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The Desire for Chaste Love in Book Three of The Faerie Queene

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THE DESIRE FOR CHASTE LOVE IN BOOK THREE OF THE FAERIE QUEENE

by

HAYLEY MCCLENNY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English Literature
Department of English

David Strong, Ph.D., Committee Chair

College of Literature and Languages

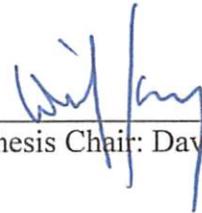
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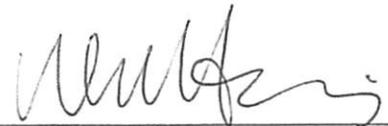
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Abstract

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The University of Texas at Tyler

May 2019

This paper examines the complex relationship between chastity and consummation presented in Book Three of *The Faerie Queene*. By recasting the Ovidian myth of Venus and Adonis, Spenser creates a definition of chastity that is based in the bond of natural emotion that includes sexual expression without the damaging effects of lust. Venus and Adonis are the first to enact love based on this definition and exemplify perfection in their expression and acceptance of love. From their example, all other lovers in Book Three act in favor of or against the notion of selfless and chaste love. Chapter two details Britomart's quest to find Artegall. Like the love between Venus and Adonis, she similarly focuses her desires on creating a chaste relationship with Artegall. As she is the protector of chastity, she is able to exercise her training as a knight and defend the qualities of pure love from the damaging effects of lust. The damages of lust are most apparent in the House of Busirane. By kidnapping Amoret, Busirane becomes the embodiment of the damages of lust, and the marriage he attempts to create with Amoret is a defiled marriage based in lust rather than purity. Through his warped worship of Cupid, he becomes a corrupted version of Scudamour and intends to corrupt Amoret as well. Britomart's rescue of Amoret proves that chaste love is a more powerful force than lust and has the power to heal the damages created by impure desires.

Introduction

In Book Three of *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser presents a view of pure love that is transcendent and selfless, yet seemingly at odds with the overarching theme of the Book by being consummated. By relying heavily on the Ovidian myth of Venus and Adonis, Spenser establishes his belief that chastity does not constitute sexual abstinence, but rather connotes a purity of expression that is not based in lust. The expression examined in Book Three focuses on a natural, selfless expression of love that allows harmony and intimacy to flourish. This is directly opposed to lust because it does not require force to act upon. Spenser's recasting of the definition of chastity refines the traditional notions of a chaste knight and applies directly to the character Britomart and her quest for Artegall. Although she is the allegorical figure for chastity, she is not destined to stay a virgin forever and, being a knight, defends against the impurities of lust. Though it was common for knights to act in defense of others, Britomart separates herself from tradition by acting in defense of an idea. By being the embodiment of chastity, Britomart applies the qualities of the physically idyllic love of Venus and Adonis to herself, thus showing their love as a model for perfection, and defends these principles when they are threatened. Many scholars have examined the presentation of chaste love in Book Three as a societal expectation. Some have argued that Britomart and Amoret are subjected to chastity as a means of control in a patriarchal society rather than desiring chastity of their own free will.¹ This rereading of Book Three seeks to dispel these inaccuracies and focus on how the idea of chaste love presented as an ideal. Chastity is not a societal expectation, but rather a form of expression inherent to pure love and contingent upon the selflessness of the lovers involved.

¹ Bruce Thomas Boehrer and Susan Frye

If Britomart is the defining figure of chaste love, Busirane is the antithesis of all that she represents. Of the many examples of threats to pure love in Book Three, Busirane is by far the most sinister figure. He attempts to corrupt the purity of love by taking Amoret captive after her wedding to Scudamour and attempting to force his way into her heart. Busirane's ideology conflicts with the selfless bond Venus and Adonis exemplify. Similarly, Busirane's House and his bizarre worship of Cupid, are in direct opposition to the natural beauty of the Garden of Adonis. His attempts to corrupt love, however, are in vain because, unlike Britomart, he does not understand the importance of the bond of selfless love. Britomart's ability to save Amoret demonstrates her ability to recognize pure love in others and therefore will be able to seek it out for herself. Her position as a knight also gives her the unique ability for a woman in *The Faerie Queene* to defend effectively against the ravishments of lust and save not only herself, but others as well. In doing this, Britomart is able to perpetuate the example of love as set by Venus and Adonis and understand the importance of seeking out and maintaining a pure relationship founded on the principles of selfless expression.

Selfless expression in Book Three is characterized by the free and natural exchange of pure love with lust being the antithesis of selfless expression. The purity that is inherent in selfless expression comes from being dedicated to only one person and committing to sharing acts of love with only that person. While sexual expression is an accepted part of selfless expression, it does not have to be controlled by the selfish desire that comes with lust. It is important to distinguish between love and lust here, as Spenser makes a clear distinction between the two in *The Faerie Queene*. Love is a feeling of strong affection for another person coupled with the desire to share life passionately together, while lust is rooted in selfish sexual gratification that has little regard for another person save physical appearance. In the depictions

of lust in Book Three, there is nothing pure about them; the characters who act based on lust are impulsive, greedy, and often ruled by base desires.

Of the three love stories examined in Book Three, the love between Venus and Adonis most clearly exhibits the principles of selfless expression. As they have had the time to develop and put into practice a consummated but pure relationship, their love is the most clearly indicative of these qualities. Unlike the other lovers, however, Venus and Adonis have the ability to exist in a state of perfection, but their ability to love where the constraints of time do not constrict their expression of love for one another extends the bounds of possibilities in love and encourages the mortal lovers to strive to achieve the selfless, transcendental love of Venus and Adonis.

Chapter One

Venus and Adonis as the Model for Chaste Love

The Garden of Adonis as a Contrast to the House of Busirane

In Book Three, the Garden of Adonis is presented as a paradise that forms the model of selfless expression evident in the love of Venus and Adonis.² Love exchanged between Venus and Adonis flourishes in the Garden because like the Garden itself, it is natural and free from contamination. The purity of their love coupled with the natural setting is implicitly opposed to selfish desire. The tenuous bond that is momentarily created from fleeting selfish desire is only done so out of a forced attraction. In these fugacious moments, selfish physicality is what binds two people together rather than a desire to come together to create a meaningful, intimate bond. Such connections are not natural and work against the model created by Venus and Adonis because the lack of intimate desire requires that force take over in place of real love. A lack of force in the prelapsarian paradise of The Garden of Adonis allows the love between Venus and Adonis to become idealized and consistently grow without enduring the strain of the mortal world. Only in the Garden are they free from the monotony and struggle of mortal life and can solely focus on the intimate connection between them. This unique feature of the Garden allows it to function as the direct opposite to the House of Busirane because, rather than offering a deceptive presentation of love that is based in art as the House of Busirane does, the Garden instead offers a space in which “[a]ll things, as they created were, doe grow” (vi. 34. 3). The presentation of love that the House of Busirane offers is one that is based in deception rather than natural expression. Love cannot exist in the House of Busirane without a cloying and exaggerated façade that must rely on art because it does not exist there naturally; describing what is offered there as “love” is a misrepresentation of what love is because there is no harmony or

² Josephine Waters Bennett. “Spenser's Garden of Adonis.” *PMLA* 47, no. 1 (1932): 46.

intimacy between the people involved. It is merely a selfish act that must be overcompensated for with heavy decoration and will ultimately end in frustration and anguish because there is no genuine expression involved.

Pure Love as Natural and Selfless Expression

Unlike the House of Busirane, the Garden of Adonis allows all things natural to flourish. There is no need for the heavy reliance on art because the love between Venus and Adonis does not require force to exist. Their love is created out of a mutual desire to express to each other their most intimate feelings. This type of expression cannot exist in a relationship based in art because such a relationship does not allow for true emotions to be expressed. True emotional expression can only exist in a relationship that is based in organically occurring attraction that does not require additional embellishments to exist. Spenser's continued emphasis on natural imagery, and the idea that everything that is intrinsic flourishes in the Garden sets up the understanding for the basis of purity for the love of Venus and Adonis. Of the untaintedness of the Garden, Spenser states:

After that they againe returned beene,
They in that Gardin planted bee agayne;
And grow afresh, as they had neuer seen
Fleshly corruption, nor mortall payne. (vi. 33. 1-4)

The return to innocence described here is an eternal existence founded upon each other's virtue and the innocence of a world untouched by vice. This innocent state they live in assures that their love cannot be tainted by the impurities of the mortal world. Because of this, their love is protected from external threats and allows them to exist in a transcendent state that can only be emulated by the other lovers in Book Three. The ability to "grow afresh" suggests the Garden of Adonis possesses healing powers that allow a state of purity to be restored upon re-entrance to the Garden. "Returned" demonstrates that initially all individuals are born into a state of purity, but because of the "payne" and "corruption" experienced in the mortal world, that innocence is

quickly stripped away. The innocence that is returned and preserved here allows for innocence to continue to be present in the material world. Without it, the material world would experience a fall from grace and succumb to corruption.

In the Ovidian myth, Venus preserves her love for Adonis by transforming him into an anemone after he was mortally wounded by the boar. This allows him to return each spring and escape death. Spenser embellishes on the myth by allowing the lovers to not being concerned about death at all. Death cannot touch Adonis when he is with Venus, and he is protected from the fatality of his wound by her. In the Garden, Venus has safely “hid[en] [Adonis] from the world and from the skill/ Of the Stygian Gods which doe her loue enuy” (vi. 46. 8-9). Her act of hiding Adonis from “the Stygian Gods” shows that not even death can touch him the Garden, rendering him immortal. As their love is the subject of envy, it is unlike any other that has been witnessed and because it cannot be touched by death, it is able to expand into eternity. Like the act of preserving Adonis, their love must continue to “grow afresh” to preserve the transcendent and pure qualities it possesses. They do not get overwhelmed by the mundane realities of existence and continuously push the boundaries of their love into a transcendent plane by allowing their love to constantly “grow.” Keeping their love fresh allows for the continued rejuvenation of the harmony within it, consequently allowing the love itself to never die. It is only through death, though, that one may be “returned” to the Garden. This does not specifically apply to Venus, however, because she is immortal, but rather to Adonis and the other souls that pass through the Garden before being returned to the mortal world. In this way, it acts as both Heaven and Eden. While in the Garden, death is not experienced, but all who return there have been reborn into a state of innocence.

Transcendent Love

Adonis' fatal wound from the boar gives him the opportunity not only to reexperience life, but also to be reborn into a transcendental state with Venus. The "mortall payne" he suffers can be alleviated through the natural healing qualities within the Garden, which are manifested in the transcendent love and affection Venus bestows upon him. While related to pure love, transcendent love pushes the boundaries of pure love and extends it to a plane of existence that reaches beyond the mundane realities of the material world. In this state, the outside world ceases to exist, and the relationship is perpetuated into eternity through the strength and harmony of the love contained within it. To achieve a transcendental state, however, the love contained in the relationship must already be based in selfless expression. Bertrand Russell argues "that a sex relation is better when it has a large psychological element than when it is purely physical."³ Russell's argument highlights the idea of the importance of the emotional connection between lovers and shows that pure love cannot exist in a strictly physical relationship. The psychological connection is important to understanding the love between Venus and Adonis because they have taken the time to cultivate a meaningful relationship that is not degraded by physical desires. Because their relationship is not limited to "purely physical" expressions as a mean to connect with one another, Venus and Adonis have been able to utilize their ability to communicate in a loving way to create a relationship that is focused on natural expression which allows for the retention of purity.

Due to their existence in the Garden, the love between Venus and Adonis is able to reach transcendence because they live in another realm. They do not have the same mortal concerns of Amoret and Scuadmour, and Britomart and Artegall and are able to focus solely on the bond between them. The other lovers, however, are bound to the constraints of the physical world

³ Bertrand Russell. *Marriage and Morals* (New York: Norton, 1957): 6.

making it much harder to attain a transcendent state. Because they must accept the realities of death, grief, turmoil, and other unpleasant events that do not touch Venus and Adonis, their love is tested in a way that Venus and Adonis' is not. This does not make their love any less pure, but prevents them being able to focus solely on the expansion of their love. In the mortal world, the love between Britomart and Artegall, and Amoret and Scudamour is limited to a chaste but consummated love because they cannot escape to the same plane of existence.

The Damages of the Material World

Adonis' rebirth into the Garden allows his love with Venus to be founded upon selfless expression and intention rather than base desires, and allows them to function as a model of pure but consummated love. As they do not know "[f]leshly corruption," their love retains an element of chastity that is akin to innocence and is founded in natural expression. Although it is explicitly stated that lust is one of the main acts that corrupts pure love, it is not merely "fleshly corruption" that constitutes as a corrupt act; it is, in fact, any act that sets out to destroy the wholesomeness of love. As Busirane shows by kidnapping Amoret, the act of trying to break the bond between lovers is the antithesis of purity. Similarly, the character Hellenore who appears in canto ix, defiles the chastity of her marriage by desiring the sexual fulfillment she could achieve with other men. Both of these characters create a great deal of damage by not only having impure thoughts but acting on those impure thoughts. Through their thoughts and actions, both of these characters seriously mar the sanctity of marriage. Busirane disrupts the expression of chaste love during Amoret's wedding night by kidnapping her and trying to force her to love only him. Although he is unsuccessful in attaining what he wants, his thoughts are the impetus of nearly destroying what is a perfect love. Similarly, Hellenore's desire for sexual fulfillment causes a rift in her own marriage. As she spends much of her time longing for what her husband cannot give her, her husband locks her in a room in their home, believing that if she is let out she will act on

her sexually driven fantasies. In this situation, a loving marriage cannot flourish because the conflicting emotions of greed and distrust override anything that could be pure.

The actions of Busirane and Hellenore are the result of living in the material world and being tempted by lust. They do not have the same opportunity to exist in a world where impurities are not an issue, and thus fall victim to them. They are as much a product of their environment as Venus and Adonis are. The love between Venus and Adonis is so interconnected with the setting of the Garden of Adonis that it ceases to be a separate idea, and simply becomes the embodiment of the perfection of the Garden itself. The connection between the Garden and their love symbolizes an ideal in the perfection between selfless expression and harmony between lovers. Wendy Beth Hyman argues that “the Garden at the center of Book III appears to be the sole embodiment of perfection in *The Faerie Queene*.”⁴ Hyman’s use of the word “perfect” does not extend to just the Garden, but to the love of Venus and Adonis as well. Because the only enemy in the Garden is time, there are no external threats to the love of Venus and Adonis; however, as Venus is an immortal, time is of little concern to her. Adonis has, through love, been given the ability to overcome death and be reborn into a state of immortality. The immortality both have shows that they have, together, overcome the only threat that could mar the immaculacy of their love. Internal threats to their love also cease to exist in this state of chastity. Neither Venus nor Adonis would stray from the purity and pleasure their love brings. In doing so, they have removed the idea of infidelity existing in the Garden of Adonis. Their ability to reach a transcendental state together in love shows their dedication to one another and because of this they exist as the model of perfection in Book Three.

⁴ Wendy Beth Hyman. “Seizing Flowers in Spenser’s Bower and Garden.” *English Literary Renaissance*, 37 no. 2, (2007): 207.

A World Based in Perfection

It is almost impossible to separate the Garden with Spenser's portrayal of the love between Venus and Adonis because the two are so entwined. The Garden itself becomes reflective of the original Ovidian myth by being based in continuous rejuvenation and offers a space in which they can become the embodiment of pure love with a transcendental aspect. By continually emphasizing nature in reference to the love of Venus and Adonis, Spenser is stating that physical love is a natural component of pure love. Developing the physical aspect of love within the bounds of loving relationship accentuates the trust and respect that are necessary to cultivate a marriage based in harmony and intimacy. Without these elements, such a relationship is unattainable and will wither and fail to thrive, leaving one, or both, of the persons involved unfulfilled and frustrated. This also highlights that the act of sex itself is not shameful when carried out in a loving context. Despite the sexual nature of their relationship, there is a notable lack of corruption that allows them to act as the models for chaste love. Judith H. Anderson argues that the presentation of the love between Venus and Adonis "is a seriocomic meditation on the landscape of desire, or wanting."⁵ Her assertion, unlike that of Wendy Beth Hyman, presents the lovers in a more human light and focuses on the deep emotional connections between them. Their ability to experience both "wanting" and "desire" places them on a similar emotional plane as Britomart, Amoret, and Scudamour. It is these human qualities that make the example of their love attainable to others, rather than appearing as an ideal that cannot be achieved. While understanding that perfection between them does exist, it is ultimately the more emotional and human bond that allows them to become relatable figures for other lovers who wish to create a selfless bond.

⁵ Judith H. Anderson. "Venus and Adonis: *Spenser, Shakespeare, and the Forms of Desire*." *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton*, (2008): 201.

Although the love between Venus and Adonis is based in natural emotional expression, their immortality places them in a realm outside of the mundane. When Venus saved Adonis from the boar, she ensured that their love could withstand any mortal threat and defeat death itself.

By her hid from the world, and from the skill
Of Stygian Gods, which doe her loue enuy;
But she herself, when euer that she will,
Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill. (vi. 46. 6-9)

By hiding Adonis “from the world,” Venus can retain the virtuousness of her love with Adonis and ensure that it is not corrupted. This act shields their love from the public and ensures that it does not become a spectacle or an event that is turned into a depraved debacle through gossip. Continuously in Book Three, the dangers of acting out love in front of an audience are shown, and it is clear that the most succinct way to prevent that from happening is to keep the expression of affection private. The most striking of these examples is the Mask of Cupid in the House of Busirane. During the Mask, Busirane displays his torture and worship of Amoret for all the participants to see. By putting what he believes is love on display, it becomes a spectacle for others not only to take part in, but also to pass judgement upon. As love is a very private matter, not allowing an opening for judgment to be passed upon it keeps it free from the destructive ideas of others. However, the fact that their love becomes the “enuy” of the “Stygian Gods” shows that their love cannot be stopped by death. While this is more literal than the traditional Christian wedding vows, it does add an element of otherworldliness to the precedent of love they have established and ensures that in the frame of pure love death is not a force that can keep love apart.

Venus’ actions of possessing Adonis “when euer she will” shows that there is freedom and lack of traditional gender roles in their relationship. While this sounds as though she is the one who has complete control, this description is balanced two stanzas later when Adonis is

described as “loving his goddess” (vi. 48. 2) in the Garden. Present in their relationship is an element of freedom that allows for both to attain an equal status and ensures that neither can assume a domineering role. This dynamic, which is a recognition of each other’s individuality, sets them apart from the corrupted characters of Book Three and provides a sustainable framework for pure lovers to operate within. Furthermore, the use of the word “sweetness” to describe the affection that exists within their physical love shows that it is a genuine emotion and does not allow any room for corruption to cast a pall upon the purity of their relationship.

Chapter Two

Britomart's Search for and Defense of Chaste Love

Becoming a Knight

Following the example set by Venus and Adonis is Britomart, the allegorical figure for chastity, who defends against the impurities of lust by transforming herself from a young princess into a knight. Britomart's quest begins with her desire to find Artegall, her future husband, as foretold by Merlin, and takes on a new meaning as she begins to establish herself as a knight. Although her desire for Artegall is always the motivation behind her actions, her role as a knight grants her the ability to act in defense of chaste love. The introduction of Britomart reveals a naïve young maid who lacks awareness of the world outside her father's castle. While she is already defined by purity at this early stage in her life, she does not know how to cope with the emotions that come with being in love. Her first glimpse of Artegall in the enchanted mirror is a moment in which she is overcome by a feeling of all-encompassing love and devotion that threatens to consume her, as she can initially do nothing but pine for Artegall. At that young age, she did not yet know how to translate this feeling into meaningful action. While this is not inherently bad, it is an indication that she could not yet act in a fully self-aware manner. Her ability to ask for and receive help in this venture shows that despite her isolated state she is not distanced from humanity and recognizes her own limitations while accepting the need to grow. It is not until after their meeting with Merlin that Glauce, her nurse, suggests that she and Britomart should train as knights and reveals to her the benefits it may bring does she realize how to overcome her own naivety. Of this idea, Glauce tells her:

And sooth it ought to your courage much inflame,
To heare so often, in that royall hous,
From whence to none inferior ye came: (iii. 54. 1-3)

By “inflam[ing]” Britomart’s courage, Glauce is prompting her to abandon her prescribed gender role of a helpless princess and adopt an identity that will empower her to find her own source of freedom and happiness.⁶ Although Britomart did not lack the desire to find Artegall, she did lack the knowledge of how to begin this quest, which lead to her frustration. Glauce encourages her to turn her frustration into courage and act in a constructive manner. Her previous station in life, which was that of an isolated princess, demonstrates that she is at the mercy of her social status. Adopting the appearance of a respected and fearless knight gives her the freedom to emulate the qualities inherent to a knight and offers her an opportunity to protect the values that define her. Britomart then sheds her identity as a “frustrated and enclosed pubescent child”⁷ and makes a clear decision to take control of her destiny and desires rather than waiting on life to unfold for her. Lending greater credibility to her assertion that Britomart will be a capable knight is Glauce’s mention that Britomart has come from a long line of courageous people. By bringing in the honor and courage of Britomart’s ancestors, Glauce motivates her to follow in the footsteps of her forebears and become a daring young woman with the determination to establish her own destiny.

Britomart’s Love for Artegall

Although Britomart’s passion for Artegall is overwhelming, she does not allow desire to over-rule chastity, and acts in the same manner of Venus and Adonis by keeping her love for Artegall to herself⁸. The use of secrecy allows her to maintain her image of a male knight by proclaiming that she is in love, but not specifying with whom. Inwardly she can retain the

⁶ Jonathan Goldberg. “The Mothers in Book Three of The Faerie Queene.” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 17 no. 1 (1975): 14.

⁷ Judith H Anderson. “Britomart’s Armor in Spenser’s ‘Faerie Queene’: Reopening Cultural Matters of Gender and Figuration.” *English Literary Renaissance*, 39 no. 1 (2009): 76.

⁸ Frederick Padelford. “The Allegory of Chastity in ‘The Faerie Queene.’” *Studies in Philology*, 21 no. 2 (1924): 372.

knowledge that she is an independent woman acting in her own best interests while her outward appearance conforms to society's expectations. Her reliance on secrecy protects the chastity of the love she feels for him and prevents her affection from being scrutinized by those who would falsely judge her intentions⁹.

The royall Maid woxe inly wondrous glad
To heare her Loue so highly magnifyde
And ioyd that euer she affixed had
Her heart on knight so goodly glorifyde
How euer finely she faind to hyde (ii. 11. 1-5)

By being “inly wondrous glad” and “fain[ing] to hyde” her love, Britomart is again following the model of Venus and Adonis and shielding her love from those who would pass false judgement on it. Secrecy in these affairs keeps the love between only the two involved, and ensures that their love is a private affair. Although Britomart is still seeking Artegall, her love for him is able to retain its purity by not allowing outside judgement to taint it. This demonstrates the value she places on the purity of not only her own character, but of Artegall's as well. Her title of “royall Maid” is indicative of her social status, and Artegall's title of “knight” similarly shows that he is also of the nobility. By loving him, Britomart is neither rising above nor falling below her societal position which assures that her love for Artegall will be fulfilled. His similar social status informs her resolution and reveals that she is not wasting her time by pursuing a person who is unattainable. Her choices affirm her remarkable amount of self-awareness that allows her to be mindful not only of what she wants, but also of what it will constitute as a loving relationship for her.¹⁰ Without acknowledgement of her own desires, Britomart would not be mature enough to recognize the virtue of Artegall, but her ability to recognize the admirable qualities Artegall

⁹ Joseph Campana. "Vulnerable Subjects: Amoret's Agony, Britomart's Battle for Chastity." *The Pain of Reformation: Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity* (2012): 192.

¹⁰ Anderson. "Britomart's Armor in Spenser's 'Faerie Queene'": 77.

possesses is a clear indication that she is capable of using her judgement wisely. Hearing the goodness of Artegall praised also indicates her insistence upon chastity because this a quality that he too possesses. Validation of his character is important to her because he is not present; therefore she must rely on others to substantiate the love she feels for him. The acknowledgement she receives from Redcrosse knight demonstrates that he is equally as chaste as she is, and this gives her the assurance she needs to move forward with her pursuit. There is no doubt that Britomart is a confident character on her own, but Redcrosse knight provides the confirmation that holiness and chastity are interlinked. Redcrosse knight, as the allegorical figure for holiness, is able to validate her love giving their future marriage the recognition not only of the laws of man, but God as well.

The dedication Britomart feels to Artegall without ever having seen him in person is a testament not only to how much she values chastity, but also how much she values the sanctity of the love she has for him. Because she is a very principled person, nothing can make her stray from her vow of chastity and risk ruining her love for Artegall. In his article “Britomart: The Embodiment of True Love,” Charles W. Lemmi states that “[l]ove informs [Britomart] to a supreme degree; therefore, she is spiritually one with it. Through her, Love dwells among men. She is the actual progenitor of an illustrious line, and in her we see an actual example of the perfect lover.”¹¹ Lemmi’s assertion that Britomart is “the perfect lover” shows her commitment to faithfulness and reinforces the idea that she is committed to finding and creating the pure but consummated love as exemplified by Venus and Adonis, with Artegall.

Although it is important to recognize Britomart’s dedication to Artegall, the reason for the strength of her dedication must be understood. Her initial impression of him, which occurred when she glimpsed in the enchanted mirror, revealed only his physical appearance, but his

¹¹ Charles W. Lemmi. “Britomart: The Embodiment of True Love.” *Studies in Philology* 31 no. 2 (1934): 135.

character is of more importance and makes him an ideal husband for Britomart. As she progresses through Faerie Land, she begins to learn more about the man she is in love with from Redcrosse knight. Because Artegall is not actually present in Book Three, it becomes easy to think of him as an abstract idea that exists largely in Britomart's mind. This, however, is not true. While in Faerie Land, Artegall has been acting as a virtuous knight and serving others faithfully. Although his deeds are recounted to her by Redcrosse knight and she is not yet able to see them for herself, his willingness use his talents for the defense of those who are unable to protect themselves makes him a perfect husband for Britomart.

Ay doing things, that to his fame redownd
Defending Ladies cause, and Orphans right
Where so he heares, that any doth confound
Them comfortlesse, though tyranny or might;
So is his honour raisde to heuens hight. (ii. 14. 5-9)

By proclaiming Artegall's integrity, Redcrosse Knight establishes the virtue of Artegall's character and gives credence as to why he is a worthy match for Britomart. The goodness of Artegall's character is also enhanced by Redcrosse Knight's accolade. As Redcrosse Knight is representative of holiness, he himself is endowed with the quality of goodness and has the ability to recognize the same virtue in others. As his "fame [is] renownd," Artegall's virtuous nature and exceptional qualities as a knight have been recognized and honored throughout Faerie Lond. In conjunction with this, his championing for "Ladies" and "Orphans," he reveals that he is compassionate and recognizes his duty as knight to defend those who are incapable of defending themselves. In this way, he uses his physical strength for the destruction of "tyranny," not the creation of it. The qualities extoled by Redcrosse Knight are also apparent within Britomart's character, revealing a potential consummate unity. The fact that his "honour is raisde to heuens hight" shows that his honor is boundless and connected to the grace and power of heaven. This inherent focus on goodness makes him an ideal partner for Britomart because her virtue is also

inherent and tied to the infinite love of heaven. With both of their defining virtues being tied to heaven, this shows that their relationship will be sanctified and recognized by the boundless love of heaven. Britomart has already established her worthiness of love by proving her virtue, but here Redcrosse knight shows that because of the goodness of his character, Artegall is worthy of the love Britomart possesses.

Britomart's Defense of Love

Britomart's quest began as a journey to find Artegall, but takes on the defense of love as her confidence grows. Each time she acts in defense of pure love, she becomes more assured in her abilities to competently protect what qualifies as a truly loving relationship. This validates her belief in the desire she feels for Artegall because she recognizes the same characteristics in others and sees the importance of preserving the sanctity of a pure union. Her defense of, and desire for, pure love, is modeled on the principles established in the Garden of Adonis. Although the principles of pure love created there are most closely examined in connection with Britomart and Artegall, and Amoret and Scudamour, they also apply to Redcrosse knight and his love for Una. While their love lacks the consummation that Venus and Adonis' has, and that Britomart and Artegall's ultimately will have, the tenets of purity and selfless love apply to their affection for one another. One of Britomart's earliest defenses of pure love is to protect the love Redcrosse knight has for Una, which is challenged by the knights of Malecasta at the Castle Joyous. Britomart recognizes the virtues of her love for Artegall in Redcrosse knight's refusal to dishonor his love for Una by proclaiming that Malecasta is a greater lady than Una.

Loue haue I sure, (quoth she) but Lady none;
Yet I will not fro mine owne loue remoue
Ne to your Lady will I seruice done,
But wreake your wronges wrought to this knight alone
And proue his cause. (i. 28. 2-6)

Britomart's "Loue" of her own allows enables her to recognize that like herself Redcrosse knight values protecting the purity of love. This statement, which is meant to confuse the knights of Castle Joyous, opens up complexities in Britomart's character. As both Britomart and Redcrosse knight value the rectitude and chastity of true love, they are bonded together in recognition of these qualities and defense of them against those who would seek to corrupt them. For both Britomart and Redcrosse knight, the element of chastity supersedes lust in a loving relationship, and neither is willing to sacrifice the selflessness of their love for the degradation of lust that the "Lady" prefers. The focus on purity as opposed to lust in this passage confirms Britomart's love as a pure love that exists without the sin of lust. Her statement that "[she] will not from [her] own loue remoue" indicates that she will not betray her love for Artegall. Even though her love for him is still in the process of developing, she will remain faithful to him despite her affections being questioned. This, despite her appearance as a knight, places her back in a traditional female role because she is assuming a subordinate position in this relationship.¹² Her refusal to provide any "seruice" for the Lady shows that her integrity matters more to her than pleasing others and she will not be told what to do if the action involves compromising her values. Britomart values truth in all the actions she undertakes and does not condone false actions. Her decision to "wreake your wronges" discloses her willingness to defend virtuous love when she sees it being compromised. The desire she possess to "proue his cause" is also proving her cause; both Redcrosse knight and Britomart are engaged in pure love, and will commit any action necessary to protect the integrity of their love.¹³

¹² Maureen Quilligan. "The Comedy of Female Authority in "The Faerie Queene"." *English Literary Renaissance* 17, no. 2 (1987):164 .

¹³ Campana,168.

While Britomart has the physical dominance and power of a male knight, it is important to remember that before taking on this role, she was a sheltered princess with limited knowledge or exposure to the world. Her ability to navigate her own desires and pursue her quest for Artegall demonstrate maturity and self-awareness; however, even though she is pursuing love, she is still very naïve in understanding the behaviors associated with love. Although she is of pure character, she does tell a lie that defames Artegall; however, her intention for doing so was only so that she could hear his goodness proclaimed. The fact that she told the lie out of love for Artegall ultimately saves her from becoming an impure character, and protects her chastity.

But mote I weet of you, right courteous knight
Tydings of one, that hath unto me donne
Late foule dishonor and reprochfull spight
The which I seeke to wreake, and Artegall he hight. (ii. 8. 6-9)

Although Britomart is lying in this passage, she does so because she is acting in a way that Andreas Capellanus defines as courtly love. Of this love, Capellanus sates “[e]very act of a lover ends in the thought of his beloved.”¹⁴ The use of the pronoun “his” shows again that Britomart is defying the traditional gender roles and is claiming power in this relationship. This is also highlighted by her take charge attitude by “seeke[ing]” him out and planning to “wreake” revenge on him. These qualities demonstrate that Britomart is not the typical damsel in distress, as would suggest by her admission that wrong has been “unto [her] donne.” She is not a woman who needs the protection or assistance of a man, but rather is capable of acknowledging her own desires and using her power to attain what she desires. Although she defames Artegall by claiming that he has “donne [her] foule dishonour,” she does this only with the thought of her love for Artegall in mind. This reveals a singular, passionate desire for Artegall that is all-

¹⁴ Andreas Capellanus. *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960): 185.

encompassing, and must be acted upon by eliciting the proclamation of his goodness. The lie that is told here does not undermine Britomart's chastity, but rather emphasizes it because it is a genuine expression of love. Because she feels that making up this story is essential to hearing Redcrosse knight extol Artegall's moral fortitude, she reveals her innocence in navigating the mores of love. Although this is a rather callow method, it is important to remember that despite her ability to defend not only herself but others as well, Britomart is still young and learning to operate within all of society's expectations. Her reference to the act of intercourse as "foule dishonoure" highlights her defining characteristic, chastity, and reveals her disdain for lust. The disdain that she feels for impurity is a clear indication that her love for Artegall is not determined by lust, but rather by honor and morality.¹⁵

Britomart's Dedication to Chastity

In his book *The Art of Courtly Love*, Capellanus states that "[l]ove is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace."¹⁶ Although suffering is associated with pain and misfortune, it plays an important role in love because it demonstrates the depth of emotion that is felt in the relationship. This type of suffering shows the amount of care and dedication each person feels, and demonstrates that the bond between them is not built on superficial desires. Creating a love such as this requires honesty from both lovers. Without honesty, love cannot thrive, and this allows for the development of resentment and hostility to threaten the purity of love attained through true intentions. Due to the virtues they champion, both Britomart and Artegall are capable of creating and sustaining this type of love. Their virtues, chastity and

¹⁵ Lemmi, 133

¹⁶ Capellanus, 28.

justice, require honesty to thrive and because both are successful at carrying out their deeds, they are not tempted to act in a dishonest manner. Due to this, the union between Britomart and Artegall will be a chaste union. Chaste is not being used here to mean sexually pure, but rather free from impure thoughts and deeds, specifically the damaging effects of lust. There will be consummation in their marriage, but the sexual act is based in natural rather than forced expression. Their continued commitment to act in a selfless manner ensures that their love is kept free from the base desires of lust. Capellanus also references this idea by stating that lovers will “carry out all of love’s precepts.” Although not explicitly stated, this idea implies a sexual union that is tempered by the desire to remain in a seemingly constant embrace. The closeness of the emotional bond that is required to maintain a connection like this is representative of a chaste romance that has a sexual component. As evidenced by the example provided by Venus and Adonis, and Capellanus’ definition, such a relationship is not unattainable, and Britomart and Artegall have the necessary characteristics to not only create this type of love for themselves, but also to ensure that it is successful.

This dedication to Spenser’s version of chastity does not leave any room for the sinfulness of lust to enter Britomart’s mind, or relationship, and her diligence in protecting herself from lust is evident early on in her defeat of Malecasta. Although Malecasta does not pose a serious threat to Britomart’s chastity because her lust is based on a case of mistaken identity, she does represent lustful desires and lives a life fueled by physical pleasure. This early defeat is an important step in Britomart’s quest to find Artegall and define her view of love, and it is through this encounter that she fully realizes the importance of chaste love and how dangerous lust can be.

Where feeling one close couched by her side,
She lightly lept out of her filed bedd,
And to her weapon ran, in minde to gride
The loathed leachour. (i. 62. 1-4)

As Malecasta attempts to seduce Britomart, she is revealed to be a purveyor of lust, and her attempt to spread her corruption is quickly thwarted by Britomart. Malecasta's action of being "close couched" shows a sneaking and deceptive personality who is attempting to hide her true intentions due to their sinful nature. Similarly, her portrayal as a "loathed leachour" shows that her lust knows no boundaries and that she will satiate her lust however she so desires. The invocation of "loathed" makes evident her lack of morality and disregard for the integrity of others. Because Britomart's bed is described as "filed" after Malecasta enters it, Malecasta's wantonness is placed in direct opposition to Britomart's chastity.¹⁷ The purity of Britomart's character, however, allows her to immediately discern the immoral intentions of Malecasta and act in order to protect her virtue. Her urgent action of running "to her weapon" shows a need for self-preservation, and that she is capable of defending herself.

Britomart's ability of being able to "gride" Malecasta shows that she is able to defend herself against impurity and corruption. Although this seduction is intended to be ridiculous because Malecasta does not realize that Britomart is a woman, Britomart does not fall for Malecasta's attempts at seduction and reveals that she values chastity above lust.¹⁸ Britomart's rejection of Malecasta indicates that she will remain true to Artegall under any circumstance, and do all that she can to prevent false seduction from happening to her.

The rejection of Malecasta discloses Britomart's desire to retain her chastity and not succumb to impure seduction or lust. Of this thwarted attempt at seduction, Susanne Woods argues "Spenser has managed to portray Malecasta's infatuation sympathetically enough so that

¹⁷ Sonya Freeman Loftis. "Reconstructing the Bower of Bliss: Homoerotic Myth-Making in The Faerie Queene." *Renaissance Papers 2012*, edited by Shifflett Andrew and Gieskes Edward (2013): 12.

¹⁸ Kent R. Lehnhoff. "Incest and Empire in the "Faerie Queene." *ELH* 73, no. 1 (2006): 215.

the reader is more amused than condemning of her loose behavior.”¹⁹ While Malecasta’s attempt at seduction is comical, it is not sympathetic. Her name itself, which means “wicked chastity,” is indicative that she is not an admirable or sympathetic character. Throughout the book, Spenser does little to arouse sympathy for lustful characters, and they are consistently the villains of Book Three. By having Britomart defeat this particular villain, Spenser is drawing a very clear line between what type of behavior is acceptable and what is not, and Malecasta’s behavior, however comical, is not sympathetic. It is, however, an important step forward in Britomart’s career as the champion of chastity. Although she would have been in no real moral danger once Malecasta discovered that she was not in fact a man, her desire to remain true to her values from the start shows a commitment to virtue that carries her character through the entirety of *The Faerie Queene*.

Because much of Britomart’s actions are in reaction to her outward appearance as a knight, it is easy to overlook her feminine role that continues to develop along with her search for Artegall. As this is the impetus for her entire quest, the importance of her love for him cannot be overlooked. Though the love she has for him is still developing, as they have not actually met in person yet, it is nonetheless true love, and it is what defines Britomart’s character. Examining her role as a lover, Lemmi suggests that “[w]here fogs of false love cast their ambiguous darkness, Britomart clears the air like a good storm.”²⁰ Her ability to act in this manner shows that while she has not directly experienced love, she understands the characteristics necessary to fulfill a chaste and loving relationship. In this instance, she is clearly emulating the example of a pure relationship as set by Venus and Adonis, however, a further link between her character and

¹⁹ Susanne Woods. “Spenser and the Problem of Women’s Rule.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 48 no. 2 (1985): 151.

²⁰ Lemmi, 136.

Venus is suggested by both Anderson and Humphrey Tonkin. Anderson asserts that Britomart is “yet another refraction of Venus”²¹ and Tonkin argues that the two major themes of Book Three, chaste love and generation, are represented in Britomart and the myth of Venus and Adonis is the perfect way to link the two, and examine Britomart in her role as a lover.²² As the link between Venus and Britomart becomes clearer, it is Britomart who emerges as the figure who best exemplifies the qualities of a chaste and loving relationship.

And ye faire Ladies, that your kingdoms make
In th’harts of men, them gouerne wisely well
And of faire Britomart ensample take,
That was trew in loue, as Turtle to her make. (xi. 2. 6-9)

The repeated use of “faire” in this passage stresses the importance of purity in love, and warns against creating a false perception of love. Because Spenser encourages the ladies to remain “faire,” he is emphasizing the importance of pure but consummated love and showing that Britomart is an example for them to follow. The warning to “gouerne wisely well” the “kingdoms...[i]n th’harts of men” urges the ladies not to consciously create jealousy in the heart of the man they love because it is a damaging emotion. The heart should instead be treated with care, and with the decency it deserves. By holding Britomart as the example here, it is evident that she has learned from Venus and Adonis, and understands the importance of acting with honesty and not creating base emotions that negate the wholesomeness of love. The use of the word “trew” to describe her affection toward Artegall shows that she would not do anything to compromise their love, nor does she take it for granted. In fact, the comparison of Britomart to a turtle-dove shows that she understands that Artegall is her only true love. Because of this, she looks forward to a happy and fulfilling marriage between herself and Artegall.

²¹ Anderson. “Venus and Adonis,” 210.

²² Humphrey Tonkin. “Spenser’s Garden of Adonis and Britomart’s Quest.” *PMLA* 88 no. 3 (1973): 416.

The Damaging Lack of Requited Love

Although Britomart is correct in believing that marriage is the ideal outcome for a happy and pure relationship, it is not always the joyful experience she imagines. In order for the marriage to be a fulfilling and loving experience, the relationship itself must be based in selfless expression beforehand, otherwise it will be a miserable, unequal façade. When the character Malbecco entered into his marriage with the much younger Hellenore, it was for selfish reasons. What ensued was a travesty that marriage could not fix because neither made their wedding vows with honest and selfless intentions.

Yet he is linked to a louley lasse,
Whose beauty doth her bounty far surpasse,
The which to him both fa vnequall years,
And also far vnlike conditions has;
For she does ioy to play emongst her peares,
And to be free from hard restraint and gealous feares. (ix. 4. 4-9)

The immediate description of Malbecco and Hellenore being “vnequall” is concerning. This lack of equality in their marriage is the main reason that problems arise, and jealousy ensues. In a pure and loving relationship one person should not hold power over another, but because of the “vnequall years” Malbecco is placed in a position of superiority by being much older than Hellenore. His apparent superiority does not create an environment in which love can flourish because already the relationship is placed in a position in which selflessness does not exist.

The ability to selflessly give and receive pleasure is a necessary part of a loving relationship as depicted in the Garden of Adonis. In the marriage of Malbecco and Hellenore, however, there is no pleasure being exchanged. Due to their “vnlike condition” their needs and desires in the marriage are not the same. Hellenore, who is still young, has normal sexual desires befitting someone her age; however, since Malbecco is “old and withered like hay” (ix. 5. 1) he cannot satisfy her needs. Rather than preserving any semblance of purity this marriage might

have attained, it works against it by creating a hostile situation in which neither person is happy or satisfied. Because Malbecco does not fulfill her, Hellenore desires “to play amongst her peares” and find sexual fulfillment elsewhere. Hellenore’s desire to be fulfilled causes nothing but jealousy for Malbecco because he knows that he is incapable of satisfying her needs, but doesn’t want her to become unfaithful either. While neither one is being unreasonable in this argument, their needs do not align, causing a situation that is detrimental to pure love and one that cannot be fixed by simply reciting wedding vows.

Similar to Malbecco and Hellenore, another character who fails to recognize the importance of requited love, and acts merely in the name of courtly love, is Florimell. Like Britomart, she defines herself by her chastity and runs toward love, but unlike Britomart, she fails to recognize that the love she chases is unrequited. By chasing Marinell all throughout Faerie Land, Florimell consistently puts herself in dangerous situations that threaten to compromise her chastity, and she is left with no choice but to run towards a love that is not fulfilling and causes her nothing but pain. Florimell’s inability to embrace the reality of the circumstances, rather than waiting on Marinell to acknowledge her love, prevents her from acting in her own best interests and renders her a pitiful and helpless, yet pure, young woman. Although she is chaste, her desire to remain so is carried out for the wrong reasons; she is waiting on a marriage to Marinell that, given the events of Book Three, will likely never happen. Because she is so single minded in her quest for Marinell,²³ she forgets to develop an identity that is not based on waiting for Marinell, which is to the detriment of her own character as she has not taken the time to explore her own capabilities. Again, this causes her nothing but pain

²³ Daniel M. Murtaugh. “The Garden and the Sea: The Topography of the Faerie Queene, III.” *ELH* 40 no. 3 (1973): 331.

and because she has no abilities other than to run from one crisis to the next, she can do nothing but weep and hope to one day be saved, hopefully, by Marinell.

For th'ayre was milde, and cleared was the skie,
And all his windes *Dan Aeolus* did keepe,
From stirring vp their stormy enmity,
As pittying to see her waile and weepe;
But all the while the fisher did securely sleepe. (viii. 21. 5-9)

Florimell's hasty flight from the battle between the giantess Argante and Sir Satyrane, which was fought over who would take Florimell, leads her into a fishing boat which she does not check before jumping in and setting out to sea. Like most characters who interact with Florimell, Aeolus sees her as a weak and pitiful young woman, but unlike many she comes into contact with, he does what he can to help her. In typical Florimell fashion, however, she does not acknowledge this. The "wail[ing] and weep[ing]" that Aeolus sees as "pittying" is nothing more than despondency and frustration. Florimell's bout of self-pity comes from the fact that she is not able to get what she desires from her actions. She has no other course of action but to run away when she finds herself in danger and does not know how to fight back. Despite her long journey through Faerie Land, she is no closer to finding Marinell, or achieving a meaningful and loving relationship with him. Florimell is embracing the very qualities that make it impossible for her to become a well-rounded character and this forces her to remain a callow and immature child. At this moment, she is self-absorbed and thinks of nothing but Marinell without acknowledging that Marinell wants nothing to do with her. Capellanus specifically addresses this behavior in his book and writes "when love cannot have its solaces, it is increased beyond all measure and drives the lovers to lamenting their terrible torments."²⁴ There is no doubt that the love Florimell feels for Marinell is overwhelming and no less intense than the love Britomart feels for Artegall. However, the "terrible torments" she feels will not cease because she fails to understand that her

²⁴ Capellanus, 34.

attempts at love are in vain. Her failure to recognize this makes her less prepared for the realities of love than Amoret or Britomart.

Due to her solipsistic behavior, Marinell fails repeatedly to realize she puts herself in further danger by not acknowledging her surroundings. The “fisher” who is “securely sleep[ing]” is a manifestation of the lurking dangers that surround Florimell and represents her naivety in assessing the world around her. Because she has not learned to defend herself, as Britomart has, her chastity is always going to be in danger of being stolen. However, as she too is defined by purity, she strives to protect herself from any danger that may arise. Her only means of protection, however, are to run away from danger rather than confront it directly, making her a much more ineffective guardian of chastity. Daniel M. Murtaugh argues that “Florimell flees at random from prince, knight, and churl ... where Britomart moves steadily forward, guided from within by her vision of Arthegall.”²⁵ Unlike Florimell, Britomart does not question the love she feels because she has not felt the rejection that Florimell has. Her unshakable faith in love is what drives her forward in the face of danger while Florimell panics because she has no security in believing that there is safety from the perils of the world. Although the story of Florimell and Marinell does ultimately reach a happy ending, it is her lack of love in this situation that prevents her from being able to attain a fulfilling and secure place in the world. Even though Britomart does not have this yet, her belief that she will attain it carries her through difficult situations and provides a level of comfort that Florimell desires but cannot find.

²⁵ Murtaugh, 326.

Chapter Three

Busirane's Defilement of Pure Love

Nature vs. Art

With Britomart as the leading figure for Book Three, and the allegorical character for chastity, it is natural that she should allow the example of pure but consummated love to rule her expectations as she moves forward with her search for Artegall. This belief in chaste love also inspires her actions as she continues to defend against the impurities of lust whenever she sees their damaging effects, and nowhere in Book Three are the damaging effects of lust more evident than in the House of Busirane. Busirane's belief in lust operates as a substitute for love, making him the antithesis of Britomart. Everything about his House is diametrically opposed to the purity of the Garden of Adonis. Busirane's kidnapping of Amoret from her wedding, and the tapestries he has depicting the power of Cupid over other Roman gods, shows his solipsistic nature and his warped worship of Cupid. The description of the tapestries themselves take up the second half of canto xi, and along with the Mask of Cupid, these are the best testaments to the perverted character that Busirane is. In his book *The Allegory of Love*, C.S. Lewis established many years ago that Spenser "distinguishes the good and evil paradises by a skillful contrast between nature and art."²⁶

In Book Three, Spenser makes a clear distinction between the goodness of nature and the corruption of nature that is art. As is evident in the Garden of Adonis, naturally occurring beauty is heavily associated with pure love. The descriptions of all things growing naturally within the Garden signify the ease with which pure love comes, and how it does not need to be supplemented with artificial extravagance that would take away from the purity of its beauty. The House of Busirane, however, with its heavy over decorative interior, is as far from the

²⁶ C.S. Lewis *The Allegory of Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1936): 407.

natural beauty of the Garden of Adonis as possible. Of the over decorated interior of the House, Lewis establishes that “Spenser uses art to suggest the artificial in its bad sense – the sham or the imitation.”²⁷ As Lewis points out, there is inherently a negative quality attached to Spenser’s use of art which was not present when describing the natural beauty of the Garden. As in the Castle Joyous, art is meant to mask that which is natural, but by applying a mask, the negative qualities can be masked as well. At a glance, the House of Busirane is appears to be a lovely, though lavish, castle. The aesthetic appeal of the House is due entirely to art as there is no natural joy in the it. Despite its ostentatious appearance, the House becomes a mask for the sinister intentions of Busirane. Without the mask that art provides, Busirane would not be able to operate in a stealthy manner and appear as though he was interested in love. Without this mask, Busirane’s intentions would be immediately recognizable as corrupt and a violation of nature. Harry Berger Jr. argues that Busirane’s overreliance on art reveals that he is attempting “to dominate and possess woman’s will through art.”²⁸ Unlike the Garden of Adonis, where love flowed freely and naturally without the use of force, Busirane must resort to using force because he does not understand the natural qualities that love possesses. The art in Busirane’s house, particularly the tapestries that Britomart encounters upon entering, are Spenser’s clue that this is an evil place.²⁹ Similarly, the images contained within the tapestries shows Busirane’s obsession with lust and willingness to pervert the naturalness of love.

And in those Tapets weren fashioned
Many faire pourtaicts, and many a faire feate,
And all of loue, and al of lusty-head,
As seemed by their semblaunt did entreat; (xi. 29. 1-4)

²⁷ Lewis, 408.

²⁸ Berger, 100.

²⁹ Lewis, 407.

The “Tapets” which decorate Busirane’s house are paramount to understanding his interpretation of love. Despite the description of the images in the tapestries being described as “faire” twice in this passage, it is the word “seemed” that shows greater importance in understanding the true meaning of the tapestries. The images in the tapestries are able to retain the surface appearance of being “faire” because of the “loue” they seemingly portray; however, the mention of “lusty-head” shows that the depictions of love in these tapestries is not love at all, but rather the manifestation of physical desire masquerading as honest expression. Much like Busirane, the very nature of these tapestries is deceptive and representative of a corruption of purity. Because Busirane decorates his house in such a manner, it is clear that he has a very warped understanding of what true love is, and instead confuses it with lust. It is this confusion and inability to understand that the images in his tapestries are not “faire” but instead a presentation of base physical desire that ultimately leads to his capture and rape of Amoret. Katherine Eggert asserts “the more rapine the poetics become the less likely they are to have the desired effect of seduction.”³⁰ Her argument points out the sinister nature of Busirane’s intentions, and how unlikely he is to attain Amoret’s affections. Because the tapestries mirror his personality and reveal his desires, he discloses his desire to love a woman, but because of his failure to understand the selflessness of expression that comes with true love, he will never attain the love he seeks. In this way, Busirane acts as the antithesis to Venus and Adonis because not only does he not understand the value of selfless and natural expression, but he bases his entire life around a false ideology that is based in corruption.

³⁰ Katherine Eggert. “Spenser’s Ravishment: Rape and Rapture in The Faerie Queene.” *Representations* no. 70 (2000): 11.

One of the most important influences on Spenser was Geoffrey Chaucer,³¹ and there are many parallels that can be drawn between *The Canterbury Tales* and *The Faerie Queene*. In “The Knight’s Tale,” Chaucer uses tapestries to highlight important concepts of love and how the ideas contained in the tapestries relate to the characters viewing them. Spenser also employs this tactic to describe the debauched beliefs of Busirane, which reveal his twisted and lust based view of love. Although the tapestries reflect Busirane’s beliefs, Britomart is the one to directly view them in canto xi, and her horror upon seeing the perversions of love reflect her inner chastity and desire to pursue a love that is free from the tarnish of lust. It is, however, Busirane’s warped interpretation of love that leads him to commit atrocities in the name of what he believes is love, and act in a self-serving and repulsive manner that is reflected in the tapestries that adorn his walls. Of the tapestries, Spenser writes:

Kings Queenes, Lords Ladies, Knights and Damsels gent
Were heap’d together with the vulgar sort,
And mingled with the raskall rabblement,
Without respect of person or of port,
To shew Dan Cupids powre and great effort: (xi. 46. 1-5)

The fact that “Cupids powre” leads to the downfall of royalty shows that Busirane believes Cupid is the supreme god, and the only one worth worshipping. The power that Cupid is displaying here is not love, but lust. Being “heap’d together with the vulgar sort” shows that despite their genteel upbringing, once shot with Cupid’s arrow, they have no choice but to succumb to his wishes. Unlike Chaucer’s portrayal of love in the temple of Venus which dealt with the unhappy aspect of unrequited love, the tapestry here shows a corruption of love. Having love be the downfall of so many people shows its supreme power, but ignores the purity it can contain and instead focuses on the debasement that lust brings. The fact that this is being done

³¹ Andrew King, “Spencer, Chaucer, and Medieval Romance,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser* ed. Richard A. McCabe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 557.

“[w]ithout respect of person or of port” indicates that lust is a base desire that is the antithesis of love. The absence of pure love from Busirane’s tapestries acts as a warning. Without love, even the mighty can become slaves to their physical needs, and act in undignified ways to achieve what they desire. Without the recognition of the selflessness love offers, human beings are turned into animals who act without respect and without regard for their status in life. In the presence of only lust, there can be only selfishness and disregard for the feelings of others. All of this leads to a total separation from humanity, which, because the absence of love is what Busirane worships, is the impetus for kidnapping Amoret and torturing her without recognizing that love is not what he wants, but rather the fulfillment of lust is.

Although it is clear from Busirane’s actions that he desires love, he fails to understand what it is or how to attain it. His action of kidnapping Amoret from her wedding shows that he does not understand the sacred bond between two people who have vowed to love one another forever, nor does he value that type of commitment. All that Busirane values are his own egotistical needs, which are driven primarily from a place of lust. Although he believes he wants to love Amoret, he does not because he does not understand the commitment that love requires. He also does not understand the chaste love that she values. She will never betray her husband, Scudamour, and will endure Busirane’s torture if it means saving the sanctity of her marriage.³² Busirane’s vain attempts to capture Amoret’s heart are reflective of his lust driven nature and his inability to truly connect with another person in a meaningful way. Of Busirane, Chih-hsin Lin writes that he “perverts married chastity”³³ by taking Amoret and forcing her into a situation reflective of courtly love, which is opposed to marital love. Because his interpretation of love is

³² Robert E. Wood. “Britomart at the House of Busyrane.” *South Atlantic Bulletin*, 43 no. 2 (1978): 9.

³³ Chih-hsin Lin. “Amoret’s Sacred Suffering: The Protestant Modification of Courtly Love in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*.” *Studies in Philology*, 106 no. 3 (2009): 354.

so deeply rooted in the courtly tradition, Busirane will never be able to capture the true affections of Amoret, as he so desires.

His blindfold eies he bad a while vnbinde,
That his proud spoile of that same dolorous
Faire Dame he might behold in perfect kinde,
Which seene, he much reioyced in his cruell minde. (xii. 22. 6-9)

This scene during the Masque of Cupid reflects the cruelty that is prized in the House of Busirane and prized by those who live there and worship Cupid. Cupid's decision to "vnbinde" his eyes shows how much delight he takes in seeing the pain of Amoret, and presents a stark contrast between the two of them. The unbinding of Cupid's eyes directly links him to Amoret's suffering because his freedom is her torture. This also shows that this perverted version of Cupid that Busirane worships condones this type of love, and looks upon it with both amusement and delight. Calling Amoret a "spoile" also robs her of her humanity and turns her into merely a plaything for Busirane's amusement. This reference shows that her captor does not recognize her humanity, which violates the example of pure love set by Venus and Adonis. Because she is clearly being used and abused for amusement, she cannot have equal power or say in this relationship, if it can be called that, which negates the trust and honesty of love and highlights with absolute clarity the fact that what Busirane feels for Amoret is not true love. Harry Berger Jr. suggests that the "worship [of] Cupid suggests a more advanced stage of perversion: sexual desire is consciously deified by minds locked into an erotic universe from which all other functions and nonerotic concerns have been purged."³⁴ Berger presents a compelling view of the House of Busirane with this statement. By living in and around images of rape and other sexual conquests, it becomes the fixation of everyone who lives in the house, and the mode of normal behavior. Because this type of behavior is accepted and emulated in the House of Busirane, the

³⁴ Berger, 104.

kidnap and torture of Amoret is seemingly normal, and the cruelty with which she is treated is not only viewed as normal, but condoned by all who witness it.

The Torture of Amoret

Because Busirane is incapable of understanding chaste love due to his insistent worship of Cupid, his treatment of Amoret is based in the pain of courtly love. Many scholars have suggested that Amoret's suffering is largely due to her own fears of consummating her marriage, but Chih-hsin Lin offers a different perspective on the suffering of Amoret. Lin argues that although Amoret understands the pleasure and chastity of a sexual union between husband and wife, her upbringing in the Garden of Adonis did not prepare her for understanding courtly love.³⁵ Although Amoret is a woman who understands the power of love and the purity a sexual union can hold, she plans on doing so only with her husband, Scudamour, but as Lin suggests, "Busyrane can easily misread her refusal to yield him her love and see her as a proud, pretentious courtly lady."³⁶ Lin's interpretation adds some much needed insight into Busirane's character, and although the added depth explains his motivations, it does not make him any less solipsistic. His continued failure to understand chastity and the sanctity of Amoret's marriage leads to the torture of Amoret and her refusal to succumb to Busirane's ever increasingly vile torments only prolongs her suffering.

And her before the vile Enchaunter sate,
Figuring straunge characters of his art,
With liuing blood he those characters wrate,
Dreadfully dropping from her dying hart,
Seeming transfixed with a cruell dart,
And all perforce to make her him to loue. (xii. 31. 1-6)

³⁵ Lin, 360.

³⁶ Lin, 370.

The description of Busirane as a “vile Enchaunter” shows not only his deceptive nature, but also his evil personality. Because he relies on enchantments to attempt to win Amoret’s affections, he shows that he knows nothing about true love. Love cannot be based in deception in order to flourish; it must be based in honesty. As his personality is inherently “vile,” he cannot appreciate that which is pure or give loving affection in return. Instead, Busirane relies on force which he mistakes for love because, due to his warped worship of Cupid, he perceives love as a violent emotional expression. By writing his spells with the blood from Amoret’s “dying hart” he is literally draining her of life by trying to force her to love him. Unlike the love between Venus and Adonis, this love does not come naturally, nor is it based in mutual respect and admiration. What Busirane feels is not love, but rather infatuation and lust, which he mistakenly identifies as love. This misunderstanding of love makes him the enemy of pure love, and his House, and the values he promotes, are diametrically opposed to the Garden of Adonis.³⁷ Similarly, the act of trying “to make her him to loue” shows force that should not be part of a genuinely loving relationship. Because he has to “make” her love him, he is ignoring the natural process a relationship should take, and imposing his will on her while ignoring her freedom of choice.

Susan Frye argues that the excessive amount of violence directed towards Amoret “results from the conflict between Spenser’s insistence on chastity as defined as male possession of the female body and the counterheterosexual chastity of Spenser’s audience and patron, Queen Elizabeth I.”³⁸ This clash between what Frye identifies as two different types of chastity plays out in the brutal treatment of Amoret because Busirane’s ultimate desire is to possess her body without respecting her desire for chastity. The chastity Amoret desires is the same that Venus

³⁷ Berger, 106.

³⁸ Susan Frye. “Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane.” *Signs*, 20 no. 1 (1994): 49.

and Adonis practice; however, Busirane does not recognize the sanctity of chaste love, which is why he attempts to impose his will on her.

Busirane's inability to perceive anything but lust is what ultimately makes him the greatest villain in Book Three. Although other villains with similar lustful desires are presented, and defeated by Britomart, Busirane's utterly vile treatment of a person so pure as Amoret sets him apart from the lesser villains of the Book. Other than his despicable treatment of Amoret, his corruption of love makes him a deplorable character with no redeeming qualities. He is vile, base, and selfish. He recognizes only lust, and because of that, is concerned only with his needs. This selfish attitude blinds him to the desires of others, especially Amoret, who he view only as an object for his pleasure. Because his desires in life are so egocentric and steeped in the corruption of love, only one who is selfless and chaste can defeat him. That responsibility of course falls to Britomart, as she is the allegorical figure for chastity.

Of Britomart's defeat of Busirane, Robert E Wood argues it "is a relatively early incident in Britomart's career. It represents her first important victory but does not significantly assist the maturation of her personality."³⁹ Although Wood is correct in asserting that this a very important victory for Britomart, it does aid in the maturation of her personality. To defeat Busirane, she must be patient and formulate a plan, which she has not had to do before. After she frees Amoret, she aides in her reunion with Scudamour, and ensures the success and continued chastity of their love. Much of the discussion given to Britomart in Book Three explains her backstory or her quest for Artegall and the defense of chastity, which culminates in the defeat of Busirane. Wood's argument that it is her first important victory is accurate; however, it is the pinnacle of her role as the defender of chastity, and solidifies the commitment she has made to remain chaste

³⁹ Wood, 11.

until her wedding to Artegall, and to continue to keep their love chaste after their wedding. Of the triumph over Busirane, Spenser writes:

So mightily she smote him, that to ground,
He fell half dead; next stroke him should haue slaine,
Had not the Lady, which by him stood bound,
Dernly vnto her called to abstaine, (xii. 34. 1-4)

Britomart's action of being able to strike Busirane down show that despite his physical dominance over Amoret, he does not have power over her because as Charles W. Lemmi states "lust is destroyed by chastity."⁴⁰ Although Busirane is not physically destroyed, the power that he had over Amoret, which was fueled by lust, is broken. The description of Britomart "mightily" striking Busirane down shows the importance of her role as a knight in her character, and also demonstrates the power of chastity. Because she is able to defeat Busirane, Britomart proves that the power of chastity is greater than the lust Busirane holds in such high regard. The fact that she would "haue slaine" him with the "next stroke" conveys her absolute disdain for his lifestyle and her disregard for all things based in lust, which she clearly despises. Although Amoret has been tortured by Busirane, her call for Britomart to "abstaine" communicates that she understands he is the only one who can undo the suffering she has endured at his hands. Amoret's title of "Lady" reveals that despite the harsh treatment she endures, she has not succumbed to base behavior herself and has not fundamentally changed despite what she has endured. Britomart's ability to remain self-possessed and stop her attack on Busirane reveals that there is a level of understanding between the two women that makes it all the more necessary for Amoret to be saved by a woman. Unlike Scudamour, Britomart is not fueled by passion and despite her disgust for Busirane, she is able to remain calm and act with purpose when saving Amoret. Joseph Campana argues that it is in this moment Amoret and Britomart become true

⁴⁰ Lemmi, 136.

friends⁴¹ and are united in their mutual hatred for Busirane's lifestyle and their shared victory in the defeat of Busirane.

The Reunion of Pure Love

Despite Britomart's admirable defeat of Busirane, many scholars have complained that the conclusion of Book Three is not satisfying because it does not end with the union of Britomart and Artegall. Instead, the union between Amoret and Scudamour reaches its completion as the two are reunited by Britomart in the 1590 edition. While the union of Britomart and Artegall would be a satisfying way to end Book Three, in the scope of *The Faerie Queene*, it is necessary to postpone the union between Britomart and Artegall. As Wood points out, the defeat of Busirane is an important moment in Britomart's career, but she is still not yet a fully realized character, and postponing her union with Artegall until this happens makes the eventual union of the two much more satisfying.⁴² The union we are presented with, that of Amoret and Scudamour, is a reflection of the eventual marriage between Britomart and Artegall, which will match theirs in terms of purity and happiness.

So seemd those two, as growne together quite,
That Britomart halfe enuying their blesse,
Was much empassiond in her gentle sprite,
And to her selfe oft wisht like happinesse,
In vaine she wisht, that fate n'ould let her yet possesse. (xii. 46. 6-9)

Amoret and Scudamour have "growne together quite" after the defeat of Busirane shows their continued affection for each other in the face of difficulties. Their ability to come back together after a forced separation such as this was, demonstrates that the love between them has not suffered, and retains its virtuousness. Their love, following the example of Venus and Adonis, becomes the best example of pure but consummated love put into practice. As Britomart acted as

⁴¹ Campana, 188.

⁴² Wood, 11.

the model and defender for chastity by saving Amoret, Amoret and Scudamour will now act as the model for pure married love for Britomart and Artegall. Britomart's "halfe enuying" look shows that now that her task as knight has momentarily come to a close after the defeat of Busirane, she can connect with her feminine side and wish for the love that she seeks. Her act of "enuying" the love between Amoret and Scudamour shows that she still very much desires this type of love and recognizes that it is the only type of love that is true. This is important for her to see because while Venus and Adonis have set an important example for pure love, Amoret and Scudamour are the first pair to put their example into practice in a place outside of the Garden of Adonis. The fact that it works gives credence to her belief in, and desire for, pure but consummated love.

Although Britomart has plenty of reason to celebrate at this moment, as she has just defeated the truly vile Busirane and reunited a pair of lovers whose love is as true as her own, it merely reminds Britomart that her own journey has yet to reach its completion. Her wish for "like happinesse" conveys that she recognizes her own desires and will strive to emulate this example. Through the love of Amoret and Scudamour, the example of Venus and Adonis reaches its closure in Book Three. Their love has been founded on chastity, allowing Britomart to bring them together. They have overcome the trials of lust and emerged as lovers who are unscathed by corruption. Because of this, they are able to carry on this example as Britomart continues her search for Artegall.

Although Britomart is an important figure in the reunion of Amoret and Scudamour, the moment is ultimately about the love they have for one another. Even though Amoret has been subjected to torture at the hands of one who claims to love her, she still embraces Scudamour with an open and loving heart. Despite the damaging effects of lust, love will always have a nurturing and healing quality that tames the ravages of lust. This is evident in the moment

Scudamour embraces Amoret after seeing her again once she is freed from Busirane's prison. Many scholars have pointed to Scudamour's impulsive and rash temperament as a reason for their marriage to be doomed to failure. The joy and happiness that is evident in that moment, however, show that despite his rash nature, he does love Amoret very much, and theirs will be a marriage that is based in happiness, acceptance, and nurturing.

Lightly he clipt her twixt his armes twaine,
And straightly did embrace her body bright,
Her body, late the prison of sad paine,
Now the sweet lodge of loue and deare delight: (xii. 45. 1-4)

Despite the damage inflicted by Busirane, Amoret's reunion with Scudamour proves that true love conquers the damages wrought by lust. Similar to Venus' ability to heal the Adonis' wound, Scudamour's love has a healing quality that transforms the pain Amoret has experienced into "deare delight" upon seeing him. The description of her body as "bright" shows that his love has already begun to erase the pain and torment she suffered and has begun to make her whole and healed again. The transformative and healing quality of love ensures that within their relationship all difficulties will be met with understanding and support. Scudamour's action of taking Amoret "twixt his armes twaine" shows that he understands her need for love and security and can also provide it. Their love has a quality of acceptance that is rarely found in any other aspect of life. Although she has endured a great deal of pain and suffering at the hands of another man, Scudamour does not appropriate harmful judgment upon her, and "embrace[s]" her with love and understanding. Even though he is not able to save Amoret from Busirane, he is the only one who can help her heal from the pain and torture she endured, and in this way live up to the meaning of his name and act as the "shield of love." It is evident from their reunion that the model of love set by Venus and Adonis is able to be carried out in the mortal world. As Britomart witnesses the reunion of Amoret and Scudamour, she feels sadness that she is not yet united with Artegall, but witnessing the two lovers reaffirms her belief in the chastity of love.

The passion and joy that is evident in the reunion of Amoret and Scudamour is indicative of their relationship containing the qualities of pure love. In the 1590 ending Spenser includes in the reunion scene a statue of Hermaphrodite. Spenser's reason for including this statue was to show how, like the statue, "[s]o seemed those two, as growne together quite" (xii. 46. 5). Their ability to become united as one is not only indicative of their marriage vows, but holds a deeper meaning of the genuine affection they have for one another. As seen in the marriage of Malbecco and Hellenore, marriage vows themselves do not determine the quality of love in the marriage, but rather the actions of the lovers do. Because there is trust and acceptance in this relationship, they are able to come together in a virtuous union. Donald Cheney states that this moment "present[s] a genuine conclusion, an emblem of completeness and fulfillment in the union of Amoret and Scudamour."⁴³ If Cheney is in fact right, this moment points toward a happy union between the two. There is no reason to assume that Scudamour has or ever had any intentions that were not pure, but doubts about the nature of Busirane's appearance have scholars divided on whether the marriage was not without its difficulties.

The Innocence of Amoret and Scudamour

Some scholars have argued that Amoret's suffering is a manifestation of her own fears "of the horror and enslavement of physical surrender"⁴⁴ and that Busirane is not real, but a rather a reflection of her own inner turmoil and uncertainty of marriage. Thomas P. Roche Jr. states that "[t]he mask which takes place at the House of Busirane is Amoret's interpretation of the wedding mask."⁴⁵ Similar to her experience in the House of Busirane, a mask takes place at

⁴³ Donald Cheney. "Spenser's Hermaphrodite and the 1590 Faerie Queene." *PMLA* 87, no. 2 (1972): 193.

⁴⁴ Thomas P. Roche Jr. "The Challenge to Chastity: Britomart at the House of Busyrane." *PMLA* 76, no. 4 (1961): 341.

⁴⁵ Roche, 341.

Amoret's wedding to Scudamour, but unlike the mask that Busirane puts on, this one presents a satisfied and genuine view of love. Roche's view, however, asserts that Amoret is afraid of marriage and projects her fear of intimacy onto the mask that takes place at her wedding. Of her wedding to Scudamour, Roche states "Amoret is afraid of the physical surrender which her marriage to Scudamour must entail."⁴⁶ If Spenser had not given much description to how Amoret was raised, this would be a valid argument. However, Amoret's childhood is described in detail in canto vi where it is revealed that she grew up in the Garden of Adonis. From her time there, she learns "all the lore of loue, and goodly womanhead" (vi. 51. 9) suggesting that she has a developed awareness of what constitutes a true and loving relationship. Having grown up in the Garden of Adonis, and witnessed the true love of Venus and Adonis, Amoret has no reason to fear the physical union that her marriage to Scudamour will entail. Because she learned the "lore of loue" at a young age, she again has no reason to fear the love she has for Scudamour, and demonstrates this when she is reunited with him. Being such a chaste character herself, it is unlikely that she would be able to conjure up the lust filled images that define Busirane and his twisted interpretation of love.

There is no doubt that Busirane is one of the least developed figures in Book Three. Little explanation is given about his background or his motivations for kidnapping Amoret. His only apparent motivation is lust, but why he chooses Amoret on the day of her wedding is seemingly a mystery at first. Busirane appears to spring into existence during the wedding of Amoret and Scudamour fully formed and extremely vicious. With the little amount of detail Spenser provides, scholars are divided on how to interpret Busirane and his role in Book Three. For many years, the abiding belief about Busirane was that he was a reflection of Amoret's fears about her

⁴⁶ Roche, 342.

marriage to Scudamour.⁴⁷ Sheila T. Cavanaugh takes this interpretation a step further by suggesting that Busirane is a reflection of Scudamour. Of Scudamour and Busirane she states “[t]hough Scudamour may function as Amoret’s fated mate, he remains culpable for transgressions which seem congruent with the enchanter’s crimes. Neither male character deserves praise or emulation, but only one receives significant criticism in the narrative.”⁴⁸ Cavanaugh is correct in noting the similarities between Scudamour and Busirane, but it is not because Busirane is a reflection of Scudamour’s inner desires, but rather because he is the perversion of everything wholesome about Scudamour. Although similar, these two characters are separate from one another, but this is how Busirane attempts to steal Amoret’s love. By presenting an image that she is familiar with, he intends to introduce her to the perversions of lust and win her heart by attempting to be a better version of Scudamour.

Although Scudamour is Amoret’s true love, his actions do not always depict a man who acts in calm and logical manner. For this reason, it is easy to mistake his passionate actions as unresolved anger and lust. His impulsive manner is similar to Adonis’ brash and headstrong behavior when Venus warned him to exercise caution during the hunt. His impulsivity, however, does not make him any less capable of feeling and expressing pure love. In this instance he behaves much like the young Adonis who was often reckless and impulsive, but also completely capable of entering into a pure and loving relationship with Venus. Scudamour’s actions in obtaining the love of Amoret are completely different than Busirane’s. Their love is cultivated naturally through the expression of genuine affection for one another. It does not rely on the use of force to survive, and this sets it apart from what Busirane believes about love.

⁴⁷ Roche, 340.

⁴⁸ Sheila T Cavanaugh. *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in The Faerie Queene* (Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1994): 102.

From the moment that Scudamour is introduced into the narrative, it is apparent that he is suffering by being kept apart from Amoret. When the reader is first introduced to Scudamour, he is outside of Busirane's castle and overcome with despair that he cannot pass through the flames that separate him from being able to rescue Amoret. After Britomart is able to pass through them, their true purpose is revealed:

And bad the stubborne flames to yield him way:
But cruell Mulciber would not obey
His threatful pride, but did the more augment
His mighty rage, and with imperious sway
Him forst (maulgre) his fercenes to relent
And backe retire, all scorch and pitifully brent. (xi. 26. 4-9)

The flames that Scudamour struggles to pass through are representative of the passion he feels for Amoret. Much like Adonis, he is too young and reckless to acknowledge that his pride is his downfall. The flames that Busirane has placed around the entrance to his castle are "augment[ed]" by Scudamour's pride, and in so doing, Busirane uses against him the very quality that should be most beneficial in saving Amoret. Although Scudamour cannot enter Busirane's castle, Britomart can because she does not feel the same "pride" and "rage" as Scudamour and can easily pass through the fire. This moment provides another link to Ovid's presentation of Venus and Adonis⁴⁹ as Britomart is seen to take the advice of Venus which Adonis did not follow. Before his fateful boar hunt, Venus warned Adonis to act with caution. By following Venus' advice, Britomart acts with a calm and collected demeanor and is not touched by "the stubborne flames" and does not fall victim to Busirane's trap as Scudamour does. Similarly, Britomart can act with experience in this matter, because she has already learned to quell the flames of intense passion. Her training as a knight and subsequent quest to find Artegall required that she act with composure and remain imperturbable. This does not mean that

⁴⁹ Iris Tillman Hill. "Britomart and Be Bold, Be Not Too Bold." *ELH* 38, no. 2 (1971): 176.

the love she feels for Artegall is greater or less than the love Scudamour feels for Amoret, but rather that she has learned how to cope with overwhelming emotions while Scudamour has not.

Busirane's ability to use Scudamour's emotions against him shows the truly vile character he possesses and similarly shows that he understands passion. The passion that Scudamour feels is borne out of love for Amoret and a desire to have her safely beside him again. Busirane, however, is motivated by passionate lust which operates much differently than love, as it seeks to keep love out. If Scudamour was merely a reflection of Busirane, as some have argued, and his intentions with Amoret were not as wholesome as they seem, he would be able to enter the House of Busirane, because like the enchanter himself, he would be motivated by lust rather love. Since he is unable to enter, it is clear that he is acting from a place of pure love, yet, because he is lacking in experience, he acts rashly and foolishly without being able to determine the consequences.

It is evident that Busirane is neither a reflection of Amoret's fears or of Scudamour's brashness. What he represents is the perversion of true love. Specifically, to target Amoret, he is the perversion of her true love, Scudamour. Although there are many parallels between Busirane and Scudamour, I believe this is so because Busirane appeals to Amoret by presenting a familiar presence. By presenting the Mask of Cupid, Busirane mocks Scudamour's association with Cupid and presents a perversion of love rather than true love. Similarly, both men view Amoret as a prize they have won; however, Scudamour did succeed in winning Amoret's love, while Busirane won her by force. These are all things that Amoret would recognize about Scudamour and Busirane uses them in an attempt to corrupt the purity of their marriage. The reason he chose her on her wedding day was to defile the purity of her love for Scudamour and attempt to introduce her to his way of life. In doing these things that present elements of Scudamour's character in a twisted light, Busirane becomes the perverted form of Scudamour and the

relationship he attempts to cultivate with Amoret is a perversion of their marriage.⁵⁰ Of this relationship, Roche states “[h]e is an abuse of marriage because the falsity of his view of love can lead only to lust or death.”⁵¹ Roche’s statement reveals the true peril Amoret was in at the House of Busirane. To live, she would have to forego her values and become a corrupted woman, but to retain her values would mean certain death.

During his enactment of the Mask of Cupid it is clear that Busirane’s only understanding comes from courtly love. Constantly at the forefront of a courtly relationship was suffering and longing, which Busirane seeks to create while holding Amoret captive. The suffering and longing experienced during courtly love were intended to be felt when the lovers were apart; however, Busirane creates this not only by keeping Amoret away from Scudamour, but also by attempting to force her to love him. The force Busirane uses is magic, as he intends “to transfer Amoret’s love for Scudamour to himself by charms.”⁵² Busirane cannot discern the value of the bond true love creates, and does not place any value on creating it himself. His heavy reliance on charms and magic to secure what he needs ensures he does not have to depend upon a sincere and caring personality. This only further removes him from humanity and ensures that a life based in lust is a perversion of natural human desire.

It is clear that Amoret’s suffering was due to her unwillingness to give herself to Busirane and forsake Scudamour, but Donald Cheney argues that “Britomart shares with Amoret and Florimell a susceptibility to the wounds of love.”⁵³ As Amoret’s body was “late the prison of sad paine” it is clear that Busirane inflicted many wounds upon her, however, Cheney is wrong

⁵⁰ Roche, 343.

⁵¹ Roche, 342.

⁵² Roche, 342.

⁵³ Cheney, 197.

by stating that her wounds were caused by love. Although these wounds were inflicted in the name of Busirane's interpretation of love they do not represent a true and loving relationship, but rather the ravishment of lust. Cheney's argument, though correct for Britomart and Florimell, does not apply in equal measure to Amoret. Both Florimell and Britomart have felt pain because of true love and the heartache separation from their beloved causes, but it is not at the hands of a third party. Theirs is a more personal pain that has to do with longing while Amoret is the only one who is tortured and subjected to violence for the love she feels.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

Book Three of *The Faerie Queene* presents a unique view of chastity, which Susannah Jane McMurphy argues “is not the vowed celibacy of the medieval aesthetic, but is synonymous with conjugal love in its purest form.”⁵⁴ By removing the definition of chastity from “vowed celibacy” Spenser exemplifies the qualities of natural, selfless expression and the importance it has on creating a meaningful bond with a lover. Refusal to develop this bond results in a distancing from humanity and an inability to form a loving relationship, as evidenced by Busirane. Spenser’s recasting of the definition of chastity further applies to many of the love stories in Book Three. Those that are based in lust ultimately meet an unhappy ending. Since the bond of lust is tenuous, it is easily broken and cannot stand the test that trials place on it. The bond of chaste love, however, retains its strength and does not break under the strain of the burden of the material world.

Britomart’s continual defense of chaste love renders her as the supreme voice for all that is pure in Book Three. She consistently acts with composure and care, which combined with her martial skills make her a dedicated protector of chastity. While it is easy to view her presence as a knight as her defining characteristic, one must remember that she too operates within the framework of selfless love. Even though Artegall is not present in Book Three, it does not stop Britomart from desiring to have a loving, chaste relationship with him. This is, in fact, what drives her in Book Three. Despite her abilities as a knight, her female desires cannot be overlooked as they are the impetus that began her quest and defense of pure love. Although Britomart’s quest in Book Three did not end with her marriage to Artegall, her defeat of

⁵⁴ Susannah Jane McMurphy. “Spenser’s Use of Ariosto for Allegory” (PhD diss. University of Washington 1924): 31.

Busirane represents an important victory for chastity that will continue to define her character and her search for Artegall.

By presenting his own interpretation of the Ovidian myth of Venus and Adonis, Spenser establishes early on how this pure but consummated love should function when carried out in a relationship. While this does not yet fully extend to Britomart and Artegall, its principles can, nonetheless, be applied to the union of Amoret and Scudamour. Although the ending was changed in the 1596 edition, the original text presents the two lovers joined together as one in wedded bliss. In the ending of the 1590 edition, Amoret and Scudamour are able to enact the pure love created in the Garden of Adonis in the mortal world. This acts a testament not only to the healing powers it possess, which were witnessed in the Garden and during Amoret's reunion with Scudamour, but also to the strength of such a bond and the trials it can endure. Although this was not the ending Spenser eventually chose, it remains the purest moment of love in Book Three, and a perfect enactment of a true selfless and loving marriage.

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