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MA Thesis

Adapting Reproduction: Portrayals of sex, birth, and bodies in four Early Modern women's  
metaphors for writing

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### Introduction: Why reproduction?

The metaphor for writing as reproduction was common in literature by both men and women in the early modern period. Indeed, Donald W. Foster argues that the comparison between texts and children, “is the single most frequent metaphor encountered in Renaissance book dedications” (44-5), and he goes on to claim that “the original author is always figured as the only begetter” (45) or parent (44). I will focus on ways that early modern women writers adapt the reproductive metaphor, and I seek to answer the question: since reproduction was the most frequent metaphor for print and since women’s writing was criticized because it was associated with promiscuity, how do women who print appropriate the reproductive metaphor to counter charges against their sexuality? I examine representations of bodies and sexual behaviour in moments when early modern women writers make reference to the writing process, and I find that this metaphor serves as a tool to defend their sexual behaviour, insult others’ perceived unchastity, gain an authoritative position from which to write, and question the connection between writing and reproduction. I conduct close readings of passages that discuss both writing and reproduction, and I use Eric Partridge’s *Shakespeare’s Bawdy*, Rebecca Bach’s *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature Before Heterosexuality*, Wendy Wall’s *The Imprint of Gender*, and the *Oxford English Dictionary* as my main authorities in identifying and analyzing vocabulary that refers to both of these events.

At the same time that I examine portrayals of sexual behaviour, I also look at the way that these works by Tyler, Cavendish, Lanyer, Wroth, and Denny use the reproductive metaphor to depict family structures. In Stephen Guy-Bray’s book *Against Reproduction: Where Renaissance Texts Come From*, Guy-Bray argues that the reproductive metaphor places textuality within the family structure, which he calls “perhaps our basic image of social control” (5), and he points out

that placing writing within the heterosexual and teleological structure of the family “is no better for women – or, for that matter, for men – than it is for texts” (15). Additionally, Guy-Bray claims that because texts are personified in this metaphor, “texts have to follow the same rules as people: a poem, like a person, should be a good citizen” (11), and consequently, texts, like citizens, “are expected to lead to something, to be productive” (Guy-Bray 15). Since women’s writing was associated with promiscuity, I look at the way that the writers I study use the reproductive metaphor to position themselves inside or outside of the family, and I use Guy-Bray’s analysis of the reproductive metaphor and the family to examine the different family structures that these writers use to describe their works. Two of the works that I discuss – Cavendish’s *Poems and Fancies* and Wroth’s *Urania* – do include heterosexual and patriarchal families; however, presenting writing within the family actually serves to defend female authorship because the women figure writing within a socially acceptable, patriarchal structure rather than presenting it as a transgressive act. The best example occurs in *Poems and Fancies* when Cavendish insists that writing contributes to her noble family by keeping her busy while her husband is away; she insinuates that the act of writing harmlessly substitutes for masturbating or committing adultery, two sex acts that were perceived to threaten the family (Weigert 38-9, Gowing 432). For Cavendish and for Wroth, whose focus is similar, emphasizing the heterosexual family can serve as a strategy that authorizes their writing by showing that they comply with patriarchal structures. Meanwhile, Tyler’s reproductive metaphor in the prefaces to *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood* describes a patriarchal family, but Tyler places both the reader and personified books in this metaphor and she eroticizes the roles of these figures, in addition to the roles of writers, in order to hyperbolize and critique the association between women’s writing and promiscuity and to create a space for women’s speech. As Guy-

Bray correctly argues, limiting women writers to a reproductive role “posits an essentialist and biological femaleness” (7), but Guy-Bray overlooks the way that the reproductive metaphor can also function as an authorizing strategy for women’s writing. On the other hand, Lanyer’s portrayals of birth in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* suggest that the reproductive metaphor is not good for women, which is one argument that Guy-Bray makes against the metaphor. In a description of a group of women speaking, Lanyer relates the word “prest” (997), which referred to the printing press and to a feminized sexual position, to the word “oppressed” (993). Her association between writing, gendered roles in reproductive sex, and oppression suggests that textual reproduction does not benefit women. Lanyer goes on to offer a series of preferable, women-centred examples of ways to produce texts. In doing so, she questions the analogy between reproduction and birth and looks for other metaphors. My analysis of these metaphors follows Guy-Bray’s call for scholars to identify alternative analogies for writing. Meanwhile, Wroth’s *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* portrays textual births that are deadly for metaphorical mothers and their children. Her work compares writing to reproduction without fulfilling Guy-Bray’s claim that the reproductive metaphor means that texts, like good citizens, must be productive. Instead, Wroth’s focus on failed deliveries recalls mother’s legacies, a genre in which women about to give birth wrote advice to their unborn children. Wall argues that the threat of death offered mothers an authoritative position from which to speak, and I claim that Wroth’s focus on deadly births allows her to assume a similar position. For these four female writers, appropriating the reproductive metaphor serves as a way to create a space for women’s speech, and these authors use the metaphor to argue against prohibitions of their writing.

The reproductive metaphor has a second consequence for male and female writers: it claims that they have participated in a sex act and places their sexual behaviour at the forefront

of their texts. Female speech was already associated with promiscuity. Ann Rosalind Jones argues that “a woman’s accessibility to the social world beyond the household through speech was seen as intimately connected to the scandalous openness of her body” (319). Since women’s speech was already considered a transgressive act that was aligned with inappropriate sexuality, use of the reproductive metaphor, which also highlights sex, further connects writing to promiscuity. Tyler plays upon this connection when she admits that writing is a sexual activity, but she eroticizes reading as well in order to suggest that her reader’s actions are as illicit as her own. In doing so, Tyler critiques the connection between texts and sex by carrying it to an extreme, and she suggests that women’s writing, like their reading, should be a more socially acceptable activity. By contrast, the other writers whom I discuss do not sexualize their roles as authors: Cavendish portrays female writers as chaste, and Lanyer desexualizes the creation of texts. Wroth’s and Denny’s correspondence, meanwhile, calls upon reproductive language and emphasizes the link between writing and promiscuity in order to suggest that the other writer is unchaste, and this attack on the other writer’s sexual behaviour serves to undermine the credibility and authority of the slandered author’s work. The use of this metaphor thus enables the writers I discuss to defame one another, to refute claims that they are unchaste, or to undermine the association between women’s speech and promiscuity.

Wall argues that the act of printing, too, was sexualized, and that it posed problems particularly for women. She summarizes the relationship between gender and print, saying,

Because print publication was rhetorically scripted as a lower-class activity, writers of both genders had to counter the force of this stigma. This is not to say, however, that gender was not an issue. In a world in which privilege was attached to coterie circulation and published words were associated with promiscuity, the

female writer could become a ‘fallen’ woman in a double sense: branded as a harlot and a member of the nonelite. (281)

Thus, although writers of both genders wrote “labored justifications for their publications” (Wall 281), women not only had to fight what Wall calls the “stigma of print” (2) but also accusations against their chastity. For all writers, these justifications most often occurred in prefaces (Wall 2) and they made use of gendered and sexualized language (Wall 6). Tyler’s, Cavendish’s, and Lanyer’s works follow this convention of justifying print in prefaces: Lanyer and Cavendish compare their books to children which they ask their readers to defend, while Tyler claims that her friends persuaded her to print and sexualizes this persuasion. The reproductive metaphor thus attempts to invoke the reader’s sympathy for the infant book or suggests that the author had been falsely coerced into printing, two strategies that the writers whom I discuss use to defend their book and their reputation.

By contrast, Wroth’s *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* may have been printed without Wroth’s knowledge and these works do not include a preface but rather place justifications for writing in the works themselves. I find that the *Urania*, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and Wroth’s correspondence with Denny, unlike the works of Tyler, Cavendish, and Lanyer, focus on births that Wroth or Denny claims have been unsuccessful. Denny and Wroth portray textual conceptions that result in illegitimate children, monstrous children, miscarriages, infanticide, or the death of the mother. While reproductive terminations such as these are an understudied area, I apply arguments from Shannon Miller’s article “Textual Crimes and Punishment in Mary Wroth’s *Urania*” to *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* in order to analyze the way that Pamphilia’s presentation of infanticide may authorize her speech by placing her in the position of a mother on trial, one role in which women’s speech was demanded. On the other

hand, Denny and Wroth describe each other giving birth to monstrous children, and they conflate these non-normative children with texts in order to discredit the other's words. Wroth's *Urania*, meanwhile, associates women's truthful stories with legitimate children and women's false narratives, conversely, with female reproductive organs that are a source of death. In doing so, Wroth ties women's speech to their reproductive abilities and suggests that truthful narrators are the only women capable of producing textual children. The metaphor for writing as reproduction thus serves as a tool to either authorize or deauthorize a speaker's words by conflating the success of their speech with the success of delivering a child. Reproductive terminations can also serve as an authorizing strategy by comparing female speakers to women accused of infanticide, whose speech was considered an important part of their trials.

My thesis will be divided into two chapters. The first, *Reproduction and the Family*, will examine the works of Margaret Tyler, Margaret Cavendish, and Aemilia Lanyer by analyzing the degree to which these writers place their books within patriarchal and heterosexual families. The second chapter, *Reproductive Terminations*, will look at Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and her correspondence with Lord Edward Denny and will relate Wroth's and Denny's focuses on unhealthy textual birth to concerns with legitimacy. The first part of *Reproduction and the Family* discusses the two prefatory letters to Tyler's translation *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood*, "To the right honourable the Lord Thomas Haward" and "M.T. to the Reader." Tyler conventionally compares writing to reproduction when she describes it as her "travaile" (A2r) and "labour" (A2r), and these words position Tyler as a metaphorical mother and her book as her child. I look at Tyler's use of colonization language in this metaphor, and I argue that Tyler uses this language to personify the book that she translates, Diego Ortúñez de Calahorra's *El Espejo de Príncipes y Caballeros*, and to suggest that this book



is both her sexual partner and her colonizer, while Tyler compares herself to a woman who has been both colonized and coerced into having sex with Ortúñez's book. At the same time that Tyler uses colonization language to conventionally claim that she is not responsible for her textual child, I argue that she also highlights the early modern connection between texts and sex. Tyler eroticizes her role as a translator, and she extends the reproductive metaphor when she places her book, her reader, and Ortúñez's book in her metaphor and focuses on their sexual roles in a family structure. I argue that Tyler adds these figures to her reproductive metaphor and eroticizes their roles in order to exaggerate and mock the association between women's writing and promiscuity, and that in doing so she creates a space for women to write.

In the second part of *Reproduction and the Family*, I argue that Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*, like Tyler's prefaces, uses the reproductive metaphor to focus on the family structure in a way that authorizes her writing. Cavendish places herself as a mother and her book as a child when she twice claims that writing her book has taken nine months (X2v and X3r) and when she states that she is "so fond of my Book, as to make it as if it were my Child" (X3v). I claim that Cavendish focuses on the reproductive metaphor to insist that she is chaste, and I examine the way that Tyler uses the metaphor in order to create a place for her book within her noble family. Making use of Guy-Bray's criticism that the reproductive metaphor replicates existing forms of social control (8), I analyze Cavendish's focuses on rank, chastity, heterosexuality, and gender in order to claim that the argument Cavendish makes for her writing can apply to few women.

The final part of *Reproduction and the Family* examines Lanyer's long poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Lanyer does not place herself and her book within a family structure. Rather, she uses words that refer both to writing and to reproduction solely in negative contexts; for instance, she uses the word "labor" (998), which refers to the process of delivering both a text

and a child, only when she describes Jesus' crucifixion. I examine the way that Lanyer finds other metaphor for textual production, and I look at the way she places metatextual language – that is, words that refer to writing – in descriptions of the reader's Christian afterlife, Mary's virgin pregnancy, and relationships between the Muses. Following Guy-Bray's request for scholars to examine other metaphors for textual production, I look at the way that Lanyer describes writing outside of the framework of sex and childbirth in a patriarchal and heterosexual family, and I find that her metaphors create a space for writers that is female-centred and that offers the possibility for women to create texts without men.

The second chapter, Reproductive Terminations, begins with an analysis of dangerous births in Wroth's sonnet sequence *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Pamphilia, the speaker of the sonnet sequence, conventionally compares herself to a mother and her poems to a child, but she uses a series of reproductive metaphors that present the birth of her text, like the birth of a child, as a dangerous event. For example, in Sonnet Thirty-four Pamphilia describes her poems as "misereries" (6) and claims that she cannot successfully be "Deliver'd" (7) from them; this language suggests that Pamphilia might die while delivering her poetry and incorporates the high mortality rate for mothers in the early modern period into her reproductive metaphor. I examine the similarities between *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* and the genre of mothers' legacies, and I argue that Wroth incorporates the legacy's focus on the mother's potential death order to authorize Pamphilia's speech. Additionally, I discuss Miller's argument that Wroth justifies Pamphilia's speech in the *Urania* by positioning Pamphilia as a mother on trial for infanticide, one instance in which women's speech was expected. I extend Miller's argument to *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and I find that Wroth emphasizes miscarriage and infanticide in this sonnet sequence in order to create a temporary position from which Pamphilia can speak.

My discussion in *Reproductive Terminations* goes on to examine non-normative births in the correspondence between Wroth and Denny. Denny's poem "To Pamphilia from the father-in-law of Seralius" portrays Wroth as a mother and the *Urania* as her child, and Denny compares Wroth's delivery of her book to an animal birth; meanwhile, Wroth returns Denny's insults in the poem "Railing Rimes Returned upon the Author by Mistress Mary Wrothe" when she claims that Denny, too, has fathered an animal text. I examine the way that both Denny and Wroth criticize one another by claiming that the other's textual birth falls outside of a noble, patriarchal family, and I analyze the way that Denny and Wroth use the reproductive metaphor to reinforce a family structure that does not account for same-sex desire and that emphasizes divisions in rank.

*Reproductive Terminations* concludes with an analysis of Wroth's *Urania*. Using Patricia Parker's argument in "Literary Fat Ladies and the Generation of the Text" that women's bodies are often linked to the book's size in Renaissance texts, I look at the relationship between women's narratives, their reproductive abilities, and the page count of the *Urania*. I find that the *Urania*'s truthful female storytellers are associated with the births of a new generation of protagonists and that the stories they tell increase the book's page count. Meanwhile, female characters who lie threaten to kill off the protagonists and thus to prematurely end the book, and Wroth also uses language that connects these women's reproductive anatomy to death. I find that the expansion of the *Urania*'s page count is reliant upon female speakers who contribute to the legitimate lines of the book's noble families, while speakers who threaten noble families are removed from the narrative, and I analyze the connections that Wroth makes between storylines and family lines.

My conclusion summarizes my findings. Additionally, it analyzes the weaknesses of the writers' reproductive metaphors and discusses to what degree each metaphor relies upon a noble,

heterosexual, patriarchal, English family structure. In doing so, my conclusion seeks to determine which women are included and which are excluded from each justification for writing.

Margaret Tyler's sexts: The eroticized book's role in *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood*

Tyler, who translated *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood* from Ortúñez's *El Espejo de Principes y Caballeros* in 1578, takes a unique approach when she compares her writing to reproduction in her prefaces' justification for her book. While Tyler conventionally uses the words "travaile" (A2r) and "labour" (A2r), which describe both writing and reproduction, she eroticizes Ortúñez's book, as well as her own role in translating. Tyler suggests that *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood* results from a sexual union between herself and Ortúñez's book, and Tyler uses colonization language that portrays Ortúñez's book as a colonizer and Tyler as colonized in order to suggest that Ortúñez's book is primarily responsible for their textual offspring. At the same time that the colonization metaphor insists on Tyler's innocence, however, Tyler also emphasizes sex when she eroticizes her role in writing and when she claims that her own personified book goes on to have an eroticized relationship with her reader. In doing so, Tyler extends the family structure by involving both Ortúñez's book and her reader in the reproductive metaphor, and she thus extends the early modern connection between writing and sex to include both books and readers. In doing so, Tyler acknowledges the perceived association between sexual behaviour and texts while simultaneously hyperbolizing and criticizing it in order to create a space for women to write.

Tyler's first prefatory letter, "To the right honourable the Lord Thomas Haward," asks Howard for patronage of her book. In the preface, Tyler praises Howard, identifies him as the son of a family for whom she had worked for in service, and explains her reasons for printing *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood*. Her explanation sets out a conventional metaphor that depicts printing as sex and childbirth. Tyler tells Howard, "I mean not to make

boaste of my travaile, for the matter was offred not made choice off, as ther appeared lykewise little lybertie in my first yielding. The earnestnesse of my friends perswaded me that it was convenient to lay forth my talent for encrease.... So upon hope to please them I first undertooke this labour, & I have gone thorow withall” (A2r). Tyler states that she was initially unwilling to write and print her book, and she describes printing using one of the conventions that Wall claims frequently appeared in prefaces to defend printed books, “the peculiarly feminizing language of modesty, seduction, and birth” (2). Seduced and “perswaded” by her friends, the maiden writer Tyler loses her authorial virginity in her “first yielding” or writing; this “yielding” results in the writer’s “encrease” and “labour” as she metaphorically becomes pregnant and gives birth to her text through print. Tyler insists that she “did not make choice off” the decision to “labour” to produce her text, and she defends her chastity by claiming that her friends initiated her metaphorical childbirth. Reproduction thus serves to depict Tyler’s sexual naïveté and her vulnerability – Tyler is unwilling in her sexualized “first yielding” – and the metaphor insists that Tyler’s textual production comes as a result of her weakness rather than her promiscuity and that her writing does not call her sexual behaviour into question.

Tyler continues to portray her sexual behaviour as socially acceptable when she describes the writing process in a sexually charged colonization metaphor. In her justification for translating a book about war, Tyler claims that others forced her to publish, stating, “as the first motion to this kinde of labour came not from my selfe, so was this peece of worke put upon me by others, & they which first counsailed me to fall to worke, tooke upon them also to be my taskemasters and overseers least I should be idle, and yet bicause the refusall was in my power, I must stand to answeere for my easy yelding” (A3v). When Tyler claims that others made the decision for her to print a book about war, she uses language that refers to colonization. “Worke

put upon me by others” and “taskmasters and overseers” suggest slavery, and Tyler’s attention to “labour” or childbirth that she has not initiated and to sexualized “easy yielding” to her “overseers” hints at rape, which Tyler associates with colonization elsewhere in her letter to the reader. This metaphor links writing to reproduction, and it places Tyler in the role of colonized in order to claim that she is not entirely responsible for her writing. Like her letter to Howard, Tyler’s reproductive language insists that her writing is a result of her weakness rather than her promiscuity, and her sexual metaphor suggests that Tyler’s “overseers” are primarily responsible for producing the book and minimizes Tyler’s role in the sexualized production of her text.

Tyler’s justification for writing personifies Ortúñez’s text, claims that his book is a foreigner from Spain, and suggests that Ortúñez’s book is one potential colonizer. Her explanation for translating a war story continues to use language related to colonization when Tyler argues that “to report of armes is not so odious but that it may be borne withall, ... for that it iumpeth with this common feare on all partes of warre and invasion” (A3v). Her reason for translating a book about war – that it conveys a “common feare on all partes of warre and invasion” – uses sexualized language that expresses fears of colonization and rape, two forms of “warre and invasion” of “all partes” of a country or a body. Meanwhile, Tyler identifies the text with Spain, a country known for its colonizing endeavours, when she identifies Ortúñez’s text as a foreigner, calling it a “stranger” (A3v), and when she points out twice that Ortúñez’s book was written in Spanish (A3r). Although the Spanish Armada did not attack England until 1588, by 1578 the Dutch revolt against Spain was ongoing, the Spanish empire had expanded to include the Philippines and a large part of the Americas, and relations between Catholic Spain and Protestant England were tense. Tyler’s defence of writing casts the text as a citizen of the country whose war and invasion England feared. Her reproductive metaphor’s focus on

colonization serves to place the responsibilities for the sexualized act of writing and for the textual child upon Ortúñez's foreign book, and, in doing so, Tyler again claims that she is not solely responsible for writing her book.

At the same time that Tyler focuses on her own innocence, however, her metaphor for writing draws attention to her sexual behaviour. The second prefatory letter, "M T. to the Reader," continues to justify Tyler's reasons for printing, and it does so by simultaneously using reproductive language and devaluing her role as a translator. She eroticizes her relationship with Ortúñez's Spanish text when she claims that translating requires little work, stating, "my part [was] none therein but the translation, as it were onely in giving entertainment to a stranger, before this time unacquainted with our country guise.... I have notwithstanding made countenance onely to this gentleman" (A3v). Tyler personifies Ortúñez's text when she describes it as a "stranger" and a "gentleman," and she uses several words that refer to anatomy to assert that she is female and the text is male. Since "quaint" punned on "cunt" (OED), Tyler's claim that the "gentleman" text is "unacquainted" provides a description of its genitals, and the depictions of Tyler's "country guise" and "countenance" have a similar anatomical pun. The facts that Tyler shows the text her "country guise" and "makes countenance" to it hint at sex, and the word "entertainment," which refers to intercourse (Partridge 151), reinforces this suggestion. As a result of her union with the book, Tyler "travaile[s] in Englishing" (A3r), a phrase that can refer to giving birth, and she produces *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood*. This textual child is born as the result of heterosexual sex, and Tyler insists that this sexual relationship is monogamous because she has "made countenance onely to this gentleman" or, metaphorically, because she has had sex exclusively with her male partner. Tyler's attention to a heterosexual union and her insistence on monogamy place textual birth within a family structure,



which Guy-Bray argues is conventional in reproductive metaphors (5), but the active role that Tyler takes when she shows the text her “country guise” and “makes countenance” to Ortúñez’s book forefronts Tyler’s sexual behaviour rather than insisting on her vulnerability. Tyler’s reproductive metaphor thus draws attention to the hypersexualized roles of women writers, but her placement of Ortúñez’s book in this metaphor also works to counter this hypersexualization by suggesting that the book’s role in this metaphor, too, can be sexualized.

At the same time, the role of Ortúñez’s male book in Tyler’s metaphor fits Tyler’s description of reproduction within early modern theories of generation. Tyler’s reproductive language suggests that Ortúñez’s text is fertile, and she insists that Ortúñez’s book is male when she calls the text a “gentleman” (A3v) and when she refers to the book as “his” twice (A3v). While the participation of the female seed in generation was called into question in the early modern period, the male seed’s role in creating a child was not (Laqueur 39-41), and some theorists of generation believed that children in the womb were created primarily from male semen (Laqueur 40-1). The text’s masculinisation suggests that it can contribute textual seed in its erotic relationship with Tyler, and it opens up the possibility that their union can generate new texts. This version of the reproductive metaphor depicts *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood* in a family structure with two parents, which is a departure from the conventional metaphor that Foster describes in which only the author figures as the parent of the book (44). Tyler adapts the reproductive metaphor in a way that unconventionally emphasizes two parents, sexualizes the role of Ortúñez’s book, and insists that the eroticized book is equally responsible for the text’s conception as Tyler is.

Indeed, many theorists of generation believed that the male role in reproduction was predominant and that a couple’s offspring would exclusively resemble its father. Uman and

Bistué claim that Tyler makes use of Galenic concepts of genetics “in which only the father contributes his characteristics to the child to which the mother then gives birth” (309). This belief was not held universally among Galenic physiologists (Laqueur 39-40), but Tyler does highlight the resemblances between metaphorical father and son. She claims that “the invention, disposition, trimming, & what els in this story, is wholly an other mans, my part none therein but the translation” (A3v). This description attributes the text’s qualities – its “invention, disposition, trimming, & what els” – to “an other man,” Ortúñez text and the metaphorical father. This attribution portrays the father as the genetically dominant parent and suggests that the role of Ortúñez’s book in reproduction is most important. Indeed, Tyler’s text is such a thorough imprint of its father that its appearance does not simply resemble but “*is wholly* an other mans” (emphasis added), and her description of the resemblances between her own book and Ortúñez’s again alters the conventional reproductive metaphor by sexualizing the role of Ortúñez’s book, in addition to the author’s role.

The way that Tyler collapses the roles of readers and writers in her argument for women’s writing also works against the convention of presenting writers as the only sexualized role in the reproductive metaphor. Tyler’s justification for women translators claims that writing is not a transgressive act, and her argument relies upon a slippage from reader to translator and suggests that the reader is already one potential writer:

But my defense is by example of the best, amongst which many have dedicated their labours ... unto divers ladies & gentlewomen. And if men may & do bestow such of their travailes upon gentlewomen, then may we women read such of their works as they dedicate unto us, and if we may read them, why not farther wade in then to the serch of a truth. And then much more why not deale by translation in

such arguments, especially this kinde of excercise being a matter of more heede then of deep invention or exquisite learning.... it is all one for a woman to pen a story, as for a man to addresse his story to a woman. (A4r-A4v)

Tyler slips from dedicatee to reader to truth-seeker to translator; in the end, she declares, “it is all one.” The way that Tyler collapses the role of dedicatees with the sexualized role of authors in an argument for women’s writing and translating has several potential interpretations. First, Tyler may be undermining her connection between translating and sex by comparing translators to dedicatees, whose role was more socially acceptable. It is also possible that Tyler’s comparison simultaneously sexualizes all of the roles that she presents – dedicatees, readers, truth-seekers, translators, and writers – in order to point out and critique the fact that literate, upper- and middle-class women’s chastity was always suspect. Either way, Tyler’s conflation of readers and writers claims that writing, like reading, should be a more socially acceptable activity.

Tyler also justifies writing by claiming that the relationship between her reader and her book is already sexualized. When Tyler describes her reasons for writing and the enjoyment that she expects her reader to receive from her work, she uses erotic language, telling the reader,

My meaning hath ben to make other parteners of my liking, as I doubt not gentle reader, but if it shal plesse thee after serious matters to sport they self with this Spaniard, that thou shalt finde in him the just reward.... And as in such matters which have bene rather devised to beguile time, then to breede matter of sad learning, he hath ever borne away the price which could season such delights with some profitable reading, so shalt thou have this straunger an honest man when neede serveth, & at other times, either a good companion to drive out a wery night, or a merry test at thy boord. (A4v)

The phrases “sport they self,” “matter ... devised to beguile time,” “he hath ever borne away the price,” and “good companion to drive out a wery night” use double entendre, and these phrases eroticize the relationship between Tyler’s reader and her book. Her words “it shal plese thee,” “just reward,” and “season such delights” construct reading as a source of pleasure. The phrase “thy boord” suggests a feminized sexual position (Partridge 68). This diction eroticizes the relationship between Tyler’s reader and her book, and the reader’s relationship with *The Mirrour of Princely Deedes and Knighthood* comes to parallel the erotic relationship between Tyler and *El Espejo de Príncipes y Caballeros*. While it was conventional to compare writing to conception and childbirth, Tyler forefronts the reader’s sexual behaviour in the same way that she emphasizes her own. In doing so, Tyler extends the reproductive metaphor to include her reader and she suggests that the relationship between her reader and her text, too, could produce new books. By introducing the reader into her reproductive metaphor and by eroticizing the reader’s role, Tyler hyperbolizes the sexualisation of the writing process. Tyler claims that she is merely one participant in a family structure in which the continuous cycle of translating and replicating books resembles the act of continuing a family line through multiple generations, and the way that Tyler introduces the more socially acceptable role of readers into her reproductive metaphor and then eroticizes their roles both exaggerates and critiques the early modern association between writing and promiscuity.

In Tyler’s version of the reproductive metaphor, Ortúñez’s text is the father, Tyler is the mother, and Tyler’s text is the offspring, born as an adult rather than as an infant. When Tyler’s fertile, adult book is read, it steps into the role of the father, her reader is its feminized partner, and this union has the potential to generate new texts. Given Tyler’s adaptation of the reproductive metaphor, Ortúñez’s text is an appropriate one for her to translate: Ortúñez claims

that his book is already a translation “‘Aora nuevamente traducido de latín en romance’ [Now newly translated out of Latin into a vulgar tongue]” (qtd. in Uman and Bistué 306), but that the book was originally chronicled in Greek (Uman and Bistué 306). Translating a book that claims to be a translation of a translation (of a translation?) and claiming that texts sire new texts, Tyler selects a work which, following her metaphor, is already part of a multigenerational family. By focusing on the book’s many family members and by sexualizing reading and claiming that reading can add a new generation to this family, Tyler hyperbolizes conventional comparisons between writing and reproduction in order to undermine the perceived connection between the two.

Tyler defends her writing by placing it in a reproductive metaphor that emphasizes colonization in order to claim that she is not solely responsible for writing her book and to pay heed to the convention of presenting her role as writing as chaste. At the same time that she defends her own writing, Tyler also focuses on her sexual behaviour, figures both her reader and the text in her reproductive metaphor, and eroticizes their roles. Tyler’s attention to the possibility that her reader can have an eroticized relationship with her book and that the reader, too, can produce textual children suggests that Tyler is simply one participant in a multigenerational family structure that continuously translates and replicates books. By focusing on the book’s and reader’s sexuality as much as on her own, Tyler uses the additional figures that she places in her reproductive metaphor in order to hyperbolize and critique the early modern association between writing and promiscuity, and her criticisms of this association create a space for women writers by mocking the perceived association between their writing and their promiscuity.



Defending authorship: Writing, chastity, and governance in Margaret Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies*

Seventy-four years after Tyler defended her book by placing it in a family structure, Cavendish, the Duchess of Newcastle, took a similar approach. Her collection *Poems and Fancies*, printed in 1652, accounts for Cavendish's reasons for writing, and it does so using reproductive language. Two of the collection's letters, "To the Reader" and "To Naturall Philosophers," claim that Cavendish has a maternal role over her work; in these letters, Cavendish twice claims that developing the book has taken nine months (X2v and X3r) and she states that she is "so fond of my Book, as to make it as if it were my Child" (X3v). Cavendish goes on to place emphasis on the patriarchal family, to insist that she is a chaste wife, and to draw attention to the four humours, "blood, phlegm, choler or yellow bile, and black bile" (Paster 7-8) in order to claim that her humoural body is under control, which serves as another way of reinforcing her chastity. Guy-Bray points out that one consequence of the reproductive metaphor is a focus on the heterosexual family and he demonstrates that "The relationship among texts... is... from the very beginning forced to be a family relationship, which is to say, a power structure that is part of a larger apparatus of social control" (8). By comparing the book to a child and herself to a parent, Cavendish describes the book within the heterosexual, patriarchal family, and her association between writing and reproduction claims that writing reinforces the family structure. By figuring her writing as part of the social institution of the family and within expectations that noblewomen be chaste, Cavendish claims that her book supports the noble, patriarchal family rather than subverting the family structure, and she uses this argument to authorize her writing.

According to Cavendish, women's writing helps maintain the patriarchal family because it keeps wives busy when their husbands are away. In her letter "To the Reader," Cavendish explains one reason for writing: "my Rest being broke with discontented Thoughts, because I was from my Lord, and Husband, knowing him to be in great Wants, and my selfe in the same Condition; to divert them... I have sat, and wrote this Worke" (X3r-X3v). Cavendish claims that writing "divert[s]" her "discontented Thoughts" in her husband's absence, but her description of occupying her thoughts is eroticized. Cavendish's statement that she busies herself when she is alone in bed and cannot sleep suggests masturbation; her sexualized description of herself in "great Wants" and her use of the word "divert," which means both "distract" and "entertain, amuse, recreate oneself" (OED) supports this reading. Rather than finding an outlet for her "great Wants" through masturbation, which was considered threatening to the family (Weigert 38-9), Cavendish turns to writing in her husband's absence. The description of this absence in reproductive language points to the need for Cavendish to find a socially acceptable outlet for her "great Wants," and it suggests that writing can fulfill this need and become a contributing factor to marital happiness and to the family's stability.

In the prefatory letter "To All Noble, and Worthy Ladies," Cavendish again draws a connection between women's writing and their sexual behaviour. Her defense of writing states that men who allow their female family members to write "shall have no cause to feare, that when they go abroad in [women's] absence, they shall receive an Injury by [women's] loose Carriages" (A3v). Literally, Cavendish claims that the "Carriages" or behaviour of female writers will not be offensive, but her use of the term "loose Carriages," which refers to promiscuity, reveals that women's sexual behaviour is her main concern. Women who busy themselves with writing, she claims, will remain chaste, and Cavendish implies that women



writers will not “injure” their families by giving birth to bastards. Reproductive language here functions to defend writers’ chastity and to combat the association between print and promiscuity; however, it evaluates women’s worth based on their sexual behaviour and it does not call the heterosexual, patriarchal family structure into question. Indeed, Cavendish’s claims that men “shall have no cause to feare” and will not “receive an injury” demonstrate that the defense is written from a male perspective, and the perspective is also upper-class because legitimacy was primarily a concern for nobility (Bach 37). The reproductive metaphor thus serves as a defense of women’s writing, but only in a noble family, and only when the women comply with the wifely expectation of chastity.

Cavendish goes on to describe the role of her writing in her own family. In “An Epistle to Mistris Toppe,” she claims that her family does not take offense to her writing:

had I broken the Chaines of Modesty, or behav’d my selfe in dishonourable and loose carriage, or had run the wayes of Vice, as to Perjure my self, or betray my Freinds, or denyed a Truth, or had lov’d deceit: Then I might have prov’d a Greife to the Family I came from, and a dishonour to the Family I am link’t to, raised Blushes in their cheeks being mentioned, or to turne Pale when I were published. But I hope, I shall neither greive, nor shame them, or give them cause to wish I were not a Branch thereof. (A4r-A4v)

Cavendish claims that writing does not involve “break[ing] the Chaines of Modesty,” behaving “in dishonourable and loose carriage,” or “running the ways of Vice,” and she states that she brings her family no “Grief,” “dishonour,” or “shame.” The words “dishonourable” and “loose” describe unchastity, and Cavendish again distances her writing from that behaviour. Instead, she emphasizes her two families, “the Family that I came from,” and “the Family I am link’t to,” in

order to focus on her role in a noble, patriarchal family – a unit that was structured around legitimate heirs – and this focus depicts Cavendish as chaste. By describing her role as a writer within her family, Cavendish refutes the association between writing and promiscuity and insists that writing is possible for noblewomen.

Cavendish also portrays writing as one of her duties as a wife. In her letter “To the Reader,” Cavendish compares it to good “Housewifery,” arguing that she writes in place of running her husband’s estate, which had been confiscated during England’s Civil War.

Cavendish states that

my Lords Estate being taken away, [I] had nothing for Huswifery, or thrifty Industry to imploy my selfe in; having no Stock to work on. For Housewifery is a discreet Management, and ordering all in Private, and Household Affaires.... But Thriftiness is something stricter.... For Thrift weights, and measures out all Expence. It is just as in Poetry: for good Husbandry in Poetry, is, when there is a great store of Fancy well order’d, not onely in fine Language, but proper Phrases, and significant Words. And Thrift in Poetry, is, when there is but little Fancy, which is not onely spun to the last Thread, but the Thread is drawne so smal, as it is scarce perceived. But I have nothing to spin, or order, so as I become Idle; I cannot say, in mine owne House, because I have none, but what my Mind is lodg’d in” (X3r).

Writing appears as a substitute for ordering her “Lords Estate,” and Cavendish creates a series of parallels between the two. Instead of spinning thread, she spins Fancy; instead of thrift in household management, she has thrift in words; and instead of ordering her husband’s estate, she orders the “House” of her “Mind.” By claiming that housewifery is “just as in Poetry,”

Cavendish casts poetry among her wifely duties. In fact, her husband William Cavendish did support her writing and contributed to many of her works. By placing writing within a domestic sphere, Cavendish describes it as part of her marriage rather than as a way of subverting patriarchal order, and she creates a place for writing within her noble family.

The prefaces further emphasize Cavendish's family when she describes the book as a good citizen. Guy-Bray argues that the reproductive metaphor places social regulations on the book by personifying it as a child. He explains that in this metaphor, "texts have to follow the same rules as people: a poem, like a person, should be a good citizen and contribute to stability.... [B]ecause texts were seen as having not only a public existence but also a public role (like children), they became increasingly subject to social regulation" (11-2). In the prefatory letter "An Epistle to Mistris Toppe," Cavendish uses the reproductive metaphor to defend her book and to highlight the book's role as a citizen. She states that

tis a shame to deny the Principles of their Religion, to break the Lawes of a well-governed Kingdome, to disturbe Peace, to be unnaturall, to break the Union and Amity of honest Freinds, for a Man to be a Coward, for a Woman to be a Whore; and by these Actions, they are not onely to be cast out of all Civill society, but to be blotted out of the Roll of Mankinde. And the reason why I summon up these Vices, is, to let my Freinds know, or rather to remember them, that my Book is none of them. (A4v)

The vices in her list describe citizens who break religious principles, laws of a kingdom, and the "naturall" orders of friendship and gender, and Cavendish insists that her book "is none of" these vices. By contrasting these citizens and her book, Cavendish personifies the book and insists that it is law-abiding. In doing so, she portrays her metaphorical child as a contributing member of

society and justifies writing using the reproductive metaphor to claim that the textual citizens she produces are beneficial to the nation.

E. Toppe's letter to Cavendish, included among *Poems and Fancies*' prefatory materials, similarly portrays the book as a citizen, and it also compares the book to Cavendish. Toppe tells Cavendish that "this Book is not the onely occasion to Admire you; for having been brought up from my Childhood in your Honourable Family... seeing the course of your life, and honouring your Ladyships disposition, I have admired Nature more, in your Ladyship, then in any other Works besides" (X1v). Toppe claims that the book, like Cavendish's life, is virtuous, and she parallels the two. The statement "this Book is not the onely occasion to Admire you" depicts the text as a metonymy for Cavendish's life, and the comparison also personifies the book and claims that it is a good citizen. This comparison continues when Toppe states that "I have admired Nature more, in your Ladyship, then in any other Works besides." By portraying "your Ladyship" as a "Work" or text, Toppe furthers the parallel between books and citizens and she claims that an honourable disposition is a characteristic of both Cavendish and her work. By casting the book as a good citizen – and, additionally, one that reflects the virtues of its author – Toppe insists that Cavendish's writing results in metaphorical children who lead admirable lives, and her description of Cavendish's textual children as good citizens serves to defend Cavendish's writing.

Cavendish encourages other women, too, to support her writing. In the letter "To All Noble, and Worthy Ladies," Cavendish asks her female readers to defend women who write. She requests that "if [men] do throw scorne [at women writers], I shall intreat you... to help her, to keep their Right, and Priviledges, making it their owne Case" (A3v). The request for the reader to take the writer's "Case" upon herself eroticizes the reader's potential defense of writing.

“Case” referred to both a legal argument and to female genitalia, and Cavendish’s suggestion that the female reader protect her own and the writer’s “Case” thus suggests that the reader’s defense of writing is also a defense of both the reader’s and the writer’s chastity. By concentrating on chastity, Cavendish again highlights a behaviour that was expected of women in noble families, and her argument that the reader should defend “their case” places the responsibility for preserving the writer’s and the reader’s chastity, and by extension the legitimate family line, upon the reader. Cavendish’s use of reproductive language in her request for the reader to defend women’s writing thus calls upon the reader to also participate in the process of preserving the family structure.

Despite Cavendish’s association between writing and chastity, the fact that she imagines women’s defense as a battle undermines the patriarchal family structure. After she insists that women defend their “Case,” Cavendish describes the defense in more detail, telling her reader to

pray strengthen my Side, in defending my Book; for I know Womens Toungs are as sharp, as two-edged Swords, and wound as much, when they are anger’d. And in this Battell may your Wit be quick, and your Speech ready, and your Arguments so strong, as to beat them out of the Feild of Disputes. So shall I get Honour, and Reputation by your Favours; otherwise I may chance to be cast into the Fire. (A3v)

Cavendish imagines this debate as a “Battell” that takes place in the “Feild of Dispute,” and the female readers figure as the soldiers fighting for Cavendish’s and other women writers’ “Honour, and Reputation.” This “Battell” erases a gender hierarchy because the female readers fight men in an equal playing field. The women carry phallic “Swords,” and Cavendish imagines that, if they decide to fight, they will have quicker wits and stronger arguments than men. By casting the

women as soldiers, Cavendish portrays them as authority figures. Their defense of writing is not simply a defense of chastity and of the patriarchal family, but it also challenges the family structure by portraying men as antagonists and women as powerful. In this battle of the sexes, Cavendish imagines that women who appropriate male roles can be figures of control.

At the same time that the passages that I have discussed emphasize the family, they also focus on chastity by using language that referred to the humoral body. Gail Kern Paster outlines that “Every subject grew up with a common understanding of his or her body as a semipermeable, irrigated container in which the humors moved sluggishly. People imagined that health consisted of a state of internal solubility to be perilously maintained, often through a variety of evacuations, either self-administered or in consultation with a healer” (8). Cavendish’s references to overindulgent sexual behaviours focus on actions that were believed to disrupt the humours, and she uses humoral language in order to claim that her body, in contrast to her examples of overindulgent behaviours, is both controlled and chaste. Paster claims that “sexual intercourse was understood in the humoral economy as the bodily expenditure of seminal fluid, to be regulated in both men and women for the maintenance of health” (167). When Cavendish discusses whores (A4v), “great Wants” (X3r), and women’s “loose Carriages” (A3v, A4r), she focuses on bodies whose humours were believed to be out of control because they expel too much seminal fluid. She distances her writing from whoredom and claims that writing prevents “great Wants” and “loose Carriages,” and these references to the humoral body serve to juxtapose Cavendish with women whose bodies leak. In doing so, Cavendish suggests that she maintains a correct expenditure of semen within marriage, and she uses humoral language within her defense of writing in order to draw a connection between her writing and her socially acceptable sexual behaviour.

Indeed, Cavendish claims that writing poetry is one way that she attempts to perfect bodily control. In the letter “To Poets,” which appears halfway through *Poems and Fancies*, she tells her reader,

Truth tells you, that Women have seldome, or never, (or at least in these latter Ages) written a Book of Poetry.... Wherefore it hath seemed hitherto, as if Nature had compounded Mens Braines with more of the Sharp Atomes, which make the hot, and dry Element, and Womens with more of the round Atomes, which Figure makes the cold, and moist Element: And though Water is a usefull Element, yet Fire is the Nobler, being of an Aspiring quality. But it is rather a Dishonour, not a Fault in Nature, for her Inferiour Workes to move towards Perfection. (R1r-R1v)

Cavendish states that, because she is a woman, she is one of nature’s “Inferiour Workes.” The “Fire” that composes men’s atoms, she claims, is “Nobler” than women’s watery atoms, and the masculine task of writing serves as a means for Cavendish to “move towards perfection.”

Writing contributes to the humoural body’s health by making her more masculine and giving her a body with more controlled humours, which allows her to take on a male role. At the same time that Cavendish highlights her controlled humours in order to insist that she fulfills her role as the wife of a noble by remaining chaste, she also uses the humours to place herself as an authority figure by emphasizing the masculine task of writing, and her attention to the humours calls gender roles into question.

*Poems and Fancies* focuses on the relationship between writing and noblewomen’s chastity. Cavendish describes her writing as a contributing factor to her chastity in order to create a place for her authorship within the family. While her descriptions of writing are occasionally subversive and she challenges the restrictions on writing for noblewomen, Cavendish accepts

men's hierarchy over women, and her portrayals of herself and other women in positions of authority, including the women's appearance in battle and Cavendish's attempt to use writing as a way to make her humoral body more perfect, always place women in a male role.

Additionally, her arguments are structured around the heterosexual, noble family and thus apply to few women. For example, when Cavendish claims that writing keeps the humours balanced, the way that she idealizes bodily control means that racially "other" women and lower-class women, whose bodies were believed to be less civilized than upper-class English women's (Loomba 51), are excluded from her argument. Similarly, Cavendish's idealization of chastity and of the patriarchal family is primarily relevant to upper-class women, who were supposed to produce legitimate children in order to extend their family lines (Bach 4), and it does not account for desires between women. Although Cavendish does place women in roles of authority, as her descriptions of women as soldiers and of herself mastering her body indicate, she reserves these roles for an elite group.



Reproductive alternatives: Textuality and sexuality in Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex  
Judaeorum*

Guy-Bray is critical of the way that the reproductive metaphor places texts in a family structure, and he argues that “The real reason to object to the reproductive metaphor is perhaps that it forces textuality into a teleological and heterosexual narrative, one that is no better for women – or, for that matter, for men – than it is for texts” (15). To resolve this problem, Guy-Bray participates in Jane Spencer’s project to find “New configurations of writers, different kinds of canons, [that] need other metaphors” (qtd. in Guy-Bray 5). I argue that these “other metaphors” can be found throughout Lanyer’s long poem *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. The work, which describes the passion of Christ, uses metatextual language – that is, words that refer to writing – and it places this language within descriptions of the reader’s Christian afterlife, Mary’s virgin pregnancy, and relationships between the Muses. In doing so, Lanyer describes writing not as sexual reproduction, but as what Guy-Bray calls production, “conception and birth without sexual activity or sexual difference” (10). Lanyer also rejects reproduction when she uses reproductive metaphors exclusively to describe negative events. She claims that women vainly “labor” (998) – a word that refers to childbirth and to the process of printing a text – to prevent Jesus’ crucifixion. By associating Jesus’ death with a word that described both writing and reproduction, Lanyer works to remove the family structure that Guy-Bray claims typically governs the relationship between readers, writers, and the text, and she places the creation of the text, instead, within alternative metaphors that she takes from Christian or Greek mythology.

*Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* invents the story that Pilate’s wife advocates on Jesus’ behalf, and it uses this story to make an argument for women’s worth. It makes reference to other stories in Christian mythology, including Mary’s pregnancy in the book of Luke and Jesus’ sermon

about a Christian afterlife in the book of John, in addition to the Greek mythological story of Icarus and Daedalus. The poem is women-centred, and it focuses on Eve, Mary, Pilate's wife, and the group of women who mourn for Christ in order to defend women. Lanyer also identifies her readership as female, saying in her letter "To the Vertuous Reader," "I have written this small volume, or little booke, for the generall use of all virtuous Ladies and Gentlewomen of this kingdome; and in commendation of some particular persons of our owne sexe" (5-7). This focus on "our owne sexe" contributes to the way that Lanyer rejects textual reproduction in favour of women-centred metaphors for textual production that are non-sexual or non-heterosexual.

Lanyer uses language that refers to both writing and reproduction, but she does so only when she discusses events that are related to Jesus' crucifixion. For example, when Lanyer depicts a group of women advocating to save Jesus' life, she uses reproductive language to describe their speech. Lanyer claims that before Jesus was crucified,

spightfull men with torments did oppresse  
 Th'afflicted body of this innocent Dove [Jesus],  
 Poore women seeing how much they did transgresse,  
 By teares, by sighes, by cries intreat, may prove,  
 What may be done among the thickest presse,  
 They labor still these tyrants hearts to move;  
 .../...  
 But all in vaine. (993-1001)

Lanyer encourages her reader to sympathize with the women and Jesus rather than with the "tyrants" who "oppress" them. She claims that the women "labor... in vaine," and the word "labour" conflates the impossibility of convincing the men to save Jesus with the failed, "vaine"

delivery of a child. The statement that the women attempt to find “what may be done among the thickest presse” uses sexual language to compare the women’s predicament to a pressing, a feminized sexual position (Wall 1). Meanwhile, Jesus’ persecution is both feminized and sexualized when Lanyer describes him using the similar word “opresse[d].” At the same time that the women’s speech is ineffectual, the women appear powerless when they are “presse[d]” in the sexual metaphor and when they do not successfully “labour,” or give birth, to their arguments. This use of the reproductive metaphor to conflate “vaine” speech with sex and birth suggests that women are disempowered in textual production.

This passage also uses several words that refer to print culture. As Margreta de Grazia argues, descriptions of the printing press were structured around reproductive language (35). “Labor” and “presse” refer simultaneously to textual production and reproduction: “labor” signified the process of writing a text, and “presse” referred to the printing matrix. When the women “prove/ What may be done among the thickest presse,/ They labour still these tyrants hearts to move” (96-8), their attempts to “labour,” or write and to negotiate their way through the “press” suggest that they are trying and failing to write and print a book, and this language reflects the restrictions on women’s writing in the early modern period. The “tyrants” overwhelm the women’s efforts to print, Lanyer’s sexualized words change from “presse” to “opresse,” and Lanyer portrays both writing and heterosexual sex as instances of women’s oppression. At the same time that Lanyer rejects reproduction here, she also dismisses the heterosexual process of women’s textual production.

When Lanyer discusses Jesus’ crucifixion, she again uses words that conflate reproduction with textual production. She describes the Earth’s reaction to his death: “Things reasonable, and reasonlesse possest/ The terrible impression of this fact” (1201-2). Literally,

Lanyer describes the different “things” of the earth that perceive Jesus’ death. However, the word that she uses to describe their perception, “impression,” again refers to the feminized sexual position of being pressed. An “impression” also described a copy of a book (Thompson and Thompson 71). By describing Jesus’ death in language that refers to sex and to textual production, Lanyer rejects the reproductive metaphor, and because she conflates textuality with knowledge of Jesus’ death here, she locates both textual production and sex at the site of the crucifixion.

At the same time, Jesus’ death offers believers a Christian afterlife, and their rebirth into the afterlife fits Guy-Bray’s description of production that does not include sexual difference.

Lanyer claims that Jesus brings believers new life, stating,

Being dead, [Jesus] killed Death, and did survive  
 That proud insulting Tyrant: in whose place  
 He sends bright Immortalitie to revive  
 Those whom his yron armes did long embrace;  
 Who from their loathsome graves brings them alive  
 In glory to behold their Saviours face:  
 Who tooke the keys of all Deaths powre away,  
 Opening to those that would his name obey. (1209-16)

This stanza describes Jesus’ resurrection and it states that his resurrection “killed death” and “brings [believers] alive” “from their loathsome graves.” “Death,” like the men who “presse” the women and “opresse” Jesus, is called a “tyrant.” Lanyer also describes Death in a sexualized lock and key metaphor when she claims that Jesus “tooke the keys of all Deaths powre away,/ Opening to those that would his name obey.” Here, Death has phallic “keys” which are the

source of his “power,” and masculinized death uses his phallic keys’ power to reinforce a gender hierarchy over the reader and believer, whom Lanyer identifies in the prefatory letters as female. By contrast, Jesus “tooke away” both the keys and their power and he appears in a feminized sexual position when he “open[s]” to believers. Like Lanyer’s audience, Jesus is feminized, and the “Immortalitie” and “reviv[al]” that he brings believers casts their rebirth into a Christian afterlife as a means of overcoming heterosexual and hierarchical Death and entering into a new birth that does not include sexual difference or a gender hierarchy.

Lanyer compares the reader’s rebirth to Jesus’ resurrection three days after the crucifixion. She parallels Jesus’ and the reader’s deaths and rebirths into a Christian afterlife when she instructs her reader to

Come swifter than the motion of the Sunne,  
 To be transfigur’d with our loving Lord,  
 .../.../.../.../...  
 Gods holy Angels will direct your Doves,  
 And bring your Serpents to the fields of rest,  
 Where he doth stay that purchast all your loves  
 In bloody torments, when he di’d opprest. (50-60)

Lanyer suggests that the reader’s “second berth” will be similar to Jesus’ resurrection. She tells her reader to “come swifter than the motion of the Sunne” – with a pun on son – and claims that the reader will be “transfigur’d with our loving Lord,” mirroring the reader and Christ.

“[T]ransfigur’d” also serves as a reference to figuring, or writing, and it describes the process in which both Jesus’ and the reader’s stories are inscribed into the Lanyer’s book. The dual meaning of “transfigur’d” conflates the writing process with the reader’s and Jesus’ rebirths. The

reader and Jesus are transfigured and regenerate at the same time that their stories are figured, or written down, in the text. By conflating the two rebirths with the writing process, Lanyer again relates writing to a form of production that occurs without sexual activity or sexual difference, and she also idealizes this form of textual production because her metaphor compares it to eternal life in heaven.

Lanyer goes on to describe the reader's rebirth in more detail. In the prefatory letter "To all vertuous Ladies in generall," she depicts the reader transcending an earthly body in order to live with Jesus in heaven, and she tells the reader,

Thus may you flie from dull and sensuall earth,  
Whereof at first your bodies formed were,  
That new regen'rate in a second berth,  
Your blessed soules may live without all feare,  
Beeing immortall, subject to no death. (64-68)

Lanyer portrays a Christian afterlife in generative language when she describes it as "a second berth." This "berth" does not involve sexual reproduction, and it consists of bodily death rather than orgasm. Believers' regeneration involves "fl[ying]" from an earthly body into an "immortall" body, and this process is a form of parthenogenesis or revival rather than reproduction. Although this passage makes use of generative language, it turns to a family structure in which the reader figures metaphorically as both parent and child, and Lanyer chooses to highlight a Biblical form of rebirth that does not include heterosexual sex or a patriarchal family.

Lanyer finds another desexualized alternative to reproduction in the Biblical story of the virgin Mary's pregnancy. In the New Testament Book of Luke, the angel Gabriel approaches

Mary and tells her that God has made her conceive a son. The *Salve Deus* presents Gabriel's speech to Mary, stating that

[Gabriel] thus beganne, Haile *Mary* full of grace,  
 Thou freely art beloved of the Lord,  
 He is with thee, behold thy happy case;  
 .../.../.../.../...  
 Loe, this high message to thy troubled spirit,  
 [Gabriel] doth deliver in the plainest sence;  
 Sayes, Thou shouldst beare a Sonne that shal inherit  
 His Father  *Davids* throne. (1041-52, emphasis original).

Gabriel claims that Mary will “beare a Sonne,” and the conception he describes does not involve sex but rather divine intervention. This form of reproduction is idealized: Mary’s “case,” a word that refers both to her situation and to her genitalia, is “happy,” and Lanyer tells elsewhere that the “maiden Mother” (1083) is “subject to no paine” (1083). This representation contrasts Lanyer’s portrayal of the women “labor[ing] in vaine” to save Jesus from crucifixion. By focusing on Mary and by describing her pregnancy as “happy,” Lanyer presents the virgin’s “happy case” as a preferable form of reproduction, and as one that occurs without men.

This description also conflates Mary’s pregnancy with textual production. When Gabriel “doth deliver in the plainest sence;/ Sayes, Thou shouldst bear a Sonne,” “deliver in the plainest sence” means that he conveys his message in the simplest words possible. “Deliver” also refers to childbirth, and Gabriel’s “deliver[y]” of his message parallels Mary giving birth. The word that describes Mary’s genitals, “case,” also refers to texts’ spoken or written arguments. The words “delivery” and “case,” which describe both women’s bodies and writing, suggest that

Mary's virgin pregnancy parallels the writing process, and this metaphor offers an alternative metaphor for textual production that desexualizes writing.

Lanyer's inventory of metaphors that offer an alternative to reproduction includes two metaphors that she adapts from classical sources. In the first of these, Lanyer alludes to the Greek myth of Icarus and Daedalus, who made wings from wax in order to escape from Crete. Lanyer compares her book to Icarus and her Muse to Daedalus, and she asks,

But my deare Muse, now whither wouldst thou flie,

Above the pitch of thy appointed straine?

With *Icarus* thou seekest now to trie,

Not waxen wings, but thy poore barren Braine,

Which farre too weake, these siely lines descrie;

Yet cannot this thy forward Mind restraine,

But thy poore Infant Verse must soare aloft,

Not fearing threat'ning dangers, happening oft. (273-80, emphasis original)

Adopting a humility topos, Lanyer describes the *Salve Deus* as "poore Infant Verse" and claims that it has come from the Muse's "poore barren Braine." The "siely lines," are compared to Icarus, who in Greek mythology flew too close to the sun, melted his wax wings, and fell to his death; through this analogy, Lanyer sets up the poem for failure. Further, her insistence that the Muse, who figures as Icarus' father Daedalus, is "barren" and infertile also seems to doom the "poore Infant" poem. While such modesty about the quality of Lanyer's poem is conventional, Lanyer removes her role in textual production and the Muse appears as the verse's sole parent. Her choice of this metaphor for textual production is unconventional, and Lanyer's presentation



of writing as the Muse flying with Icarus, like her portrayal of Mary's virgin birth, serves to desexualize the process of writing and publishing a text.

The introductory poem "The Authors Dreame to the Ladie Marie the Countesse Dowager of Pembroke" features the second adaptation from a classical source in a metaphor for textual production when it describes the muses, Greek and Roman figures who inspire writers. In the poem, the muse Dictina, whose name comes from the Latin "dictare," or "to dictate," personifies the act of writing. Lanyer tells that

faire *Dictina* by the breake of Day,

With all her Damsels round about her came,

Ranging the woods to hunt...

...

Her Ivory bowe and silver shaftes shee gave

Unto the fairest nymphe of all her traine;

.../.../.../.../.../...

Then pressing where this beauteous troupe did stand,

They all received her most willingly,

And unto her the Lady [the Countess] gave her hand,

That shee should keepe with them continually. (45-60 emphasis original)

Dictina takes part in homosocial relationships with her nymphs, the Countess, and the Countess' troop. These relationships are eroticized: Dictina gives her "fairest nymphe" her phallic "shaftes" and she "press[es]" the Countess' troop, which "received her most willingly." While Dictina, the figure for writing, is eroticized here, the troop does not expect her to generate texts or children, but simply to "keepe with them continually"; writing is not, as Guy-Bray argues it is in the

reproductive metaphor, “expected to lead to something, to be productive” (15). Additionally, Lanyer places the act of writing in a community of women, and in doing so, offers a portrayal of writing that is female-centred rather than based in the heterosexual family.

A second metaphor in “The Authors Dreame to the Ladie Marie, the Countess Dowager of Pembroke” claims that the Countess Mary Sidney Herbert, who had written a translation of the Psalms, will have eternal life in heaven. Lanyer relates the Countess’ writing to her attainment of a Christian afterlife in heaven, stating that

With contemplation of Gods powrefull might,  
 [The Countess] fills the eies, the hearts, the tongues, the eares  
 Of after-comming ages, which shall reade  
 Her love, her zeale, her faith, and pietie;  
 The faire impression of whose worthy deed,  
 Seales her pure soule unto the Deitie.  
 That both in Heav’n and Earth it may remaine,  
 Crownd with her Makers glory and his love. (159-166)

Lanyer points out that future generations “shall reade” the Countess’ pious book and that the Countess’ reputation will thus live on through “aftercoming ages.” Lanyer also states that Herbert’s “faire impression” or book “seales her pure soule” in heaven. While it was conventional for writers to claim that their legacy would live on through their books, the association between writing and a Christian afterlife was not conventional. By presenting the translation as the reason for Herbert’s Christian rebirth, Lanyer associates the Countess’ text with generation, and the Countess’ translation of the Psalms, like the reader’s transfiguration, brings a rebirth that resembles parthenogenesis and does not require sexual activity or sexual difference.

Near the end of the poem, Lanyer again draws a connection between books and eternal life. She describes Jesus judging Christians after death to determine whether or not they are worthy to enter heaven, and Lanyer states that Jesus “onely [is] worthy to undoe the Booke/ of our charg’d soules” (1657-8). In this metaphor, Lanyer compares people to books that are read and reviewed by Jesus, and reading the book of “our charg’d soules” stands in for Jesus’ judgement of the reader. This statement again connects the text to the possibility for a Christian afterlife, and the Christian rebirth is eroticized not only because opening and “undo[ing] the Booke” resembles undressing, but also because Jesus appears throughout the *Salve Deus* as a sexualized Bridegroom. Lanyer adapts and develops the Biblical example of generation through rebirth, and she uses it to create a new metaphor for textual production that does not involve reproductive sex.

While metaphors for the writing process most frequently figure the author as parent, the patron as godfather, and the text as an infant (Foster 44-5), Lanyer employs generative stories from Christian or Greek mythology in order to find new metaphors to describe writing, and her use of Biblical and classical sources gives her comparisons authority. The metaphors she chooses – a Christian afterlife, Mary’s virgin pregnancy, Icarus and Lanyer’s Muse flying, and the Muse Dictina “keep[ing] with” her troop – do not focus on the framework of sex and childbirth within a patriarchal and heterosexual family. Instead, they feature several different configurations: the reader figures as both parent and child in parthenogenesis, the Countess and the reader are reborn because Jesus reads their books, Mary conceives without men, Lanyer’s Muse gives birth without the author’s help, and the writing-figure Dictina is not expected to produce texts. These metaphors not only distance textual production from the patriarchal family, but are also female-centred and offer the possibility that women are able to generate texts without men. Lanyer’s

rejection of reproduction, then, serves to separate authorship from the role of the mother in a heterosexual family and to suggest the possibility for texts to be produced outside of the family in a variety of sexual and non-sexual configurations.

## Chapter Two: Reproductive Terminations

Destructive motherhood: miscarriage, infanticide, and the death of the mother in Mary Wroth's

### *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*

While Lanyer reconceptualises the text's relationship to the family, Wroth investigates another aspect of the reproductive metaphor. Her sonnet sequence *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, published with her prose romance *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania* in 1621, makes use of childbirth language to discuss the writing process and focuses on the difficulty of delivering both poems and children. Wroth's sequence describes Pamphilia's inability to "passage finde/To bee discharg'd of this unwellcome ghest" (68, 2-3), the "deliver[y]" (34, 7) of Pamphilia's "miseries" (34, 6), hope that is "conceaving butt to kill" (40, 3), and a "strang labourinth" (77, 1, emphasis added); these four descriptions emphasize female genitalia, pregnancy, and childbirth, and they do so in order to present textual birth as destructive, constricting, and dangerous. Wroth's focus on destructive births invokes the genre of mother's legacies, a type of book in which women about to give birth wrote advice to their unborn children in case they died in delivery. Mother's legacies were considered an acceptable genre for women writers, and Wall argues that childbirth gives one author of a mother's legacy who discusses the possibility of death, Elizabeth Jocelin, "license to author such a book because of the pressing possibility that her written maternal advice to her child may have to substitute for her living guidance" (284). Wroth invokes this genre in order to authorize her speech, and her suggestion that she may die in textual delivery positions Pamphilia as a pregnant mother, one of the roles in which women were encouraged to speak.

The metaphor of writing as reproduction was not new to sonnet sequences. In two of the most famous examples, Wroth's uncle Sir Philip Sidney declares in his first sonnet in *Astrophil to Stella* that he is "great with child to speak" (12), and this statement conflates his desire to write with pregnancy. Meanwhile, the first line of William Shakespeare's *Sonnets* claims that "From fairest creatures we desire increase" (1), and the speaker requests that his beloved reproduce. By the sonnet "When I consider every thing that grows," Shakespeare declares that he will "ingraft [the beloved] new" (14). "[I]ngraft" both refers to reproduction and recalls the Greek word for writing, *graphesis*, and Shakespeare claims that his sequence will preserve the male beloved through poetry. In Guy-Bray's arguments against the reproductive metaphor, he notes that "there is almost never any consideration of what it would really mean to endow books with life" (4). While Guy-Bray is discussing the text's role as a good citizen here, the fact that uses of the reproductive metaphor do not reflect the high mortality rate for women in labour is another instance in which writers do not evaluate what the metaphor "would really mean." By contrast, Wroth's focus on death suggests that the metaphor means that both the author's and the text's lives would be in jeopardy, and Wroth uses this extension of the metaphor to claim maternal authority.

In Wroth's sequence, her speaker Pamphilia laments the inconstancy of her beloved Amphilanthus, whose name means "lover of two" (*Urania* 300) and the sequence focuses almost exclusively on Pamphilia's internal state (Wall 331). In the sixty-eighth sonnet, Pamphilia discusses her attempts to remove love's pain, and her discussion of pain uses language that refers to childbirth. Pamphilia states, "My paine, still smother'd in my griev'd brest,/ Seekes for some ease, yett cannot passage finde/ To bee discharg'd of this unwellcome ghest" (1-3). Literally, Pamphilia claims that she cannot be relieved of pain, which she personifies as an "unwellcome

ghest.” But “passage” also refers to a vagina, while “discharging” an “unwellcome ghest” suggests the birth of an unwanted child. Pamphilia’s release of her pain figures as childbirth, and the fact that Pamphilia “cannot passage finde/ To bee discharg’d” suggests that she cannot find the means to relieve her pain and, metaphorically, that the birth is dangerous because she cannot find the vaginal “passage” to deliver her metaphorical child or “ghest.” The fact that “paine” figures as this child further emphasizes the possibility of the mother’s death. By using reproductive language to highlight the dangers of childbirth, Pamphilia positions herself as a pregnant mother and a potential writer of a mother’s legacy. Since these legacies were one of the limited instances in which women’s writing was considered socially acceptable (Wall 284), Wroth’s attention to death in labour serves to authorize her writing. Additionally, women’s speech was believed to be most honest during birth because of their physical pain (Gowing 433), and Pamphilia’s description of herself in labour serves as a second means of justifying her poetry.

The sonnet’s discussion of pain also makes use of the conventional metaphor in which writing was compared to reproduction. In addition to referring to female genitalia, the word “passage” could describe this sonnet or the sonnet sequence as a whole. According to this reading, Pamphilia’s claim that she “cannot passage finde/ To bee discharg’d of this unwellcome ghest” (2-3) signifies that she cannot find the “passage” or words that would allow her to relieve her pain through writing. Writing and childbirth are conflated here because Pamphilia’s “passage[s]” or poems figure as children that she cannot “discharg[e].” The comparison between Pamphilia’s writing and the failed birth of her metaphorical child extends the reproductive metaphor in order to suggest that writing poses risks for authors in the same way that birth is

dangerous to mothers. By conflating writing with reproduction, the metaphor gives the delivery of Pamphilia's poetry the same authority allotted to women giving birth.

Pamphilia also gains authority because her reproductive metaphor suggests that she commits textual infanticide. In Miller's discussion of Wroth's *Urania*, Miller argues that Pamphilia commits textual infanticide when she burns or buries her verses in Book One (391), and Miller claims that the suggestion that Pamphilia is on trial for infanticide positions her as a defendant in court, which was one situation in which women were expected to speak in order to defend themselves (Miller 394). According to Miller, this positioning serves "to authorize Pamphilia's poetry" (394) in the *Urania*. When Pamphilia claims in Sonnet Sixty-eight of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* that "paine" is "smother'd in [her] griev'd brest" (1), she states that she cannot rid herself of this emotion, but Pamphilia's claim that her metaphorical child pain is "smother'd" also suggests infanticide. In doing so, Sonnet Sixty-eight, like the *Urania*, criminalizes Pamphilia and places her as a defendant for the crime of infanticide, a position in which women's speech was expected. This position serves to authorize Pamphilia's poetry. Alternatively, "smother'd" may refer to the pains that Pamphilia faces. Pamphilia elaborates on her relationship with her metaphorical child "paine," and she states that "when most I strive, more fast his burdens bind" (4). This line offers the possibility that the child is "smother'd" because he "bind[s]" himself to Pamphilia's body; in this reading, the relationship is parasitic, and the child intentionally "smother[s]" himself on Pamphilia's breast in order to constrict and endanger his metaphorical mother. In this alternative reading, the child threatens Pamphilia's life in the same way that it would to a woman in labour, and the life-threatening pain that Pamphilia faces because of her metaphorical child gives her a role of authority that mirrors the authority of pregnant women in order to create a space for Pamphilia's speech.



A difficulty in “find[ing] passage” (2) also appears in Wroth’s syntax, which includes inverted diction and emphasizes difficult sounds in order to force a slow, laboured reading. In the first stanza, inverted diction in “passage finde” (2), “most I strive” (4), and “more fast his burdens bind” (4) stalls the reader by creating delays in comprehension. Sibilance in “still smother’d” (1), “seekes” (2), “some” (2), and “strive” (4), as well as alliteration in “most” (4), “more” (4), and “burdens bind” (4) place the lines’ emphases on consonants that are difficult to pronounce, and these devices slow reading. Assonance in “griev’d” (1), “seekes” (2), “ease” (2), “bee” (3), and “most” (4) and “more” (4) similarly slows the line with long vowel sounds. Commas in lines one, two, and four break the sentence, causing three pauses and restarts. In the same way that Pamphilia claims it is difficult to “passage finde,” these rhetorical devices cause the reader to frequently stop and resume, making Wroth’s verse passage difficult to navigate. The process of reading comes to mirror the difficult birth Wroth’s language describes, adding emphasis to her discussion.

In Sonnet Thirty-four, Pamphilia states that the pains of love might kill her and describes how she would like to be remembered after her death. Wroth again uses the theme of pregnancy here in order to justify Pamphilia’s writing when she focuses on Pamphilia’s potential death and invokes the genre of the mother’s legacy. In the sonnet, Pamphilia apostrophizes her “shades,” which could refer to her curtains, and she asks them to testify after her death about the miseries of love that she has endured. Her address to the shades resembles a will, and Pamphilia tells them,

You blessed shades, which give mee silent rest,  
Wittnes butt this when death hath clos’d mine eyes,  
And separated mee from earthly ties,

Beeing from hence to higher place adrest;  
 How oft in you I have laine heere oprest,  
 And have my miseries in woefull cries  
 Deliver'd forth, mounting up to the skies  
 Yett helpes back returnd to wound my brest,  
 Which wounds did butt strive how, to breed more harme  
 To mee, who, can bee cur'de by noe one charme  
 Butt that of love, which yett may mee releeve;  
 If nott, lett death my former paines redeeme,  
 My trusty freinds, my faith untouch'd esteeme  
 And wittnes I could love, who soe could greeve. (1-14)

Pamphilia addresses her “blessed shades,” and she uses the language of a last testament to ask them to “witness but this, when death hath closed my eyes.” The final couplet, too, asks her “freinds” – which could refer to her “paines,” the shades, or literal friends – to “witness I could love,” and the sonnet is framed as though Pamphilia issues it from beyond the grave, which is one strategy of mother’s legacies (Wall 285). Continuing the similarity to mother’s legacies, Pamphilia asks the shades to recall that she has “deliver’d forth” miseries, and the word “deliver’d” suggests birth, while the metaphor figures “miseries” as her children in a way that recalls the high mortality rate for women in labour. By framing this sonnet as a will issued before the birth of a child, Wroth places Pamphilia as a mother who has written a legacy, and she positions Pamphilia in the authoritative speaking position of a mother-to-be.

The metaphor that compares Pamphilia and her miseries to a mother and child is developed further in this sonnet when Wroth suggests that either Pamphilia or her child dies

during birth. Pamphilia recalls that she has “my miseries in woefull cries/ Deliver’d forth, mounting up to the skies” (6-7). These lines depict Pamphilia crying because of her love for Amphilanthus, but Pamphilia’s emotions are described in language that refers to a deadly birth. The “woeful cries” that Pamphilia gives when she “deliver[s] forth” the metaphorical child “miseries” reflects labour pains and suggests that giving birth jeopardizes Pamphilia’s life. In the same way, the phrase “mount up to the skies” suggests death and ascension to a Christian afterlife in heaven. Since the phrase could grammatically refer to the death of either Pamphilia or of her children “miseries,” it might describe a metaphorical miscarriage, a stillborn child, or the death of the mother. As Miller argues, stricter legislation around infanticide incorporated both miscarriages and the births of stillborn children into the definition of infanticide around the same time that the *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* were published (Miller 392). Because Sonnet Thirty-four ambiguously suggests miscarriage, a stillborn birth, or the mother’s death, it authorizes Pamphilia’s poetry both by referring to the genre of mother’s legacies and by placing Pamphilia as a potential infanticide defendant.

Sonnet Thirty-four also conflates reproduction with writing. When Pamphilia asks her shades to “wittnes... How oft in you I have laine heere oprest,/ And have my miseries in woefull cries/ Deliver’d forthe” (2-7), the language suggests not only that Pamphilia gives birth, but also that she writes “in you,” or among the shades that she addresses. “Deliver’d” frequently referred to the process of writing a text, and Pamphilia’s poems, which express her pain, resemble her metaphorical children miseries. Additionally, “oprest” recalls the words for the printing press or matrix. This language conflates writing and reproduction, and Pamphilia’s claim that she delivers her “miseries” amidst “woeful cries” casts writing, like childbirth, as a painful event. As a transgressive act for women in the early modern period, writing might well be a danger to

Pamphilia's reputation. By casting her poems or miseries as children who almost die and herself as a mother facing the life-threatening event of childbirth, Pamphilia portrays authorship, like motherhood, as a physical danger to herself and her text, and the metaphor that compares writing to reproduction focuses on a dangerous birth in order to portray textual production, like birth, as an activity that authorizes Pamphilia's speech.

The sonnet also makes use of formal devices that complicate the process of reading and mirror the difficult birth that Pamphilia describes. Inverted syntax in the words "my miseries in woefull cries/ Deliver'd forth" (6-7), as well as inverted words in lines eight, eleven, twelve, and thirteen, slow the reading process as they force the reader to untangle complicated syntax. The unclear referent of the words "mounting up to the skies" (7), which could describe Pamphilia or the miseries, similarly creates pauses in comprehension. Since the phrase has two potential referents, it also contains several meanings, which it expresses in a condensed word count. The unclear referents and inverted syntax create difficulty in reading that mirrors Pamphilia's description of birth, while the condensed meanings, like pregnancy, highlight containment. The adverbial clauses "which wounds..." (9), "who, can..." (10), and "which yett..." (11) redirect the sonnet's focus, forcing the reader to attempt to follow each redirection and making the reading process laboured. This series of turns eventually returns the reader to the topic that began the poem, death, and this structure mirrors the miseries "return[ing]" (8) to Pamphilia. These devices intentionally make reading difficult, and the experience of reading comes to mirror the pains of love and childbirth that Pamphilia describes.

Sonnet Forty also depicts a painful birth. In the sonnet, Wroth describes Pamphilia's reaction after Amphilanthus gives her hope that her love will be reciprocated and then abandons her. The sonnet portrays Pamphilia's reaction to abandonment using language that refers to

reproduction and highlights the possibility of miscarriage or death of a child during delivery. Pamphilia directly addresses her hopes: “Faulce hope which feeds butt to destroy, and spill/ Whatt it first breeds; unnaturall to the birth/ Of thine owne wombe; conceaving butt to kill,/ And plenty gives to make the greater dearth” (1-4). While Pamphilia laments the destructive “faulce hope” that her love would be fulfilled, she does so using three words that refer to reproduction, “breeds,” “birth,” and “conceaving.” Each of these words describes an action of “faulce hope,” which Pamphilia personifies and casts as a metaphorical mother. Pamphilia claims that false hope destroys its own creation: hope “feeds butt to destroy,” “spill[s] what it... breeds,” “conceive[s] butt to kill,” and gives “plenty” to make “dearth.” These phrases portray hope killing its child. As Editor Josephine A. Roberts notes, Wroth’s claim that hope “spill[s] what it first breeds” describes miscarriage (107), and Miller argues that the line “carr[ies] the image past miscarriage to a much more violent image suggesting infanticide” (392). Meanwhile, Miller claims that in the words “conceiving butt to kill,” “the violence directed against the image of the child intensifies” when Wroth again implies that false hope is guilty of infanticide. Although Wroth does not connect infanticide to writing here, the images of miscarriage and of infanticide recall Sonnets Thirty-four and Sixty-eight, and these images develop the motif of death in childbirth by presenting birth as vain, hopeless, and destructive. The sonnet also focuses on the dominance that the metaphorical mother hope has over Pamphilia, and both the death imagery and this dominance construct the mother’s role as powerful and reinforce the authority of Pamphilia’s speech when she appears elsewhere as a metaphorical mother.

The sonnet’s form reinforces this hopelessness by lingering on “faulce hope” (1). The first quatrain lists false hope’s actions – it “feeds butt to destroy, and spill/ What itt first breeds” (1-2), it is “conceaving butt to kill” (3), and it “plenty gives to make... dearth” (4). Each of the

items in this list returns to the words “faulce hope” for its grammatical subject. This returning creates delays in the reader’s comprehension and it never allows the sonnet’s focus to progress beyond “faulce hope.” In doing so, the list of false hope’s actions mirrors the halted progress of its creations, which “feed” and then are “destroy[ed].” Additionally, the verbs “which feeds” (1) “[is] unnatural” (2), “[is] conceiving” (3), and “gives” (4) are not grammatically parallel and thus create pauses in reading; the two instances of the omitted auxiliary verbs “is” add to these pauses. Missing direct objects after the verbs “feeds,” “destroy,” and “conceiving,” similarly, make the quatrain’s meaning difficult to comprehend. By including complicated grammar that forces the reader to pause, halt, or return to the previous lines for clarification, the quatrain’s form mirrors the progress and regress that “faulce hope” makes when it metaphorically gives birth.

Sonnet Seventy-seven, the first poem in Wroth’s corona, also focuses upon birth. The sonnet describes Pamphilia’s confusion as she attempts to discern what to do about her love for Amphilanthus. In the first line, Pamphilia compares love to a labyrinth when she asks, “In this strange labourinth how shall I turne?” (1). As Mary Moore suggests, the spelling “labourinth” invokes the idea of childbirth (109); the pun also suggests that Pamphilia is making her way through a “strang” childbirth. The word choice “turne,” which frequently describes the sex act (Partridge 207), reinforces the idea that this line refers to reproduction. Pamphilia goes on to describe her difficulty in the labyrinth:

Wayes are on all sids while the way I miss:

If to the right hand, ther, in love I burne;

Lett me goe forward, therin danger is;

If to the left, suspition hinders bliss,

Lett mee turne backe, shame cries I ought returne. (2-6)

Her description of the narrow “wayes” of the “labourinth” employs a vaginal symbol. The words continue to describe Pamphilia’s attempts to navigate the labyrinth using language that refers to reproduction. “Returne,” like “turne,” could describe the sex act, and “burne,” could refer either to sexual desire or to syphilis (Partridge 74). These words are emphasized due to their rhyme and their positions at the ends of the lines. Pamphilia’s claim that “the way I miss” and her description of the “labourinth” as “strang” presents the process of childbirth as difficult and perplexing, and this description recalls the position of a mother giving birth and again focuses on the authority of pregnant women.

Pamphilia’s “labourinth” also conflates writing with reproduction. Writers frequently referred to their books as the result of their “labour,” and Wroth’s spelling serves as a reference to her text, as well as to childbirth. As Moore observes, Wroth’s “labourinth” is a symbol for her sonnet sequence for a second reason: it “evoke[s] the poem itself as intricate space and Pamphilia’s thoughts as labyrinthine source of mimetic writing” (109). Moore offers a lengthy argument that the structure of Wroth’s sequence is labyrinthine (115), and she uses the corona, Sonnets Seventy-seven through Ninety, as an example. In the corona, the last line of each sonnet becomes the first line of the following sonnet, and the last line of Sonnet Ninety repeats the corona’s opening line. Moore notes that “The corona formally embodies enclosure through reiterative opening and closing lines, creating a closed poetic crown” (110). Moore’s words could also apply to childbirth, another event that involves repetitive opening and closing. Indeed, the corona begins and ends with the line, “In this strang labourinth how shall I turne?” (77, 1; 90, 14), and Wroth’s use of the spelling “labourinth” to both open and close the sequence relates this opening and closing to childbirth. While the corona’s emphasis on enclosure corresponds to a

labyrinth, as Moore notes, it also mirrors the preoccupation with pregnancy that Pamphilia expresses and draws attention to her discussion of difficult births.

Throughout the sequence, Wroth uses and adapts the convention of presenting writing as childbirth, and she focuses on miscarriage, infanticide, and the death of the mother in order to invoke the genre of mother's legacies and the possibility that Pamphilia is on trial for infanticide, two strategies for authorizing Pamphilia's poetry. These alterations of the reproductive metaphor are unconventional, and they avoid one problem that Guy-Bray identifies with the metaphor. Guy-Bray claims that reproduction places textuality within a family structure and that textual children, like good citizens, "are expected to lead to something, to be productive" (15). Pamphilia's textual children, by contrast, do not perform this role in the family. Instead, the birth of Pamphilia's metaphorical children results in either the children's deaths or in Pamphilia's, and this portrayal of textual birth serves as a strategy for justifying Pamphilia's speech. Here, reproducing is not the goal. Rather, Pamphilia's textual births serve to give Pamphilia's words the same authority as the speech of a pregnant woman or of a woman accused of infanticide, and they create a temporary space for Pamphilia to speak.



Non-normative births and the text in the correspondence between Lord Edward Denny and Lady Mary Wroth

At the same time that Tyler and Cavendish use the reproductive metaphor to focus on the patriarchal family and to defend their writing, the metaphor also serves as a means of critiquing other writers and focusing on writers' sexual behaviour in order to defame them and discredit their writing. After the publication of Lady Mary Wroth's prose romance *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania* in 1621, several of Wroth's contemporaries criticized her decision to publish what they believed to be a thinly-veiled allegory of Jacobean court scandals. The most vocal critic, Lord Edward Denny, Baron of Waltham, believed that Wroth had satirized him in the character of Seralius' drunken father-in-law, and Denny wrote and circulated a twenty-six line poem called "To Pamphilia from the father-in-law of Seralius" that articulates his criticism of Wroth in reproductive language in order to slander her. In this work, Denny makes use of a conventional reproductive metaphor, describing Wroth as a mother who "conceived" (3) and "brought forth" (4) her text, which he compares to a child. He emphasizes Wroth's sexual behaviour and focuses on her conception of her text, which he portrays as monstrous in order to claim that Wroth's speech, like her sexual behaviour, is socially unacceptable, and Denny uses the reproductive metaphor in order to undermine Wroth's credibility. Wroth's response, like Denny's poem, makes use of a reproductive metaphor in order to discredit her critic. Wroth returns Denny's reproductive metaphor when she compares Denny to a "sire" (4), or a male horse, while his book appears as an "ass" (4) and as his metaphorical child. For Wroth, as for Denny, the reproductive metaphor offers a way to insult her critic and to undermine the critic's position of authority by placing him in a non-normative reproductive metaphor.

Denny's poem denounces Wroth by claiming that her book lies, accuses her of promiscuity, and compares Wroth's writing to impregnation and childbirth. He tells Wroth that "Thy wrathfull spite conceived an Idell book / Brought forth a foole which like the damme doth look" (3-4). In this metaphor, Wroth figures as a mother who "conceived" and "brought forth" her book, which appears as a metaphorical child. In the same way that Tyler focuses on her book's characteristics, Denny's claim that Wroth's book "like the damme doth look" refers to Galenic understandings of genetics. Although early modern medical treatises disagree about whether male or a combination of male and female seeds determined the child's appearance (Laqueur 39-40), the cultural practice of highlighting the child's resemblance to the father functioned as a means of stemming worries about legitimacy (Thompson and Thompson 71). The physical qualities of the *Urania*'s father do not figure in the text's appearance – Denny claims that the *Urania* looks solely "like the damme" – and because the text's father is absent, the text's birth occurs outside of normative ideas of male/female conception and the text's conception falls outside of the male seed's control. This portrayal of Wroth's textual birth envisions Wroth's body emitting both an unusually strong reproductive seed and a non-normative child, and Denny's version of the reproductive metaphor serves to discredit Wroth by claiming that her role in reproduction transgresses gender boundaries.

Denny goes on to present Wroth's textual birth as animalistic. In his description of delivery, Denny claims that Wroth "brought forthe a foole which like the damme doth look" (4). Denny puns on dam and foal, which could be spelt "foole" (OED), in order to compare Wroth and her book to a mother and baby horse. According to Paster, early modern beliefs about monstrous births included beliefs about women giving birth to animals (169), and Paster contends that such births were perceived to be a consequence of socially unacceptable sexual

desire: “Immoderate, inappropriate, or untimely desire in male or female was thought to have manifold, even disastrous obstetrical consequences. The birth of monstrously deformed babies, for example, could result from problems in the amount of male seed (too much, too little) or from an undesirable state of the uterus” (Paster 169). According to Denny, Wroth’s metaphorical birth does have too little male semen, and Denny’s claim that Wroth’s text is conceived by “wrathful spite” also suggests that Wroth’s uterus is not in an ideal state because emotions like spite were believed to affect the uterus (Paster 180). By using the reproductive metaphor to compare Wroth’s writing to an animal birth, Denny argues that Wroth’s writing is not credible because her body is out of control.

Denny also makes use of a reproductive metaphor in order to highlight Wroth’s sexual behaviour. He compares Wroth to an oyster in order to portray her as unchaste when he claims that Wroth’s “vaine comparison for want of witt / Takes up the oystershell to play with it / Yet common oysters such as thine gape wide / And take in pearles or worse at every tide” (7-10). Denny claims that Wroth’s “vaine comparison,” or her book, idly “play[s] with” an “oystershell.” At the same time, he states that Wroth’s “common oyster,” which is a symbol for both her mouth and her vagina, “gapes wide,” insinuating that she speaks too much and that she is promiscuous. The word “common” referred to prostitutes (Partridge 83) and further suggests that Wroth is unchaste. Denny’s claim that Wroth “takes in pearles or worse” adds to this connection by suggesting a monetary exchange, while “gap[ing]” portrays Wroth’s orifices as unusually large. Denny’s discussion focuses on Wroth’s vagina, objectifies her body by fetishizing her genitals, and uses the reproductive metaphor to foreground Wroth’s supposedly open sexuality in order to discredit her by associating her speech with promiscuity.

The penultimate couplet adds to Denny's focus on Wroth's sexual behaviour because it associates Wroth with fools, or common men, a group that was believed to have excessive sexual desire. In this couplet, Denny directly addresses Wroth and tells her that, "Thus hast thou made thy self a lying wonder / Fooles and their Bables seldome part asunder" (23-4). His words describe Wroth, the sentence's "thou," as a "foole" or a low-born man. According to Bach, fools were associated with male sexual pleasure (37). Bach argues that

aside from having more perfect humoral bodies than women, men were radically differentiated from one another, largely on the basis of rank. Thus, a low-born man who served his social superiors in a household was represented as sharing more characteristics with women than he did with men. Certainly, his potentially voracious and indiscriminating sexual desire aligned him more with women and their unruly appetites than with the potentially controlled passions of dominant men. (6)

When Denny calls Wroth a "foole," this word insults Wroth's rank and also places Wroth within a group that was associated with promiscuity. Meanwhile, Denny's word "Bables" puns on "babes" and again suggests that Wroth is sexually active. This reproductive language portrays Wroth as sexually desirous, aligns her with the lower class' perceived uncontrol over their reproductive urges, and uses this focus on sexual desire to establish a division in rank between Wroth and Denny and to portray Denny as a more authoritative speaker.

Denny goes on to imply that Wroth and her body must come under control when he describes the *Urania* using the vaginal symbol "potted witts" (14). Denny tells Wroth that "Both frind and foe to thee are even alike/ Thy witt runns madd not caring who it strike/ These slanderous flying f{1}ames rise from the pott/ For potted witts inflamd are raging hott" (12-14).

Denny compares Wroth's "witt," or writing, to flames escaping from a pot. In doing so, he employs a vaginal symbol in order to claim that Wroth's writing is uncontrolled. He claims that her writing "runns madd" and compares it to flames that overflow from the pot and cause harm to "both frind and foe." The word "hott," according to Partridge, meant "sexually eager" (124), while "flames" and "raging," which both describe lust (Partridge 106, 171), also associate Wroth's writing with her sexual behaviour. By comparing Wroth's book to an overflowing vaginal symbol and by suggesting that Wroth desires sex, Denny claims that both Wroth's speech and her sexual behaviour are not socially acceptable. Additionally, the possibility that someone will put a lid on Wroth's pot underlies Denny's metaphor, and Denny implies that Wroth's leaking body should come under external control.

Denny's poem attempts to exert such control over Wroth. His final couplet tells her to stop writing, stating, "Work o th' Workes leave idle bookes alone/ For wise and worthyer women have writte none" (25-26). The letter in which the poem appears goes on to offer further directions, informing Wroth that she can "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" (qtd. in Roberts 34). These instructions reinforce the possibility for masculinized control that underlies Denny's pot metaphor, and the instructions attempt to limit Wroth's writing by dictating both the genre in which she should write and the length of her new work. These two commands attempt to control Wroth's writing – and, with it, the sexual desire that Denny claims is connected to Wroth's speech – in order to align both Wroth and her book within what Denny sees as socially acceptable roles in textual production.

In the same way that Denny uses a non-normative reproductive metaphor and focuses on Wroth's sexuality in order to criticize her role as an author, Wroth's response positions Denny in a similar reproductive metaphor in order to slander him and undermine the position of authority that he assumes over her work. Her verse response "Railing Rimes Returned upon the Author by Mistress Mary Wrothe" consists of thirteen couplets in iambic pentameter and repeats each of Denny's end rhymes and many key words within the lines; this structure echoes the verse form of Denny's critique, using his structure to adapt and return many of Denny's insults. In lines three and four, Wroth modifies Denny's reproductive metaphor, telling him that his "spitefull words against a harmless booke/ Shows that an ass much like the sire doth looke" (3-4). In this metaphor, Denny appears as a "sire," a word that refers to a father as well as to an adult male horse (OED). Meanwhile, Wroth compares Denny's "spitefull words" or poem to an "ass," and this comparison places Denny and his work in an animalistic reproductive metaphor that mirrors the one in which Denny places Wroth. In addition to comparing Denny's work to an animal, the word "ass" is significant for two other reasons: it is a symbol for ignorance (OED) and thus again insults Denny's poem, and it suggests that Denny's metaphorical child is a bastard since horses do not conceive donkeys. The reproductive metaphor thus serves as a means for Wroth to insult and discredit Denny because she claims that his metaphorical child is ignorant and is an animal, as well as that Denny's work is a bastard and thus does not fit expectations for an early modern noble family.

Wroth continues to place Denny and his work outside of expectations for a noble family when she insinuates that Denny has excessive sexual desire. As Bach outlines, common men were seen as sexually desirous, while noble men were expected to distance themselves from promiscuous behaviours (6). In lines seven and eight, Wroth insults Denny's chastity and

connects his sexual behaviour to his writing when she asks, “Can such comparisons seme the want of witt/ When oysters have enflamd your blood with it” (7-8). These lines, like Denny’s, use “oysters” as a euphemism for a vagina, and Wroth uses vocabulary that could refer to lust (Partridge 106) when she insinuates that oysters have “enflamd” Denny’s “blood.” Wroth also relates Denny’s supposed promiscuity to his writing when she claims that Denny’s “comparisons,” or his poem, come as a result of this desire; the fact that “oysters” can refer to either vaginas or mouths furthers the connection between Denny’s sexual desire and his speech. Wroth, like Denny, thus uses the reproductive metaphor as a means to slander her rival’s chastity, to suggest that he and his work do not fit within expectations for the noble family, and to call Denny’s role as an authority over her work into question.

Although Wroth focuses on Denny’s sexual behaviour in these two couplets in order to undermine Denny’s role as an authority figure, the other lines of her poem often remove the sexual suggestions that are present in Denny’s corresponding couplets. For example, Denny’s statement that Wroth’s “wrathfull spite conceived an Idell booke” (3) describes writing as conception and suggests that Wroth’s conception occurs when she is full of “wrathfull spite,” a mood that was considered to put the uterus in a state that was not desirable for conception (Paster 169). By contrast, Wroth’s corresponding line, “Your spitefull words against a harmless booke” (3) does not invoke a body politic. Denny’s claim that “common oysters such as thine gape wide/ And take in pearles or worse at every tide” (9-10) compares Wroth to a “common” woman or a prostitute, focuses on a monetary exchange, and describes Wroth’s body as “gap[ing] wide.” Wroth’s line retorts, “it appears your guiltiness gapt wide/ And filld with Dirty doubt your brains swolne tide” (9-10); her lines suggest that Denny is ignorant or insane because his brain has a “swolne tide,” but they do not focus on his sexual behaviour to the same degree, nor do they

connect Denny's poem to unchastity. These examples suggest that insulting the other writer's sexual behaviour may be more useful for Denny than it is for Wroth, and the contrast between the two poems highlights the way that women's writing in particular was perceived to be connected to their chastity.

In the same way that Denny insults Wroth, she describes Denny giving birth to a non-normative text, and she uses the reproductive metaphor as a platform to insult Denny's rank and sexual behaviour in order to undermine his position of authority. However, Denny uses this metaphor more extensively than Wroth does, and it is possible that his insults are more effective because of the perceived connection between women's writing and their sexuality. Nonetheless, both writers are focused on exclusion rather than inclusion, and their reproductive metaphors conform to strict expectations about the family, since both authors position textual births that fall outside of a chaste, noble family as socially unacceptable. These versions of the reproductive metaphor do not account for same-sex desire, nor do they create a position from which non-nobles or racial "others," who were both considered to have less control over their bodies (Loomba 51), can write, and both Denny's and Wroth's metaphors, like Cavendish's, reserves writing for an elite group.



Female storytelling and the legitimacy of the narrative in Mary Wroth's *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*

Wroth's 1621 prose romance *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, which chronicles the adventures of the royal families of Morea, Naples, and Romania, predictably places emphasis on reproduction and on legitimate family heirs. The female characters serve to extend these heterosexual, patriarchal families. At the same time, the women also extend the book itself, and in two main ways: the stories they tell add pages to the *Urania*, while their children provide a new generation of protagonists for the narrative to follow. These factors create a link between the women's narratives, reproductive abilities, and the size of the book. Parker's discussion in "Literary Fat Ladies and the Generation of the Text" provides a useful starting point for analyzing this link. Parker looks at the way that figures of female storytellers come to stand in for the body of the text itself. She finds that "this entire complex of 'dilation'" – by which she means the way in which texts are physically enlarged and their page count is expanded – is "frequently associated with figures of the feminine" (251). Although Parker does not analyze the *Urania*, her analysis is relevant to this work because romances like Wroth's *Urania* includes frequent digressions and stories-within-stories that lengthen the book, and Wroth links these stories to women's bodies. Romances also typically consisted of several volumes – the *Urania* is composed of two, each upwards of 415 pages in modern editions – and the convention of writing a multi-volume work with high page counts increases the book's length. The *Urania* fits Parker's description particularly well both because it has multiple volumes and because each volume ends mid-sentence in a way that refuses to conclude the romance and enables the book's expansion. This section will focus on four female and two male

narrators and on volume one's conclusion, and it will relate the narrators' bodies and stories to the duration of the book itself.

The *Urania* features more than one hundred characters, but its narrative mainly follows two women, the queens Pamphilia and Urania, as they meditate on their loves. The book also follows about a dozen male knights as they pursue a series of quests and court their beloveds. Storytelling features prominently in the *Urania*: many of the hundred plus characters tell their histories, and approximately half of the book's first volume is made up of stories-within-stories. These narratives are often concerned with courtship, marriage, or finding lost family members; in other words, the narratives focus on adding new legitimate children or restoring lost members in order to continue the patriarchal family. Because these families are usually noble, the family kingdom and fortune are at stake in the project of extending the legitimate family line, and this project also relies on the wife's ability to give birth to an heir. Extending the family additionally provides content that expands the book, which connects the process of textual expansion to the project of legitimacy.

The first character I will examine, Dalinea, the Princess of Achaya, appears in the book when Parselius, the Prince of Morea, makes a brief stop in her country. The two characters secretly marry and shortly after, Parselius leaves to resume a quest. After several months, Dalinea arrives in the Morean court with an infant and, in a story that takes up a page, asks Parselius to acknowledge paternity. In her discussion of enlarged female bodies, Parker claims that "the rhetorical tradition of 'increase and multiply'" is identified "with the ... fruitful dilation of ... the pregnant female body" (257). Along similar lines, Dalinea associates the story that she tells in the Morean court with her pregnancy. She says, "the time of my delivery came, when God sent me this babe: having ganedd some little strength, I left my Country, and hither am I

come” (242). The word choice “delivery” applies to the act of childbirth, as well as to Dalinea’s storytelling, and their descriptions in this sentence are similar. Dalinea leaves her geographical “country,” but the common early modern pun on “cunt” points out that the child exits its anatomical counterpart. Both “deliver[ies]” rely on periods of delay – the nine months before “the time” of the child’s birth, and the recovery period when Dalinea “ga[ins] some little strength” before her journey to Morea. Because the delay of Dalinea telling her history corresponds to a second form of deferral, her pregnancy, Wroth relates Dalinea’s storytelling to her body and feminizes delaying tactics.

The passage’s language, meanwhile, is concerned with extending both family lines and the book. Dalinea says that Parselius “spar[ed] no means to win his end, till he procured this end from me” (241). Literally, Parselius achieves his “end,” or objective, by marrying and having sex with Dalinea. The word choice is also metatextual and refers to the way that Parselius brings about the conventional “end” of early modern dramatic comedies by concluding his courtship of Dalinea in marriage. But in the second phrase, “end” is associated with Dalinea’s pregnancy, a bodily enlargement that facilitates Dalinea’s storytelling, her continued presence in the book, and the creation of a new generation of heroes whose quests the book chronicles. The book’s refusal to allow the story of Dalinea, Parselius, and their heirs to end is feminized and continuation becomes associated with Dalinea’s expanded body.

Parker contends that feminized forms of enlargement – physical enlargement, verbosity, or both – must be brought to a close in Renaissance texts. She claims that “One of the chief concerns of the tradition that portrays women as unflappable talkers is how to master or contain such feminine mouthing.... [T]his control of female speech resembles the provision of shaping and closure to the potentially endless movement of dilation” (269). In this episode in the *Urania*,

“shaping and closure” takes two forms. First, the King, whom Dalinea addresses, puts himself in charge of resolving Dalinea’s situation and bringing the story of her pregnancy to an end. He instructs her to “tell mee who this Knight is, and I vow he shall not stay in my Court, or favour, if hee doe not before me satisfie you, so as this can be verified against him” (242). These instructions offer to conclude the episode about Dalinea’s pregnancy by expelling the knight who has fathered her child from court; as the words “so as this can be verified against [the knight]” suggest, the episode could also conclude with Dalinea’s expulsion if her story proves to be false. Whether Dalinea’s tale concludes with the knight’s expulsion or her own, the King asserts that her words should be closed up.

Parker’s second form of “shaping and closure” (269) involves what she calls “the production of an issue within a patriarchal economy of increase” (269). Parker claims that this “issue” – a word she uses to describe both speech and infants in the womb – is produced in “the specific case of the fat lady who is the only temporarily dilated, pregnant woman” (269). This second form of “shaping and closure,” then, is a process in which the text or child is legitimized. Parselius relates Dalinea’s child and story to legitimacy when he expresses concerns with the truthfulness of her tale. Failing to recognize his wife, he tells her, “For you sad Lady, if you be not [Dalinea], you wrong your self extreamely; and I vow, that (but her self) I never yet did touch, nor ever will; then seeke another husband, and a father for your child” (243). Parselius’ words “husband,” “father,” and “child” attempt to place Dalinea’s story within the heterosexual family, and his insistence that he “never yet did touch, nor ever will [touch]” anyone other than Dalinea asserts that he follows expectations for noble men by having only legitimate heirs. However, his failure to recognize his wife undermines this claim, as I will discuss in more depth shortly. By commanding Dalinea to “seeke another husband, and a father for your child,”

Parselius emphasizes the importance of placing women's stories within a patriarchal and heterosexual family structure. He draws a relationship between illegitimate family and the supposed inauthenticity of Dalinea's words in order to suggest that women's false stories have no place in his father's court.

At the end of this episode, Dalinea and her child are accepted into Parselius' family when she insists that she is Parselius' "loyal Dalinea" (243). The *Urania's* narrator confirms her identity, claiming that "this was Dalinea," and the plot line neatly ends. However, Dalinea and her child's entrance into Parselius' family is simplistic and does not resolve the problems of identification that reoccur throughout this episode. Parselius remains silent after Dalinea and the narrator confirm her identity, a detail that calls attention to his ongoing failure to recognize his wife and child. His inability to identify Dalinea, as well as the fact that he has previously abandoned her to search for Urania, whom he also loves, highlight Parselius' disregard for the expectation that noble men be chaste outside of marriage. Parselius also fails the expectations of chivalry. When the King initially asks him if he had married Dalinea and fathered her child, Parselius "vow'd, nothing should make him answer false.... He fell straight on his knees. 'If ever,' cry'd he, 'I gave my word to marry any, or had a child by any, let Heaven-' 'Blesse you,' said the Lady, staying him from further proceeding" (242). While Dalinea's speech contributes to what Parker calls a "patriarchal economy" because it provides legitimate male heirs, Parselius' words fail the project of extending his noble line when they almost declare his child a bastard.

Parselius' speech, more than Dalinea's, demonstrates "the danger of losing the thread of a discourse and never being able to finish what was begun, the specter of endlessness and of inability to come to a point" (269) that Parker claims is associated with "the supposed

copiousness of the female tongue” (269). In one example, Parselius verbosely explains his marriage to Dalinea to his brother-in-law Leandrus:

wandering in search of my friend Amphilanthus (as I pretended, but indeed that onely was not my voyage), I fell into the confines of Achaya, where I met Berlandis, who came to seeke me from his Lord, and to intreat my company in finishing the warre for Antissius; I consented: but passing through that Country, I chanced to come to the Castle of Dalinea, your faire and vertuous Sister; her I fell in love withall, forgot all former vowes.... But long I had not thus enjoyed her, but one sad night I dream'd of my first Love.... At last I made a faigned excuse, and by that meanes liberty to goe. (243)

Parselius' speech, which is longer than Dalinea's, buries the confirmation of paternity in the middle of a series of tangents. His long first sentence, with its list of dependent clauses – “where I met Berlandis, who came to seeke me from his Lord, and to intreat my company in finishing the warre for Antissius” – has nothing to do with his marriage to Dalinea, and what should be the point of his story – the child's legitimacy – appears as a mere digression that he undergoes while “passing through that Country,” with a pun on “cunt,” in his quest for Urania. At the same time that Parselius' words lose their intended topic, his speech has a parallel in the near-loss of his legitimate heir, and his disruptive story line mirrors his family line.

This long speech is in contrast with Dalinea's concise response, “I'le seeke no other [husband] ... then take your loyall Dalinea to your selfe” (243). While Parselius' verbosity suggests aimlessness and endlessness, Dalinea's words offer the episode's conclusion. The fact that Dalinea has the last word suggests that her speech cannot be closed up by the male characters: Parselius cannot come to a point himself, and Dalinea's resolution is adopted even

though the King's demand that Dalinea's story be "verified" is never met (242). Not only do the male characters fail in controlling Dalinea's words, but Dalinea's speech and the generation she discusses do not need to be controlled in the first place. Instead, Dalinea offers a story that lengthens the book by adding several pages and by providing a new generation of characters whose adventures the book can chronicle. In doing so, Dalinea participates in what I believe is the romance's project: perpetually deferring the book's ending by lengthening its noble family lines.

The project of extension is also related to another female character, Melissea. A seer who lives on the island of Delos, Melissea is associated both with storytelling and with the period of time between making predictions and the predictions' fulfillments. Her instructions to the protagonists lengthen the book's plot. For example, she tells Prince Ollorandus that Amphilanthus, the Prince of Morea, "shall venture [life] for you, and save yours by the hazard of himselfe: keepe then together, and still be your loves firme and constant, assisting one another; for a time will bee, when you shall merit this from Amphilanthus, giving him as great a gift" (142). Melissea's instruction that the two knights should "keepe... together" saves their lives when Ollorandus returns to his kingdom and when the men meet King Terrichillus' deceptive wife. By giving the men this direction, Melissea extends the lives of two of the book's main protagonists, who can then go on to participate in more adventures and add more pages to the *Urania*. For the same purpose, Melissea orders Steriamus and Urania to jump into the sea at St. Maura; in the water, the two characters are purged of their former loves and fall in love with one another. This courtship adds pages and a second generation of protagonists to the book. These predictions link Melissea's storytelling to both rhetorical and generational forms of increase.

Melissea's predictions are also concerned with providing families with legitimate heirs. She brings about the unions of Antissius and Selarina and of Allimarlus and the shepherdess by predicting their happiness in love. The process of marriage, consummation, pregnancy, and birth that she triggers for these two couples links her predictions to reproductive fecundity; the predictions also structure the characters into patriarchal, heterosexual families that contribute heirs to what Parker's discussion of narratives and pregnancy calls "the patriarchal economy of increase" (269). In the same way, Melissea's uncovering of Urania's lineage serves to legitimize Urania by placing her, too, within a patriarchal family. By revealing that Urania is Amphilanthus' sister and the daughter of the King of Naples, Melissea restores Urania's place in royal succession, and her predictions become linked to the legitimate family lines that they bring about or uncover.

Wroth highlights the generative power of Melissea's stories when she connects Melissea to reproductive anatomy. Melissea lives on an island that can be accessed by a cave, and the journey to her island is described in eroticized language:

Amphilanthus following on, came to a great Cave, into which hee went .... When he came to the River he desired to passe it, but at first saw no meanes... so they found a board, which was fastned with chaines to the top of the Vault, and two pins of yron that held the chaines, being stuck into the wall; those being pulled out, the chaines let the Planke fall gently downe, just crosse over the water, which was not above six yards over .... Then passed they on to a doore which they opened ... and the end of it, thorow which they entered into a dainty Garden, and so into a faire Pallace of Alabaster, incompassed with Hilles, or rather



Mountaines, of such height, as no way was possible to bee found to come at it, but  
thorow the same vault the King came. (138-9)

Wroth makes use of vaginal and phallic imagery when she discusses caves, vaults, boards, yards, and planks. Additionally, Wroth's combination of a plank, chains, and pins of iron is reminiscent of contemporary drawings of the penis, spermatic ducts, and testicles; several contemporary drawings are reprinted in Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex: Body and Gender From the Greeks to Freud* (80-1). The anticipation of walking "into" the cave, opening the door, and "enter[ing] into" the garden is sexualized. Accessing Melissea's "dainty Garden" resembles penetration, as the process of "let[ting] the Planke fall gently downe" in order to pass through the vault makes explicit, and the protagonists' means of accessing the fortuneteller figures as penetrative sex. The characters' admission to hear their futures is eroticized, and, following the common early modern metaphor in which texts figure as children, penetration serves as a precursor to the predictions that Melissea delivers.

The characters' second arrival at Melissea's island, which occurs by sea, is similarly eroticized. Wroth describes the characters' landing:

Then to Delos they came, whose milke-white rockes looked smooth with joy to  
receive within their girdle, the worlds treasure of worth, now being in their  
presence richer, then when more treasure was within her: then tooke they directly  
to the Pallace, at the entring into the vault meeting the grave Melissea, who ...  
conducted the Prince through that into the Gardens, all now in hope or feare to  
know their fortunes. (175)

Arriving on the island again figures as heterosexual, penetrative sex. The pronoun "her" feminizes the island, while the description of the royal characters as "treasure" makes use of a

word that, according to Partridge, described male seed (205). Wroth's language focuses on penetration: she describes the island as "smooth with joy to receive," she portrays the company "entring into the vault," and she twice calls attention to the treasure "within." Her metaphor for the shore's rocks, a "girdle," signifies "a belt worn round the waist" (OED), but also "the part of the body round which the girdle is fastened" (OED), referring again to genitalia. The end of this sentence, "all now in hope or feare to know their fortunes," links the reproductive language to storytelling when it suggests that "fortunes" can be accessed only by "entring into the vault"; this description highlights the fact that "fortunes," like pregnancy, requires a period of delay, and it portrays the vault, a counterpart for the womb, as the container for characters' futures.

On the island, the relationship between Amphilanthus and Melissea mirrors the dynamic between Parselius and Dalinea, and for several reasons. First, while Melissea's predictions are concerned with legitimacy, Amphilanthus consistently returns the topic of their conversation to his non-procreative courtship of Pamphilia. He asks Melissea, "'Can you find good Madam... whether I shall bee happie in my love, or not?'" (139); after her response, he repeats the inquiry, saying, "'But shall I not enjoy her then? miserable fortune, take all loves from me, so I may have hers'" (140); and, once Melissea has changed the topic, Amphilanthus directs their conversation back to ask, "'But must I loose my Love?'" (140). The narrator emphasizes the circularity of Amphilanthus' thoughts, noting that he is "complaining still of his Mistrisse" (139) and claiming that "further [Amphilanthus] would have proceeded" (139) thinking about Pamphilia if Melissea had not arrived to speak to him. Unlike Melissea's foretellings, which are concerned with legitimacy and linearity, Amphilanthus' speech focuses on a non-procreative relationship, and it rhetorically returns the conversation topic to this relationship several times rather than discussing the production of future heirs. Whether Amphilanthus and Pamphilia's relationship is

consummated remains ambiguous, as I will discuss later, but they do not have children, legitimate or otherwise; Amphilanthus also does not produce heirs by any other character. In the same way that Parselius' verbosity jeopardized his family line, Amphilanthus' circularity and his inability to reach a (procreative) point corresponds to his failure to produce an heir.

A second parallel appears in the fact that Amphilanthus, like Parselius, has little respect for the female storyteller or the account that she delivers. The narrator claims that "Sometimes [Melissea] discoursed to [Amphilanthus], and he for civilitie did answere her; yet oft-times she was content to attend his owne leisure for his replie, so much power had his passions over him" (140). At the same time that Amphilanthus' "passions" lead him to treat his hostess with disrespect, he also distrusts her predictions: the narrator tells that "Amphilanthus was sorry for his vow" to follow Melissea's instructions (142). Certainly such rudeness is not ideal in a chivalric hero. But what is at stake in these details of Amphilanthus' behaviour is that if, as I have been arguing, female narratives can stand in for the legitimate family line and the means to continue the book, the characters Amphilanthus and Parselius work against these narratives and, in doing so, threaten to end their noble families.

In the first volume's ending, Amphilanthus and Princess Pamphilia express their love for one another after an extended courtship. While scholars debate whether Wroth meant for the book to end this way, I argue that the book's ending, which leaves off mid-sentence in what appears to be the beginning of a sex scene, is consistent with Wroth's focus on using female bodies in order to extend the book in the episodes featuring Dalinea and Melissea. The book ends,

now all is finished, Pamphilia blessed as her thoughts, heart, and soule wished:  
Amphilanthus expreslesly contented, Polarchos truly happy, and joyfull againe;

this still continuing all living in pleasure, speech is of the Germans journey,  
 Amphilanthus must goe, but intreates Pamphilia to goe as far as Italy with him, to  
 visit the matchles Queene his mother, she consents, for what can she denye him?  
 all things are prepared for the journey, all now merry, contented, nothing amisse;  
 greife forsaken, sadnes cast off, Pamphilia is the Queene of all content;  
 Amphilanthus joying worthily in her; And [...] (661)

This “And” leaves off mid-sentence: it seems to both imply and censure the sex scene that would logically follow Wroth’s description of the pair “joying worthily in” one another. Wroth’s emphasis on “content,” as well as the fact that Amphilanthus “recovered his” phallic “Sword” (661) earlier in the same page adds to this sexual charge. However, the actual sex scene is absent. Volume One’s reader never learns whether Amphilanthus, like Parselius, “achieves his end” through consummation. Instead, the book ends with the word “And,” which, like a modern-day ellipsis, suggests that the book continues but leaves content up to the reader; Colleen Ruth Rosenfeld calls “And” “a version of Spenserian endlessness” (1049). At once an ending and a continuation, this last word calls into question attempts at resolving the book’s story line. Notably, it does so by suggesting that Pamphilia might produce heirs, again linking female bodies to the process of continuation and drawing a connection between the potential growth of Pamphilia’s body and the growth of the text.

This passage also refuses to conclude in other ways. After asserting that “now all is finished,” it features an extended list of its characters’ emotions and their future quests, a list that is punctuated with commas, colons, and semicolons, but not with periods, and these punctuation marks prevent the sentence from ever coming to a full stop, as Rosefeld notes (1049). This long sentence introduces the possibility that Pamphilia and Amphilanthus might have sex, and the

length of the sentence connects their reproductive potential to the text's duration. The sentence structure connects Pamphilia to the potential extensions of Amphilanthus's noble line and of the book, and it reinforces Pamphilia's role as a figure of the text's extension. The romance again advocates extension and the female narrators are the main proponents of this project.

The connection between female speech and extension appears in the text when the female characters' stories are genuine (or perhaps legitimate), but when Terrichillus' wife deceives Amphilanthus and Ollorandus, the two heroes must overcome her false plot in order to save their lives. Terrichillus' wife, called simply "the Princesse" (286), plans to revenge Amphilanthus for killing her husband. Half-clothed and pursued by a group of men, she pretends to need Amphilanthus' help. But after she explains to him that the men have kidnapped her so that one of them can "have [her] by force" (284), the men attack Amphilanthus and the Princess reveals her identity. In Parker's terms, the Princess' deceptive speech might be an unfruitful dilation because it uses false, unsubstantiated words to set up Amphilanthus' death. Unlike Melissea and Dalinea, whose stories are concerned with lengthening the book by providing legitimate heirs or saving the protagonists' lives, the attack on Amphilanthus demonstrates that the Princess' plot is literally concerned with cutting off. Since the main protagonist's death would also bring the book to a premature close, the wife's plan is associated with ending the text, and her false narrative appears as a threat that the protagonists must overcome.

Wroth links this threat to female reproductive anatomy. When Ollorandus believes that Amphilanthus is dead, he blames the "Damn'd Countrey, that must be the death of that, which all the world envied Italy for, the blessing of nursing brave Amphilanthus" (286). Wroth puns on cunt here, as she did earlier when explaining Dalinea's pregnancy. Literally, she juxtaposes the countries in which Amphilanthus was born and died, but the pun constructs the "Damn'd" cunt

as a potential source of “death.” The contrast between the two countries that Ollorandus discusses is drastic. A good mother-figure, Morea has “the blessing of nursing brave Amphilanthus,” and the pun draws attention to fertility and to motherhood as it did when Wroth used it in her discussion of Dalinea. But the Princess’ country is far from generative: Wroth renders it a dangerous object that works against the project of legitimacy and attempts to end both Amphilanthus’ life and the book. These constructions of female anatomy forge a relationship between the female speaker’s reproductive capacities and her story: only accounts concerned with generation and extension can correspond to bodies that are the source of “env[y]” and “blessing.”

The wife’s focus on ending has a counterpart in her unproductive speech. Her words are intentionally confusing so that she can deceive and kill the protagonists. The narrator describes Amphilanthus and Ollorandus’ encounter with the Princess, saying, “they met a Lady running... her cries loud and fearefull, a strange disorder in her words, she spake as if danger pursued, and helpe requisitly demanded” (284). The description of her speech as “cries” full of “strange disorder” portrays the Princess’ speech as incoherent; the fact that the speech is paraphrased rather than quoted contributes to the speech’s “disorder” by muddling the Princess’ words rather than pinpointing precisely what she has said. Meanwhile, the words “as if,” which are used in the *Urania* to indicate upcoming danger, create a link between the “strange disorder” of the Princess’ words and a threat to the protagonists. The Princess’ incoherent speech is rendered dangerous here not because it threatens to never end, but rather because the words’ ambiguous content, signified by “as if,” imperils the protagonists by preventing them from seeing that the Princess intends to kill them.

Metatextual references relate the Princess' narrative to the duration of the book. Wroth creates a metaphor between the Princess' plan and a play when she describes Amphilanthus and Ollorandus attempting to find the reason for the attack. She claims that

Then did they strive to bring some of them that lay on the ground to life, if but to tell the plot, but in vaine for they were all dead... [The Princess' servant] did ... confesse all the villany, but yet not till she saw her Lady dead.... The Princesse herself contented to act a part, for the getting of her devillish purpose, and as a perfect actor did performe that last act best of her Tragedy. (287)

The metatextual words "plot," "act a part," "perfect actor," "performe," "last act," and "Tragedy" suggest that Amphilanthus and Ollorandus have been the audience for a play, but they cannot understand the play's content and they look to the only remaining "actor," the Princess' servant, "to tell the plot." The Princess' deceptive speech has a metaphorical counterpart in the play's confusing plot, which is the series of actions that preempt the pile of bodies in the tragic "last act." Meanwhile, her attention to ending is mirrored in the play's climactic and bloody final scene, the definitive end in which almost all the characters die and it becomes clear that the play is a "Tragedy."

A second metatextual reference describes another part of the Princess' plan. The servant who conspires with her distracts Ollorandus in order to separate him from Amphilanthus. The narrator explains that

While [Amphilanthus and the Princess] were... discoursing, an other Lady, with as fearfull cries, and shreeks passed by, running from the Wood-ward, with such hast, as her feare had made her so light, as shee left no print, so much as pressing the grasse whereon she ranne, the impression it seem'd being in her, and no

weight but swiftnesse allowed her feet. Ollorandus followed her, shee fledd still,  
till shee had lead him a good distance from his freind. Oh Ollorandus, what  
misfortune now befalleth thee? (285)

Wroth claims that the servant runs so quickly that she is “pressing the grasse” without her steps leaving indentations, but the word Wroth uses to describe these footsteps, “pressing,” also signified the mechanical process of the printing matrix placing ink on the page. The suggestion that the servant “left no print” continues this metaphor, and the servant is described as though she were a printing press that has left no mark on the pages of a book. In De Grazia’s discussion of the printing press and reproduction, she argues that the words that described print were constructed around reproductive vocabulary (35), and two words that signified reproduction and textual production appear here. “Press” described a sex position (Wall 1), while “impression” could mean a text or a child who was supposed to copy the father’s features (Thompson and Thompson 70-1). Metaphorically, the mark that the servant does not leave is cast as an ungenerated text, and this metaphor also suggests a potential “impression” or child who is never born. The absence of a mark/text is rendered threatening when the narrator exclaims, “Oh Ollorandus, what misfortune now befalleth thee?,” drawing a connection between the empty pages and the potential ending of the book through the death that the protagonist faces.

In this episode, neither the Princess nor her servant initially contributes to the project of extending the text, and the Princess’ “damn’d Country” (286) and the servant’s ungenerated text threaten the protagonists with death. Despite the narrator’s claim that this episode is “the most hazardous and dangerous” (286) challenge that Amphilanthus and Ollorandus encounter, they overcome the Princess’ plot: the Princess kills herself, and the servant’s punishment is to report the outcome of the fight to the princess Sydelia, whom Amphilanthus has recently saved.



Because of this punishment, the servant's speech changes, and her words simultaneously become sincere and contribute to a noble family structure. Prompted by the servant's speech, Sydelia builds "the tombe for Antonarus [her husband], laying his body there, leaving a place for her selfe, ... retyring her selfe to this place, where with loyall love, and sincere faith, she ended her dayes, beeing after buried with him, from whom living, shee would not be parted, nor dead, severed" (288). The "tombe," a place reminiscent of a womb, is rewritten to become not only a place for death, but also for family and for extreme wifely obedience. In a book that compares narratives to children, the servant's contribution to a legitimate family takes place only once her deceptive speech becomes honest.

Women who tell the truth extend family lines and the book, while women who lie threaten them, and this dichotomy between true and false narrators extends to the male characters. A noble man whom I will refer to as Amphilanthus Two takes the protagonist's name in order to court Emilina, the Princess of Styria. But instead of marrying Emilina and creating heirs who will inherit her kingdom, Amphilanthus Two abandons her for a series of other women. His actions do not meet the expectations for noble men to be chaste outside of marriage. Bach claims that noble men's "power did not reside, as sexual power may in modern men, in the ability to take pleasure in ejaculation with multiple women; rather this power inhered in conservation of the seed and very discriminate ejaculation, within marriage, and only for the 'making' ... of legitimate male heirs" (37). In other words, Amphilanthus Two's philandering threatens the project of generation by offering the potential for illegitimate children.

Additionally, Amphilanthus Two is also not the legitimate heir to the kingdom of Morea, as he claims that he is. His impersonation of another noble and the fact that he uses this prestigious

name in order to court more women relate Amphilanthus Two's lie about his name to the threats that he poses to legitimacy.

At times, Wroth dissociates the protagonist from Amphilanthus Two; for instance, she calls the protagonist "the true Amphilanthus" (300) and the other a "counterfet" (358). But the two characters also mirror each other, and the parallels between them work against Wroth's "true"/"counterfet" dichotomy. Emilina's maid tells the protagonist that Amphilanthus Two courted Emilina "earnestly" (297) but did not remain loyal and fell in love with Emilina's friend, and she claims that Amphilanthus Two "truly doth... make good his name, that signifieth the lover of two" (300). Her words could as easily describe Amphilanthus' history: he courted Pamphilia but was unfaithful and pursued her friend Antissia and other women. Amphilanthus Two also purports to abandon Emilina to attend to his father, the same reason that Amphilanthus later leaves Emilina's kingdom. These parallels undermine Wroth's suggestion that one Amphilanthus is "true," while the other is a "counterfet," and they suggest that drawing a clear line that separates truth-tellers from liars is impossible. The fact that the protagonist, like Amphilanthus Two, is a philanderer also works against the idea that protagonists who tell the truth are always figures of the extension of patriarchal families. Instead, the episodes that I discuss in this essay suggest that the male characters extend the text by uncovering and overcoming women's false plots, while the female characters extend the text by adding new members to patriarchal families.

Wroth constructs women who tell the truth as figures of the expansion of the book and the expansion of noble family lines; meanwhile, women whose stories are false threaten to prematurely end the book by killing the male protagonists. This division authorizes the speech of female truth-tellers by placing them in a patriarchal family structure, and it reinforces the family

structure by associating exclusion from the family with lying and death. While the male characters take a small step towards bridging the divide between truth-tellers and liars, the passages that discuss these male protagonists never relate the closing “true”/“counterfet” divide back to female genitalia, and Wroth continues to value her female speakers based on whether or not they contribute to the patriarchal project of creating legitimate heirs. Additionally, Wroth’s focus on legitimacy, which was primarily considered relevant for nobility (Bach 6), excludes non-noble women from her justification for female speech. While the Urania’s female characters are central to the book’s narrative, the way that Wroth associates their speech with reproduction creates space for women’s speech primarily within noble, patriarchal, and heterosexual families.

## Conclusion

I find that Tyler, Cavendish, Lanyer, and Wroth all use the reproductive metaphor in ways that defend their writing. Tyler uses the metaphor to extend the family structure, and she adds other sexually active members to this family in order to exaggerate and criticize the perceived connection between women's writing and their promiscuity. Cavendish similarly places the text within a family structure, but she emphasizes chastity and the noble family in order to suggest that writing maintains rather than undermines the family's patriarchal structure. Meanwhile, Lanyer briefly includes words that refer both to writing and to reproduction, but she suggests that this metaphor does not benefit women and she provides an inventory of other metaphors for writing that are women-centred, such as the reader's Christian afterlife, Mary's virgin pregnancy, and relationships between the Muses. In doing so, Lanyer calls the connection between writing and reproduction into question and distances writing from sexual behaviour. Wroth, by contrast, uses the reproductive metaphor in order to create a temporary space for Pamphilia's speech by comparing her both to a pregnant woman and to a woman on trial for infanticide, two times in which women's speech was authorized. Additionally, Wroth uses the reproductive metaphor to defend herself against Denny by placing Denny in a non-normative reproductive metaphor in order to undercut the authority that he attempts to assume over her book, and she justifies women's speech in the *Urania* by creating a connection between women's truthful words and the legitimate heirs of noble family lines. Taken together, these works suggest that the reproductive metaphor served as one means for women to defend their writing by addressing the perceived relationship between print and promiscuity.

At the same time, the texts' obsessions with legitimacy both reflect and reinforce a noble family unit. Cavendish's claim that her work helps maintain her noble family emphasizes a

patriarchal and heterosexual structure; the fact that Cavendish relies upon this family structure in order to make her defense for writing means that her argument does not account for desires between women and that it reinforces men's hierarchy over them. While Wroth's texts may ascribe more agency to women by placing more emphasis on female speech, Wroth highlights legitimacy in the same way that Cavendish does. This emphasis on legitimacy means that their arguments for writing do not apply to non-noble women or to sexually "other" women, whose bodies were believed to be less controlled (Loomba 51) than noble women's and for whom legitimacy was not perceived to be as relevant (Bach 6), and Cavendish's and Wroth's emphases on legitimacy therefore excludes these women from their defenses of writing.

On the other hand, Tyler and Lanyer, who were middle class, create a space for more women in their defenses of women's writing. Lanyer does not focus on the family – or, therefore, on legitimacy – in her text; meanwhile, Tyler incorporates the reader into her eroticized metaphors for writing and thus opens up the possibility for same sex desire or for polygamous relationships, since she may have more than one reader, who may be male or female. By altering the reproductive metaphor from convention or by creating new metaphors for writing that do not rely on a family structure, Tyler and Lanyer make their metaphors for writing inclusive for a larger audience of women. This is especially true for Lanyer, who not only leaves space for these relationships in her metaphors, but who explicitly portrays women producing texts outside of the family in a variety of sexual and non-sexual configurations.

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