THE PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN POET IN LADY MARY WROTH'S *PAMPHILIA TO AMPHILANTUS*

LEYDİ MARY WROTH'UN PAMPHILIA TO AMPHILANTUS *ADLI ESERİNDE BİR KADIN ŞAİRİN PORTRESİ*

Hande SEBER
Prof. Dr., Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, hande@hacettepe.edu.tr

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Abstract

Lady Mary Wroth is considered to be one of the most prominent women writers of the Early Modern Period. She comes from the Sidney family, the members of which are well-known with their noteworthy literary accomplishments. Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus has a significant place among the sonnet sequences and early modern women's poetry as it is considered to be the first sonnet sequence written by an Englishwoman. The Petrarchan tradition with its determined roles of a male poet and an idealized lady, along with its blazons employed to express the consequences of unfulfilled love and desire can hardy accommodate a woman who comes up with such an unaccustomed role. This article, therefore, aims at a study of Pamphilia to Amphilanthus, as a sonnet sequence to see how a woman poet manages to employ the sonnet tradition in her own way. How Wroth as a woman poet accommodated herself and her persona to the poetic tradition of the time will be the main point of argumentation. It is in this respect that, the focus will be on Pamphilia and how she is represented with a new role. She is depicted as a woman with a voice, talking about her experience and the destructive outcomes of grief, quite often questioning the nature of love. Pamphilia appears not as the silent object of some other poets' work, but writing her own poems, metaphorically redefining her place in the literary production. Furthermore, Wroth's choice of genre, how she employed and revised it, the role she assigned to the female speaker, the major themes, along with her ideas on writing as a woman poet will be further elaborated on.

Öz

Leydi Mary Wroth, Erken Modern Döneme damgasını vurmuş önemli bir yazardır. Ürettikleri önemli edebi eserler ile tanınan Sidney ailesinin fertlerinden biridir. Wroth'un Pamphilia to Amphilanthus başlıklı eseri bir İngiliz kadın tarafından yazılan ilk sone dizisi olarak kabul edildiğinden, sone geleneğinde ve erken modern dönem kadın yazınında oldukça önemli yere sahiptir. Erkeğin şair, kadınınsa idealize edilen kişi olarak rol aldığı, karşılıksız aşk ve tutkunun kalıplaşmış ifadelerle sunulduğu Petrarka şiir geleneğinde kadının alışılmamış bir role bürünerek şair olarak ortaya çıkması oldukça güçtü. Bu makale, bir kadın şairin sone geleneğini kendi özgün tarzıyla nasıl yorumladığını görmek üzere Pamphilia to Amphilanthus adlı eseri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Wroth'un şair olarak kendisini ve alışılagelmişin dışında özelliklerle şekillendirdiği şiir kişisini dönemin şiir geleneğine nasıl yerleştirdiği tartışmanın ana noktasını oluşturacaktır. Bu bağlamda, eserde Pamphilia'nın temsili üzerinde önemle durulacaktır. Deneyimlerini ve üzüntünün neden olduğu yıkıcı sonuçları dile getiren, çoğu kez de aşkın doğasını sorgulayan sesi ile var olan bir kadındır Pamphilia. O, başka bir şairin eserindeki sessiz obje olmaktan öte, kendi şiirlerini yazan, edebiyat yazınında kadının yazar konumda da olabileceğini gösteren bir figür olarak yansıtılır. Tüm bunlara ek olarak, çalışmada Wroth'un edebi tür seçimi, bunu nasıl kullandığı ve değiştirdiği, şiir kişisinine verdiği roller, eserdeki ana temalar ve bir kadın şair olarak edebi eserler üretmek hakkındaki görüşleri de ayrıntılı olarak ele alınacaktır.

Introduction

Lady Mary Wroth is considered to be one of the most prominent women writers of the Early Modern Period. Coming from a family with noteworthy literary accomplishments, Lady Mary Wroth followed the same path with her uncle, aunt and father. In keeping with the literary heritage of her uncle Sir Philip Sidney, Lady Mary Wroth modelled her Petrarchan sonnet sequence *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* on *Astrophil and Stella* believed to be written about 1581-1589.[1] Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* has a significant place among the sonnet sequences and early modern women's poetry. Roberts states that it is "the first sonnet sequence to be composed by an Englishwoman" but "overlooked by literary critics" somehow due to its time of publication when the popularity of sonnet sequences declined (1982, p. 43). First circulated in manuscript, the sonnet collection *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* was published in 1621 as a separately numbered section appended to Lady Mary Wroth's prose romance *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (Roberts, 1983, p. 41).[2]

For the Renaissance poets who wanted to make their experience of loving and suffering as the subject matter of their verses, Petrarch's *Canzoniere* had been the main source of inspiration. Petrarch's immortalized beloved Laura became the model for the sonneteers who in a similar manner expressed their love and frustration to almost identically fashioned ladies. The Petrarchan tradition with its determined roles of a male poet and an idealized lady, along with its blazons employed to express the consequences of unfulfilled love and desire can hardly accommodate a woman who comes up with such an unaccustomed role as a poet. Lady Mary Wroth according to Payne "followed the Sidney family tradition" but "kept the expectations of her male-dominated audience," and accordingly, "softened the potential sting of her words by dramatically altering the traditional voice of the poet to prove her chastity and obedience as a Renaissance woman" (1999, p. 210). The major theme of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is frustrated love and its consequences. The sequence is marked not only by conventional woe poems from a woman's perspective but also with a woman poet's deep concern of how to express them in poetry. The owner of this voice is Pamphilia who is both the forsaken beloved and the poet determined to tell her own

[1] For a detailed account of Philip and Robert Sidney's influence on Wroth's sonnets, see Miller, 1990, pp. 295-310.

[2] There are two different views in evaluating *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, either as a part of *Urania* or as an independent sonnet sequence. For a brief account of these studies see O'Hara (2011, pp. 25-26). This article will concentrate on the sequence as an independent work with particular emphasis on how a woman poet uses the sonnet tradition.

story in the songs and sonnets. The choice of genre in this respect, is quite a challenge for a woman poet – both for Wroth as a poet and for the poetic persona she created. Beilin refers to an interesting aspect about Wroth's choice of genre in her literary works, arguing that she intentionally used the romance and the sonnet sequence that were "out of the vogue by 1620" and she further states "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" (1987, p. 213). This freedom, therefore, enabled Wroth to give a new role to Pamphilia, the lovelorn lover and the poet in the sequence. Moreover, Amphilantus's absence and the impossibility of the lovers' union play a crucial rule in securing the chastity of the woman poet, who expresses frustration rather than hope and contentment in her verses.

Roberts's remark in "Lady Mary Wroth's Sonnets: A Labyrinth of the Mind" where she says that Wroth's "poems reveal an effort to dramatize the conflict between passionate surrender and self-affirmation" is the starting point for this article (1970, p. 319). A woman poet's journey in the labyrinth-like path of the poetic tradition will be at the core of the study. *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, as a sonnet sequence[3] will be discussed briefly to see how a woman poet manages to employ the sonnet tradition in her own way. However, more importantly, the focus will be on Pamphilia, and how she is represented with a new role. Accordingly, Wroth's choice of genre, how she employed and revised it, the poetic persona's identity, the role assigned to the female speaker, the major themes, along with Wroth's ideas on writing as a woman poet will be elaborated on. In order to see the whole picture of how Wroth, as a woman poet, accommodated herself – and her poetic persona – to the poetic tradition of the time, it will be useful to have a very brief look at the literary convention of the Early Modern Period to see to what extent women can raise their voices as writers.

Early Modern Women's Poetry and Lady Mary Wroth

During the Early Modern period, there were very few literary genres available for women writers. Hannay states that "Protestant Tudor women. . . were confined to patronage, translation, dedications of translations, epitaphs, letters, and the occasional private devotional meditation" (1990, p. x). These devotional works evidently conform with the well expected notions of femininity, and translating the works written by others, particularly spare women from the accusation of self-

[3] In the discussion, J. A. Robert's edition of the primary text *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth* will be used. The argumentation of the study will also base on her view about the structure of the sequence "in four distinct, yet interrelated, sections" (1983, p. 44).

exposure or claim for authority. The Protestant ideas and what is said in the scriptural texts, as Walker points out, are all about the importance of women's obedience to their husbands, and their silence in order not to challenge male authority during the Renaissance (1996, pp. 8-9).

The traditional ideas of femininity are at the same time very restrictive when women dare to break the silence and talk about their emotional experiences. The outstanding body of literary texts of the Renaissance poetic tradition is produced by the male poets with humanist education who at the same time set the rules of poetic production along with the roles ascribed to women, mostly as silenced and idealized objects of adoration. Like the ideas on femininity, the poetic tradition that was shaped by classical literature and patriarchal in nature, is similarly restrictive for a woman who is determined to raise her voice as a woman. Writing is an act of claiming authority over the text, the power that women were thought to be deprived of. Kelly-Gadol's often-quoted remark that "there was no renaissance for women – at least, not during the Renaissance" (1987, p. 176) best explains the situation. Self-expression is a violation of chastity and womanly virtues. Additionally, making their work known by the public, not only by publication but even by manuscript circulation had its consequences, and women were burdened with this in the following centuries. Talking about why women poets like Katherine Philips and Anne Finch were hesitant about publishing their works, Mermin underlines the common condition of women in a world where publication is regarded "as a kind of sexual self-display" and that "their works and their selves are so often confused with each other" (1990, pp. 336; 338).

Among the women writers recognised with literary accomplishments, Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke has a significant place. Her literary merits were appreciated not only in the age that she lived but also even today by the critics. Being a prominent figure of the Sidney literary circle, she appears as an ideal model for female writers, particularly for her niece. In the literary tradition with few literary genres seen suitable for women writers, she has a distinguished place with her translations, original poems, and editing the works of her brother Sir Philip Sidney, along with being a literary patron. After the death of Sir Philip Sidney, she continued with translating David's *Psalms* and edited her brother's pastoral romance *Arcadia*. Moreover, she translated Philippe de Mornay's *A Discourse of Life and Death*, Francesco Petrarch's *The Triumph of Death* and Robert Garnier's French neoclassical tragedy *Mark Antoine* (Freer, 1987, p. 482).

Although the Countess of Pembroke's works appear to be in accordance with the expectations of a Tudor woman's literary accomplishments, her voice and ideas can be evidently observed in her "modest" yet very strong dedicatory poems "Even Now that Care" and "To the Angell Spirit of the most excellent Sir Philip Sidney," her eulogy "A Dialogue Between Two Shepherds, Thenot and Piers, in Praise of Astrea" and a poem of doubtful authorship "The Doleful Lay of Clorinda."[4] Thought not explicitly stated, and seemingly within the borders of the convention, her ideas on writing poetry are in the core of these poems. Moreover, the dedicatory poems are marked by her devotion to the Protestant cause for which her brother Sir Philip Sidney died. She makes use of every possibility to transform her feelings into poetic utterences making her worries, concerns and expectations reflected in her verse, more importantly even political messages. "To the Angell Spirit of the most excellent Sir Philip Sidney," according to Hannay, is more than an elegy for her late brother, but a strong potitical message to Queen Elizabeth I reminding her duties in supporting the Protestant cause for which Philip Sidney died (1990, pp. 151-152).

Hence, women who aimed at writing somehow accommodated themselves to the literary convention of the time by modestly refashioning these genres and adjusting their authorial voice in accordance with the expectations of the time. Despite such obstacles, Lamb believes that "the Renaissance gender ideology did not succeed in preventing all Renaissance women from writing; but it exerted formative pressure upon what they wrote, how they wrote, and the ways their writings were received" (1990, p. 4). Lamb's remarks are also applicable to Wroth's case as she managed to write and publish her work, though severely criticised at the same time. Wroth was advised to follow the literary accomplishments of her "pious" aunt by Sir Edward Denny who in his letter expressed how he was intimidated and dishonoured in *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* as he saw a similarity between himself and the father in law of Sirenus. For Sir Edward Denny, instead of "lascivious tales," Wroth should "followe the rare, and pious example of [her] vertuous and learned Aunt, who translated so may godly books and especially the holly psalms of David" (qtd. in Roberts, 1983, p. 239).

Actually, not by translating religious verse but in giving voice to woman in poetry Wroth followed her aunt's accomplishment. Such indebtedness is highlighted by Fienberg who believes that in the Countess of Pembroke's work "Wroth might well

[4] For further information about these poems see Seber (2014, pp. 107-131).

have found an alternative Petrarchan tradition more suited to her poetics," and Laura's declaration of her love in a vision in *The Triumph of Death*, became a model for Wroth to openly express her love and desire (1991, p.184). Fienberg also notes a similarity between *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* and Mary Sidney's elegy "The Doleful Lay of Clorinda" both in terms of "the pastoral voice of the shepherdess, Clorinda" and also in the use of "sighs, 'Ay mee,' and her questioning effort to find an audience for her complaint" (1991, p. 186).

In the tradition of women's writing that dates back to past, authentic female voice has a crucial role in self-expression.[5] It is in this respect that Wroth's poetic persona's subjective role attracts particular attention, as there is more to see behind Pamphilia's modest appearance as a lovelorn beloved. She is a woman with a voice, talking about her experience and the destructive outcomes of sorrow, quite often questioning the nature of love. She is not the silent object of some other poets' work, but writing her own poems, metaphorically redefining her place in the literary production. In Wroth's fashioning of Pamphilia, Lamb notices another possible influence. Referring to Song 8 in *Astrophil and Stella* where Stella was given voice in twenty-eight lines, Lamb thinks that Sidney "conferred an unusual degree of subjectivity upon his inscribed woman reader Stella" and that it may "helped Wroth in the radical reformulation of the Petrarchan sonnet sequence necessary for her writing of her own *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*" (1990, p. 22). The possible influence of her uncle and aunt along with the Petrarchan tradition is Wroth's starting point. However, Wroth is both within and outside the tradition as a woman poet, just like her poetic persona, entering the labyrinth of literary production from one door and noticing many possible paths to take.

Pamphilia: The Woman Poet Walks Through the Labyrinth

With the new and unaccustomed role given to the poetic persona, the traditional nature of sonnet sequence is at the same time altered by Wroth. *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is not an account of courtship or an idealization of the loved one, it rather appears as sequel to a traditional sonnet sequence, offering a very vivid picture of a woman who was once a silent participant of courtship. From a woman's point of view, it is a narration of the acceptance of loneliness, isolation, emotional entrapment and deprivation due to unreturned love, and the poetic persona's attempt to find a

[5] During the Middle Ages, among those women writers whose name survived to our time, Margery Kempe, Marie de France and Christine de Pisan from the English and French Medieval literature have all used their own subjective voices in their literary works.

way in such confusion – best represented with the image of the labyrinth. In the Petrarchan fashion, the tone of lament and melancholy dominate the scene, and despite its dire consequences, love is similarly glorified. In *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* unfulfilled love and its aftermath are heard from Pamphilia's perspective who talks about her personal experience and tries to give a meaning to all that she lived. Roberts thinks that the poems in "the sequence do not show a steady progression of attitudes," they are rather arranged "to reflect an on-going emotional struggle within Pamphilia," and that the sequence reflects "the mental processes" of the persona who "constantly seeks to discover the truth of her own feelings" (1970, p. 323). This self-discovery results in the poetic persona's attempts to put her feelings into writing, and her evolution as a poet questioning her poetic skills. With the absence of the lover, yet with the presence of sadness, Pamphilia as a woman poet shares her experience, signing the poems with her own name: Pamphilia (Sonnet 48 {55}, Sonnet 9 {P103}).

As evident in the title of the work, the subjectivity and loneliness of Pamphilia are suggested at the very beginning. Rather than giving an account of the courtship or exchange of graces between a woman and a man, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is built on how the speaker feels after a broken relationship. Pamphilia, the poet, tells her plight to the "absent presence" (a phrase borrowed from *Astrophil and Stella*, Sonnet 106) of Amphilantus despite knowing that he will never hear them nor be moved by them. The physical qualities of Amphilantus are never mentioned in the sequence, nor his virtues or physical attributes are glorified. When the sonnet sequence is evaluated as an independent work from *Urania*, there is no detail about Pamphilia and Amphilantus' relation or their mutual memories. It is ironic to see that such "absent presence" of the lover becomes the starting point for Pamphilia, that secures her place both as a lonely woman and as a woman poet talking about her sad experience without harming her chastity.

The choice of name for the poetic persona is also significant in terms of reflecting her identity as the maker of her song, rather than an object who inspires it. Roberts states that Wroth followed her uncle's sonnet sequence in naming it as *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and used the names that are derived from Greek, Pamphilia meaning "all-loving" and Amphilantus "the lover of two" (1982, p. 44). Roberts thinks about a possibility that in choosing Pamphilia as a name "Lady Mary Wroth may have also wished to identify her protagonist with one of the most famous women writers of antiquity – Pamphilia, who lived under the reign of Nero. . . . Like her distinguished namesake, the persona of the sonnet sequence is described as a dedicated and prolific

writer" (1982, p. 44). In line with what Roberts suggests, despite the presence of conventional metaphors and expressions in depicting the intensity of sorrow, the speaker is also busy with questioning her poetic skills.

The sequence begins in a traditional manner by Pamphilia's account of how love fully conquered her. The first section consisting of fifty-five poems, as Roberts notes, is about "Pamphilia's conflicting emotions as she attempts to resolve the struggle between passionate surrender and self-affirmation" (1983, p. 44). In the darkness of the night, Pamphilia's mind is all busy with ceaseless "thoughts" swiftly running. In her dream, Venus "Queene of love" places a burning heart in her breast (Sonnet 1 {P1}, 6). Its outcome is pain, doubt, uneasiness and conflict which are expressed through a number of Petrarchan conceits. The metaphorical wound she received is fatal as Pamphilia's flaming heart is totally conquered, and it makes her wonder if there is any hope in such misery (Sonnet 3 {P3}). Nothing comforts her, neither sleep nor rest, as the thought of her lover is always in her mind (Sonnet 3 {P3}). Conflicting feelings torture her only to increase her grief (Sonnet 4 {P4}), and in deep doubt she asks questions with the hope of finding answers to why she is suffering that much (Sonnet 5 {P5}). Realizing that the torture and suffering are the outcomes of love that is lost, she wonders if death is the only thing that can save her (Sonnet 6 {P6}). With Song 1, the female poetic persona metaphorically defines her role as the poet, not as a mere victim of love.

Pamphilia wakes up from this dream as a "lover," not as a beloved of a sonneteer, and thus starts writing. Song 1 {P7} is about Pamphilia's decision to put her feelings into writing, and it is rich in metaphors that represent the poet and the act of writing poetry. The song opens with a tribute to spring. The traditional Petrarchan contraries used by Pamphilia while talking about her sorrow are strikingly in contrast with the joy of spring. The season that brings beauty and pleasure to nature does not change the speaker's misery as she still has "sad showers" flowing from her eyes, and is still in "[c]olde winter" (4-7). Although the sun brightly shines on the earth warming everything, she is deprived of all his "treasure[s]" like "heate, light, and pleasure" and "[j]oyes" (9-16).

Nevertheless, this song is not only based on the conventional theme built on the comparison of the innate sadness with the joy in nature, but also it offers another picture of a woman poet in the character of a shepherdess. This unnamed, betrayed and lovelorn shepherdess decides to put her grief into writing with what she has in

hand, and hopes that lovers with similar plight may find and read her verses. Her words are recalled by Pamphilia:

A shepherdesse thus sayd
Who was with griefe oprest
For truest love beetraid
Bard her from quiett rest
And weeping thus sayd she
My end aprocheth neere,
Now willow must I weare
My fortune soe will bee. (Song 1 {P7}, 17-24).

The shepherdess, weeping at her plight, tells Pamphilia about her imminent death. Wearing willow on her head she crowns herself as a poet, not with laurel as the male poets have done, but with willow leaves. Her daily experience becomes her subject matter and what she has in nature, her material. Writing follows this symbolic crowning, and modestly she makes the bark of a tree her book:

The barck my booke shall bee
Wher dayly I will wright,
This tale of haples mee
True slave to fortunes spight;
The roote shall bee my bed,
Wher nightly I will lye,
Wayling inconstancy
Since all true love is dead (Song 1 {P7}, 33-40).

The silent ladies of the convention, appear in different roles in *Pamphilia to Amphilantus*, actively participating in the process of poetic production. Miller argues that as a woman poet Wroth is "restructuring certain conventions of the genre" and in this task, she is "re-viewing as well as revising male-authored conceptions of 'the lady' in the Renaissance" (1990, p. 295). In this pastoral realm, the shepherdess who shares her experience with Pamphilia, actually shows her the path for poetic accomplishment, in a way becomes her muse. Accordingly, the presence of a strong female bond enhancing literary production is uttered in the song. She shows Pamphilia the possibility that female experience can be the subject matter of poetry, and that one can share such experience with other people:

And thes lines I will leave
If some such lover came
Who may them right conseave,

And place them on my tombe. . . (41-44).

The shepherdess hopes that her verses on the epitaph will communicate with a lover sharing similar experience. Watkins thinks that by giving voice to someone other than Pamphilia, Wroth "uses the song to theorize the interpretive exchange between reader and writer that is necessary for literary production" (2015, p. 144). Watkins further argues that unlike the other sonnet sequences that "focus on the author," the reader is given significant importance "acting as a crucial agent of artistic production" (2015, p. 146). Therefore, poetry is represented as an account of personal experiences enriched by exchange, bringing together the author and the reader, uniting them in shared experience.

Yet, the woman poet's aspirations about poetic glory are modest. Unlike the male sonneteers who seek fame and recognition in their verses, the shepherdess with the lines on her tombstone does not look for praise or recognition but humbly hopes for a possibility that someone may read them. Yet, the fear that her poems may fade into insignificance pervades. Simon, in her study on the epitaph in Early Modern period, puts particular emphasis on the epitaph in Song 1, arguing that just like literary texts, the epitaph in general "suggest[s] a search for both prominence and permanence," and along with offering "moral instruction" it also "interpolates the reader into a community of shared texts as a means to shared understanding" (2016, pp. 45-46). The ephemeral nature of such writing, like poetry is also underlined. Simon further adds that in this song "Wroth registers anxiety about the ephemerality of her verse, which may go unread, unprinted, or misunderstood" (2016, p. 52). Accordingly, the song is highly symbolic in terms of reflecting the concerns of a woman poet whose mind is occupied with the nature of poetic production, giving clues about to what extent it will endure and how it will be received.

Thematically, Song 1 is built on the traditional motif of the celebration of the beauty and joy of spring which is in stark contrast with the sadness of the poetic persona who is emotionally entrapped in ultimate winter and darkness. The setting of the song also hints at certain worries and concerns of a woman poet, symbolically displaying a woman poet's place in the poetic tradition along with the restrictions imposed on her. In her study on the use of gardens by the women poets of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Coch names Wroth as one of these woman poets who is "able to reimagine the garden as a site where a female poet can work

toward reconciling her art with social expectations" (2004, pp. 97-98).[6] In line with what Coch suggested, though not specifically identified as a garden, but rather seems to be a grove, the pastoral realm of this song is represented as the place where a woman poet expresses her decision to put her emotions into writing and crowns herself as the poet. Far removed from the concerns of daily life, the pastoral realm becomes a haven for her. However, the natural landscape where the speaker mourns does not appear as a place of joy. Like Pamphilia, the shepherdess does not seem to care about the pleasures of nature. The bark of the tree and her tombstone will bear her verses. As the sequence proceeds, the metaphorical significance of nature, the garden in particular, is also employed in a similar context, and will be combined with the figure of the nightingale, another symbol for the woman poet.

Following the path set by the shepherdess, Pamphilia starts sharing her experience. In Sonnet 7 {P8}, that comes after the song, Pamphilia talks about how she yields to love, which is actually a personal choice as she says "I ame thy subject, conquer'd, bound to stand" (6). Although these words recall surrender at first sight, there might be a pun on the word "subject." As the sequence proceeds, Pamphilia will acknowledge the power of love in terms of poetic inspiration, be in peace with its conflicting emotional consequences and finally will reward love with the crown of poems. Therefore, metaphorically she appears not as *a* subject, but as *the* subject – the poet – of these verses. Pamphilia wants to ease her pain through writing, but at the same time realistically she is aware that "griefe is nott cur'd by art" (Sonnet 8 {P9}, 4). Others' joy neither grieves her, nor she is envious of them. In Sonnet 9 {P10} she accepts her state, as she is aware that she is used to "sorrow" and "dispaire" that governs her. Resembling herself to a "weary traveller" (Sonnet 10 {P10}) she knows that pain will always be with her.

Throughout the sequence, there is no outburst or insurgence, and no blame on Amphilantus who is the reason for such misery. The images related to darkness, isolation, exile, shade and night, along with a feeling of acceptance dominate the following sonnets. In her loneliness, these abstractions accompany her. Neither day nor night brings comfort to her, and Pamphilia complains that she is tired of "a tedious night" and wishes for the day, but she is well aware that neither day, nor

[6] For a detailed account of how gardens and women appear in poems written by the male poets of the sixteenth century "as sources of analogous pleasures" along with the difference between how a male poet and a female poet metaphorically employ this metaphor, see Coch (2004, pp. 98-118).

night will sooth her pain (Sonnet 12 {P13}). Miller thinks that Wroth "re-present"s some conventional imagery "toward her own ends", and unlike the traditional insistence on the opposition between day and night, she "moves beyond that dichotomy to a choice" (1990, p. 299). Pamphilia is represented as welcoming night in Sonnet 15 {P17} thinking that it will provide her with peace in her loneliness. Such acceptance does not bring a passive state to her, it rather brings out acceptance and recognition. Realizing with what she is left with, she turns them into the subject matter of her verses.

As a sonneteer, devoid of a tradition for female expression of love and desire, in her attempt to accommodate herself as the poet writing in the Petrarchan tradition, Wroth prefers the realms, places that are left for women. Jones talks about the isolated condition of Pamphilia with reference to the use of the images of winter, night, her presence in unidentified places and argues that "Pamphilia embraces her exile" (1990, pp. 144-145). The unidentified, or at times in-between places are usually away from the social life along with its restrictions where she is all alone. It is this loneliness and exile that provide her with an unusual role as a female poet. Exiled, yet freed from all the conventional attributes or roles given to women in the sonnets, Pamphilia becomes the maker of her songs.

The other image that contributes to the idea of exile or isolation is the use of shade – the ambiguous state between darkness and light – also suggests her attempt to redefine her place in the poetic tradition. It is a metaphor, commonly employed by women poets, and Salvaggio's remarks related to the metaphorical significance of the use of shade by Anne Finch in the following century provides a good insight into a similar use in the sequence. In relation to Finch's poetry, Salvaggio argues that "shade was not simply a retreat, but the process of radical displacement that was hers both as a 'woman' who wrote, and as a poet who wrote 'woman'" (1998, pp. 243-244). Moving on with Salvaggio's remarks, Wroth's speaker's reference to shade is also related with the woman poet's sense of displacement and her attempt to find herself a place among the things that is left for her. These unidentified or isolated places and the in-between areas that are not occupied by the male poetic tradition are indeed what is left for a woman poet. In Sonnet 17 {P19} the speaker is so sad that she cannot take delight offered by the "[s]weet shades" (1). She is in sad shade as the sun with its brightness cannot make her happy (Sonnet 20 {P23}). In Sonnet 30 {P34} she defines the shades as "blessed" as they give her "silent rest" (1). Hoping

to find peace in death, the shades that she prefers in life provide her with similar peace, where she can cry and grive.

In her isolated private world, Pamphilia is not totally alone, but is accompanied by certain abstractions. Miller notes that in Sonnet 15 {P17} the speaker and Night become "as female companions in grief" and in Sonnet 37 {P43} "silence" and "grief" are also referred to in a similar manner, and this "triple companionship" "stress her awareness of a shared female bond of suffering and decenter the role of the male beloved, relegating him in effect to the margins of this 'freindship' " (1990, pp. 299-300). Waller thinks that these female figures are intentionally employed to show Pamphilia is not the only woman who lives through "helplessness or anger," and Fortune, "conventionally, female and a consoler of the suffering male" similarly appears with an unconventional role in the sequence and "becomes a fellow female sufferer" (1993, pp. 218-219). As the sequence proceeds in Sonnet 31 {36} Fortune is depicted as caring and loving with her "blesse'd armes" (6), and with her presence Pamphilia's fears and doubts disappear, and she ends up with a realization that love is the best of all feelings.

Pamphilia's presence in unidentified or isolated places, her concern about secrecy and her preference of abstractions as her sole companions mark her alienation from the public sphere. Masten states that although in the seventeenth century there was a clear distinction between "private" and "public" spheres, in Wroth work they both emerge in a "discursive world." He further argues that, contrary to the "public and courtly"[7] nature of this convention, in the sonnets with the Petrarchan images "withdrawal from public significance" is observed, and accordingly he suggests that the fictional Pamphilia at the same time places herself *"firmly within the Petrarchan tradition"* (1991, p. 70). The separation from the public sphere, along with the themes of exile and isolation are earlier discussed as bringing a degree of freedom to Pamphilia so that in her private world she can contemplate on her thoughts and express them in poetry. Privileging her private world provides Pamphilia with a similar freedom. So Pamphilia, as a woman poet is once again represented with her endeavour to content herself with what she has in hand; confined to her inner world, brooding, yet her mind is busy with thoughts that will form her poems.

[7] Masten in elaborating on the distinction between public and private, bases his argument on Marotti's ideas who argues that the sonnet tradition is commonly employed by the courtier poets to express their social, economic and political concerns (See Marotti, 1882, pp. 396-428).

In Sonnet 38 {P44} calling herself "a bannish'd creature" (1) she lays stress on the isolation from social life as she can no longer take delight in pastimes as other people do. She is distanced from the joyful company of others:

> What pleasure can a bannish'd creature have
> In all the pastimes that invented arr
> By witt or learning, absence making warr
> Against all peace that may a biding crave;
> Can wee delight butt in a wellcome grave . . . (1-5).

The different spheres that men and women inhabit, both in social life and in poetic tradition are also pointed out by Fienberg who thinks that in this sonnet "a woman's marginal relationship to the dominant culture" is described" (1991, p. 175). The speaker is isolated from the court and its pastimes that are all invented by men of wit and learning (Fienberg, 1991, p. 176). In this context, Fienberg also refers to Sonnet 23 {P26} noting that this sonnet "provides an alternative perspective on her social isolation," and that *"[n]ot the pastimes of the court 'invented' by men, but her own invention, the pleasures of her inward self, shape her sonnet"* (1991, p. 176). Due to her pensive mood, she distinguishes herself from everyone who has "pleasing pastime[s]" like hunting, hawking and music. The speaker feels joyless in "daylike night," watching others:

> When others hunt, my thoughts I have in chase;
> If hauke, my minde att wished end doth fly,
> Discourse, I with my spiritt tauke, and cry
> While others, musique choose as greatest grace. (Sonnet 23 (P26})

While others are hawking she is chasing her thoughts, talks with her own spirit and cries. "[F]ree from eyes" (5), she emotionally distances herself from others. Still, as observed in other instances in the sequence, despite all its seemingly negative connotations, solitude provides Pamphilia with a room and an opportunity where she can, and in her own way grieve, think, question and thereafter put them all into writing.

Accordingly, concern about writing poetry becomes a major theme in the sequence. In Sonnet 39 {P45}, Pamphilia questions her poetry and even sees it as unworthy. The reason for such growing contempt can best be explained in the light of Sonnet 8 {P9} where it is earlier stated that "griefe is nott cur'd by art" (l. 4). Although it is grief that makes her write, she is well aware that her plight cannot be cured. In Sonnet 39 {P45} as she is "robbed of [her] chiefest joy" (2) she even sees her

verses as unworthy and questions her poetic talents. Masten notes an important point in this sonnet that marks the difference of the speaker from the male poets writing in the Petrarchan tradition and states that *"[a]dmitting that her words are but pale reflections of an inward authenticity, she nonetheless argues that her poetry, unlike theirs, grounds itself in an emotional reality"* (1991, p. 72). Wroth's poetic persona is both within and outside the Petrarchan tradition. The sonnets are the projection of the most private feelings of Pamphilia, and in fashioning such a female poet/speaker, who looks in her heart and writes, Wroth walks in the same path of originality with Sir Philip Sidney.

As Pamphilia's emotional reality and her private experiences are her material, some of the metaphors that she employed are highly personal and feminine in nature, like the metaphor of giving birth. Like impregnation, parturition as a metaphor is commonly employed by the male poets of the Renaissance, and in *Astrophil and Stella*, for instance, Sidney extensively uses it while talking about inspiration, poetic creativity and poetic production. Villeponteaux thinks that unlike the representation of artistic creation and bringing forth the image of the beloved for the Renaissance writers, the metaphor of birth does not stand for "the birth of a poetic self" for Wroth, but rather relevant to the restrictions on women's writing and stands for *"a frustrated attempt to act, to create, to love"* (Villeponteaux, 1999, pp. 166, 169).[8] However, Fienberg points out another aspect of the use of this metaphor and thinks that "Wroth gives a new and natural meaning to this convention" by using the theme of miscarriage and, therefore, *"reclaim[s] her body as her own"* (1991, p. 183). The metaphor is employed in Sonnet 35 {P40} to talk about the worthlessness of false hopes. Unlike in the traditional sonnets, Pamphilia is not presented as torn in between hope and frustration, or yearning for a union with her lover. In a realistic manner, she is well aware of the consequences of self-deception:

> Faulce hope which feeds butt to destroy, and spill
> What itt first breeds; unaturall to the birth
> Of thine owne wombe; conceaving butt to kill,
> And plenty gives to make the greater dearth . . . (Sonnet 35 {P40}, 1-4).

She knows that *"hope deluding brings us to the pride / Of our desires the farder downe to slide"* (Sonnet 35 {P40}, 13-14). Although her grief does not decrease, it makes her tell her conflicting emotions, making her a poet singing her sad song. The

[8] Villeponteaux also talks about the relevance of the imagery of birth to some biographical parallels in Wroth's life (1999, p. 173). See also Fienberg (1991, p. 183).

first section ends with Sonnet 48 {P55} marking Pamphilia's self-awareness and decision that she will continue loving until she will turn to ashes. More importantly, this sonnet is noteworthy as it is signed by the name of owner of these feelings and verses as Pamphilia.

In the following section (starting with {P56}), Roberts notes that "a darker side of passion: the lover's susceptibility to doubt, jealousy and despair" is explored (1983, p. 45). Abstractions like night (Sonnet 1 {P 63}; Sonnet 3 {P 65}), and the feelings of suspicion (Sonnet 4 {P 66}), pain (Sonnet 6 {P 68}) and jealousy (Sonnet 8 {P 70}) become the subject matter of the sonnets to describe the things that Pamhlilia is living through. But more significantly, this part is dominated by the presence of Cupid, who seems to appear in various guises. The Petrarchan tradition is built on the lover's contrary feelings finding expression in paradoxes that aim at representing the dilemma between loving and suffering. The conflicting representations of Cupid are employed to depict the confused state of the speaker.

Roberts thinks that there is more than different or opposing representations of Cupid in this part. She disagrees with the critics who see an inconsistency in Wroth's representation of Cupid, and believes that it is intentionally done by her to show Pamphilia's efforts to "discover which one most accurately expresses the true nature of love" (1970, p. 325). Cupid, called as "[t]he wanton child" is resembled to a juggler playing tricks on people (Sonnet 2 {P 64}). He is the giver of misfortunes, first offering love and its pleasures but then turning them all to woe (Sonnet 5 {P 67}). He is like a thief, or rather a fugitive, who was once in chains and fetters, but then escaped, and causing trouble now (Sonnet 8 {P 70}). He is also Anacreontically represented as blindfolded (Sonnet 8 {P 73}) or as a mischievous boy (Song {P74}), and the dire consequences of such encounter with him are listed in the following song ({P 75}).

The role given to Cupid is also interpreted in terms of Wroth's attempts at originality, as well as her deliberate handling of the tradition as a woman poet. Related to the absence of the male lover, Miller notices a different relation between the female sonneteer and Cupid in the sequence. Cupid appears as "the female poets's suitor" rather than an "ally and rival" and the relation to him is not presented in terms of "metaphor of battle" (or in martial terms) as in *Astrophil and Stella* (Miller, 1990, p. 298). Payne refers to another interesting point related to the references to Cupid in the sequence noting that unlike in *Astrophil and Stella*, where the beloved is blamed for the inflicted pain, in Wroth's poems not the lover but Cupid is said to be responsible for that. Payne believes that it is intentionally done by Wroth, because

"a female living in seventeenth-century England could not criticize a noble man for his emotional and financial neglect" (1999, p. 218). There is an immediate change in tone with the Sonnet {P 76}] that comes just before the *corona*. Pamphilia, asks for forgiveness as she so far blamed Cupid for all the pain she lived. She curses her condemning thoughts and says that from then on, love will be her guide. She decides to "give a crowne unto thy endless prayse" to glorify and honour love ({P 76}).[9]

A Crowne of Sonetts dedicated to Love {P77-90}, to follow Roberts's division, marks "the final section" of the sequence where *"Pamphilia gradually begins . . . to accept pain as a necessary complement to joy in love and to recognize the unpredictability of human emotions"* (1983, p. 46). Pamphilia's realization leads her to present a metaphorical crown to love, rather than the loved one. The fourteen sonnets, that begin and end with the ambiguous or rather the suggestive image of the labyrinth, marks this section. These fourteen sonnets, reminiscent of the fourteen lines of a sonnet, present a woman poet who is trying to find her way in a metaphorical labyrinth of love that surrounds her. The labyrinth symbolizes isolation and enclosure at times, but on some other occasions the difficult yet untrodden way to poetry, along with other things reminiscent of the myriad of possible paths or dead ends that a labyrinth offers.[10] Despite the presence of certain poems that suggest entrapment, Waller offers another metaphorical significance of the labyrinth, stating that as *"the nightmare underside of a woman's private space. . . . . the labyrinth consists of potentially infinite attempts to find an escape"* (1993, p. 217). Waller sees the labyrinth as a "metaphor of action" and accordingly he refers to the first sonnet of the corona where Pamphilia says that she will take the tread of love (1993, p. 218).

[9] Beilin thinks that this sonnet "marks the turning point," and Pamphilia "rejecting blind Cupid" turns "to praise the divine Cupid" (1987, p. 236-237). For an account of the two different iconographic representation of Cupid see Beilin (1987, p. 236-237).

[10] Villeponteaux thinks that in the sequence there is "a sense of space that is not only private but also often enclosed" and entrapment is a "recurring motif" that culminates in the image of the labyrinth (1999, p. 165). She also notes that the references to the private spheres should not always be read in "the positive terms of the woman writer's withdrawal from circulation and assertion of self-will" as they also refer to sadness, frustration and a sense of entrapment (1999, p. 165). In her discussion about the use of birth and maternity metaphors, she also refers to how "the sixteenth century anatomists" in some medical texts used the image of the labyrinth to describe the anatomy of the womb (1999, p. 172). Jones, with reference to Wroth's biography, talks about another possibility that the labyrinth stands for her loss of favour as a female courtier (1990, p. 152).

Lost in love and frustrated, *A Crowne of Sonetts* begin with her attempts to find a way out from this misery. In Sonnet 1 {P 77}, she wonders where to turn as she is surrounded with love and its consequences. On her right there is love that burns, danger is ahead, on the left there is suspicion, and if she were to return, shame awaits her. Though she is in doubt, as earlier stated in the poems, she decides to face the consequences of love, and says that she will take the "tread of love":

> In this strang labourinth how shall I turne?
> Wayes are on all sids while the way I miss:
> If to the right hand, ther, in love I burne;
> Lett mee goe forward, therin danger is . . . (1-4).

She questions the destructive nature of love and the ways to cope with this misery. She will try not to get lost in the labyrinth because unlike in the story of Ariadne, who with a tread helped Theseus find his way in the maze, Pamphilia is all alone. Miller thinks that *"Pamphilia's voice itself becomes her thread of love expressed, revealing her chosen path through a maze of fluctuating behaviour on the part of her beloved"* (1990, p. 300). After a metaphorical truce with love, Pamphilia by taking the thread of love decides to face the dangers, and makes love her inspiring force as a poet. "Love is the shining starr" for Pamphilia, guiding her through the path of dangers (*Corona*, Sonnet 2, 9). The image of light, with all its brightness and glory, is presented in the following sonnets. The brightness intensifies with Sonnets 4 {80} and 5 {P81}, and Pamphilia says that love burned her. Unceasingly burning in love, she says that she learned to love its pain, and then sees love as her tutor (Sonnet 5 {P81}).

Love not only guides Pamphilia to find her way in the labyrinth but also teaches her to become a better poet. There are poems where Pamphilia again questions the worth of her poetry. Sonnet 6 {P 82} is about what true love is, along with how it inspires and becomes the subject matter of her poetry:

> Itt doth inrich the witts, and make you see
> That in your self, which you knew nott before,
> Forcing you to admire such guifts showld bee
> Hid from your knowledg, yett in you the store . . . (9-12).

Moreover, love's contribution to artistic creativity is pointed out in Sonnet 7 {P 83}. Love makes one a painter who could paint the loved one "[m]ore lively, parfett, lasting, and more true" (11), and Pamphilia as the poet, will draw a similar, perfect and lasting picture with words. As the inspired artist, she starts painting what love is that consists of virtue, truth, desires, "[s]trengthned by worth, renued by

carefulness", constant thoughts and pains of jealousy (Sonnet 8 {P84} 5-8). In the following poems of the *corona*, she continues with painting love. Then she offers them all to Love:

> Great King of Love, my soule from fained smarts
> Or thought of change I offer to your trust
> This crowne, my self, and all that I have more
> Except my hart which you beestow'd beefore (Sonnet 13 {P 89}, 11-14).

Pamphilia undergoes a great change, an evolution indeed, as she is no longer the confused, scared speaker in the beginning of the sequence trying to give meaning to what is happening to her. Living through different emotional states, like questioning, wondering, confusion and acceptance, Pamphilia is able to see what love is.

The final sonnet of the *corona* ends with Pamphilia's paying tribute to love which hurts, never eased, but makes her "fervently" burn in it (Sonnet 14 {P90}. Her heart is paid as tribute, envy is given away, and she is left with pure thoughts and constancy. Therefore, the question asked in the final line of this sonnet ("In this strang labourinth how shall I turne?" – that is at the same time the first line of the first sonnet of the *corona*) this time appears as a rhetorical one, already answered by Pamphilia. Miller thinks that Wroth employed *corona* different from her uncle and her father and that *"[t]he crown in Wroth's sonnet sequence becomes a crown for the sonneteer, a triumph of individual expression for the voice of a lady in affirming a love-centered rather than a self-centered perspective"* (1990, p. 300). And, unlike the incomplete coronas of her father and uncle, Miller argues that *"by maintaining a true circularity of form, which reflects continuing rather than the conclusive nature of her speaker's experiences in love"* (1990, p. 304).

Four songs and nine sonnets that follow the *corona* mark this continuity. In Song 1 {P91} Pamphilia is now in peace with love and the absence of the loved one. She thinks about a possibility that the "sad absence" may one day end (6). The absence no longer tortures but gives comfort, because as a faithful lover she through experience learned that *"though parted, loves force lives / As just in heart as in [each other's] eyes"* (11-12). Another pastoral setting with a female figure comes out with Song 3 {P93}. The song depicts a delightful spring scene, and is built on the conventional comparison of the joy that the season brings and the sadness of the poet. Like the pastoral setting with the shepherdess of Song 1 {P7}, Song 3 {P93} presents Philomela in an arbour singing her song of complaint. Transformed into a

nightingale – a common metaphor for the poet – Philomela's song gives another image of a woman poet who makes her experience the subject matter of her verses:

> Philomeale in this arbour
> Makes now her loving habour
> Yett of her state complaining
> Her notes in mildness straining
> Which though sweet
> Yett doe meete
> Her former luckles payning (Song 3 {P93}, 15-21).

Philomela's story, when metaphorically interpreted shows the possible ways a woman poet can express herself. Although Philomela was raped and her tongue was cut by Tereus to prevent her from informing her sister Procne about the things that happened to her, she was still able to tell it all by weaving a tapestry[11] (Hamilton, 1969 pp. 270-271). Like the shepherdess of Song 1 {P7}, despite all the difficulties Philomela manages to find a means to express her experience. Lamb believes that "[l]ike most Renaissance versions of Philomela, Wroth's poem portrays Philomela's grief rather than her anger," and with the emphasis on its "sweetness," an "analogy between the nightingale's song and Wroth's own attempt to write poetry" is observed (1990, p. 223).[12] The sequence, therefore, offers pictures of women who wanted to make their voice heard. The lines written on the bark of a tree or a tombstone, the nightingale's song and the crown of poems to love all show the woman poet's endeavour for self-expression.

Another female figure, the muse, appears at the end of the sequence in Sonnet 9 {P 103}. Having completed her words, Pamphilia addresses her muse and asks her to put herself to rest as she will no more write. However, it does not mark an end, or a retreat. Miller states that *"[t]he silence at the end of Pamphilia to Amphilantus thus*

[11] For a detailed account of the story of Procne and Philomela see Hamilton (1969, pp. 270-271). Also see N. K. Miller who gives an invaluable account of Philomela's story and the significance of her weaving her tale with reference to Patricia Joplin's review of Geoffrey Hartman's essay (1986, pp. 281-282). Another significance of Philomela's song is pointed out by N. J. Miller who relates it to "female companionship" where other women appear as its audience; and she further states that "[d]eprived of her tongue, Philomela nevertheless overcomes her attempted silencing by authoring her own text for a specifically female audience" (1996, p. 198).

[12] Lamb in the fifth chapter of her book gives extensive information on the symbolic use of the nightingale and how the myth of Philomela is employed by the members of the Sidney family, particularly in the works of Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke and Lady Mary Wroth, see: (1990, pp. 194-228).

represents not the defeat of the singer but the culmination of the song" (1990, p. 305).[13] The silence is not an imposed one but a deliberate decision of a woman, a poet, who having told her whole story decides to finish her song. Pamphilia leaves the task to younger ones and wants her muse to:

> Leave the discourse of Venus, and her sunn
> To young beeginers, and theyr braines inspire
> With storys of great love, and from that fire,
> Gett heat to write the fortunes they have wunn,
> And thus leave off, what's past showes you can love,
> Now lett your constancy your honor prove,
>
> Pamphilia (Sonnet 9 {P103}, 9-14).

Conclusion

Presenting a woman poet in the character of Pamphilia who makes her own experience of loving and suffering the subject matter of her poems, Lady Mary Wroth fulfills the advice "look in thy heart, and write" that was given by the muse in in the last line of Sonnet 1 in *Astrophil and Stella*. By redefining the roles given to the lover and the beloved in the Petrarchan tradition, Wroth fashions Pamphilia as a woman poet, who in her own way employs the convention, redefining the role attributed to woman in Petrarchan sonnets. The topic of unreturned love that found its medium of expression in the sonnet tradition, is projected from a woman's perspective in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Although the expressions and conceits popularized by Petrarch and his continental followers are employed by Wroth in the construction of the sonnets and the poetic persona, she privileges Pamphilia's evolution from a lovelorn lover to a poet. In the process of writing, Pamphilia is presented as assessing her feelings and emotions, developing coping mechanism with frustration, even turning its consequences into poetic expressions.

Roberts sees a "skillful treatment of human psychology" in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (1970, p. 327). Moving in between sadness and acceptance Pamphilia is seen as giving new meanings to the set conventions of the Petrarchan tradition. Love, though unreturned, is not only acknowledged as the driving force, the source of inspiration that provided the poetic persona with artistic creativity but is also honoured as the noblest of emotions with a crown of poems offered to him. More

[13] Seeing the muse as "the last figure of female authority in the poem apart from the speaker herself," Miller thinks that, like Philomela, she also appears as another woman representing the "female homosocial bonding" in the work (1996, pp. 199-200).

importantly, love became the thread that enabled Pamphilia to walk through the labyrinth. And on her way out, like Philomela, Pamphilia continued with her song. Having expressed herself in the poems, Pamphilia also fulfills what the shepherdess said, but her words are not written on a tombstone. In the closing lines of the sequence, Pamphilia's portrait as a woman poet is completed. Having told her story and by leaving love to the younger ones, she ends her verses signing them with her name, Pamphilia.

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Summary

Lady Mary Wroth is considered to be one of the most prominent women writers of the Early Modern Period. She was a member of the Sidney family, well-known with the noteworthy literary accomplishments of its members. Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* has a significant place among the sonnet sequences and early modern women's poetry as it is considered to be the first sonnet sequence written by an Englishwoman. The Petrarchan tradition with its determined roles of a male poet and an idealized lady, along with its blazons employed to express the consequences of unfulfilled love and desire can hardy accommodate a woman who comes up with such an unaccustomed role. Traditionally, the poetic persona is used to be a male from whose perspective the fulfilment and frustration in love, along with the glorification of the silent and distant beloved is presented. However, in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* love and grief are told from a woman's perspective who makes her sad experience the subject matter of her verses.

This article, therefore, aims at a study of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, as a sonnet sequence to see how a woman poet manages to employ the sonnet tradition in her own way. How Wroth as a woman poet accommodated herself and her persona to the poetic tradition of the time will be the main point of argumentation. It is in this respect that, the focus will be on Pamphilia and how she is represented with a new role. Accordingly, Wroth's choice of genre, how she employed and revised it, the poetic persona's identity, the role assigned to the female speaker, the major themes, along with Wroth's ideas on writing as a woman poet will be elaborated on.

The major theme of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is frustrated love and its consequences. The sequence is marked not only by conventional woe poems from a woman's perspective but also with a woman poet's deep concern of how to express them in poetry. Wroth's poetic persona's subjective role attracts particular attention, as there is more to see behind Pamphilia's modest appearance as a lovelorn beloved. She is a woman with a voice, talking about her experience and the destructive outcomes of sorrow, quite often questioning the nature of love. She is not the silent object of some other poets' work, but writing her own poems, metaphorically redefining her place in the literary production.

With all these distinguishing features, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* rather appears as sequel to a traditional sonnet sequence, offering a very vivid picture of a woman who was once a silent participant of courtship. From a woman's point of view, it is a narration of the acceptance of loneliness, isolation, emotional entrapment and deprivation due to unreturned love, and the poetic persona's attempt to find a way in such confusion – best represented with the image of the labyrinth. A woman poet's concerns about writing poetry is a major theme in the sequence, and in this metaphorical labyrinth, Pamphilia is presented as a poet who is trying to find her way. Therefore, for a woman poet, the labyrinth becomes a symbol of isolation and enclosure at times, but on some other occasions the difficult yet untrodden way to poetry, along with other things reminiscent of the myriad of possible paths or dead ends that its complicated structure offers.

In *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* unfulfilled love and its aftermath are heard from Pamphilia's perspective who talks about her personal experience and tries to give a meaning to all that she lived. By redefining the roles given to the lover and the beloved in the Petrarchan tradition, Wroth fashions Pamphilia as a woman poet, who in her own way employs the convention, redefining the role attributed to woman in Petrarchan sonnets. The topic of unreturned love that found its medium of expression in the sonnet tradition, is projected from a woman's perspective in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Although the expressions and conceits popularized by Petrarch and his continental followers are employed by Wroth in the construction of the sonnets and the poetic persona, she privileges Pamphilia's evolution from a lovelorn lover to a poet. In the process of writing, Pamphilia is presented as assessing her feelings and emotions, developing coping mechanism with frustration, even turning them into poetic expressions. More importantly, she is depicted as a woman poet signing the poems with her own name: Pamphilia (Sonnet 48 {55}, Sonnet 9 {P103}).