie "by the presence of a better maide than herself." *Progresses*, I, 492.

30. Roy Strong notes that the crowned pillars referred to Elizabeth's constancy in two of Sir Henry Lee's entertainments for 1590 and 1592. *The Cult of Elizabeth* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 75, 154.

31. As in the *Arcadia*, this Urania probably evolves from Venus Urania or the celestial Venus, the original divine archetype of human love. Plato's description of two Venuses or two loves had a strong Renaissance tradition. See Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1967), pp. 138-39.

32. Paul Johnson gives specific details of Elizabeth's solicitude for her subjects in *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Omega, 1976), pp. 234-36. For the Tilbury speech, see *Progresses*, II, 536. See also Frances Yates, "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea," *JWCI* 10 (1947), 27-82.

33. William Camden, *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth*, selected chapters, ed. Wallace T. MacCaffrey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 29. See also William Birch's "A Songe betwene the Quene's Majestie and England," stanza 4, in E. C. Wilson, *England's Eliza* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), pp. 4-5:

> Bessy. Here is my hand,
> My dere lover Englande,
> I am thine both with mind and hart,
> For ever to endure,
> Thou maiest be sure,
> Untill death us two do part.

34. Less than twenty years after her death, Elizabeth had almost achieved the aura of sainthood. An engraving by Frances Delaram c. 1617–1619 shows the queen in heavenly glory. An earlier posthumous tribute declared, "She was and is, what can there more be said,/ In earth the first, in heaven the second maid." *Progresses*, III, 652.

35. These two scenes may echo *The Faerie Queene* (III. xi. 30-31), in which the enchanter, Busyrane, lays bare Amoret's heart and uses her

lifeblood to figure "straunge characters of his art," trying to force her to love him.

36. This may be a Garden of Deduit, a false paradise, reflecting Amphilanthus's continual breach of faith.

37. Parry says of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* that "this sequence contains much competent writing in the Petrarchan fashion; the feeling throughout is late Elizabethan" ("Wroth's *Urania*," p. 57). The sonnet sequence is appended to the *Urania*, but separately paginated. Quotations here are from Josephine Roberts's excellent edition of the sonnets in *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, although reference is also made to the 1621 text. Sonnets are cited by their number in the sequence and by page number.

38. A number of parallels between the poems of father and daughter are suggested by W. H. Kelleher and Katherine Duncan-Jones in "A Manuscript of Poems by Sir Robert Sidney: Some Early Impressions," *British Library Journal* 1 (1975), 114-15. In another article, Duncan-Jones writes that Wroth "models a substantial number of poems on her father's." " 'Rosis and Lysa': Selections from the Poems of Sir Robert Sidney," *ELR* 9 (1979), 243. Now that all the texts are available, a full study of the relationships among the three sequences of father, uncle, and daughter is needed. See Croft, *The Poems of Robert Sidney*, Appendix C, Echoes of Robert's Sequence in his Daughter Mary Wroth's Verse; and Roberts, *Poems*, in which resemblances are given in the notes to individual sonnets.

39. The *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (p. 174) defines a crown of sonnets as "Traditionally a sequence of 7 It[alian] sonnets so interwoven as to form a 'crown' of panegyric for the one to whom they are addressed. The interweaving is accomplished by using the last line of each of the first six sonnets as the first line of the succeeding sonnet, with the last line of the seventh being a repetition of the opening line of the first. A further restriction prohibits the repetition of any given rhyme sound once it is used in the crown." Philip Sidney uses the form memorably in the fourth singing dialogue of the second eclogues of the *Arcadia* in which Strephon and Klaius mourn the absent Urania; Robert Sidney has an unfinished crown of four sonnets and a fragment, *Poems*, pp. 174-81. In other sequences, poets use the technique for up to four sonnets, but the extended repetition to as many as fourteen sonnets seem to be unique to Wroth's sequence.

40. The crown of sonnets is also a crown of praise for love, reminiscent of the iconography of a crowned virtuous love. See Ripa's "Amor di virtu," a naked, winged youth crowned with a wreath of laurel and holding three more laurel wreaths, "per mostrare che l'amor d'essa non e corruttibile, anzi come l'alloro sempre verdeggia, e come corona, o ghirlande che di figura sferica non ha giamai alcun termine" (*Iconologia*, p. 20). Alciati's "Amor virtutis" is identically equipped and claims to have woven the wreaths out of virtue itself, including the wreath of wisdom on his brow. Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata*, p. 459.

41. Ibid., pp. 457, 461.

42. See R. V. Merrill, "Eros and Anteros," *Speculum* 19 (1944), 265-84, for a history of the rival interpretations. Merrill describes Marguerite de Navarre's "La Distinction du vray amour par dixains" as similar to Alciati's emblems, but with Marguerite's own intent of showing how divine love is purified "of the cruelty of blindness . . . which characterizes earthly passion" (p. 28). In *The Masque of Beautie* in which Wroth had appeared, Ben Jonson introduces multiple Cupids and notes, "I make these different from him, which they fayne, *caecum cupidine*, or *petulantem* as I expresse beneath in the third song, these being chaste *Loves* that attend a more divine beautie, then that of *Loves* commune *parent*." *Works*, VII, 192.

43. In "The Biographical Problem," Josephine Roberts also recognizes two Cupids; however, Roberts's conclusion is that the two Cupids are an "Anacreontic Cupid," the playful trifler, and "a mature, esteemed king, in the tradition of the medieval courts of love," who "stands as the symbol of noble, generous love" (p. 50); see also *Poems*, p. 45. Of all the sequences Sidney Lee publishes in *Elizabethan Sonnets* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964), none approaches the number of references to Cupid in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*—except *Astrophil and Stella* with 27.

44. In "Shakespeare and the Sonnet Sequence," *English Poetry and Prose 1540–1674*, ed. ChristopherRicks (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970), 101-17, Thomas P. Roche writes of the sonnet ladies that "the vitality of the sonnet sequence comes not from real life but from the multiple significances inherent in these female figures who symbolize all that is desirable and unobtainable in human life. We need not refer to outmoded theories of courtly love to explain the intensity and endurance of the tradition; we need only consider the later sequences, derived from Dante and Petrarch, to see that most of them emphasize only one half of the story these poets tell, and that half-story stresses again and again the unhappiness attendant on the poet's not obtaining his lady's love. In both Dante and Petrarch this unhappiness leads to the greater happiness of suffering—through to wisdom and virtue, but in all of the sonnet sequences I have read, with the exception of Spenser's *Amoretti*, the poet is enslaved by despair at the end, trapped by his unobtainable passion" (p. 104). Roche concludes that a Renaissance reader would not greatly sympathize with the sonneteer's ultimate despair over love, and indeed that the sequence would have been a warning to lovers.

45. In the 1621 text, the spelling is "Prophet." The transformation of Cupid here to prophet and teacher is perhaps akin to the seventeenth-century emblems which metamorphosed boy-Cupid into infant Jesus. In *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1964), Mario Praz writes that "the Infant Jesus, the heart, the cross—these are the new devotions which flourish in the seventeenth century. Alexandrian love has become spiritual; Cupid has yielded up his wings and arrows to the little Redeemer" (p. 155).

ELAINE V. BEILIN

# Redeeming Eve

## WOMEN WRITERS OF THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

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