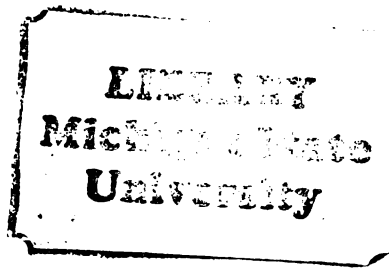


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SPENSER'S MYTHS OF VENUS AND CUPID IN THE
FAERIE QUEENE AND THE FOWRE HYMNES: THE
EMERGENCE OF MARRIAGE AS A ROMANTIC IDEAL

presented by

Tetsuji Hiramatsu

has been accepted towards fulfillment
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Ph.D. degree in English

Donald M. Rosenberg
Major professor

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AND THE FOWRE HYMNES: THE EMERGENCE OF MARRIAGE AS A
ROMANTIC IDEAL

By

Tetsuji Hiramatsu

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ABSTRACT

SPENSER'S MYTHS OF VENUS AND CUPID IN THE FAERIE QUEENE
AND THE FOWRE HYMNES: THE EMERGENCE OF MARRIAGE AS A
ROMANTIC IDEAL

By

Tetsuji Hiramatsu

It often escapes our notice that Spenser is the literary fountainhead of the major revolution in sexual mores and popular attitudes toward marriage. Dissatisfied with the formula of the amour courtois and the conception of love as courteous adultery in medieval romance, Spenser established a new pattern of romance of marriage centered upon the felicity of Christian monogamous life in the Faerie Queene. The Protestant ethics which stressed the new sense of individualism and intimacy within a family was the driving force behind this literary phenomenon.

Spenser effects this new synthesis of the romantic view of love and marriage through the myths of Venus and Cupid. The universal basis of marriage is procreation. The Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus present Venus the genetrix rerum, the universal goddess of generation who drives every creature to perpetuate its species through procreation. Allegorical union of Venus and Adonis, Form and Matter, is the symbolic celebration of this natural, primordial element in human marriage.

Equally important is Spenser's myth of the "cruel" and "gentle" Cupid. We see the typical image of the "cruel" Cupid in the House of Busyrane. This sardonic, tyrannical god of love symbolizes the deceit, lies, and pains of courtly love which Spenser saw as the most potent enemy to his ideal of married love. Britomart's rescue of Amoret, the romantic passion incarnated, from the House of Busyrane completes the triumph of the romantic ideal of marriage over courtly deception. The "gentle" Cupid of the Garden of Adonis, with his weapons taken away and thus symbolically made innocuous, is Spenser's image of matrimonial affection: in the Garden of Adonis the "gentle" Cupid plays joyously with his newly regained wife Psyche.

Despite their strong Neo-Platonic coloring, the Fowre Hymnes are not about the repudiation of earthly love. The felicity of married love is again extolled in the Lover's Paradise in the first hymn, and the celestial union of God and Sapience in the fourth hymn presents the sacred model of Spenser's ideal of marriage.

To Miki

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INTRODUCTION

With his usual flair for sweeping generalization which has transformed our very perception of certain literary works, C. S. Lewis comments on the House of Busirane in Book III of the Faerie Queene:

. . . Spenser has painted for us an unforgettable picture not of lust but of love—love as understood by the traditional French novel or by Guillaume de Lorris—in all its heartbreaking glitter, its sterility, its suffocating monotony. And when at last the ominous door opens and the Mask of Cupid comes out, what is this but a picture of the deep human suffering which underlies such loves? . . . The Mask, in fact embodies all the sorrows of Isoud among the lepers, and Launcelot mad in the woods, of Guinevere at the stake or Guinevere made nun and penitent, of Troilus waiting on the wall, of Petrarch writing vergogna è 'l frutto and Sidney rejecting the love that reaches but to dust; or Donne writing his fierce poems from the House of Busirane soon after Spenser had written of it. When Britomart rescues Amoret from this place of death she is ending some five centuries of human experience, predominantly painful. (The Allegory of Love, p. 341)

Spenser's picture of love as presented in the Faerie Queene is unlike that of any of his predecessors. Despite being a fervid admirer of Chaucer, Spenser found something fundamentally deficient in the medieval concept of love as courteous adultery. It is in his insistence upon the essential harmony of sanctity and sensuality in marriage that Spenser has become a precursor of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Milton, leaving with us the record of the decisive chapter in "the final struggle between the romance of marriage and the romance of adultery" (Lewis, Ibid., p. 340). All the middle books of the Faerie Queene revolve around the inevitability and unique happiness of marriage. The

union of Amoret and Scudamour, of Florimell and Marinell, and of Britomart and Arthegall, all depict the consummation of love that is healthy, confident, not haunted by the bitter memory of religious anathema against erotic love. In the nuptials of the Medway and the Thames, marriage is extended even to a cosmic scale and involves the delightful pageants of the gods and rivers and the celebration of the inherent order of the natural world.

The new sentiment and feeling, however, had first to discover new forms capable of holding these innovative ideas together and communicating them to the reader. It meant that the poet had to transform internally certain literary forms and conventions he inherited so that they could serve his unique purpose. Thus he improved upon rime royal and invented the "Spenserian" stanza. Many elements went into the form of the Faerie Queene as a long narrative poem--the medieval allegorical poem, the Virgilian classical epic in twelve books, the Ariostan romantic epic with canto division--, but the result of combination is uniquely Spenser's own. We can say the same about Spenser's treatment of the pagan mythology of love, specifically the myth of Venus and Cupid. The myths of Aphrodite-Venus and Eros-Cupid have long been fundamental symbols of what people felt and thought about love in the western world since the time of Sappho and Homer. It was expected of any poet who attempted to write about Venus and Cupid to follow certain conventions about them and present some immediately recognizable features and themes, for example, Cupid's blindness or his love-kindling arrows. Spenser was of course more than

willing to oblige the reader's expectations by supplying rich mythological allusions and iconographical details, borrowed from Ovid here, modelled from Petrarch there. But the truth is, Spenser's Venus and Cupid are like none of his contemporaries'. He obviously saw these two figures of pagan mythology, not merely as the accretions of literary allusions and associations, but as the potent instruments to express his views about love--its motivating force, its ideal form, and its enemy. Since the poet's romantic idea of marriage was so unique, he had to modify the myths of Venus and Cupid as necessity arose, discarding certain aspects or traits that militated against his convictions, adding some salient features conducive to the better expression of his ideas.

The myth of Aphrodite-Venus is rich, to say the least. Having come from the east, Aphrodite was quickly naturalized in Greek soil as the goddess of love, beauty, and female charm. In Homer, "laughter-loving" (philomeides) and "golden" are two epithets peculiar to her. The symbol of her power is her girdle, "wherein are fashioned all manner of allurements; therein is love, therein desire, therein dalliance--beguilement that steals the wits even of the wise" (Iliad, 14. 216-17). As the goddess of love, Aphrodite's role very frequently coincided with Eros'. Unlike Eros, however, Aphrodite was worshipped in various aspects of her power under different cult names. Her role as a vegetation goddess can be best attested by her close association with the Horae ("hours") who presided over the orderly change of the seasons (The Homeric Hymn VI, "To Aphrodite"), and above all, with Adonis who was obviously a corn spirit whose death in autumn, connected with the

withering of flowers and herbs, was ritualistically lamented by women (Theocritus, The Idyl, XV). As the universal goddess of love, she embodied the procreative impulse within all living beings, and Lucretius perpetuated the idea by his solemn paeon to the goddess in the beginning of De Rerum Natura. Aphrodite was also worshipped as the priestess of marriage under the cult titles of Thalamon ("Of the bridal-chamber") or Arma ("Who joins together in matrimony"). Being born from the sea-foam, she always had a close connection with the sea and navigation, and Apelles' painting of Aphrodite Anadyomene, "rising from the sea," exerted a powerful influence over the Renaissance artists. Clad in armor, she was even worshipped for her bellicose capability.

During the Middle Ages, Venus was, generally speaking, of more earthly significance than Cupid. Fulgentius (Mythologiae, 2. 1) allegorizes each traditional property of Venus in strongly moralistic terms--she is naked because the sin of lust is never cloaked, and roses, sacred to the goddess, are appropriate for her since "the roses both grow red and have thorns, as lust blushes at the outrage to modesty and pricks with the sting of sin." The Euhemeristic interpretation, which speculated that Venus was in fact a common woman of easy virtue, was rife (Prudentius, Contra Orationem Symmachi, l. 164-73; Gower, Confessio Amantis, 5. 1430 f.). Being identical with Luxuria, carnal love, Venus was often represented in pictorial art as languorously lying on a bed of roses, admiring her own beauty in the mirror which she held in her hand. The word Venus became synonymous with lechery, and that

is how the Wife of Bath uses the word; "And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke" (The Wife of Bath's Prologue, 464).

Spenser did not want his Venus to be soiled by the negative associations given by the medieval mythographers and Christian moralists. The image of a frail coquette fostered in an atmosphere of luxury and debauchery, completely disappears from the poet's picture of the goddess. Instead, there emerges Venus the goddess of nature at whose approach the whole natural world revives, just as the parched land gains new life from timely rain. She is the celestial spirit that brings the seasons of warmth and verdure, the time of love-making for animals and men alike.

Great Venus, Queene of beautie and of grace,
 The ioy of Gods and men, that vnder skie
 Doest fayrest shine, and most adorne thy place,
 That with thy smyling looke doest pacifie
 The raging seas, and makst the stormes to flie;
 Thee goddessse, thee the winds, the clouds doe feare,
 And when thou spredst thy mantle forth on hie,
 The waters play and pleasant lands appeare,
 And heauens laugh, and al the world shews ioyous cheare.
 (The Faerie Queene, 4. 10. 44)

Although this passage bears a strong Lucretian influence, Spenser did not learn his "Naturalism" from Lucretius, but from the school of Chartres, from Alanus de Insulis and his concept of Nature as an intermediary between man and God. In fundamental terms, there is little difference between Spenser's Nature in the Mutability Cantos and Venus in the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus. For Spenser, Venus of pagan mythology and the goddess Natura of Christian Naturalism are both metaphors for the omnipresent Law that governs our phenomenal world--the divine mode of operation which does not exclude Mutability,

but rather employs her service in maintaining the natural order. God has elected to govern the world not by permanence, but by change and continual renewal of every stock of being. This is where the pagan goddess of procreation fits into Spenser's positive affirmation of the Christian world order. Rather than interpreting the ceaseless cycle of death and birth as a curse imposed by the Fall, Spenser advises us to see it as an advantage, a unique mode of life that has its own joys and insights. Therefore, marriage and procreation have a significance larger than social or ethical; they are the manifestations of the natural law that commands us to befriend vicissitude and find in it a special mode of self-preservation, and ultimately, of self-expression.

The basic premise of Chapter I, "The Garden of Adonis," is the understanding that the Garden is the powerful symbolic statement of this doctrine and the dynamic fecundity of procreative love. The Garden, "the first seminarie/ Of all things, that are borne to liue and die," sends forth into the world an inexhaustible stock of every imaginable being. The weary soul that has experienced the turmoils of life outside returns to the Garden by the hinder gate and being planted again in the fertile soil regains its original vigor and prepares itself for another journey through the world. Presiding over this endless cycle of generation is Venus, who has ransomed her dead lover Adonis from the Stygian lake and made him the lord of the Garden of Adonis. She, as Form, gives new life to Adonis who is Matter and also the spirit of seed; "eterne in mutabilitie,/ And by succession made perpetuall,/ Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie." The Garden,

however, is also the sanctuary of matrimonial love. There Cupid discards his killing arrows and plays wantonly with his bride Psyche. Venus elects to educate Amoret under their tutelage to prepare her for perfect wifhood. Thus the "Naturalism" of the Garden of Adonis is effectively complemented by positive human values associated with the institution of marriage. After all, Spenser's Venus is not the earth goddess of primitive pantheism. For the poet, her proper domain is within the Christian monogamous life.

Venus in the Temple of Venus, the subject of the second chapter, represents love in a much more civilized sense than her counterpart in the Garden of Adonis. Instead of the spacious outdoor feeling of the Garden, the Temple of Venus is dominated by the stately pillars, the imposing arch, and the odors of incense burnt to propitiate the goddess. After all, it is a temple, a human edifice, as contrasted to the garden. The name of the matrons who inculcate the lessons in femininity upon Amoret are Womanhood, Shamefastness, Cheerfulness, Modesty, Curtesy--the qualities the Elizabethans required in a good wife. After graduating from this university, Amoret should have no difficulty in gracefully treading the delicate steps of the matrimonial dance. Venus in the Temple of Venus, however, signifies more. Being a Hermaphrodite, she reconciles two sexes in one person, and embodies the idea of coincidentia oppositorum, the unification of opposites in the divine oneness of God. That is why Concord, the amiable custodian of the Temple, operates upon the contrary principles of Love and Hate. On the very literal level, the idea of Concord as the resolution of

strife is skillfully illustrated by Scudamour's abduction of Amoret. Scudamour's audacity, even his little display of violence, does not elicit a frown from Venus. The whole scenario of the "rape" is hers and she knows that the male aggressiveness and the maid's initial terror toward it are all part of the natural process of courtship.

The history behind the development of the myth of Eros-Cupid is no less complex. For the sake of convenience, we may say that there were at least three different currents of development in the myth of Eros in Greek thought. First, there was the tradition of the cosmogonical Eros who, according to the accounts given by the Orphic hymns, Hesiod, and Plato, allayed the strife of the elements and imposed an order upon Chaos. This doctrine reached the Renaissance through the Italian Neo-Platonists. Then there is the Greek tragic writers' concept of Eros as the sender of madness, the destroyer of human beings and the disrupter of civil order (Sophocles, Antigone, 781 f.). Thirdly, we have the more light-hearted interpretation of Eros by Anacreon and later Hellenistic writers: a ruddy-faced youth, or a boy, full of knavish pranks, yet winsome and lovable. Moschus' "Love the Runaway" draws the typical picture of him--a sweet prattler with a voice of honey, a cheat, a treacherous brat, who winged like a bird flits from one human heart to another.

The Middle Ages added another important feature to the myth of Cupid--the king of the Court of Love. Typically, a youth in love strays out into the meadow on a May morning and has a vision in which he finds himself in a royal court surrounded by courtiers and damsels with names such as Pleasure, Grace, Pity, Hope, Largess, etc. Finally,

he is led into the king's presence and learns that his name is Love. The lover is given instructions as to the importance of humility and patience in serving his lady, and also hears the explanation of Love's blindness, the power of his arrows and torch, etc. While Venus was associated more often than not with the actual act of love-making, Cupid was more closely related with the finer sentiments of love. In the Romance of the Rose, in Dante's Vita Nuova, and in Chaucer's poems written under a strong French influence, Cupid epitomizes the set of literary and social conventions now known as "courtly love"--the religion of love, Love's Commandments, an idealization of adulterous relationship, and so on. Ovid's idea of love as a mock-combat between the sexes, and the lover as miles Amoris, together with his notoriously cynical Art of Love, added a touch of worldliness and male gallantry to the medieval amour courtois.

Spenser's Protestant ethics and his romantic ideal of marriage made it necessary for him to put some distance between his vision of perfect love and the precepts of courtly love. This is the central theme of the third chapter, "The House of Busyrane." Busyrane is the arch-villain of Book III of the Faerie Queene--the abductor and torturer of Amoret who is the incarnation of faithful, monogamous love. The defeat of Busyrane by Britomart and the rescue of Amoret complete the triumph of married love over "courtly" love. But the real enemy of Britomart is Cupid, the idol of the lascivious, egoistic lovers like Malecasta or Paridell. The House of Busyrane is the temple of the "cruel" Cupid who embodies the lures of sensual love practised by courtly seducers. The whole setting of the House of Busyrane--the

glittering tapestry with the pictures of the amorous escapades of the gods and the heap of the victims of destructive passion thrown indiscriminately together, the sardonic God of Love himself brandishing his cruel arrows and watching Amoret's torture with sadistic delight, and the desolate, empty atmosphere of the entire building--is meant to convey the superficial gaiety and the well-camouflaged pain and barrenness of a love ruled by urbane social etiquette and a perverted pursuit of pleasure. The Masque of Cupid is a little compendium on the diseased emotions that plague such a love; Fancy and Desire are followed by Doubt, Danger, Fear, Grief, Fury, and Cruelty. The prolonged moments of unhappiness and torment finally end with "Vile Pouertie, and lastly Death with infamie" (3. 12. 25). The kind of love depicted in the House of Busyrane is diametrically opposed to the healthy, natural sensuality celebrated in the Garden of Adonis. Everything spontaneous and innocent is suppressed in the House of Busyrane; only sterility and surfeit remain. In the Garden of Adonis, Cupid is firmly under the control of Venus, that is, he is allied with pro-creative love. In the House of Busyrane, however, he is a savage tyrant, accountable to no one but himself, and the love he symbolizes has lost its basis in what constitutes a happy relationship--contentment, trust, sacrifice, and constancy.

Contrasted with this picture of the "cruel" Cupid is the "gentle" Cupid of the Garden of Adonis and the House of Alma. Spenser created a private myth of Cupid that counterbalanced the courtly associations surrounding him. He found it in the motif of "Cupid disarmed" whose origin is found in the Greek Anthology and Roman literature. In order

to enter the Garden of Adonis, the sanctuary of married love, Cupid has to lay aside his bow and arrows, the instruments of destruction and pain. Thus unarmed, he no longer poses a threat to the tranquility of monogamous love. In the Garden of Adonis he even joins the circle of matrimony with his companion Psyche and plays the role of a husband with accustomed ease. Spenser's distinction between the "cruel" and "gentle" Cupid is strikingly consistent. In the Temple of Venus, Cupid with his killing bow and arrows is again banished. His place, however, is taken by the tiny, unarmed Erotes, the surrogates for the "gentle" Cupid. In An Hymne in Honour of Love, the cosmogonical Cupid that sleeps in Venus' lap is "vnarmed then and naked" (62). When Cupid appears in close relationship with Venus, he is normally presented without his arms.

In the Faerie Queene, the values of secular love rarely fall under religious scrutiny. But when they do, Spenser leaves no doubt that the eyes of the lovers are clouded with vanity and that their happy sojourn in Love's Paradise is only a temporary truancy. The old sage named Heavenly Contemplation instructs St. George to renounce the world and the love for ladies once his chivalrous duty on earth has been accomplished; "As for loose loues are vaine, and vanish into nought" (l. 10. 62). This direct comparison of secular and religious values occurs in the starkest form in the Fowre Hymnes. Cupid and Venus, the symbols of earthly love, to whom the first two hymns are dedicated, are superseded in the last two hymns by Christ and Sapience. The poet presents himself as a penitent ashamed of "Many lewd

layes" (H. H. L., 8) he has written in praise of Venus and Cupid. His mind is wholly bent on the adoration of the saving love of Christ and the heavenly glory of Sapience, God's own beloved. The strong Neo-Platonic coloring in the poem and the Neo-Platonic scheme of the scala, the mystical ascent from a woman's beauty to Celestial Beauty, seem to buttress this "recantation" theory.

But as I wish to prove in the fourth chapter, judging from the depth of feeling and the note of conviction we detect in Spenser's treatment of love and marriage in the Faerie Queene, the Amoretti, and Epithalamion, it is hardly credible that the sweeping renunciation of earthly love presents the poet's real belief. Rather, the poet is warning that the claims of erotic love must be restrained in the presence of religious commandments. Moreover, the palinode is a common, and popular, way of ending a love poem for medieval and Renaissance authors. The penitential note is dictated not so much by biographical facts as by the need to adhere to certain literary conventions. Viewed in their correct context, the Fowre Hymnes are the parallel celebration of profane and sacred love. The relationship between the profane and sacred hymns is not that of repudiation, but of contrast. And in its final and simplest form, the contrast is between Agape of the New Testament and Eros of pagan philosophy and love poetry, between "the love that descends to give and the love that ascends to get" (Welsford, Spenser's Fowre Hymnes and Epithalamion, p. 11). Spenser envisions the perfect state of felicity for both kinds of love--the Lover's Paradise in the first hymn, where the

Petrarchan bitter-sweet experience is finally transcended by the vision of the fruition of love in marriage symbolized by the mythical union of Hercules and Hebe, and the vision of Sapience ablaze with heavenly beauty in the fourth hymn. Furthermore, what is the love relationship between God and Sapience, God's "owne Beloued," but the sacred model of Spenser's romantic ideal of marriage which he pursued in the Faerie Queene? The celestial union of the God of Righteousness and Sapience-Christ, whose love toward mankind often softens the rigor of God's judgment, is the mystical prototype of the marriage of Arthegall and Britomart, Justice and Clemency, and of St. George and Una, Holiness and Truth.

CHAPTER I

THE GARDEN OF ADONIS

The myth of Aphrodite or Venus involves many meanings and ideas. The "golden" Aphrodite of Homer, the goddess of love and female beauty and charm, feeble in battle but courted by the gods for her power in bed and bowers, caught with her paramour Ares by Hephaestus, is one aspect of the tradition that evolved around Aphrodite. But equally significant is her role as the goddess of nature and generation, the concept that originally came from the east and was quickly naturalized on Greek soil (Farnell, The Cults of the Greek States, Vol. 2, pp. 642-52). This tradition was passed on to the Middle Ages by Virgil, Ovid, and Lucretius, and as attested by the mythological manuals and dictionaries, it formed an integral, often dominant, part of the significance of Venus during the Renaissance.

Venus in the Garden of Adonis represents fecund and undying generative force which is the universal basis of marriage. The union of Venus and Adonis generates the living bodies which replenish the world, performing the duty commanded by the sacred Word, "Be fruitful and multiply." The central allegory of the Garden of Adonis is the encounter of ultimate male and female principles, the sowing of "timely seed" in "chaste wombe" (Epithalamion, 386). However, there are several vexing controversies with regard to the allegorical meaning

of the Garden. One such problem involves the identification of Form-Substance with Venus-Adonis, and another deals with the presence of Time in the Garden. But once we have firmly established in our mind that Venus and the generative power which she embodies are the controlling principle in the Garden, some of the difficulties are cleared out of our way. Venus is Form, and Time is in the Garden because Venus represents the force immanent in nature.

The story of Venus and Diana with which Spenser begins the Garden of Adonis canto, and their adoption of Amoret and Belphoebe, express the poet's conviction that married love and virginity should not be viewed as antithetical. The most powerful symbol of this belief is the image of Venus-Virgo which Spenser develops in the description of Belphoebe. The poet captures the essential harmony between procreative love and chastity in an emblem of the voluptuous goddess of love roving in the woods attired like a virgin huntress. Spenser's vision of felicitous married relationship reaches its apex in the union of Cupid and Psyche in the Garden of Adonis. Cupid, irrational passion, is disarmed within the premises of Venus. That is, Spenser draws a firm line between the bitter-sweet experience of Petrarchanism and his vision of perfect matrimonial affection.

The best clue to the meaning of the Garden of Adonis is perhaps its contrast to the Bower of Bliss in Book II. The Bower of Bliss is Spenser's image of incontinent love, insatiable lust severed from healthy sensuality and procreative impulse. As C. S. Lewis has made abundantly clear (The Allegory of Love, pp. 324-26; 330-33), Spenser

describes the contrast between the Garden of Adonis and the Bower of Bliss chiefly in terms of Nature-Art antithesis. The Bower of Bliss presents Nature undermined by Art, or Art surreptitiously masquerading as Nature. We have to make absolutely sure in the Bower that everything is really what it seems to be. The arch of vines supplies ripe grapes to a stroller's hand, "freely offering to be gathered," but at a closer look he will discover that mingled with the real grapes are counterfeited ones "of burnisht gold,/ So made by art, to beautifie the rest" (2. 12. 55).¹ The ivy that covers the richly sculptured fountain is counterfeit too: "For the rich mettall was so coloured,/ That wight, who did not well auis'd it view,/ Would surely deeme it to be yuie trew" (*Ibid.*, 61). This dubious atmosphere, with its perversion of the natural order, prepares us for the kind of erotic trap that Acrasia, the mistress of the Bower, is spreading for her victims. The description of her sensual and languorous beauty is remarkably vivid. But the Bower shows us nothing in way of sexual fulfillment. As Lewis observes, "There is not a kiss or an embrace in the island: only male prurience and female provocation," and Acrasia is "a picture not of 'lust in action' but of lust suspended--lust turning into what would now be called skeptophilia" (p. 332).

In contrast the Garden of Adonis is devoid of any artifice; it is all Nature. It is the fairest place "as Nature can deuize," and the green arbor in which Adonis lies slumbering is "not by art,/ But of the trees owne inclination made" (3. 6. 44).. The place is characterized by a spacious, outdoor feeling which is strangely lacking in the

Bower. After all, it is a "garden" where nature is, as contrasted to a "bower," what she is meant to be--verdant, fecund, and animating. The fruits that bend the boughs with their heaviness are not the gaudy metal balls of the Bower. Appearance and reality coincide, and our senses are not only gratified, but also given assurance that what they naturally find pleasant is often good too. The Garden restores our faith in appearance; the ripe fruit is the symbol of inexhaustible fecundity of nature. Also in the Garden love is emancipated from artificial perversions and set in its natural environment. "Franckly each paramour his leman knowes," and the Garden is the nuptial bed of Venus and Adonis; "But she her selfe, when euer that she will,/ Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill" (3. 6. 46). Adonis, killed by a boar, is recalled from the Stygian lake by the goddess and is made the lord of the Garden of Adonis where the boar, their deadly enemy, is eternally imprisoned in a cave. The marriage of Venus and Adonis symbolizes the union of Heaven and Earth, and as I argue later, the marriage of formal and material principles which united together constitute the universal basis of all terrestrial beings.

Another source of contrast, often unnoticed, is Acrasia as the false Venus. When Guyon and the Palmer step into the inmost recess of the Bower, they find Acrasia fondling sleeping Verdant ("giver of spring") on her lap, "after long wanton ioyes." As the posture of the two suggests, Acrasia is in perfect control over the youth. Inclining her head she often bedews his lips with kisses and, a reminder that she

is a sorceress, "through his humid eyes did sucke his spright" (2. 12. 73). The almost transparent veil in which she is arrayed "or rather disarrayd," her "snowy brest," a few drops of perspiration, the telltale sign of her "late sweet toyle," all emphasize her voluptuous beauty. The enervation of Verdant is symbolically presented by his weapons idly hanging by.

The situation, no doubt, imitates the traditional theme of Venus and Mars. Lucretius (De Rerum Natura, 1. 31. f.) presents them in classical posture, Mars laying his head on Venus' lap, gazing and admiring her beauty. The Renaissance poets and painters were particularly fond of this theme. Poliziano's version (Stanze, 1. 122) is very close to Spenser.

He [Cupid] found her seated on the edge of her couch, just then released from the embrace of Mars, who lay on his back in her lap, still feeding his eyes on her face: a cloud of roses showered down upon them to renew them for their amorous pursuits; but Venus with ready desires was giving him a thousand kisses on his eyes and forehead.

The resemblances with Spenser are striking. Acrasia is lying on the bed of roses, the flower sacred to Venus. The normal meaning of the myth of Venus and Mars is that peace, harmony, and love are superior in strength to war and discord. In the famous painting by Botticelli, the triumphant Venus reclines with a graceful smile beside sleeping Mars, while the infant satyrs are playing with his spear and helmet. Spenser's Acrasia and Verdant pervert the myth. The Cyprian goddess is turned into a sorceress, the god of war into a young, promising knight whose sense of honor and ambition has been corrupted by the lure of debauchery.

His warlike armes, the idle instruments
 Of sleeping praise, were hong vpon a tree,
 And his braue shield, full of old monuments,
 Was fowly ra'st, that none of the signes might see;
 Ne for them, ne for honour cared hee,
 Ne ought, that did to his aduauncement tend,
 But in lewd loues, and wastfull luxuree,
 His dayes, his goods, his bodie he did spend:
 O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend.

(2. 12. 80)

The idle arms, normally the symbol of peace, mean only the degradation and emasculated state into which the young man has fallen.

The contrast between the true and false Venuses is enhanced by the fact that Genius, who is normally associated with Nature or Venus in medieval literature, is the porter both of the Bower of Bliss and the Garden of Adonis. Genius in the Bower is an evil tutelary spirit, "The foe of life, that good enuyes to all," while Genius in the Garden is the universal god of generation,² whom Spenser has drawn in all probability from the Greek sophist Cebes' Tabula, translated by Sir Frances Poyngz in 1552, in which Genius is depicted as a porter who instructs and guides the souls that are about to enter into life. Clearly Spenser meant Genius of the Bower as a sinister contrast to his counterpart in the Garden. And, although Genius is described as the vicar of Nature in Alanus' Complaint of Nature and Jean de Meun's continuation of the Romance of the Rose, in Middle English literature he is often associated with Venus. Thus in Gower's Confessio Amantis he appears as Venus' confessor who shrives Gower and gives him instructions on love. In Lydgate's Reson and Sensuallyte, Genius first appears as the priest of Nature (864-68), but later he is the priest of Venus who warns women against coyness and disdain. Whether Spenser

was aware of this connection of Genius with Venus is problematical, but it remains a strong possibility.

The Garden of Adonis is first and foremost the sanctuary of Venus as the goddess of generation. Spenser compares it to Paphos, Cythera, and Cnidus, the traditional places of worship of Venus. On top of the "stately Mount" that stands in the middle of the Garden rises "A gloomy groue of mirtle trees," the tree sacred to Venus. Above all, the throbbing and joyous rhythm of life that pervades the Garden, its fecundity and eternal spring ("There is continuall spring, and haruest there/Continuall, both meeting at one time:/ For both the boughes do laughing blossomes beare, etc.") are the direct manifestations of the traditional role of "laughter-loving" Venus who is the goddess of love, vegetation, and spring. Since this aspect of Venus as the goddess of nature, Venus Physica, is usually taken for granted and seldom commented upon, it is not without some benefits to survey its history briefly.

Aphrodite as the goddess of generation and vegetation makes her frequent appearances in early Greek writings. Thus in Hesiod's Theogony (195) the grass grew spontaneously beneath her feet when the newborn goddess came ashore on Cyprus. In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (V), Aphrodite "the mother of wild creatures," as she walks through the mountain of Ida, puts desire in the breasts of lions, wolves, and bears so that "they all mated, two together, about the shadowy coombes." In the fragmentary epic cycle the Cypria (Hesiod: The Homeric Hymns and Homerica, p. 499), Aphrodite is clothed in a robe of "such flowers as the Seasons wear--in crocus and hyacinth and flourishing violet and

the rose's lovely bloom, etc." But we find the most extraordinary presentation of Aphrodite as the cosmic generative principle in Aeschylus' fragment of the Danaides (Aeschylus, Loeb, vol. 2, pp. 395-96).

The holy heaven yearns to wound the earth and
yearning layeth hold on the earth to join in wedlock;
the rain, fallen from the amorous heaven, impregnates
the earth, and it bringeth forth for mankind the flood
of flocks and herds and Demeter's gifts; and from that
moist marriage rite the woods put on their bloom.
Of all these things I [Aphrodite] am
the cause.

We hear a distant echo of this when Spenser describes the sudden shower of rain that compels Una and the Red Cross Knight to seek shelter; "And angry Ioue an hideous storme of raine/ Did poure into his Lemans lap so fast, . . ." (l. 1. 6).

During the Roman period, Venus' connection with spring and flowers becomes more marked. Horace (Ode, 4. 11) and Ovid (Fasti, 4. 13) call April the month of Venus. Lucretius describes the goddess in company with Spring, Zephyrus, and Flora (De Rerum Natura, 5. 737-40). Manilius (Astronomica, 3. 652-57) connects the vernal equinox with the beginning of the mating season; "then amid happy pastures the tribes of bird and beast hasten to mate and breed ("in Venerem partumque ruit"), . . . So deeply is nature stirred by the potency of the sign."

The paean to Venus the genetrix rerum is universal among Roman writers, for instance in Virgil's Georgics, 3. 242-75, or Seneca's Hippolytus, 466-82. Lucretius' opening lines of De Rerum Natura addressed to alma Venus are well known; "And since thou alone dost

guide the nature of things, and nothing without thine aid comes forth into the bright coasts of light," Here Venus calms both sea and wind with her benevolent influence and drives wild beasts and cattle to mating with uncontrollable frenzy. Spenser paraphrases this Lucretian hymn to Venus in the Temple of Venus episode in Book IV. She is called "Great Venus, Queene of beautie and of grace,/ The loy of Gods and men" and drives birds and beasts to "In generation seeke to quench their inward fire." Ovid (Fasti, 4. 91 f.) extols Venus in fundamentally the same terms, saying that "she furnished the primary causes for the plants and the trees," and that she replenished the ocean with innumerable spawn of fishes.

It is worthwhile to remember that in many cases Venus was looked on as coitus itself, and sometimes contrasted to Cupid who represented desire that led to it. Thus Virgil calls the sexual desire "saevus Amor" (Eclogue 8, 47) or "durus amor" (Georgics, 3. 259), but when he comes to deal with actual coitus the word invariably used is Venus. So an old horse without lustiness is "frigidus in Venerem senior," and the mares, kept spare on scanty diet, thirstily seize upon the seed, "rapiat sitiens Venerem" (Georgics, 3. 95-100; 129-37). In the same fashion Lucretius calls Cupid "Venus' winged harbinger" (5. 737-40)--"an unspoken desire foretells the pleasure to come" (4. 1057).

This distinction is still vaguely felt in Spenser. The modern meaning of the phrase "to make love" roughly covers the activities of Venus in the Garden of Adonis or in the Lucretian hymn in the Temple

of Venus. On the other hand, Cupid is always associated by Spenser with the emotional aspect of love, "to fall in love." Whenever the context calls for a refined, romantic response to love, Cupid is usually invoked. This is probably the direct influence of the medieval habit of associating Venus with the earthly manifestations of love while bestowing upon Dan Cupid the regal awe and power fit for the god of the religion of love.

The tradition of Venus as the goddess of spring and generation runs no less strongly during the Middle Ages. Macrobius (Saturnalia, 1. 12. 8-9) connects April with Venus, saying that the word April is etymologically related to the Greek aphros, "foam," from which Venus was believed to have been born. In Bernardus Sylvestris' De Mundi Universitate (2. 5), Venus in her planetary capacity controls the budding of flowers and "inspires the renewal of all creatures by her generative impulses." The medieval writers were particularly fond of this figure of Venus as a planetary deity. Thus Chaucer in the opening lines of the third book of Troilus and Criseyde calls on Venus, "O blisful light, of which the bemes clere/ Adorneth al the thridde heven faire," and he enumerates among her virtues the power of universal generation; "In hevne and helle, in erthe and salte see/ Is felt thi myght, if that I wel descerne;/ As man, brid, best, fissh, herbe, and grene tree/ Thee fele in tymes with vapour eterne."

But Venus had a strong rival in Nature who, transmitted to the Middle Ages by the writers of late antiquity such as Statius or Claudian, grew in literary and philosophical importance in the hands of the thinkers of the school of Chartres and pushed her pagan sister

into the subordinate role.³ Thus in Alanus de Insulis' Complaint of Nature, Venus is an "under-deputy" of Nature appointed to administer the purely physical side of generation, "applying hammers to their anvils," to use Alanus' phrase (p. 45). The relationship of Venus with Nature is fundamentally the same in Lydgate's Reson and Sensuallyte, 2257 f.; Nature is the sovereign lady, Venus her obedient chambermaid, "Ordeyned, by comyssion,/ To be next hir, in special,/ In hir paleys principal."

Although Spenser never introduces Nature and Venus together, their relationship seems to follow the pattern described by Alanus and Lydgate. The fact that Venus is described as androgynous (4. 10. 41) and that Nature is implied to be so (7. 7. 5) does not automatically suggest their identification. The domains of Nature and Venus overlap each other in some areas, but Venus, for all her power and exalted status, never reaches the height of divine mysticism which Spenser's Nature enjoys. Nature is said to be "euer young yet full of eld,/ Still moouing, yet vnmoued from her sted" (7. 7. 13), and even domineering Mutability addresses Nature in uncharacteristic humbleness; "For, euen the gods to thee, as men to gods do seeme" (Ibid., 15), that is to say, Nature stands above the pagan gods as they stand above the mortals. Spenser's Nature is a surrogate Christian God and the simile which compares her radiance with the Transfiguration of Christ (Ibid., 7) seems to point to no other direction.

Such, in brief, is the traditional picture of Venus Physica available to Spenser. He could have found it in many Renaissance

mythological handbooks. For instance, his favorite mythographer Natalis Comes calls Venus "rerum omnium genetrix" (Mythologiae, p. 209) and defines her as "the hidden desire, implanted by nature, for procreation ("occultum coitus desiderium a natura insitum ad procreandum," p. 211). Citing the lines from Virgil's Georgics, Comes identifies Venus with the benign climate of spring, since especially during spring the animals are inclined toward the work of Venus (pp. 212-13). But the concept of Venus as the goddess of nature and generation is so common and diffused that fortunately we do not have to bother ourselves with "sources." What we have to deal with is a tradition that has acquired vast meaning and rich associations as it was transmitted from one age to another. The moment Spenser decided to create the garden of eternal generation and make Venus its sojourner and divine overseer, he consciously or not allowed the rich flow of mythological meaning to enter his garden and give additional depth to the entire conception. So long as we give due attention to Venus as the independent and dominant principle in the Garden of Adonis, we do not commit the mistake, as I shall show later, of identifying her with Substance, which is passive and inferior (in comparison with Form), the qualities fundamentally at odds with the conception of Venus as the supreme principle of generation. The barrenness of the Bower of Bliss becomes clearer when we realize that it presents only the false Venus, the love severed from its tie with the natural, and dwindled into trivial allurements of eyes and touch. The Bower of Bliss presents only incontinent lust alienated from the mystery of marriage. Instead of the divine bidding

"increase and multiply" which reverberates in the Garden of Adonis, we hear only a yearning, unfulfilled carpe diem song of desire and prurience in the Bower.

The rivalry between Venus and Diana is a favorite mythological topos of the Renaissance poets and painters. Perugino's Combat of Love and Chastity depicts a battle between Chastity and Lust, Pallas and Diana representing Chastity, Venus and Cupid representing Lust. It goes without saying that it is invariably Venus who is worsted in such a confrontation. The medieval association of Venus with Luxuria or Otia certainly did not help, although according to Wind and Panofsky, the Platonic revival that swept the quattrocento Italy injected mystical and esoteric new meaning into the pictorial representation of Venus by, for example, Botticelli and Titian.⁴ Be it as it may, Spenser's story of Venus and Diana (3. 6. 1-29) is unique in that the confrontation ends in reconciliation and in implicit recognition of the right of both; Diana obtains Belphoebe, and Venus Amoret. The harmonious relationship between Venus and Diana, voluptuousness and Chastity, symbolically presents Spenser's romantic view of passionate, yet chaste matrimonial affection. At the same time, marriage and virginity do not have to be mutually exclusive; they deserve equal praise and glory in their heavenly state of perfection.

As the introduction to the Garden of Adonis, Spenser tells the story of Venus' search for her lost son. The story comes ultimately from Moschus' first idyl in which Venus proclaims a hunt for her wayward son in the manner of a cry after a runaway slave.⁵ In Spenser

Venus, unable to find him in court, cities, and country, finally directs her steps to "the salvage woods and forrests wyde" and eventually comes upon Diana and her train who are bathing themselves in the cool fountain after hot chase. Angered by the sudden intrusion, Diana gives deaf ears to her sister's plea to join in the search:

Goe Dame, goe seeke your boy,
Where you him lately left, in Mars his bed;
He comes not here, we scorne his foolish ioy,
Ne lend we leisure to his idle toy:
But if I catch him in this company,
. . .
Ile clip his wanton wings, that he no more shall fly.
(3. 6. 24)

Thus the first phase of their encounter ends with squabbles and personal taunts. Especially it brings out the worst in the virgin goddess--she is irritable and rudely sarcastic.

The development of the story sounds familiar. In an entertainment devised by Thomas Churchyard at Norwich in 1578, the strayed Cupid encounters Chastity and her retinue--Modesty, Temperance, Good Exercise, and Shamefastness. The maids strip Cupid of his bow and arrows, and come to the Queen to present her with Cupid's arms "to learn to shoote at whome she pleased, since none coulde wounde hir Highnesse hart" (Nichols, The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. 2, p. 189). Likewise in Lyly's Gallathea, Cupid disguises himself as one of Diana's nymphs and plays havoc with them. He is finally produced before angry Diana, who punishes him by breaking his weapons and clipping his wings. By the arbitration of Neptune, Cupid is restored to Venus. But no meaningful reconciliation takes place. Unlike Spenser, both Churchyard and Lyly do not venture forth beyond the

stereotyped presentation of the age-old antagonism between Venus and Diana.

In Spenser Diana finally relents at Venus' vehement importuning and sound argument ("We both are bound to follow heauens beheasts,/ And tend our charges with obeisance meeke," 3. 6. 22) and consents to search for the boy. Instead of Cupid, the goddesses find Chrysogone and her newly delivered babies. Spenser makes sure that we understand the divine origin of the virtues the twins embody by telling us that the sun begot them on Chrysogone ("She bore withouten paine, that she conceived/ Withouten pleasure," Ibid., 27), and by saying that "Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew" (Ibid., 3) obviously reminiscent of Psalm 110. 3, "The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning." Diana takes up Belpheobe "To be vpbrought in perfect Maydenhed," while Venus conveys Amoret to the Garden of Adonis, "To be vpbrought in goodly womanhed." It is important to notice that as Spenser says ("And in her litle loues stead, which was strayd,/ Her Amoretta cald, to comfort her dismayd," Ibid., 28) Venus adopts Amoret, literally "Little Love," in place of Cupid. The action is equivalent to the disarming of Cupid which I shall discuss later; Amoret--faithful, monogamous love--replaces Cupid, or the irrational whims of passion.

What exactly is the relationship between Belpheobe and Amoret? Are the virtues they represent incompatible with each other? These are the questions that we must address now. As Spenser makes it clear (3. 6. 4), Belpheobe is the elder of the two and her virginal virtue represents "the highest staire/ Of th'honorable stage of womanhead"

(3. 5. 54). Since, as Spenser declares in the Letter to Raleigh, Belphoebe is Elizabeth in her role as the Virgin Queen, Spenser can say no less. The religious values associated with celibacy, although considerably depreciated by Protestant attacks, still continued to assert themselves strongly. The explicitly religious language in which Spenser extols Belphoebe's virginity ("heauenly coronall,/ Such as the Angels weare before Gods tribunall" Ibid., 53) is something that her more earthly sister cannot hope to enjoy.

Amoret, on the other hand, represents married love. She is a "virgine wife" (4. 1. 6). Cestus, which tests "chast loue,/ And wiuehood true" (4. 5. 3) fits only Amoret and Florimell. Her imprisonment and torture by Busyrane are the test of her faithfulness to Scudamour. In the Garden of Adonis she is trained by Psyche and Pleasure in "true feminitee" (3. 6. 51). The Temple of Venus in Book IV completes her education. There her tutors include such wifely virtues as Womanhood, Shamefastnesse, Cherefulnessse, Modestie, Silence, and Obedience.

Belphoebe is, like her foster parent Diana, the mistress of her own world, independent and self-sufficient, while Amoret is not. As it is seen in her oration on Honor (2. 3. 40-41), Belphoebe's aspiration is heroic and anti-courtly.

Who so in pompe of proud estate (quoth she)
Does swim, and bathes himselfe in courtly blis,
Does waste his dayes in darke obscuritee,
And in obliuion euer buried is:
Where ease abounds, yt's eath to doe amis;
But who his limbs with labours, and his mind
Behaues with cares, cannot so easie mis.
Abroad in armes, at home in studious kind
Who seekes with painfull toile, shall honor soonest find.

In woods, in waues, in warres she wonts to dwell,
 And will be found with perill and with paine;
 Ne can the man, that moulds in idle cell,
 Vnto her happie mansion attaine:
 Before her gate high God did Sweat ordaine,
 And wakefull watches euer to abide:
 But easie is the way, and passage plaine
 To pleasures pallace; it may soone be spide,
 And day and night her dores to all stand open wide.

"Ease" and "pleasure" are her archenemies because they are not only detrimental to Honor but also incitements to love, for "Take away leisure ["Otia"] and Cupid's bow is broken, and his torch lies extinguished and despised" (Ovid, Remedia Amoris, 139-40). It is Belphebe that kills Lust (4. 7. 29-32) when Amoret has helplessly fallen a victim to his power. Amoret is a Persecuted Fair, like Florimell, unprotected and exposed to male aggression. Separated from her lover, she needs the guardianship of Britomart and Arthur. Unprotected, she is an easy prey to Busyrane or Lust. Amoret is unique among Spenser's major heroines in that she has no prototype in Ariosto (McMurphy, Spenser's Use of Ariosto for Allegory, p. 36). Britomart has her counterpart in Bradamante, and so do Belphebe and Florimell in Angelica.⁶ But Ariosto has no female figure that represents chastity in the sense of wifely steadfastness. Whether we accept C. S. Lewis' argument that Books III and IV of the Faerie Queene presents "the final defeat of courtly love by the romantic conception of marriage" (The Allegory of Love, p. 298), Amoret, the yielding bride and the "Lodestarre of all chaste affectione," represents ethical values to which the whirligig of Ariosto's fictive world can hardly do justice.

Belphebe is not merely an athlete devoid of any female sexuality. Her sudden displeasure at Timias tending Amoret's wound might

be interpreted as a symptom of the irascibility of an immature, sexually frustrated virgin. But in terms of the Venus-Diana myth, there is a rich ambiguity about Belpheobe's identification. Her sylvan bower is surrounded with myrtle trees, sacred to Venus, as well as with laurel trees, sacred to Apollo and his sister Diana (3. 5. 40). And her beauty is described in sensuous Petrarchan terms. Her forehead looked like a broad table "For Love his loftie triumphes to engraue,/ And write the battels of his great godhed" and "Vpon her eyelids many Graces sate,/ Vnder the shadow of her euen browes,/ Working belgards, and amorous retrate, . . ." (2. 3. 24-25). But this ambiguity is best illustrated by Venus-Virgo theme in Belpheobe's description.

When Belpheobe makes her first appearance in the Faerie Queene (2. 3. 21 f.), Spenser extensively imitates Virgil's description in the first book of the Aeneid of Aeneas' meeting with his mother Venus disguised as one of Diana's nymphs. In Spenser Braggadocchio and Trompart replace Aeneas and his comrade Achates. Belpheobe suddenly rushes out of the thicket and addresses Trompart who is stupefied with amazement.

Hayle Groome; didst not thou see a bleeding Hind,
Whose right haunch earst my stedfast arrow strake?
If thou didst, tell me, that I may her ouertake.

Wherewith reuiu'd, this answere forth he threw;
O Goddesse, (for such I thee take to bee)
For neither doth thy face terresriall shew,
Nor voyce sound mortal :

(The Faerie Queene, 2. 3. 32-33)

ac prior 'heus', inquit, 'iuvenes, mōstrate, mearum
vidisti si quam hic errantem forte sororum
succinctam pharetra et maculosae tegmine lyncis,
aut spumantis apri cursum clamore prementem.'

Sic Venus, et Veneris contra sic filius orsus:
 'nulla tuarum audita mihi neque visa sororum,
 o quam te memorem, virgo? namque haud tibi vultus
 mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat; o, dea certe.'
 (She spoke first: "Ho there, young Sirs! Do you
 happen to have seen one of my sisters, wearing
 a quiver and a cloak of spotted lynx-skin,
 wandering about here, or shouting hard on the
 track of some foam-flecked boar? if so, tell me
 where.' So said Venus. And her son started to
 answer her: 'No, I have neither seen nor heard
 any sister of yours, young lady; only, how am I to
 speak of you? You have not the countenance of human
 kind and your voice has no tones of mortality . . .
 Goddess! For a goddess surely you must be.')
 (The Aeneid, l. 321-28)

The description of Belphebe's hunting attire, her bare legs, and her
 loose, flowing hair is in accord with Virgil's presentation of Venus
 (The Aeneid, l. 315-20).

The literary rendering of Venus-Virgo theme is quite common.⁷
 Thus Ovid (Metamorphoses, 10. 533 f.) describes Venus, in love with
 Adonis, ranging through the mountains in pursuit of wild animals,
 "her garments caught up as high as her knees, just as Diana wears
 hers." Apuleius (The Golden Ass, 10. 31) tells that Venus appeared
 before Paris in a guise "when she was a maiden" ("qualis fuit Venus
 cum fuit Virgo"). Chaucer (The Legend of Good Women, 970-103)
 describes in details the meeting of Aeneas and Venus. Aeneas replies,
 "But by thy beaute, as it thynketh me,/ Thow myghtest nevere erthly
 woman be,/ But Phebus syster art thou, as I gesse." In Poliziano's
Stanze (l. 49) the nymph Simonetta whom young Giuliano de Medici
 encounters in the wood is described in words strongly reminiscent of
 Virgil; "Whatever you are, o sovereign virgin, nymph or goddess, but
 certainly you seem a goddess to me; if a goddess, perhaps you are my
 Diana."

The Virgilian Venus-Virgo was of special importance among Renaissance literary men. Hughes ("Virgilian Allegory and The Faerie Queene," p. 698) suspects that "the moral allegory which Spenser associated with Belpheobe was, in all essentials, that which criticism of the Aeneid from Petrarch to Scaliger had taught him to read into Virgil's Venus." Wind (Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, p. 75) shows us a medal of Giovanna degli Albizzi which presents a huntress carrying bow and arrow, with the inscription from the Aeneid, "Virginis os habitumque gerens et Virginis arma" ("having the countenance and guise of a virgin and carrying the weapons of a virgin") and he interprets it as the variation on the Neo-Platonic triad of Beauty-Love-Chastity, "one hybrid figure in which the two opposing goddesses, Diana and Venus, are merged into one." Wind believes that the Renaissance Platonists expanded the Virgilian Venus into "a semi-chaste, semi-voluptuous cult of Venus. . ." (p. 77).

For Spenser the figure seems to have been especially dear, since in the April eclogue of the Shepherd's Calendar, where he pays lavish compliment to the Queen, he chose "o quam te memorem, virgo? o dea certe" as the motto. The reconciliation of voluptuousness and chastity in a single figure is especially welcome in the general context of the Faerie Queene, as it provides an excellent antecedent to Spenser's own myth of the twin birth of Belpheobe and Amoret, the union of Diana and Venus. Also the presence of Venus-Virgo figure behind Belpheobe considerably softens her image as an awe-inspiring, aloof virgin, presenting her in warmer and more sensual light; the

Queen would not certainly mind being depicted as a kind of chaste Venus figure.

The relationship and contrast between Belpheobe and Amoret seem to be illustrated best by being compared to another pair of famous sisters, Pamela and Philoclea in Sidney's Arcadia. Sidney's stage is not the Fairy Land but Greece, and his method is much closer to the technique of a novel than Spenser's. But essentially the comparison of Spenser's and Sidney's heroines stands; Pamela is a study in female majesty, and Philoclea is another Renaissance sketch of a buxom, yielding bride.

For my part, when I marked them both, methought there was (if at least such perfections may receive the word of more) more sweetness in Philoclea but more majesty in Pamela: methought love played in Philoclea's eyes and threatened in Pamela's; methought Philoclea's beauty only persuaded, but so persuaded as all hearts must yield; Pamela's beauty used violence, and such violence as no heart could resist. And it seems that such proportion is between their minds: Philoclea so bashful, as though her excellencies had stolen into her before she was aware; so humble, that she will put all pride out of countenance; in sum, such proceeding as will stir hope but teach hope good manners. Pamela of high thoughts, who avoids not pride with not knowing her excellencies, but by making that one of her excellencies to be void of pride.

(Arcadia, ed. Maurice Evans, p. 76)

Pamela's motto is "Yet still myself" (p. 146); "Nothing bred from myself can discomfort me; and fools' opinions I will not reckon as dishonour" (p. 758). Her rejection of Musidorus' hasty and ill-fated advance shows the same noble flare of temper with which Belpheobe treats Timias' alleged misconduct (p. 436). And the two sisters and the virtues they embody, as Sidney sees it, are complementary to each

other; "while Philoclea tempered Pamela's just disdain, and Pamela ennobled Philoclea's sweet humbleness" (p. 571).

Belpheobe and Amoret, chastity and married love, complement each other in the same way. Married love is "chaste" in its glowing purity and constancy, and virginity, far from being the virtue of a recluse, is full of vigor, emotional richness, and even sensual charm. Chrysogone's mother is rightly called Amphisa, "equally both."⁸ Neither can do without the other. It is Britomart, another heroic virgin, who saves Amoret from Busyrane, and superimposed upon the picture of the buskined mistress of the woods we see the grace and beauty of the Cyprian Queen.

When Upton first observed, "Let us not forget the allegory. Venus is Form; Adonis, Matter," he probably did not realize that his simple remark would stir such far-reaching ripples of controversy. The critics seem unable to agree on just what Spenser meant by the myth of Venus and Adonis, and the endless variety of ideas that has been proposed to explain it is itself a tribute to Spenser's complex imagination that is hard to translate into clear-cut conceptual terms. My interpretation, which basically endorses Upton's position, is not, I admit, wholly satisfactory in answering all the problems. But it has a definite advantage in not being unnecessarily abstruse as well as being true to an obvious parallel between certain parts of the text. The principle which I followed is that the meaning must fit the context imaginatively as well as logically, that is to say, a logically consistent interpretation of the text must be discarded when it runs counter

to the imagistic and emotional pattern of the narrative surface. In reading Spenser, an immediate and proper response to his imagery is often more important than intellectual deduction. Moreover, if the identification of Venus with Form, a principle superior to Matter, is correct, it confirms Spenser's female-oriented view of marriage relationship as witnessed in the union of Una and St. George, Britomart and Arthegall.

Spenser describes the generative process that is going on in the Garden in terms of the unification of Form and Matter.

That substance is eterne, and bideth so,
Ne when the life decays, and forme does fade,
Doth it consume, and into nothing go,
But chaunged is, and often altred to and fro.

The substance is not chaunged, nor altered,
But th'only forme and outward fashion;
For euery substance is conditioned
To change her hew, and sundry formes to don,
Meet for her temper and complexion:
For formes are variable and decay,
By course of kind, and by occasion;
And that faire flowre of beautie fades away,
As doth the lilly fresh before the sunny ray.

(3. 6. 37-38)

Later, when the scene moves to the "stately Mount" that is situated in the middle of the Garden and to Venus embracing her beloved Adonis in the shade of myrtle trees, Spenser has this to say about Adonis.

And sooth it seemes they say: for he may not
For euer die, and euer buried bee
In balefull night, where all things are forgot;
All be he subiect to mortalitie,
Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
And by succession made perpetuall,
Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie:
For him the Father of all formes they call;
Therefore needs mote he liue, that liuing giues to all.

(Ibid., 47)

Upton recognizes a correspondence between these two passages and identifies Adonis with Matter, Venus with Form. Adonis is "unactive, passive, the mother, the nurse, the receptacle, etc. . . . But form gives matter an essence, determining it to be this or that particular thing. 'Forma dat esse rei,' as they say in the schools" (Variorum, vol. 3, p. 260). Upton identifies the boar imprisoned in the cave with Privation, the absence of forms. Greenlaw ("Spenser and Lucretius," p. 454) repeats Upton's interpretation and sees in it "the adaptation of the old myth to the Lucretian philosophy from which Spenser had drawn his perception of permanence underneath all mutability." In his review of Ellrodt's Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser (p. 155), C. S. Lewis says "Venus ought to be the Form-giver. She dwells only some times on earth. Her native region is 'the house of goodly formes and faire aspects Whence all the world derives the glorious Features of beautie, and all shapes select.' And Adonis, 'eterne in mutabilitie' and 'transformed oft,' ought to be Matter."

The very opposite view is presented by Stirling ("The Philosophy in Spenser's 'Garden of Adonis'," p. 535) who argues that "Venus is the Recipient or substance and Adonis the Source or Father. . . . Adonis clearly being the Father, a perpetual element through all succession of forms, the object of his sexual embrace must be recipient substance, and this should be Venus."

Some scholars tend to dismiss any correspondence between the Form-Substance passage and Venus-Adonis passage. Thus Bennett ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis," p. 72), who interprets the Garden as an

abode of Platonic pre-existent, pure forms, does not allow matter to enter into her definition of Venus-Adonis myth. Identifying Adonis with the sun, she argues that "Venus represents the Idea-pattern while Adonis is the generative power of form, both a father and a mother. . . . In their simplest earthly terms" Venus and Adonis "represent respectively seeds and sun" ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis Revisited," p. 71). Ellrodt (Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser, p. 87) rejects the simple equation of any kind on the ground that "these contrary interpretations rest on the unjustified assumption that the Adonis-Venus myth merely parallels the earlier described form-substance relationship." Ellrodt, following Bennett, identifies Adonis with the sun; "This was the easier since Venus, or the act of generation, was thought to require 'the force of the sun'" (p. 88). Alastair Fowler (Spenser and the Numbers of Time, p. 137), although he rejects the Adonis-Matter equation, perceives the role of Adonis as fundamentally passive, identifying him with seed; "Only thus can we fully understand the statement that Adonis is 'by succession made perpetual'--by the line of succession of the seed, that is to say, from generation to generation." Hankins (Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory, pp. 246-47), one of the latest participants in the controversy, asserts that Venus, whom he calls "genital nature," is literally "the fluid emitted during coitus; metaphorically she is the desire caused in part by the superabundance of that fluid," while Adonis is identified with "species, the type-form which endures though the individual body perishes."

Let us begin our discussion by reviewing briefly the structure of the Garden of Adonis passage:

- a. Stanzas 29-30 constitute a prologue.
- b. Stanzas 31-35 describe the Garden as a gigantic greenhouse where "beings" (here the ground is extremely treacherous, because of the divergence of opinions with regard to exactly what grows in the garden), after they have accomplished their share of reincarnation, return and are planted to grow "as they had neuer seene/ Fleshly corruption, nor mortall paine." But these "beings" are not merely plants, Spenser says, but "infinite shapes of creatures" and "vncouth formes, which none yet euer knew . . . Some fit for reasonable soules t'indew,/ Some made for beasts, some made for birds to weare."
- c. In stanzas 36-38, Spenser introduces Chaos which furnishes the endless supply of substance. This substance, when it "does ketch" form, becomes a body and issues out into the world. The emphasis is on the indestructibility of substance and the ephemeral nature of form.
- d. Stanzas 39-40 where the "wicked Time" who cuts down every flower and herb in the Garden is presented as the only hostile and destructive element in the otherwise perfect state of paradise.
- e. Stanzas 41-51 describe the Garden as the place of abundance and eternal spring, and then go on to present the union of Venus and Adonis, who is now safely sheltered from death and his enemy, the boar, in the woody arbor.

Now, the sections c and e constitute the only part in which the Garden is imagined as a meeting-place of two principles or mythological figures. It is only natural to see a connection between the two

sections, and if there is any evidence of correlation between Form-Substance and Venus-Adonis, to try to establish the exact identification between them. I believe there is enough evidence to do so. The two passages in question, stanzas 36-38 and stanza 47, are both about the principle of permanence manifesting itself through change. "That substance is eterne," says Spenser, and it is conditioned "To change her hew, and sundry formes to don" (3. 6. 38). The physical shapes which substance acquires are transitory and must die but substance which undergoes that change is undiminished and unaffected. Adonis is described in basically the same language. He is "eterne in mutabilitie,/ And by succession made perpetuall,/ Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie" (*Ibid.*, 47). It should now be clear that Spenser is expressing a single idea, which he borrowed, among other sources, from the last book of Ovid's Metamorphoses, that nothing in the universe ever really perishes and that the sum of all things remains unchanged. The idea, of course, receives its consummate expression in the *Mutabilitie Cantos*. Here the difference between the two passages is the frame of reference. In one Spenser puts forward the idea in metaphysical terms of Form and Matter (Ellrodt has shown that Spenser could have gotten the doctrine of the transiency of form and indestructibility of substance from many medieval and Renaissance sources without going to Lucretius) and in the other in mythological symbolism.

The identification of Adonis with Matter is self-explanatory. Stirling's identification of Adonis with Form and Venus with Matter led him to an outrageous suggestion that Venus is "the very presiding deity

of Chaos" (p. 557).⁹ Venus, as Spenser describes her, can only be a superior, formal principle. In stanza 12 Venus is said to have left her "heauenly hous,/ The house of goodly formes and faire aspects,/ Whence all the world deriues the glorious/ Features of beautie, and all shapes select,/ With which high God his workmanship hath deckt." Bennett ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis Revisited," p. 59) identifies this heavenly house with "the Platonic Ideas in the mind of God." The idea seems to be a tempting one, especially in the light of An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, 29-56, where Venus is identified with "perfect Beautie," the source and model of formal principle which, descending upon the "grosse matter of this earthly myne," embellishes it so that it appears beautiful to mortal sight. Whether the Platonic thought may or may not be behind the description of Venus' "heauenly hous," it is certain that she stands for the formal influence and the principle of beauty which are to be impressed upon substance, i.e., Adonis. "All shapes select,/ With which high God his workmanship hath deckt" suggests the divine derivation of human countenance as imago Dei, and this is consonant with Venus as the goddess of generation who performs the bidding of the divine Word, "be fruitful, and multiply."

The question that naturally arises is, if Venus is to be identified with Form, is it not with transient forms, rather than pure forms, because stanzas 36-38 expressly tell us that forms that are joined with matter "are variable and decay"? The answer is no, since Venus, the celestial paradigm of beauty, represents pure, immaterial

forms, and it is only their earthly copy that is transient. Her "heauenly hous,/ The house of goodly formes and faire aspects" is the uncorrupted source from which the world "derives" physical, phenomenal shapes, "the glorious/ Features of beautie, and all shapes select." We must remember that the Garden of Adonis is Venus' abode only "when she on earth does dwel." The fact that the immaterial principle has to descend to the realm of corporality in order to exist in the world does not negate its purity and transcendence at its source.

One of the advantages of Venus-Form, Adonis-Matter identification is that it fits the narrative context in a way the opposite identification cannot. Spenser depicts Venus, as Shakespeare does in Venus and Adonis, as the aggressor and allows Adonis only a passive role. She "when euer that she will,/ Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill," and does "reape sweet pleasure of the wanton boy" (3. 6. 46). The imbalance of power between Venus and Adonis agrees with the commonly held superiority of form or soul over the physical element; "for soule is forme, and doth the bodie make" (An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, 133). The formal principle must be in a controlling position over matter, for although matter may be indestructible, unless it receives the impression of form, it remains a mere abstraction, undefined and nonexistent, if we postulate it as immaterial Platonic prima materia, or mere chaotic mass if we imagine it as corporeal substance.

The most often cited objection to Venus-Form, Adonis-Matter identification is that it reverses the traditional association of Form

with male and Matter with female, especially the association of materia with mater. C. S. Lewis refutes this objection, citing Spenser's presentation of Sapience, the Second Person of the Trinity, who is normally presented as Son, Bridegroom, King, etc., as a female in An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie, 183 f., "The soueraine dearling of the Deity,/ Clad like a Queene in royall robes, . . ." (Review of Ellrodt's Neoplatonism. . . , p. 155). Moreover, Lewis argues, the reversal of power between sexes touches the very heart of "the fruitful tensions and sensitive ambiguities which characterize Spenser's attitude to the sexes elsewhere" (Ibid., p. 157). Spenser's explicit statements, as we expect from the conservative society in which he lived, give the male the dominant role, but this is mere "doctrinal facade." Una in her relationship with the Red Cross Knight, and Britomart in her relationship with Arthegall, display the very opposite view. Una is Truth that guides St. George, a sinful mortal, through the labyrinth of temptations. Britomart, as described in the Temple of Isis, is "Equity" or clemency which softens the rough justice of Arthegall.

The next most frequently cited objection is that Adonis is called "the Father of all formes." Both Roche (The Kindly Flame, p. 123) and Cheney (Spenser's Image of Nature, p. 136) identify Adonis with Form on the strength of this line, and Venus with Matter by implication. But the problem is not insurmountable. Upton suggests the solution by saying that Spenser "should have said the subject-matter of all forms" and I think the phrase should be understood in

that sense. Tonkin ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis and Britomart's Quest," p. 412) likewise says that "Adonis is the father of all forms because he gives forms their substance, brings creatures into being, not because he himself is form." We should say that Adonis is the perpetuator of forms, since it is through the everlasting continuity of matter that the succession of phenomenal forms can go on indefinitely.

We have concluded that Adonis is Matter, but this does not mean that he cannot allegorically stand for anything else. The rich ambiguity of the Renaissance symbolism or iconography can accommodate several meanings at the same time. Gloriana is Queen Elizabeth as the sovereign empress of the British empire. As the elusive other-worldly lover of Arthur, she is the Fairy Queen of folklore. But as the patroness of the twelve knights who represent twelve virtues, she is glory in the very exalted sense, and the comparison with Sapience in the fourth Hymn is not quite out of place. Likewise, Adonis is Matter when he is defined as a metaphysical entity. But Spenser has another perspective from which to define the ever-going process of generation in the Garden. When the Garden of Adonis is viewed, not as a meeting-place of Form and Matter, but as a nursery where "infinite shapes of creatures" grow "ranckt in comely rew," every being containing within itself "eternall moisture," another association is uppermost, the association of Adonis with Seed.

Macrobius (Saturnalia, l. 21) identifies Adonis with the sun. The myth that Macrobius bases his theory upon, typically summarized

by Apollodorus (Bibliotheca, 3. 184-85), runs as follows. Venus secrets away her beloved Adonis in a chest and leaves its safeguard to Proserpina, who falls in love with the boy and refuses to give him back. As the result of Jupiter's arbitration, the year is eventually divided in half and it is decreed that Adonis should stay with Venus for six months, and with Proserpina for other six months. Macrobius interprets the myth as the sun's travel through the twelve signs of the zodiac. When the sun is with Proserpina, that is, in the lower signs, the day becomes shorter and Venus mourns the absence of her beloved. But at the vernal equinox, when the sun enters the higher signs, Venus rejoices at the return of Adonis. This interpretation is generally adopted by the Renaissance mythographers like Comes or Cartari, and it is upon this tradition that both Bennett ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis," p. 71 f.) and Ellrodt (p. 87) base their identification of Adonis with the sun. The description of the virgin birth of Belphebe and Amoret in stanzas 8-9, where the sun which quickens life in conjunction with moisture is called "great father" of generation, seems to strengthen their position.

But the problem is that Adonis as Spenser presents him is quite un-solar, as C. S. Lewis rightly points out.

His garden is on earth (29). It is full of moisture (34). Even within that secret garden he inhabits a still more secret place, a "gloomy grove," a thicket of "shadie boughes" (43) where "Phoebus beams" --his own beams, if he were the sun!--can never reach him (43). I cannot feel with Dr. Ellrodt that this place "is obviously reminiscent of Mount Olympus." Its darkness, foliage, dampness, shelter from wind (44) seem to me the antithesis of the shining mountain top. (Review of Ellrodt's Neoplatonism. . . , p. 156)

What makes Adonis unfit for a solar symbol makes him superbly fit for the symbol of seeds. Both Bennett ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis," p. 74) and Ellrodt (p. 87) recognize the Adonis-seed identification as the part of the traditional interpretation of Venus and Adonis myth. Comes (Mythologiae, 5. 16) has "Adonis frumentum est satum, quod sex menses degit sub terra; sex menses illum habet Venus" ("Adonis is the planted corn, which lives under the earth for six months: Venus has him for six months.") Cartari (Imagines Deorum, p. 352) says, just after he has quoted from Macrobius extensively, that Venus gives the power of generation to the beasts and seeds. In fact, the seed is like matter in being "eterne in mutabilitie,/ And by succession made perpetuall." The phrase like "for he may not/ For euer die, and euer buried bee/ In balefull night, where all things are forgot" (3. 6. 47) fits the description of the cycle of death and rebirth of seeds as well as the sun's sojourn in different hemispheres. Moreover, the Adonis-seed association helps to clarify the predominantly botanical or horticultural images of the Garden as "the first seminarie/ Of all things, that are borne to liue and die." The place sheltered from excessive heat and wind is a natural environment for seeds. In the light of Adonis-seed identification, Ellrodt's proposal of Augustine's rationes seminales as the possible key to the entire Garden of Adonis episode becomes extremely attractive.

For, according to Augustine, God created all things, present and future, simultaneously. All living beings not fully developed in the first act of creation--whether plants, beasts or the bodies of men--were

performed in the rationes seminales, or invisible germs, All the things created at once through the Wisdom of God--the Sapience of the Hymne of Heavenlie Beautie--are brought to blossom, as it were, at proper intervals and "according to their kinds" out of those hidden rationes which "God has scattered like seeds." (Neoplatonism . . . , p. 77)

As a final word, it is worthwhile to remember that Adonis cannot be either matter or seeds in an absolute sense. The identification is from poetic analogy, not mathematical equation. One comparison does not preclude another; Adonis is like matter, Adonis is like seeds. Also one may be tempted to ask what Venus represents as opposed to Adonis defined as seeds. I cannot provide that answer, for there are not enough clues. The easiest answer, and probably the right one, is that Spenser did not intend his symbolism to be a precise equation.

Time's presence in the Garden is another source of controversy. Spenser says that the "thousand thousand naked babes" that flock around the porter Genius are planted again upon their return to the Garden, apparently doffing off their "fleshly weedes," to grow "as they had neuer seene/ Fleshly corruption, nor mortall paine" (3. 6. 32-33). Later he also says that "All things, as they created were, doe grow" (Ibid., 34). These statements seem to suggest that the Garden is immune from the effect of time. But in stanzas 39-40, Spenser introduces Time in the Garden.

Great enemy to it, and to all the rest,
That in the Gardin of Adonis springs,
Is wicked Time, who with his scyth addrest,
Does mow the flowring herbes and goodly things,
And all their glory to the ground downe flings,

Where they doe wither, and are fowly mard:
 He flyes about, and with his flaggy wings
 Beates downe both leaues and buds without regard,
 Ne euer pitie may relent his malice hard.

Is there an inconsistency here? I think there is, but unity in a poetical work does not forbid the presence of logical inconsistency, and in this case I do not believe that Time mars the poetical integrity of the Garden of Adonis episode as he does the flowers that grow there. Above all, when we consider that the Garden belonged to Venus, the goddess of generation, and therefore immanent in nature, the presence of Time seems to be reconcilable with the fundamental meaning of the Garden. Every earthly being renews its stock through marriage. In a timeless, celestial paradise, there is no need to procreate.

First, we have to contend with the assertion that there is no inconsistency in Time's presence. Stirling (p. 256) declares that "one finds no evidence prior to Stanza 39, that beings in the Garden are changeless."¹⁰ Since, as Stirling sees it, all forms that are generated in the Garden are transient, physical shapes, and "the existence of beings in the Garden is constantly interrupted by their transmission into mortal state" (pp. 526-27), there is no contradiction in the rule of Time in the Garden. The root of Stirling's mistake is his failure to see the contrast between the Garden and the outside world. The "naked babes," be they soul or form, or substance, according to Stirling's interpretation, are in a state of sinlessness ("as they had neuer seene/ Fleshly corruption, nor mortall paine" can mean only that), and to issue out into the world and into the

"mortall state" means for them to exchange this state of sinlessness for "fleshly weedes" and "sinfull mire." Although thus far we have no explicit mention of time, it should be assumed that the gates of the Garden are the boundary between immutable and mutable worlds. To allow to beings in the Garden, as Stirling does (p. 526), only the terrestrial mode of permanence in temporal succession, "eterne in mutabilitie,/ And by succession made perpetuall," is naively to identify the Garden of Adonis with the world. The beings in the Garden are constantly submitted to the wheel of reincarnation, but the Garden itself is a place exempt from this ceaseless cycle of life and death. Surely there is growth and change in the Garden, but prior to stanza 39 there is no suggestion of mortality there. Spenser's Time is not merely Mutability, however, but Death.

How can we allow such an inconsistency? How can Death exist in the sinless, prelapsarian world? Bennett ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis," p. 68) tries to solve the problem by perceiving the shift in perspective at the point of the introduction of Time. The Garden, she observes, is the timeless nursery of pure forms. But as Spenser describes the departure of these forms into the world of corporality, "The point of view has shifted, as the poem progressed, from the world of forms to the world of matter." Although Bennett seriously impairs the credibility of her thesis by trying to support it with an unwarranted statement that Time's presence reflects the idea that whatever there is in the copy, the world of phenomena, must also be present in the original world of Ideas, I believe that something very like what she suggests happens.

The structure of the Garden of Adonis episode is based upon the pattern of feeling. The progression of stanzas from one idea to another, from the "horticultural" passage to the Form-Substance passage and finally to the Time passage, is not organic, but associational. The relationship of the different parts of the entire structure is analogous to a mosaic in which the fragments dissimilar in shapes and colors are put together to create a rough, "unclassical" harmony. The transition from one part to another is not tightly thought out. For example, the Form-Substance passage virtually slides into the Time passage. At the end of the former, the emphasis gradually moves toward the lyrical lament of the ephemerality of physical forms, "And that faire flowre of beautie fades away,/ As doth the lilly fresh before the sunny ray." And this melancholy contemplation usurps the focus of attention from the purely objective observation on Form-Matter unification and sprouts another stanza of its own: "Great enemy to it . . . Is wicked Time, etc." A phrase, an image, not the logical scheme, controls the sequence of thought. It is unreasonable and futile to try to seek a consistent pattern of ideas in such a sequence.

The strange fact is that we do not feel the presence of Time as the breach of promise or the violation of the poetic integrity. This is because the movement of thought, from immutable world of forms to matter and to Time, although it may be too much to be contained coherently in a single fable of about two hundred lines, is nevertheless true to our feeling about the perception of time's role in the generative process in the Garden. Time and death are

inseparable from the generation of new beings, and Venus has to descend to the realm of mortality to perform her function as the great genetrix rerum. Therefore, Tonkin's proposed solution that when Venus grieves over the destruction wrought on her creatures by Time "this does not mean that Time is in the Garden, but simply that she sees the results of Time's ravages when the creatures return from Time's realm" (p. 411), must be rejected, not only because we can hardly imagine Time cutting down with his scythe all the "goodly things" outside the Garden, but especially because to exclude Time from the Garden does irreparable harm to the total meaning of the episode. Ellrodt (p. 84) observes that any interpretation of the Garden of Adonis has to satisfy a twofold requirement. The Garden has to be sinless, "a world of creatures yet unborn. But Amoret being already born and in the world, it had to be an actual garden of generation and growth and not a mere pattern-world of forms." And to the question "ubi ergo?" Ellrodt answers, "The 'first seminary,' in a way, is not in the world, and yet of the world." Following him we should perhaps say that Spenser meant the Garden to be both in and out of time. Just as it is pointless to try to locate the Garden, nothing is gained by either completely immersing the sacred place of eternal generation in time or elevating it above time and out of contact with the world. Spenser's Garden of Adonis is neither Lucretian nor Platonic; it is a mosaic of both, and many more ideas.

Macrobius (Saturnalia, l. 8. 6-8), interpreting the myth of Saturn's castration of his father Coelum, identifies Saturn with

Time and says that with his appearance the spontaneous flow of seeds of all things from heaven ceased and was replaced by generation by means of the conjunction of two sexes, presided over by Venus, a goddess born from the foam of the sea into which the severed genitals of Coelum were thrown. Thus mythically Venus owes her birth to Saturn, Time. Referring to this myth of Venus and Saturn, Leone Ebreo, a successful popularizer of the Neo-Platonic lore in the Renaissance, states that "generation in this world originates in destruction For if things were not destroyed there would be no generation" (The Philosophy of Love, p. 151).

Thus the Garden of Adonis had naturally to belong to the temporal world. It is the fairest place "as Nature can deuize," and we have to speculate that human, immortal soul is of divine origin and comes from outside the Garden, since the Garden is "the first seminarie/ Of all things, that are borne to liue and die,/ According to their kindes." But one who tries to interpret the Garden in consistently naturalistic light must feel its limitation. Greenlaw ("Spenser and Lucretius," p. 453) feels no uneasiness about the presence of Time, because it strengthens his thesis that the Garden manifests the principle of natural law superior to the gods, and he interprets Venus' grief over Time's relentless destruction of her creatures in that spirit. We have to remember, however, that within the Christian system of values Nature is only a surrogate authority. Venus' role in the Garden of Adonis is closely analogous to Nature's in Alanus de Insulis' Complaint of Nature in that both represent the generative principle immanent in nature and under the careful

supervision of the supreme deity. Nature is called "the lowly disciple of the Supreme Ruler," and she defines her own limited role in comparison with God:

His operation is simple, mine is multiform; His work is faultless, mine is defective; . . . For, according to his sure testimony, man by my working is born, by the might of God is born again. Through me he is called from not being into being; through Him he is led from being on into a better being. For through me man is begotten unto death, through Him he is created unto life again. (pp. 29-30)

The Garden retains some divine vestiges of the omnific Word, since here the Natural Law is the extension and mundane manifestation of the Divine Will.

As has already been suggested, the Garden of Adonis is not simply Nature's laboratory; it is also a nursery of Amoret, a maid who is to be educated in "all the lore of loue, and goodly woman-head." The presence of Cupid in the Garden has been explicitly mentioned: "And sweet loue gentle fits emongst them throwes." The introduction of Cupid and his consort Psyche, with their daughter Pleasure, completes this aspect of the Garden as the shrine of monogamous love. Cupid here is no longer the cruel, sardonic tyrant of the Petrarchan amorists. He is the affectionate husband of Psyche. The suffering which Psyche has undergone on account of Venus' anger is behind her now. Cupid and Psyche are united in true harmony and constant love.

But one problem confronted Spenser. The majority of the description of Cupid in the Faerie Queene does not belong to this type of "gentle" Cupid. His normal signification is passion and sensual

desire. Thus in the castle of Malecasta, where young squires and damsels spend their time in uninterrupted revels, "Cupid still amongst them kindled lustfull fires" (3. 1. 39). And above all, in the forthcoming cantos of the House of Busyrane, Spenser depicts Cupid in a predominantly sinister and negative light. How can one introduce Cupid to the sanctuary of married love without dragging in these associations too? Sidney (Arcadia, p. 693) excludes Cupid from the epithalamial celebration; "But thou foul Cupid, sire to lawless lust,/ Be far hence with thy empoison'd dart," This exclusion is in keeping with the tradition of Christian epithalamion of, for example, Paulinus of Nola who also banished Juno, Cupid, and Venus, the familiar company of pagan marriage rite, from the marriage ceremony of a Christian couple (An epithalamion celebrating the wedding of Julian of Eclanum and Titia, The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola, tr, P. G. Walsh, p. 245). Spenser found the solution in disarming Cupid. Cupid is allowed to visit the Garden on one condition and that is "laying his sad darts/ Aside."

The fact that this is not an isolated case can be attested by other numerous examples, both in and outside the Faerie Queene. Thus in the proem to Book I Spenser invokes Cupid, bidding him "Lay now thy deadly Heben bow apart/ And with thy mother milde come to mine ayde." The angel which appears before swooning Guyon is compared to "Cupido on Idaean hill,/ When hauing laid his cruell bow away,/ And mortall arrowes, wherewith he doth fill/ The world with murderous spoiles and bloudie pray, . . ." (2. 8. 6). Also in the House of Alma Cupid plays his wanton sports, "being returned late/ From his

fierce warres, and hauing from him layd/ His cruell bow, wherewith he thousands hath dismayd"(2. 9. 34). In Colin Clouts Come Home Againe (803-810), Spenser says that when Venus brought newly born Cupid, "pure and spotless," to the Garden of Adonis he had no weapons. He acquired them only when "he his owne perfection wrought,/ And shortly was of all the Gods the first." It is evident that Spenser endowed the unarmed Cupid with special significance.

But Spenser is not the inventor of this pretty conceit. The idea of unarmed Cupid has formed a minor literary topos since the late Greek period. The Greek Anthology contains a few epigrams on Cupid unarmed or Cupid asleep (The Greek Anthology, Loeb vol. 5, p. 281 and 285). The most memorable piece in it, perhaps, is one ascribed to Plato.

When we entered the deep shadowed-wood we found
within it the son of Cytherea, like unto rosy
apples. Nor had he the quiver that holds arrows,
nor his bent bow, but they were hanging on the
leafy trees, and he lay among the rose blossoms
smiling, bound fast by sleep, and above him the
tawny bees were sprinkling on his dainty lips
honey dripping from the comb.

(Ibid., p. 283)

Pausanias (2. 27. 3) reports "a picture by Pausias representing Love, who has cast aside his bow and arrows, and is carrying instead of them a lyre that he has taken up." Tibullus (2. 1. 79-82) invites Cupid to the country feast on one condition; "But, prithee, lay aside thy arrows, and far from us put away thy burning torch." To draw a few examples from the Renaissance time, Poliziano (Stanze, l. 69), when he is about to describe the abode of Venus in Cyprus, invokes Erato

and says that "often Love himself comes to sing with you; having put down the quiver from his shoulder, he tries the strings of your beautiful lyre." The "Golden Age" chorus of Tasso's Aminta presents the lover's paradise where there is no dreaded Honor, but only Nature's command, "Whatever pleases is allowed"; "In those days amid the flowers and the streams the little Loves without bows and without torches danced in rings." In Sidney's Arcadia (p. 245) Cupid visits the chaste bed of Pamela and Philoclea "to play him there without dart." Notice that in these instances the disarming is voluntary. In a different situation Cupid is stripped of his weapons, most often by his mother, as a punishment for his mischief, or Cupid's powerlessness before Diana or Minerva is often signified by his disarming. The sense of peace and quiet, peculiar to the voluntary unarming of Cupid, is conspicuously missing in these cases.

In creating an anti-Cupid figure Spenser was also probably influenced by another mythological figure closely related to Cupid--Anteros. In classical Greece Anteros represented mutual love. Thus Pausanias reports, "in one of the wrestling schools is a relief showing Love and Love Returned, as he is called. Love holds a palm branch, and Returned is trying to take the palm from him" (6. 23. 5). But later Anteros came to mean strictly anti-love, that is, love of virtue or even religion. Servius (Commentary on the Aeneid, 4. 520) says that Anteros "unbinds the lovers" ("amores resolvit"). In Emblematum liber Alciati defines Anteros as love of virtue (Emblem 109) and shows him binding Eros to a tree and burning his bow and

arrows (Emblem 110). Cartari (Imagines Deorum, p. 325) says that Venus had two sons¹¹--one is Cupid who inflames human hearts with sordid desire, the other is Anteros who makes us abhor such desires and seek honorable things. Pausanias' Eros and Anteros striving for a palm branch was interpreted as a struggle between sacred and profane love (Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods, p. 271).

If Spenser harbored the thought of using the figure of Anteros, he dropped it with happy result. Anteros, as described in the Renaissance mythological manuals and dictionaries, stood in too sharp a contrast to his brother Eros. The popularized Neo-Platonic distinction of Celestial and Earthly Cupid, amor spiritualis and amor carnalis, would never do for Spenser, since love in the Garden of Adonis is explicitly human and sensual. He could easily have found the notion of unarmed Cupid from Poliziano or Tasso, or Sidney, if Spenser had the chance to read the Arcadia as it was circulated in manuscripts before it was first published in 1590, and it suited his purpose better since it deprived Cupid of the very elements which should make him an unwelcome guest: his power to hurt, his proclivity toward violence. As the sacred place of married love, the sacramental meaning of the Garden of Adonis had to maintain its pure ideality, and Cupid, if he was to be introduced in it, had to go through some kind of symbolic transformation. We have to appreciate the subtle emphasis of Spenser's symbolism. Although unarmed and conceived as an anti-type of Cupid, Spenser's "gentle" Cupid is not Anteros, an abstracted idea, but still Cupid, human passion tamed and purified within the framework of matrimony.

There still remains the problem of Psyche. Her Greek meaning "soul" naturally gave birth to the interpretation of her suffering and wandering as the myth of human soul's search for Divine Love.

Plotinus' interpretation is most typical:

That our good is There is shown by the very love inborn with the soul; hence the constant linking of the Love-God with the Psyches in story and picture; the soul, other than God but sprung of Him, must needs love. So long as it is There, it holds the heavenly love; here its love is the baser; The soul in its nature loves God and longs to be at one with Him in the noble love of a daughter for a noble father; but coming to human birth and lured by the courtships of this sphere, she takes up with another love, a mortal, leaves her father and falls. But one day coming to hate shame, she puts away the evil of earth, once more seeks the father, and finds her peace.

(The Enneads, 6. 9. 9)

Later Fulgentius (Mythologiae, 6. 6) interprets the myth in strongly moralistic terms. He identifies Cupid with greed (cupiditas), and thus Psyche's breaking Cupid's inhibition to see his face amounts to her succumbing to it. But the most influential explication of the myth is perhaps Boccaccio's (Genealogiae Deorum, 5. 22). In his hand the myth becomes a complete Christian allegory. Psyche is the human soul, the daughter of the sun, God. Her marriage to Cupid represents the soul's bond with God. The urging of Psyche's two sisters, vegetative and sensitive souls, to look upon Cupid's face is the voice of natural reason trying to replace faith in the knowledge of God. With Psyche's violation of the promise to Cupid, her marriage to him is dissolved and she is alienated from God. But at last penitent, purged of pride and disobedience, she comes once

again to divine contemplation and love, and being united with Cupid again, bears Pleasure, timeless beatitude.

But how far are these various interpretations relevant to Spenser's treatment of the myth? Did he intend the allegory of Plotinus and Boccaccio? The allegorical interpretation of the Psyche myth was very popular and undoubtedly Spenser knew it. But the fact that he knew it does not necessarily mean that he intended the spiritual reading of the myth. The chief reason for believing so is that such a reading does not fit the narrative texture and the emotional context.

And his true loue faire Psyche with him playes,
 Faire Psyche to him lately reconcyld,
 After long troubles and vnmeet vprayes,
 With which his mother Venus her reuyld,
 And eke himselfe her cruelly exyld:
 But now in stedfast loue and happy state
 She with him liues, and hath him borne a chyld,
 Pleasure, that doth both gods and men aggrate,
 Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche late.

(3. 6. 50)

Cupid and Psyche are introduced as the ideal pattern of married love and their chief function is to be a tutor for Amoret. Spenser's Cupid in no way resembles Divine Love. He is, as we have observed, the Petrarchan god of love symbolically domesticated. Spenser's specific emphasis on Psyche's suffering and its bearing on larger scheme of meaning rightly led A. C. Hamilton to observe that "What appeals most strongly to Spenser's imagination is the quest of the beautiful and virtuous woman seeking her lover, In Books III and IV Psyche's quest provides a definite myth for shaping the matter of romance" (The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene, p. 140).¹²

But this phase of Psyche's adventure, so crucial to Spenser, has only a marginal meaning for the allegorists; in both Plotinus and Boccaccio there is little intimation that Psyche has earned her happiness by enduring the hardships imposed upon her. In fact, traditionally the allegorical interpreters paid only scant attention to that part of Apuleius' narrative in which Psyche bravely performs impossible tasks imposed by Venus, including her journey to the underworld.

As for Roche's claim that Cupid and Psyche "represent that further creation without which generation is incomplete, . . . the creation of the soul through the action of Love" (p. 126), I believe, with Ellrodt (p. 79), that the rational souls are of supernatural origin and therefore are not created in the Garden of Adonis, the first seminary of all things "that are borne to liue and die." Besides, Spenser never presents Cupid in the sense of Love that has begotten the human soul, both in and outside the Faerie Queene. In An Hymne in Honour of Love Cupid moulds the world out of Chaos but nothing is said of his role in the emergence of human soul. The "great immortal Spright" out of which the soul is said to have been derived (An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, 107) is obviously God.

A spiritual interpretation has been offered also for Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche. Bennett ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis," pp. 78-79) contends that Pleasure is "no earthly pleasure . . . but rather that Pleasure which the soul experiences when, led heavenward by Love, it contemplates the eternal Ideas, represented at this stage by their images, the forms." But there is not a shred

of evidence to support this thesis. Rather, that Spenser intended a more secular concept of pleasure, specifically the pleasure of the marriage bed, is evident from the following lines of Epithalamion; "Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will,/ For greedy pleasure,¹³ careless of your toyes,/ Thinks more vpon her paradise of ioyes,/ then what ye do, albe it good or ill" (364-67).

The meaning of Spenser's Cupid and Psyche story is relatively easy to understand, if we do not bring in an assortment of recondite ideas and force them upon the narrative. Psyche is the prototype of the Persecuted Fair, especially Amoret and Florimell, and her reconciliation with Cupid foreshadows these heroines' well-earned union with their lovers.

CHAPTER II

THE TEMPLE OF VENUS

Spenser considered the primordial impulse of procreative love in the Garden of Adonis as the foundation of his vision of marriage. But as the education of Amoret by Pleasure indicates, procreative love must be ennobled and humanized by merging with love in a more civilized sense, a broad sense of intimacy and personal harmony between husband and wife. The Temple of Venus presents that civilized aspect of marriage in the image of Concord, the universal amity that binds heterogeneous and hostile elements into a harmonious whole. The bond of affection and trust that binds a married couple adumbrates this universal working of Concord, or Friendship as the subtitle of Book IV calls it. As opposites coincide in the image of the Hermaphrodite Venus, erotic love and friendship (the mutual devotion between spiritual equals) are merged together in Spenser's idealized picture of marriage.

Book IV of the Faerie Queene bears the subtitle of "the legend of Cambel and Triamond, or of Friendship," but it is about friendship in a very restricted sense. Cambel and Triamond, as soon as their story is told, disappear completely from the action of the poem and in no way contribute toward establishing a sustained quest. This is also true of Book III, in which the Ariostan "polyphonic" narrative

technique overrides the linear development of a single action, but at least it has Britomart's quest for her lover and her confrontation with Busyrane as the culminating point of the fable of chastity. Besides, the story of Cambel and Triamond is curiously inept. There is no warm, personal touch in their relationship. They both remain wooden and expressionless. The same is also true of the story of Amyas and Placidas. Despite Spenser's exalted praise of their devotion, emotionally their story conveys very little and lacks fire. These two stories, although potentially the main stuff of the book, remain ineffective and weak. Bennett (The Evolution of the Faerie Queene, pp. 166-67) goes so far as to suggest that the subtitle was probably the invention of the editor or even the printer and that he gave this pre-eminence to the story of Cambel and Triamond because the story of Amyas and Placidas, which Bennett believes to be the chief exemplum of the titular virtue, was inept. The most interesting and lively parts of the narrative in Book IV have little connection with the theme of friendship. Britomart's union with Arthegall, Amoret's captivity at the den of Lust, the story of Belphebe and Timias, Florimell's misery and Marinell's conversion, are all materials continued from Book III. It is wiser to regard the two books as a unit with a common theme, love.

Still the book had to have an allegorical core. Book I had the House of Holiness, Book II the House of Alma, and Book III had the Garden of Adonis. Should the central allegory be about friendship (supposing that Spenser wrote the subtitle), or should it be

about love as in Book III? Spenser, I think, had it both ways. The Temple of Venus is the sanctuary of Venus as the Garden of Adonis was and is chiefly about Scudamour's courtship of Amoret. The Cupid symbolism in the Temple of Venus is quite consistent with what has been developed in the Garden of Adonis and the House of Busyrane; the "cruel" Cupid is banished from the premises of Venus. The fact that the allegorical core of Book IV is about Venus and that the main concern of Book IV is the various manifestations of love as illustrated in the adventures of the four heroines should confirm the essential continuity of Book III and Book IV. But, on the other hand, the Temple of Venus also gives a prominent place to friendship. The throng of mythological and legendary famous friends stroll leisurely there, separated from the crowd of lovers, relishing the honors bestowed upon them by the poet. Furthermore, the Temple of Venus is about amicitia in a much larger sense. At the porch of the Temple sits a matron named Concord whose work is to tie the universe together with the strong bond of unity and "friendship." Venus here is not simply the goddess of erotic love, but symbolizes the cosmic force which, as Spenser says, has created the universe and is ever since maintaining and renewing it. Friendship and sexual love are only the human manifestation of this universal principle of love, this limitless goodness that originates from the almighty ruler of the world. As the distinction between sexes disappears in the statue of the Hermaphrodite Venus, the opposites coincide in the essential unity of divine harmony, and the distinction between friendship and sexual love becomes insignificant and even trivial.

Scudamour's wooing and achieving Amoret is the focal point of the Temple of Venus canto. First, it is necessary to survey the general setting of the Temple of Venus. It cannot be taken for granted that the shrine of Venus was always like Spenser's. We find a good evidence of it in Chaucer. Spenser's Temple of Venus is surrounded by the lively images of natural landscape. Many aspects of an earthly paradise--lush green, lovely chirping of birds, gentle murmur of streams--are there. In the temple of Venus in Chaucer's Knight's Tale, however, we do not have this spacious, outdoor feeling. Instead, we find an enclosed room and the walls decorated with the images of tribulations and maladies of love. This temple in fact reminds us more of the House of Busyrane than the Temple of Venus. In the same way, the inner sanctuary of Venus in the Parliament of Fowls, despite its surrounding green-world, conveys the impression of darkness and an enclosed feeling; "Derk was that place, but afterward lightnesse/ I saw a lyte, unnethe it myghte be lesse, . . ." (263-64). Apparently Spenser had no use for this gloomy, enclosed feeling that was one of the prominent features of medieval presentation of the shrine of Venus. His inmost temple where the statue of Venus is situated conveys the sense of an abundance of light, order, and cleanness. Conspicuously absent is the medieval image of Venus, the languorous goddess of delight combing her flowing hair and dreamingly absorbed in her image in the mirror.¹ Instead Spenser draws for us the picture of the "queene of th'ayre,/ Mother of laughter" (4. 10. 47) who brings with her the season of warmth and

joy, who drives with gentle stings every creature toward mating, "to coole their kindly rages" (Ibid., 45).

However, she is not the Venus of the Garden of Adonis either. As opposed to the purely natural force of generation, Venus in the Temple stands for civilized, human love. As C. S. Lewis has remarked (The Allegory of Love, p. 343), if the Garden of Adonis is Amoret's nursery, the Temple of Venus is her university where she learns under the tutelege of Womanhood, Cheerfulness, Modesty, and Obedience. This quality of "civility" is most clearly illustrated by the golden mean achieved through the equal blend of Art and Nature in the Temple. In the Garden of Adonis we did not find even a trace of human artifice. But here Art is in perfect harmony with Nature, supplying what Nature lacks and mending her defects; "and all that nature did omit,/ Art playing second natures part, supplied it" (4. 10. 21). The bridge that leads to the island where the temple is situated is built with "stately pillours, fram'd after the Doricke guize" (Ibid., 6). In the garden every dainty flower on earth was "planted, or grew naturall" (Ibid., 22) and, in accordance with Elizabethan fashion, this garden contains a labyrinth too. Nurtured in this civilized environment, Amoret was taught the requirements of a good wife--Obedience and Silence are specific wifely virtues. She is now ready to be courted by an eligible young man and to enter the actual world. The Garden of Adonis was not in the world, yet of the world. There is no ambiguity as to the location of the Temple of Venus. Spenser says that the inhabitants of the Elysian fields would "wish to life return'd againe to bee"

(Ibid., 23), if they saw the beauty of the Temple of Venus. The Temple is not in some celestial realm; it is here in our world.

After 1590, the time of the publication of the first installment of the Faerie Queene, Spenser changed his mind as to the way Scudamour and Amoret met for the first time. In the closing section of canto six, Book III, it is told that Amoret was brought to the Fairy Court after she had been nursed in the Garden of Adonis. It is in Gloriana's court that Amoret is courted and won by Scudamour (3. 6. 53). Apparently Spenser was dissatisfied with this idea and decided to make Scudamour snatch away Amoret from the shrine of Venus in the forthcoming Book IV. It is extremely difficult to reconstruct the actual process through which the Temple of Venus took the form as we know it. We can be fairly certain, however, that the Temple of Venus was created to accommodate Scudamour's wooing of Amoret. The name Scudamour means the "shield of love." Therefore, when Spenser first introduced him in Book III, he had already in mind Scudamour's adventure involving the shield of love and presumably the capturing of Amoret, since, as Scudamour's raison d'etre was to be the lover of Amoret, it is unimaginable that he should fight for another lady. Thus it is quite possible that prior to 1590, when Spenser envisioned the meeting of Amoret and Scudamour to take place in Gloriana's court, the poet intended Scudamour to win Amoret as the prize of a tournament held at the Fairy Court, just as in Satyrane's tournament in Book IV the False Florimell is given to the victor. At the same time Spenser developed the idea of the shrine of Venus and of using it as the

allegorical core of Book IV. Also he knew Musaeus' Hero and Leander, or Marlowe's version of it, in which Leander forcibly wooed Hero who was serving as one of the priestesses of the temple of Venus. Eventually Spenser abandoned the original plan of Scudamour's courtship of Amoret in the Fairy Court and gave the story an entirely new context and narrative framework by making Scudamour achieve the adventure of the shield of love in the Temple of Venus.

The basis of Scudamour's wooing of Amoret is the medieval chivalrous quest of the Rose. In Jean de Meun's continuation of the Romance of the Rose, the young lover, aided by Venus and Cupid, assails the castle in which his lady is imprisoned by Jealousy, Shame, and other personifications that represent the obstacles that stand in the way of the consummation of his will. Likewise, after winning the shield of love by defeating the twenty knights who guard the bridge that leads to the Temple of Venus, Scudamour has to pass by Doubt, Delay, and Danger who are stationed to deter his progress. These personified figures stand for the psychological impediments that hinder Scudamour. Doubt who has Janus-like double face is the doubt of self-worth, the fears that one may not deserve the favors of the lady. Delay spins out thousands of trivial reasons why the lover should not launch into wooing the lady immediately. The faint-hearted who have never learned to seize the occasion while they could "did ly/ Long languishing there in vnpittied paine,/ And seeking often entraunce, afterwards in vaine" (4. 10. 13). Doubt and Delay are placed at the outer gate of the bridge with reason; the lover who is

deterred by these psychological scruples fails even before he actually begins his courtship.

Danger also appears in the House of Busyrane, but his function is different from that of Danger in the Temple of Venus. Danger in the House of Busyrane has a net called Mischief and a rusty knife called Mishap, "With th'one his foes he threatened to innuade,/ With th'other he his friends ment to enwrap:/ For whom he could not kill he practizd to entrap" (3. 12. 11). This is hostility, covert or open. But Danger in the Temple of Venus has neither a net nor a knife. His chief business is to scare off the "faint-heart-fooles" with his grim looks. In fact, this particular Danger represents the lady's refusal to grant love to the wooer; "Vnworthy they of grace, whom one denial/ Excludes from fairest hope, withouten further triall" (4. 10. 17).

The same Danger in the Romance of the Rose chases away Fair Welcome who encourages the lover to kiss the Rose. As C. S. Lewis explains (The Allegory of Love, appendix II "Danger"), the primitive meaning of the word "danger" ("lordship" or "dominion") developed into two semantic groups. Sense A came to mean the power to influence, to hurt, hence "danger" in the modern sense of the word; sense B, the power to withhold, refusal, or being harsh or "difficult." Danger in the House of Busyrane embodies sense A, while Danger in the Temple of Venus embodies sense B. That is why the doughty knights well-seasoned in battles "Durst not the sternesse of his looke abide." Some fearful cowards try to creep by Danger "through gifts, or guile, . . . or stealing of the kaies," but Scudamour advances his shield and challenges the churl, that is, he does not lose courage at the initial

rejection of the lady. His boldness at this Gate of Good Desert anticipates his audacity in snatching Amoret from the lap of Womanhood. This does not mean, however, that he is arrogant. He possesses a degree of humility that Guyon or Arthegall never possesses "But I though meanest man of many moe" (4. 10. 19). Humility may not be a characteristic virtue of an epic hero modelled on classical epics, but it is one of the most attractive qualities of the "servant of Love" of medieval love poetry.

The most interesting aspect of Scudamour's capturing of Amoret is probably Spenser's use of Cupid symbolism strikingly consistent with its use in the Garden of Adonis and the House of Busyrane. In many medieval poems of love allegory, Venus and Cupid are often worshipped together in the shrine of Venus. This is true in Chaucer's Knight's Tale (1955-66) and the House of Fame (130-39). We may have the remnant of this tradition in the group of lovers in the Temple of Venus "Praying their god, and yeelding him great thanks" (4. 10. 25). But the fact is that Cupid is banished from the Temple. Instead of him, we have tiny Erotes fluttering around the statue of Venus.

And all about her necke and shoulders flew
 A flocke of little loues, and sports, and ioyes,
 With nimble winge of gold and purple hew;
 Whose shapes seem'd not like to terrestriall boyes,
 But like to Angels playing heauenly toyes;
 The whilest their eldest brother was away,
 Cupid their eldest brother; he enjoyes
 The wide kingdome of loue with Lordly sway,
 And to his law compels all creatures to obey.

(Ibid., 42)

The symbolism is basically the same as in the Garden of Adonis. The "cruel" Cupid, the irrational passion, has no part to play in the

premises of Venus. Instead of disarming Cupid, Spenser here has introduced "litle loues, and sports, and ioyes" as the surrogates for the "gentle" Cupid. The same symbolism appears in Epithalamion. Throughout that poem Cupid is never mentioned. But when the night falls and the noise of merrymaking has died away, leaving the newly married couple in long looked for privacy,

an hundred little winged loues,
Like diuers feathered doves,
Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,
And in the secret darke, that none reprocues,
Their pretty stealthes shal worke, and snares shal spread
To filch away sweet snatches of delight,
Conceald through couert night.
(357-63)

In other words, although Cupid as the object of the idolatry of "courtly" love may be a disturbing presence in nuptial ceremony, the element of romantic passion represented by him is somehow required to complete the full picture of married love. The ardor of human love must be controlled, not killed.

The figure of "litle loues" descends from the Erotes of Greek literature and the Amores of Roman literature and is so common that it needs no further comment.² The case of "sports, and ioyes" may require some explanations. The figures seem to derive from locus of Roman poets. The locus classicus is Horace, Ode, 1. 2., "Or shall blithe Venus from Sicilian skies/ Fly down with Mirth [locus] and Cupid in her train. . . ?" Here and elsewhere (Statius, Silvae, 1. 6.6; Philostratus, Imagines, 1. 25. 3) locus is conceived as Cupid's double attending on Venus. In early Christian literature and during the Middle Ages his status deteriorated. In Prudentius' Psychomachia

Iocus is among the swarm of disreputable personifications, such as Ostentation ("Pompa") or Pleasure ("Voluptas"), who follow their leader Luxuria, carnal love, and are defeated by Soberness. In Alanus de Insulis' Complaint of Nature, Iocus is the illegitimate son of Venus and Antigamus;³ Cupid is the son of Venus and Hymen. During the Renaissance he is very much restored to his original stature. The following passage by Jonson is especially interesting as it connects Iocus with marriage;

At this, from behind the Trophaees, CVPID discovered himselfe, and came forth armed; attended with twelue boyes, most antickly attyr'd, that represented the sports, and prettie lightnesses, that accompanie Loue, under the titles of IOCI, and RISVS; and are said to wait on VENVS, as she is Praefect of Mariage.

(The Haddington Masque, 157-63)

Jonson, however, may have had in mind Spenser's passage in Epithalamion or the Temple of Venus.

But we have not yet exhausted the full extent of Cupid symbolism in the Temple of Venus. Although Cupid is banished from the Temple, he is present as a painted figure on Scudamour's shield. There is no doubt as to the nature of this Cupid. He is the full-fledged "cruel" Cupid; "Cupid with his killing bow/ and cruell shafts emblazoned . . ." (4. 10. 55). Alciati (Emblematum liber, CVII "Vis Amoris") describes the shield of Alcibiades which bore the image of Cupid holding thunderbolts. Alcibiades, according to Alciati, was the most handsome man of his age and apparently enjoyed the protection of Cupid. In the same way, Scudamour, who is consistently associated with the shield of Love (3. 11. 7; 4. 1. 39), has been under Cupid's special patronage ever since he achieved the

adventure of the shield. He and the image of Cupid are unwelcome elements in the peaceful confines of the Temple. Womanhood and other tutoresses of Amoret are terrified by the image on the shield and can do nothing to prevent Scudamour from taking Amoret by force. Scudamour's use of force is justifiable, since violence of some sort is required to acquaint a recluse virgin with actual passion. It is no time for Scudamour to become reverential and be hampered by moral scruples; "For sacrilege me seem'd the Church to rob,/ And folly seem'd to leaue the thing vndonne, . . ." (4. 10. 53). It befits Scudamour, the knight of Cupid, to shake off "all doubt and shame-fast feare" which have never won a lady's love.

A. Kent Hieatt in his article "Scudamour's Practice of Maistrye upon Amoret" blames Scudamour for being overbold; "He has overstepped the bounds of love in asserting a passionate mastery incompatible with what he really wants, which is happy marriage" (p. 510). This interpretation suggests the niceness of bourgeois ethics incompatible with Spenser's idea of love and courtship. In the first place, what else could Scudamour do? The whole idea of the adventure of the shield of love consists in breaking into the island of Venus and snatching away the beautiful virgin, the "renowned prise." Hundreds of Scudamours have got possession of their bride in such a way as long as history can remember. In the Renaissance and baroque painting, the "rape" of the Sabine women by the Romans was a respectable pictorial theme. Venus is certainly not offended by Scudamour's audacity. She smiles on him "with amiable grace" and favors his "pretence" (4. 10. 56). She condones Cupid's tyranny with the same

tolerance when she hears the mortals' complaint of his cruelty; "yet she did smile thereat" (3. 6. 15). It is part of Venus' plan that Amoret should be abducted by a suitor, provided that he is a worthy mate.

Another aspect of the Temple of Venus involves the idea of Venus as the goddess of universal love with which the word Concord is synonymous. Concord is not an univocal concept but, as Spenser understands it, means harmony based upon two contrary principles of Love and Hate. We should probably see Scudamour's "rape" of Amoret against this background of concordia discors. Cupid, unruly and disturbing as he is, contributes toward establishing an order which is sustained by fruitful tension and conflicts. Venus' tolerance of Cupid's invasion into her premises could be understood as the adumbration of her universal way of working, the resolution of discord and violence into unity and peace. When this Concord manifests itself between humans, it is called love or friendship.

To Spenser's mind, love and friendship do not differ in their essence, at least within the Temple of Venus where behind the facade of plurality always lurks the countenance of divine unity. In the garden of the Temple of Venus "thousand payres of louers" stroll under the shade, praising the god of love. Far away from them, there are "another sort/ Of louers lincked in true harts consent" (4. 10. 26). They are famous friends--Hercules and Hylas, Jonathan and David, Damon and Pythias, and many more. This passage may have been interpolated when the Temple of Venus was adapted to the friendship theme,

as suggested by Bennett (The Evolution, p. 174), but the point is that Spenser did not make the distinction between love and friendship as glaring as he could. Friendship, Spenser says, is grounded upon "chast vertue. . . Which in their spirits kindling zealous fire,/ Braue thoughts and noble deedes did euermore aspire." This description fits Arthur's love for Gloriana or Britomart's for Arthegall as well as Damon's for Pythias. Elsewhere (3. 3. 1 f.) Spenser apostrophizes love in fundamentally the same terms; "But that sweet fit, that doth true beautie loue,/ And choseth vertue for his dearest Dame,/ Whence spring all noble deeds and neuer dying fame." As Spenser believes that true beauty is incorporeal (An Hymne in Honour of Beautie , 64 f.), love and friendship agree in having the beauty of the soul as their object and being grounded upon virtue and honor. When the poet emphatically depreciates sexual love in favor of friendship (4. 9. 1 f.), we can be fairly certain that it is only a purposeful gesture to give necessary prestige to the titular virtue of the book; the choice of deliberately belittling words, "raging fire of loue to woman kind" or "Cupids greater flame," betrays it. By "Cupids greater flame" Spenser must have meant the diseased emotions of Ragingund, Malecasta, or Paridell. Love in its highest and purest form, however, is as selfless, compassionate, and steadfast as friendship.

Spenser calls Concord the mother of Friendship (4. 10. 34), and she is the source or the universal paradigm of amity in the world, in the body politic and human society in general. The goddess Concordia of the Roman religion was the patroness of peace of both the state and married household. In Spenser, Concord sits on the

porch of the Temple of Venus and her work is to mitigate the rivalry between Love and Hate; "Hate was the elder, Loue the younger brother;/ Yet was the younger stronger in his state/ Then th'elder, and him maystred still in all debate" (Ibid., 32). Hate is elder than Love perhaps because Chaos and the abhorrence of order preceded the act of creation by Love (An Hymne in Honour of Love, 57 f.).

Concord is not a creative principle. Just as she arbitrates the quarrel of Love and Hate, her work is to maintain the status quo of the universe as God has created it.

By her the heauen is in his course contained,
 And all the world in state vnmoued stands,
 As their Almighty maker first ordained,
 And bound them with inuiolable bands;
 Else would the waters overflow the lands,
 And fire deuoure the ayre, and hell them quight,
 But that she holds them with her blessed hands.
 She is the nourse of pleasure and delight,
 And vnto Venus grace the gate doth open right.⁴
 (4. 10. 35)

As the last two lines indicate, Spenser seems to be envisaging Concord as the vicegerent of Venus, just as Alanus and Lydgate saw Venus as the deputy of Nature. The concept of Concord is naturally very abstract and, unlike Nature, she lacks those rich literary associations that appeal to our emotions. But by conceiving her as "an amiable Dame" and linking her with Venus and her myth (Could Concord be the "nourse" of Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche, and of little "sports, and ioyes," Cupid's brothers, who fly around the statue of Venus?), Spenser presents her as more than an abstract idea.

The statue of the Hermaphrodite Venus occupies the central place in the Temple of Venus. The idea of the composite deity who

combines both sexes may be shocking to modern sensibility, but it has a long history dating back to Plato and its presence in the Temple of Venus is very appropriate since it epitomizes the theme of concordia discors--the opposition between two sexes and the distinction between sexual love and friendship are symbolically dissolved in the unity of Venus, the universal love.

There are a few peripheral points of interest in the poet's description of the statue of Venus. Spenser is deliberately vague as to the material of which the statue was made: "neither pretious stone, nor durefull brasse,/ Nor shining gold, nor mouldring clay it was; . . . But being faire and brickle, likest glasse did seeme" (4. 10. 39). This kind of equivocation, especially in describing a divine object, is typically medieval. Thus Lydgate describes the garment of Venus; "But the mater is nat tolde/ Wher-of yt was y-made or wrought,/ Nor, pleylnly, I ne coude noght/ Deme, wherof yt sholde be" (Reson and Sensuallyte, 1558-61). Spenser may have found a hint of the glassy material from Chaucer's House of Fame (120), where the temple of Venus "ymad of glas" is mentioned. Another detail that should be considered is the snake clasping the feet of Venus, with its head and tail fast bound. The normal meaning of a snake swallowing its own tail is eternity, and Kathleen Williams (Spenser's Faerie Queene, p. 127) interprets the use of the symbol here in that way. Roche has a more elaborate theory, contending that the snake possibly symbolizes "Caritas," "Aeternitas," and "Vita humana," "all of which conceptions are united in Spenser's picture of Venus" (The Kindly Flame, p. 132). This seems to me a little far-fetched since the sole ground

of Roche's argument is that the symbol in the Hieroglyphics of Horapollon is interpreted in that manner. Fowler (C. S. Lewis, Spenser's Images of Life, p. 41, note 2) identifies the snake with the annual cycle of generation on the strength of Macrobius, Saturnalia, 1. 9. 12 f.; ". . . so as to show that the world sustains itself out of its own self, and returns upon itself again." Basically this interpretation accords with Williams', since the concept of eternity that has neither beginning nor end could be visualized only through the image of endless circular motion, be it of seasons or generation.

The statue of Venus is veiled. There are a few references to the veiled Venus in antiquity (Pausanias, 3. 15. 10-11; Pliny, Natural History, 36. 5). The veil betokens secrecy and is related to the ancients' aversion to liberally promulgating the mystery of the cult to the vulgar and the uninitiated. Thus Spenser begs pardon from Elizabeth for foreshadowing her and her kingdom in Gloriana and her Fairy Land; "The which O pardon me thus to enfold/ In couert vele, and wrap in shadowes light,/ That feeble eyes your glory may behold,/ Which else could not endure those beames bright, . . ." (2. Proem 5).

Spenser's Venus is veiled because she is a Hermaphrodite.

The cause why she was couered with a vele
Was hard to know, for that her Priests the same
From peoples knowledge labour'd to concele.
But sooth it was not sure for womanish shame,
Nor any blemish, which the worke mote blame;
But for, they say, she hath both kinds in one,
Both male and female, both vnder one name:
She syre and mother is her selfe alone,
Begets and eke conceiues, ne needeth other none.

(4. 10. 41)

The same Hermaphrodite Venus appears in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe (801-2); "For Venus selfe doth soly couples seeme,/ Both male and female, through commixture ioyned." This Hermaphrodite Venus ultimately comes from the Venus Barbata described by Macrobius, Saturnalia, 3. 8. 1; "Moreover, there is in Cyprus a bearded statue of the goddess with female clothing but with male attributes, so that it would seem that the deity is both male and female." Cartari refers to the same Venus with the face of a man, but wearing female clothes;

They represented her with beard, since the goddess has both male and female organs, as they believe her to be the priestess of all generations. Therefore her body above the waist shows male features, and below, feminine. (Imagines Deorum, p. 351)

Venus is not the only androgynous deity. Servius, commenting on the Aeneid, 2. 632, where Venus is referred to in the masculine form "deo," mentions the belief that the gods have both male and female sexes. Thus Spenser depicts Nature as veiled, and suggests her androgynous nature; "Whether she man or woman inly were,/ That could not any creature well descry" (7. 7. 5). Furthermore, Hermaphroditus, the child of Hermes and Aphrodite, represents the mythical marriage of masculine strength and female fruitfulness. Citing the passage from Julian, "Through Hermes and Aphrodite are invoked all generated things everywhere," Nohrnberg asserts that the "link between the Temple of Venus and the hermaphrodite must ultimately depend upon those texts that make Hermes and Aphrodite share in the patronage of marriage" (The Analogy of the Faerie Queene, p. 605).

From these evidences, it is difficult to deny Spenser's knowledge of the mystical belief in the coincidence of the opposites in God. Citing the passages from Cusanus, Pico della Mirandola, and Leone Ebreo, C. S. Lewis (Spenser's Images of Life, p. 42) concludes that both Venus and Nature are images of the natura unialis, the ultimate unity that underlies all beings; "contradictoria coincidunt in natura uniali" ("Contradictions are reconciled in the nature of the One," Pico, Conclusiones paradoxae, 15). Deeply related to this concept of the Hermaphrodite deity is the Biblical interpretation of the original man as androgynous. Wind (Pagan Mysteries, p. 212 f.) informs us that Philo and Origen inferred from Genesis 1. 27 ("So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created him; male and female created he them") that the first man had both sexes and that the division into male and female belonged to a later stage of creation.

Lotspeich (Classical Mythology in Spenser's Poetry, p. 116) argues that Venus of the Temple of Venus "is also the Aphrodite Ourania of Plato." This, however, cannot be correct since Plato says that Aphrodite Urania who has "sprung from no mother's womb but from the heavens themselves" is altogether male (Symposium, 181^c). If we pursue a Platonic analogy, Spenser's Hermaphrodite Venus corresponds with Aphrodite Pandemos, or the Earthly Venus, the daughter of Zeus and Dione. She, says Plato, partakes of both male and female, because she is the goddess of heterosexual love, as opposed to Aphrodite Urania who presides over the virtuous affection between males.

The Hermaphrodite Venus is an appropriate symbol for the Temple of Venus, or for that matter, the entire Book IV. The two central concerns of the book, love and friendship, are deliberately contrasted (4. 9. 1-2), only to be unified within the image of Hermaphrodite Venus; the distinction of sexes, which is the basis of the contrast between love and friendship, is dissolved to prove the natura unialis of divine love, of which human love is, to use Neo-Platonic vocabulary, an emanation or reflection. Ate, the chief stirrer of troubles in Book IV, whose mind is settled on one thing, "How she might overthrow the things that Concord wrought" (4. 1. 29), is after all one of the cards Concord plays in her cosmic game. Without the element of discord and strife, the music of terrestrial harmony cannot be attained. Venus, or Concord, allays the opposition of Love and Hate, attraction and repulsion, and produces harmony distinctly human--for only the angelic Intelligence is capable of composing quintessential harmony devoid of jarring notes.

The great hymn to Venus (4. 10. 44-47) is, as critics have long observed, based upon the opening passage of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura. Spenser follows Lucretius in general structure and sometimes paraphrases him very closely. "Tibi suavis daedala tellus/ summittit flores" Spenser translates into "Then doth the daedale earth throw forth to thee/ Out of her fruitfull lap abundant flowers" (4. 10. 45). "Omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem/ efficit ut cupide generatim saecula propagent" becomes "So all things else, that nourish vitall blood,/ Soone as with fury thou doest them inspire,/ In generation seeke to quench their inward fire" (Ibid., 46). Like Lucretius'

Venus, Spenser's Venus is the cosmic force of spring and generation that renews the earth and its inhabitants every year.

But Spenser's hymn contains several un-Lucretian elements. Lucretius' subject is the scientific, philosophical investigation of the ultimate law of nature, and Lucretius is invoking Venus as its mythical expression. On the other hand, Spenser's hymn is sung by one of the suppliant lovers who present Venus with their complaints; "Amongst the rest some one through loues constrayning,/ Tormented sore, could not containe it still,/ But thus brake forth, that all the temple it did fill" (4. 10. 43). The situation is a familiar one in medieval literature. In the Middle English Court of Love, a thousand lovers with their "billes" throng around the statue of Venus, some urging the goddess to punish the faithless man who deserted his woman, some exalting her power;

Venus, redresse of all division,
 Goddes eterne, thy name y-heried is!
 By loves bond is knit all thing, y-wis,
 Best unto best, the erth to water wan,
 Bird unto bird, and woman unto man.
 (591-95)

The direct source of Spenser's hymn may be classical, but the situation is purely medieval. Spenser's panegyric ends, not with the flourish of mythological allusion, but with the lover's plea, "O graunt that of my loue at last I may not misse."

Another medieval element is the idea of Venus as a planet.⁵ Lucretius' passage only hints at the goddess' identification with the planet; "alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa/ quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis/ concelebras" ("Venus the life-giver, who

beneath the gliding stars of heaven fillest with thy presence the sea that carries the ships and the land that bears the crops"). Spenser's reference is unambiguous; ". . . that vnder skie/ Doest fayrest shine, and most adorne thy place . . ." (4. 10. 44). Between Lucretius and Spenser lie medieval astrology and the habitual association of the planets with the pagan gods, and Spenser read "caeli subter labentia signa" as the telltale proof of Venus' identification with the planet. In Lydgate's Temple of Glass, which presents the shrine of Venus and a hymn sung in her honor, Venus is addressed predominantly as a planet.

Fairest of sterres, that with youre persant light
And with the cherisshing of youre stremes clere,
Causen in loue hertes to be light
Oonli thurugh shynyng of youre glade spere,
Nou laude and pris, O Venus, ladi dere,
Be to your name,
(1341-46)

How deeply Spenser connected Venus with the planet can be attested by Epithalamion. In that poem, Venus, together with Cupid, is excluded from the marriage ceremony and is never mentioned in her own person as the goddess of love. But instead Spenser obliquely refers to her by mentioning the evening star Hesperus, which is of course the planet Venus. The appearance of Hesperus on the horizon signals the coming of blissful night, and Spenser apostrophizes the planet in elated mood; "Fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of loue/ That all the host of heauen in rankes doost lead,/ And guydest louers through the nights dread, . . ." (288-90). Thus the planetary associations of Venus serve the subtle nuance of Spenser's symbolism. Venus, the voluptuous pagan goddess, is banished from the marriage celebration, but her presence is felt in the distance and in an innocuous way.

The most significant departure from Lucretius is Spenser's statement that Venus is responsible for the creation of the world; "So all the world by thee at first was made,/ And dayly yet thou doest the same repayre" (4. 10. 47).⁶ The divine creation of the world runs squarely against Lucretius' doctrine of the confluence of atoms giving birth to the universe. To find the source of Spenser's idea we have to go back to Plato. In Timaeus, 29, Plato reasons that the world, beautiful and ordered as it is, must have had a model no less beautiful and perfect. Later this model or pattern was identified with Ideas in the Angelic Mind and with the radiance of God's divine goodness (Ficino, Commentary on Symposium, 1.3) and was often referred to as the Celestial Venus. In An Hymne in Honour of Beautie Spenser says that the divine artificer had before his eyes "a goodly Paterne" according to which he created the world "as comely as he could" and identifies this pattern of perfect beauty with Venus; "That is thy soueraine might,/ O Cyprian Queene, which flowing from the beame/ Of thy bright starre, thou into them [the earthly creations] doest streame" (54-56). Thus Spenser changed the spirit, as well as the style and phrasing, of Lucretius' paean to Venus. His eclectic talent enabled him to integrate several strands of ideas from diverse sources and blend them into something distinctly his own.

The Temple of Venus is the least problematical of Spenser's allegorical set pieces. No knotty puzzles confront us as in the Garden of Adonis, and no aura of brooding mystery hovers over it as in the House of Busyrane. Critical works that discuss the Temple of

Venus extensively are scarce, not because it is dull or mediocre, but because there are so few "problems" that fire the critics' imagination. Basically Spenser is telling a story. The structure of the Temple of Venus canto employs the most primitive narrative technique, well-tried through the ages; "Scudamour won the shield; then he came to the bridge; then he passed by Doubt and Delay; then he confronted Danger; then he entered the island of Venus, etc." No other allegorical set piece of Spenser has this simple linear structure. The allegory of Concord and the Hermaphrodite Venus is a festoon crowning this narrative structure. The allegory is not a profound or complex one. Even the Hermaphrodite Venus, who generates a certain degree of mystery, is far from being puzzling. If the Temple of Venus loses some of its stature when compared, for instance, with the Garden of Adonis because of its lack of profundity, we must also recognize that its vehicle and content are perfectly matched to each other. The ragged structure of the Garden of Adonis is tonally right for its theme of the dynamic, primordial impulse of procreation. In the same sense, the central theme of the Temple of Venus--civilized, human love and universal Concord--finds its perfect form of expression in the simple, smooth structure built upon modest scope and technical finesse. Instead of metaphysical depth or psychological tension, the Temple of Venus conveys a sense of orderliness, placid harmony, a satisfied feeling that everything is in its right place. It is a modest achievement, but an achievement nonetheless.

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE OF BUSYRANE

If the allegory of Venus and Cupid in the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus presents Spenser's romantic ideal of marriage in its archetypal form, the House of Busyrane defines that ideal by what it is not, by vividly depicting the pains and hollowness of love alienated from the essential values of Christian monogamous life. But unlike the Bower of Bliss, the House of Busyrane does not exemplify simple Lust. The Masque of Cupid, the allegorical core of the House of Busyrane, tries to intimate that marriage is synonymous with a perversion of Petrarchan experience. The pretence of the Masque of Cupid consists in the deceptive notion that marriage is the virtual continuation of the torments, pains, and despair of courtship that leads nowhere. In short, Busyrane is trying to replace Hymen with Cupid as the priest of the marriage rite. Britomart can rescue Amoret from this nightmarish deception since she is able to penetrate the falsehood of Busyrane's pretence by virtue of her intimate knowledge of the universal working of love; the Petrarchan experience is a purgatorial path to the felicity of the union both in body and soul.

Of all the allegorical "cores" in the Faerie Queene, the House of Busyrane has a mysteriously intangible quality about it.

We roam with Britomart through its interior filled with puzzles and opaque symbols, sensing some hidden meaning in everything we encounter but unable to decipher it. This sense of ambiguity and mystery is in large part generated from Cupid who occupies the central place in the House of Busyrane. It is impossible to try to define him in simple moral terms. The fact that Busyrane, an adept in the cult of Cupid, is the enemy of chastity and married love, does not automatically make Cupid a wicked figure. When Busyrane is captured and fettered, Cupid simply disappears from our sight, like a royal masquer privileged to come and go as he pleases without bothering himself with petty moral distinctions. But he is not the "gentle" Cupid of the Garden of Adonis either. He is a fully armed daemonic god who enjoys hurting people, and the Masque of Cupid, since it includes seven pairs of allegorical personifications, reminds us of the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins in the House of Pride.

The paradox is in fact inherent in Spenser's conception of Cupid in the Faerie Queene. Spenser encourages us to see Cupid in the House of Busyrane as somehow related to, or even responsible for, the perverted form of love which Busyrane tries to impose upon Amoret and us. But on the other hand, Cupid is unmistakably present at the inception of love of Arthur or Britomart, because without the romantic yearning after the fleeting image of beauty neither heroism nor knightly quest is possible. Cupid may be an unwelcome guest at the nuptial banquet, but he has a legitimate role as the motivating force and the Tryer during the whole process of courtship. It is, I believe, this blend of meaning and nuance that gives the House of Busyrane its

peculiar aura of ambiguity. The sense of brooding enigma finds a memorable tableau in the image of Amoret's bleeding heart pierced with a cruel arrow. It is an appropriate symbol of the entire episode—it condenses the atmosphere of deep mystery that surrounds the magic castle into a reticent, yet powerful speaking picture.

First, let us put aside all prejudices and try to see the House of Busyrane as Britomart saw it. Britomart forces her way into the castle on the information that a lady is tortured by a magician who is trying to seduce her. She is alone and does not have the least idea what to expect. Her nerves are on edge and everything she sees is received by her mind with special vividness. The imposing, empty galleries decorated with sumptuous tapestries, a dim light of gold that creates "a litel glooming light, much like a shade" (l. 1. 14), an iron door with enigmatic words which are meant to confuse rather than to be understood—all these are familiar to us through our childhood dreams of being lost alone in an enormous room in which everything is hushed and yet menacing by its very silence. The surrounding high walls make us look dwarfish and we can never shake off the impression that we are constantly watched.

But more she meruaild that no footings trace,
Nor wight appear'd, but wastefull emptinesse,
And solemne silence ouer all that place:
Straunge thing it seem'd, that none was to possesse
So rich purueyance, ne them keepe with carefulnesse.
(3. 11. 53)

This desolation, this dustiness and neglect, according to C. S. Lewis (Spenser's Images of Life, pp. 71-73), is one of Spenser's images of evil, the "Waste House" as Lewis puts it. The dominant

sense of wastefulness must have a primary bearing on the meaning of the House of Busyrane, since that is the well-kept secret of the House, a defect which Busyrane's magic could not cover up. Despite its lively and brilliant exterior, the form of love which Busyrane offers is something barren, lonely, cold, and wasteful.

The House of Busyrane, needless to say, is a castle, a human edifice, and this has a considerable allegorical implication. As a contrast we may think of the Garden of Adonis where nature is uncontaminated and in its pristine freshness. Also we may think of the Temple of Venus and its happy blend of Nature and Art; "For all that nature by her mother wit/ Could frame in earth, and forme of substance base,/ Was there, and all that nature did omit,/ Art playing second natures part, supplied it" (4. 10. 21). In the House of Busyrane nature is totally suppressed and art unabashedly asserts its dominance. Whereas in the Bower of Bliss art pretends to be "natural," art in the House of Busyrane is ostentatiously artful. In fact, what Britomart encounters is a private picture gallery and a stage, with a single theme, "Amor vincit omnia."

The gallery is full of tapestries depicting Cupid's conquest of the Olympian gods and men, with vivid details of the river of blood running through the fallen bodies, "so liuely and so like, that liuing sence it fayld." Britomart is greeted with the sumptuous glitter of gold again and again. The rich tapestries are woven with gold and silk "That the rich metall lurked priuily," the central statue of Dan Cupid is "of massy gold," and the wall of the second

room is covered all with gold. The artifacts in the House of Busyrane, their brilliance and costliness, are meant to overwhelm the spectator with dizziness, to make him breathless and spellbound, and this is exactly the way Britomart responds to them.

That wondrous sight faire Britomart amazed,
 Ne seeing could her wonder satisfie,
 But euer more and more vpon it gazed,
 The whiles the passing brightnes her fraile senses
 dazed. (3. 11. 49)

But to be enthralled by the glitter of the decor and the ambiguous, yet shining, surface, although seemingly an innocent act, is in fact the first step into the magician's snare. Both the House of Pride and the Cave of Mammon provide a valid analogy. The beauty of Lucifera is a decoy to distract our attention from the corpses and skulls that are hidden in the obscure corner of the palace, and a fiend is ready to tear Guyon into pieces the moment he betrays any signs of succumbing to the lure of gold. The dubious nature of temptation is revealed in the simile which compares the golden thread of the tapestry to a "discoloured Snake, whose hidden snares/ Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht backe declares" (*Ibid.*, 28). The same simile appears in the description of Cymochles' enervation in the Bower of Bliss; "He, like an Adder, lurking in the weeds,/ His wandring thought in deepe desire does steepe, . . ." (2. 5. 34).

In order to appreciate more fully the meaning of the House of Busyrane, we have to understand the general function of Cupid in the Faerie Queene, for Cupid in the House of Busyrane, far from being a stray instance, exemplifies the false love treated extensively in the

Faerie Queene. Does his picture in the House of Busyrane constitute a radical departure from his normal presentation? What does Spenser usually mean by Cupid?

The first category is what we should call the "gentle" Cupid. The most representative of this kind is the unarmed Cupid of the Garden of Adonis and the House of Alma. This Cupid is non-violent, unaggressive, and peace-loving. Spenser seems to have had a predilection for this particular type of Cupid, and it appears several times outside the Faerie Queene (Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, 803-10, and An Hymne in Honour of Love, 62). In other cases he is described in essentially the same positive terms. Thus after the conclusion of the Malbecco story Cupid is summoned to banish jealousy; "Sweet Loue, that doth his golden wings embay/ In blessed Nectar, and pure Pleasures well,/ Vntroubled of vile feare, or bitter fell" (3. 11. 2). The most inspired and exalted presentation of the "gentle" Cupid may be in the following passage:

Most sacred fire, that burnest mightily
 In liuing brests, ykindled first aboue,
 Emongst th'eternall spheres and lamping sky,
 And thence poud into men, which men call Loue;
 Not that same, which doth base affections moue
 In brutish minds, and filthy lust inflame,
 But that sweet fit, that doth true beautie loue,
 And choseth vertue for his dearest Dame,
 Whence spring all noble deeds and neuer dying fame:

Well did Antiquitie a God thee deeme,
 That ouer mortall minds hast so great might,
 To order them, as best to thee doth seems,
 And all their actions to direct aright;
 The fatall purpose of diuine foresight,
 Thou doest effect in destined descents,
 Through deepe impression of thy secret might,
 And stirredst vp th'Heroes high intents,
 Which the late world admyres for wondrous moniments.

(3. 3. 1-2)

Here Spenser apostrophizes Love as the driving force behind Britomart's heroic quest for her lover. Britomart's passion was first ignited by a brief glimpse of the image of Arthegall, a brave knight she had never met before, in Venus' mirror. Since then, her mind is settled on a single goal, to be united with her lover at whatever cost. When finally she meets Arthegall and allows herself "softly to relent" at his suit, she yields her consent "To be his loue, and take him for her Lord,/ Till they with mariage meet might finish that accord" (4. 6. 41). For all her heroic, and often unbridled, temper, she knows how to stoop graciously before her husband.

Moreover, the heavenly origin of love, the definition of its object as beauty, the notion that love is the source of all goodness and noble deeds, are in accord with Castiglione's Courtier and other Italian dialogues on love. The passage anticipates the strongly Neo-Platonic treatment of love in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe and An Hymne in Honour of Love. It is also important to notice that Cupid here is fully armed; "But thy dread darts in none doe triumph more,/ . . . then in this royall Maid of yore,/ Making her seeke an vnknowne Paramoure." This passage helps us to understand the essential difference between Britomart and Amoret. Amoret is protected in secure environments where Cupid cannot carry his bow and arrows, while Britomart has to go through all the wind and rain of the world where love is almost synonymous with affliction and pain. That is probably the reason why Amoret is vulnerable to Busyrane and Britomart can overcome his deception.

The "gentle" Cupid often appears in non-sexual context. Thus in the proem to Book IV Spenser asks him to mollify Queen Elizabeth's majesty so that "she may hearke to loue, and reade this lesson often." In the May section of the seasonal pageant in the Mutabilitie Cantos, Cupid appears clad "all in greene." This idyllic Cupid has some classical antecedents, but probably comes from medieval sources.¹ And in the same spirit Life, one of the personified figures that march after the months, is compared to Cupid; "But Life was like a faire young lusty boy,/ Such as they faine Dan Cupid to haue beene,/ Full of delightfull health and liuely ioy,/ Deckt all with flowres, and wings of gold fit to employ" (7. 7. 46).

Then we have the distinctly medieval Cupid of the Court of Love in the story of Mirabella in the seventh and eighth cantos of Book VI. Cupid's court where the grievances of lovers are heard and punishment is meted out to the offenders is a familiar convention of medieval literature.² The association of St. Valentine's Day with Cupid is also medieval (Chaucer, The Legend of Good Women, F text 145). Although he sternly deals with Mirabella's disdain of her lovers, Cupid is described as an essentially fair and compassionate judge; "The sonne of Venus who is myld by kynd,/ But where he is prouokt with peeuishnesse,/ Vnto her prayers piteously enclynd,/ And did the rigour of his doome repress" (6. 7. 37).

However, the second category, the "cruel" Cupid, is seen more frequently in the Faerie Queene. It is the most conventional presentation of Cupid in Elizabethan literature. He is equipped with the

Ovidian arrows of gold and lead (3. 11. 48), he is blind and thus a fit companion of Fortune (3. 4. 9),³ he is the vanquisher of kings and caesars and loves to heap troubles upon innocent women (4. 7. 1-2), he is the tamer of the rebellious and disobedient (4. 12. 13), but also he tyrannizes the heart of those who revere his authority (3. 2. 23). Cupid, "raging fire of loue to woman kind" (4. 9. 1), is compared rather unfavorably with friendship since "loue of soul doth loue of bodie passe." He also mingles a thousand illls with love to teach the lesson "That here on earth is no sure happinesse" (6. 11. 1). He is a "proude auenging boy" (1. 9. 12) who does not like to be disdained and slighted. Arthur and Marinell, the contemner of love, eventually succumb to this Cupid's power.

Cupid is most conspicuous in the development of that part of the narrative that concerns Britomart. Thus the moment she looks on the image of Arthegall in the magic mirror she is hit by Cupid's arrow; "But the false Archer, which that arrow shot/ So slyly, that she did not feele the wound,/ Did smyle full smoothly at her weetlesse wofull stound" (3. 2. 26). Glauce comforts love-stricken Britomart saying that the blind god has another arrow to hit her lover (3. 2. 35). Britomart roams the Fairy Land "Following the guidaunce of her blinded guest" (3. 4. 6), and her wandering is likened to a voyage in the ship steered by the two blind gods; "Loue my lewd Pilot hath a restless mind/ And fortune Boteswaine no assuraunce knowes,/ But saile withouten starres, gainst tide and wind" (3. 4. 9). We find no comparable presentation of Cupid in any other part of the entire Faerie Queene and we should naturally suspect that it was deliberate and that

Spenser meant Britomart to be the illustration of the virtuous restlessness and heroic aspiration that love kindles in a noble mind; love does not permit man's mind to sink in sloth and sluggishness, "But to the highest and the worthiest/ Lifteth it vp, that else would lowly fall:/ It lets not fall, it lets it not to rest" (3. 5. 2).

But Cupid is also the enemy of chastity. It is quite understandable that Cupid's darts are powerless before the "dredd Maiestie, and awfull ire" of Belphoebe (2. 3. 23). Also Alma, "a virgin bright," has never felt Cupid's wanton rage (2. 9. 18). Charissa in the House of Holiness, Spenser's image of fecund Christian monogamy, suckling the babies from her bare breasts, hates "Cupid's wanton snare/ as hell" (1. 10. 30). In these passages it would seem that these virtuous women have never felt lust. But the problem is that in the Faerie Queene Cupid is never identified with primitive, bestial sexual desire. Whenever he appears, erotic desire is already refined and stylized. Thus he is present at the inception of love of Arthur or Marinell, but absent when the old fisherman's lust is kindled by Florimell's beauty. Besides, Busyrane, the archenemy of chastity, cannot be lust since, if he were, it is pointless and redundant that Lust should capture and imprison Amoret in Book IV. Therefore we must regard Cupid as the enemy of chastity in a different sense, as the actual and external threat to chastity.

We see this Cupid in action in two episodes--the Castle Joyous (3. 1. 20-67) and Paridell's seduction of Hellenore (3. 9. 27 f). The Cupid of these episodes is, as it were, at the lowest and darkest end of the spectrum. He anticipates his counterpart in the House of

Busyrane, and we have every reason to believe that Malecasta and Paridell actually practise what the House of Busyrane presents allegorically.

The Castle Joyous poses a threat to Britomart's chastity, as the House of Busyrane does to Amoret's. Malecasta ("badly chaste") is infatuated with Britomart's beauty and believing her to be a man tries to seduce her. Britomart's adventure in the Castle Joyous and the House of Busyrane is nocturnal; she has to wait until the dead of night for the unknown to discover itself--Malecasta stealing into her bed in one case and the Masque of Cupid issuing out of the closed door in the other--and the danger clears with the coming of the morning. One of the six knights that guard the castle is appropriately called Noctante. The Castle Joyous anticipates the House of Busyrane in more details. The excessive glitter of gold, "The image of superfluous riotize," is the least of them. More significant are the "costly clothes of Arras and of Toure" which depict the love of Venus and Adonis. This particular representation contains no allegorical meaning as in the Garden of Adonis. It is purely Ovidian in its preoccupation with sensual effects--"And whilest he bath'd, with her two crafty spyers,/ She secretly would search each daintie lim, . . ."
(3. 1. 36). The picture would be appropriately hung in Busyrane's gallery. The theme of the tapestries in the Castle Joyous and the House of Busyrane is similar; the gods' love for mortals, which ends in death. Spenser's consistent association of artifice, especially tapestry, with some forms of evil makes this picture suspicious, and

the phrase "with ambrosiall kisses bathe his eyes" is strongly reminiscent of the Bower of Bliss.

Instead of the deadly silence and desolation of the House of Busyrane, the Castle Joyous is teeming with the lively bustle of the courtiers and the sweet whisper of music. The chamber is furnished with beds after the Roman fashion, "Some for vntimely ease, some for delight." Among the damsels and squires "swimming deepe in sensuall desires," "Cupid still . . . kindled lustfull fires." This artificial, courtly environment fosters love that is more deadly and corrupt than simple lust because of its very sophistication. The six brothers who serve Malecasta are all fine knights trained in the civil manners of courtiers but nonetheless they are the unwitting accomplices in the false love of their mistress--Gardante ("watching"), Parlante ("speaking"), Iocante ("jesting"), Basciante ("kissing"), Bacchante ("drinking"), all are preludes to the secret acts of the night, Noctante. The thread that divides refinement and evil is here very thin. Literary conventions and social etiquette create an intricate pattern of courtship and seduction at the expense of spontaneity, simplicity, and genuine feeling. This courtly deception, as Spenser saw it, was the most potent threat to chastity.

Paridell, the "learned louer," is the master of this craft par excellence. For him to woo a lady, to be accepted or to be rejected, is all part of the game. The pain of love is no pain for him at all: "for he so oft had tryde/ The powre thereof, and lou'd so oft in vaine,/ That thing of course he counted, loue to entertaine" (3. 9. 29). His emblem, the burning heart, is also the

insignia of Lechery in the House of Pride (1. 4. 25). Cupid is conspicuously present in his courtship of Hellenore. Rejoicing at Paridell's success in beguiling Hellenore and cuckolding Malbecco, Cupid unbinds his eyes to indulge himself with the luxury of watching his spoils; "That Cupid selfe it seeing, close did smyle,/ To weet how he her loue away did steale,/ And bad, that none their ioyous treason should reueale" (3. 10. 5). The unblindfolding of Cupid occurs here and in the House of Busyrane (and later in the Mirabella episode), and this particular Cupid comes closest in approximating the sardonic, quasi-diabolical Cupid of the House of Busyrane.

The art which Paridell practises is so highly sophisticated and conventionalized that he can communicate with Hellenore in the cipher legible only to the adepts. Thus he purposefully spills wine on the table, "A sacrament profane in mystery of wine," to which Hellenore responds by doing the same on her lap. In the actual wooing, Paridell employs all the tricks of his trade. He sighs, sobs, swoons, wails, and swears he would die unless Hellenore pities him. He can sing ballads and ditties, devise some pretty riddles, to please his mistress' fancy. Paridell's dexterity is exactly that of Lechery who

. . . learned had to loue with secret lookes,
And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulness,
And fortunes tell, and read in louing bookes,
And thousand other ways, to bait his fleshly hookes.

. . .
But ioyd weake wemens hearts to tempt, and proue
If from their loyall loues he might them moue.
(1. 4. 25-26)

Once he has satisfied his lust, however, Paridell flings away Hellenore. As the cynical persona in Donne's "Community" asks, "And when he hath the kernel eat,/ Who doth not fling away the shell?"

C. S. Lewis identified Busyrane with courtly love (The Allegory of Love, p. 340) and has been criticized by some critics for doing so.⁴ Even the idea of courtly love as a phenomenon peculiar to twelfth and thirteenth century Europe has recently come under fire.⁵ It is unwise, I admit, to try to identify Busyrane with historical amour courtois. The thesis, however, that Busyrane generally stands for love tainted by courtly deception seems to be still true. This thesis is in accord with Spenser's growing anti-courtly attitude which culminated in Book VI. Despite his lip service to Elizabeth's court, his antipathy toward courtly values, compounded by his disappointment in securing the permanent employment in court, seems to have deepened by the time he finished the first installment of the Faerie Queene. If the term "courtly love" has too strong historical and sociological associations, the "Ovidian" or the "Petrarchan" might equally do. The point is that when people actually try to live out the social and literary conventions of love, as if they were the rules of some kind of game, and use them as the well-disguised tactics to beguile others and satisfy their selfish need, they are debasing those conventions and also their emotional integrity. The deceit and lies involved in such a process, the wiles of the "cruel" Cupid, are emphatically banished by Spenser from the threshold of matrimonial harmony.

We have thus far examined the House of Busyrane from the periphery. The moat, so to speak, has been bridged; we are ready now to attack the castle itself. Let us investigate Cupid specifically in the House of Busyrane.

The first thing we should notice is the theme of Cupid's War woven into the tapestries. Cupid, "to make his empire great," wages war upon the Olympian gods, degrading them by virtually turning them into beasts. The word "war" strikes the keynote. Busyrane's magic and his "art" depict love as a battle, a contest of will and might. The god's love for mortals is often destructive, as Phoebus' love proved to Daphne; "Yet was thy loue her death, and her death was thy smart" (3. 11. 36). The second room of the House of Busyrane is filled with the broken arms and trophies of the heroes of yore vanquished by love. Behind all these images, of course, is the Ovidian idea of love as warfare.

Every lover is a soldier, and Cupid has a camp of his own; Atticus, believe me, every lover is a soldier. The age that is meet for the wars is also suited to Venus. . . . The spirit that captains seek in the valiant soldier is the same the fair maid seeks in the man who mates with her. Both wake through the night; on the ground each takes his rest-- the one guards his mistress' door, the other his captain's. . . . Who but either soldier or lover will bear alike the cold of night and the snows mingled with dense rain? The one is sent to scout the dangerous foe; the other keeps eyes upon his rival as on a foeman. The one besieges mighty towns, the other the threshold of an unyielding mistress. (Amores, 1. 9)

The idea of love's war is a cliché for the Elizabethan sonneteers, but when one actually tries to practise it on someone it is far from innocuous.

Radigund is determined to wage the war of love on Arthegall. The domineering and proud Amazon can understand love only in terms of war. The origin of her love is natural and conventional; she is hit by "th'hidden dart" of Cupid and turns her haughtiness "To meeke obeysance of loues mightie raine,/ And him entreat for grace, that had procur'd her paine" (5. 5. 28). But despite her best intention to avoid "strong compulsion, and streight violence" in obtaining Arthegall's good will, the initial failure drives her into declaring open war. She scants Arthegall's diet, imposes harder labor upon him, fetters him in iron chains, all to make him more docile to her courtship. In fact, she regards her wooing as a siege; "For I resolute this siege not to giue ouer,/ Till I the conquest of my will recouer" (5. 5. 51). Clarinda, Radigund's maid who also loves Arthegall, feeds him with false promises to ingratiate herself with him and would rather keep him in prison than lose him. Spenser succinctly summarizes Arthegall's predicament; "Of both beloued well, but little frended."

Cupid's War in the House of Busyrane is terrifying, with the lively images of bleeding wounds and heaps of men and women thrown together "without respect of person or of port,/ To shew Dan Cupids powre and great effort" (3. 11. 46). But we must also remember that these images are the product of Busyrane's magic and that the moment Britomart compels him to undo the spell they instantly disappear, including the flames that prevented Scudamour from entering the castle. The terror and cruelty is part of Busyrane's strategy to convince the visitor that all love is terrible and cruel. To be

enthralled by the seductiveness of the images, to be taken in by their terrible message, is to play into the hand of the magician. There is nothing inherently sinister or morbid about the traditional theme of the transformation of the gods. Lucian made a comic satire on Jove out of it (The Dialogues of the Gods, II). Spenser's presentation is sinister because he chose to project it to us that way. Let me illustrate my point by comparing Spenser's treatment with Poliziano's in his Stanze (l. 105 f.). Poliziano describes the amorous escapades of Jove and other gods, sculptured on the door of Venus' palace, in imagery and diction very similar to those of Spenser's. But the total effect is quite different. The backdrop of Poliziano's images is the wine-colored Aegean sea and the gentle, fragrant breeze of Cyprus. Even the animal transformation seems to be a frank celebration of dynamic, healthy sexuality. Spenser's Cupid's War is morbid and inhibiting partly because of its environment and context. We know that in some secret dungeon a virgin is tortured. Our mind fearfully anticipates terror and when we actually meet it we cannot help intensifying it. The suffocating atmosphere and enclosed feeling certainly encourage it. Only after several deliberate readings do we realize that the tapestry contains some potentially comic elements, like the shepherds calling to Ganymede to take surer hold of the eagle's talons.

In our investigation of Cupid in the Faerie Queene we met some examples which anticipated Cupid in the House of Busyrane, but the truth is that none of them is identical to the dark, malign quality of

Cupid of the House of Busyrane. He exudes a sense of evil, being the object of "fowle Idolatree." He not only condones the torture of Amoret but also takes sadistic delight in watching it. We cannot watch the Masque of Cupid without being reminded of the similar pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins in the House of Pride. In the House of Pride we have six allegorical figures representing six sins; Pride is represented by Lucifera. In the rear comes Satan, lashing those whose steps are tardy. The Masque of Cupid follows somewhat the same pattern. First march the six pairs of allegorical figures, followed by Amoret flanked by the seventh pair of personifications, then finally comes Cupid riding on a lion.

The association of Cupid with the devil is not new. According to Panofsky ("Blind Cupid," in Studies in Iconology, pp. 95-128), Cupid always had a close tie with Death as blind personifications, and was often depicted with a griffon's claws to indicate his diabolical nature. These associations are rather inevitable results of the determined efforts of the mythographers to debase Cupid as the agent of dehumanizing lust. The diabolical Cupid seems to have been especially strong in popular tradition. Sidney, who had a remarkable gift for reproducing the speech and way of life of ordinary folk, vividly depicts a scene in the Arcadia (p. 308) in which Miso, the wife of the shepherd Dametas, recounts her initiation into love by an old village crone, who shows her a picture of Cupid with "a pair of horns like a bull, his feet cloven, as many eyes upon his body as my grey mare hath dapples." Cupid stands upon the gallows like a hangman and "such a

countenance he showed as if he would persuade folks . . . to come hither and be hanged." Many such pictures must have been circulated among the worried parents of frisky, flirtatious young girls. Spenser too seems not entirely unfamiliar with the popular superstitions about Cupid. Glauce's use of folk remedy in trying to cure Britomart of love malady, her incantation and folk rituals that revolve around the mystic number three ("Come daughter come, come; spit vpon my face,/ Spit thrise vpon me, thrise vpon me spit;/ Th'vneuen number for this busnesse is most fit," 3. 2. 50), seem to presuppose the belief in diabolical Cupid of some kind. Miso or Glauce would have no difficulty in detecting in Cupid of the House of Busyrane the image of a grinning devil.

There are many iconographically interesting points in the description of Cupid in the House of Busyrane. Some icons, after careful examination and research, yield a definite, clear-cut meaning while some remain opaque and unfathomable.

Cupid riding on a lion is the easiest to understand. Spenser himself supplies the explanation that Cupid "man and beast with powre imperious/ Subdeweth to his kingdome tyrannous" (3. 12. 22). The theme of Cupid taming the wild beast is common in classical literature.⁶ In Alciati's Emblematum liber (CV) Cupid is shown riding on a chariot and whipping the two lions harnessed to it. When Marinell's obdurate heart thaws at the sight of Florimell's suffering, Spenser presents the conversion in the image of Cupid taming the unruly beast.

Thus whilst his stony heart with tender ruth
Was toucht, and mighty courage mollifide,
Dame Venus sonne that tameth stubborne youth

With iron bit, and maketh him abide,
 Till like a victor on his backe he ride,
 Into his mouth his maystring bridle threw,
 That made him stoupe, till he did him bestride:
 Then gan he make him tread his steps anew,
 And learne to loue, by learning louers paines to rew.
 (4. 12. 13)

Also interesting is the wounded dragon beneath the feet of the golden statue of Cupid. His eyes are pierced with an arrow, "That no man forth might draw, ne no man remedye" (3. 11. 48). C. S. Lewis (Spenser's Images of Life, p. 22) directs our attention to Alciati's Emblematum liber (XXII), where the virgin goddess Pallas is pictured with a dragon, and the motto below the picture makes it clear that the dragon is meant as the custodian of virginity; "Sleepless care is needed to keep girls safe before marriage; Love spreads his snares everywhere" ("Innuptas opus est cura asservare puellas/ Pervigili. laqueos undique tendit amor"). Lewis observes, "This is the guardian of chastity mutilated in the very organs which qualified it for guardianship" (p. 23). The following passage from Ovid's Amores (3. 4. 19-20) may be also pertinent; "A hundred eyes before, a hundred behind, had Argus--and these Love alone did oft deceive."

However, the case of Amoret's transfixed heart is more difficult. The heart as the symbol of Cupid's spoils appears often in pictorial art. Panofsky (p. 115) cites an example of Cupid with the threaded hearts of his victims hanging like "scalps on the belt of an Indian." In Barnabe Googe's Cupido Conquered, the triumph of Cupid includes "a thousande wounded Harts,/ That gush abroad hot streams of blud/ new persed with his Dartes." In her article "Busirane's Castle

and Artidon's Cave," Atkinson draws our attention to the Spanish romance Espeio de Caballerias, translated into English under the title of the Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood (1578). In the romance, there is a memorable tableau which shows the magician Artidon, who has abducted the queen Artidea to his cave, clothed in bright armor and kneeling before the queen, with his bloody heart cut out of his breast. In this case the bleeding heart is the symbol of hopeless male devotion to a cruel beauty. But in Spenser the transfixed heart belongs to Amoret, and Busyrane is actually torturing her. What is Cupid's arrow that torments Amoret? I believe that the arrow that pierces Amoret's heart represents the false forms of love that Busyrane is trying to impose upon the visitor to his magic castle--the "courtly" love of Malecasta and Paridell, or the selfish love of Radigund who can understand human relationships only in terms of war. Amoret's chastity is assaulted by these false and distorted forms of love because she, as the embodiment of pure femininity, is vulnerable to them and once out of the protective environment of the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus Amoret has somehow to learn to survive them.

The last iconographical detail that we are going to investigate is Spenser's treatment of Cupid's blindness in the House of Busyrane. As Panofsky has shown, classical art never pictured Cupid as blind, although in literature he was occasionally referred to as blind; but it was strictly metaphorical.⁷ It is during the Middle Ages that the blindfolded Cupid first appeared. This blind Cupid is

chiefly the product of the moralistic tradition represented by mythographers and commentators on Virgil or Ovid, who attributed Cupid's irrational and haphazard way of working to his blindness.⁸ On the other hand, the medieval writers under the influence of dolce stil nuovo or the Romance of the Rose had more sublime views of love and rejected the moralists' interpretation. In their writings Cupid is never blind, for the eyes are the chief organs to perceive beauty, the object of love. Chaucer, although he was a lineal descendant of the Romance of the Rose school, makes us know that he was aware of the other tradition; "And al be that men seyn that blynd ys he,/ Algate me thoughte that he myghte se" (The Legend of Good Women, F text, 237-38). By the Renaissance the original distinction between the blind and clear-sighted Cupid has been largely forgotten and there was much confusion even among the professional mythographers. Thus Alciati complains: "If Cupid is blind and wears a bandage, what is the use of the bandage? Does it mean he sees less?" (Emblematum liber, CXIII).

Spenser's attitude toward Cupid's blindness is very much Chaucer's. His Cupid is merely blindfolded as opposed to his counterpart in Gavin Douglas' Palice of Honour, who had "Ne Eine in his heid" (480). He can remove his bandage whenever he wants, "That his proud spoyle of that same dolorous/ Faire Dame he might behold in perfect kind;/ Which seene, he much reioyced in his cruell mind" (3. 12. 22). Spenser also connects Cupid's power with his clear-sightedness.

False loue, why do men say, thou canst not see,
And in their foolish fancie feigne thee blind,
That with thy charmes the sharpest sight doest bind,

And to thy will abuse? Thou walkest free,
 And seest euery secret of the mind;
 Thou seest all, yet none at all sees thee.
 (3. 10. 4)

There is an added touch of irony in that Malbecco who is cuckolded by Paridell is blind in one of his eyes.

Wind ("Orpheus in praise of blind love," Pagan Mysteries, pp. 53-80) informs us that Cupid's blindness had a special significance for the Neo-Platonists since to be blind in the corporeal eyes was to awake to the new mystical knowledge of God which is above the intellect. There is not even a trace of this mysticism in Spenser. Also Panofsky (p. 128) draws our attention to Lucas Cranach's painting in which Cupid is removing the bandage from his eyes. The meaning of the painting is clarified by a volume under Cupid's feet, entitled Platonis opera; the "seeing" Cupid is Platonic love of higher contemplation. But again Spenser never experiments in this direction. His Cupid in the Faerie Queene is predominantly the god of love of amatory lyrics and his significance is deeply secular. In An Hymne in Honour of Love (226 f.), Cupid's blindness is held responsible for the lovers' boldness to slight dangers to please their lady.

The Masque of Cupid seems to epitomize the sense of ambiguity and mystery of the entire House of Busyrane episode. It begins with the gust of wind that flings open the wicket. Out issue forth the masquers with appropriate emblems; then they act out some scene of obscure meaning, and as soon as their act is finished they disappear behind the same door beyond which we are not invited. One image is indelibly etched in our mind--Amoret's bleeding heart on a silver

basin. It is a picture of sadism and horror. What has Amoret done to deserve this torture? As soon as we ask this question we step into the mire of psychoanalysis and motive hunting. We do not have to search for Amoret's "undefinable fault" since she is the victim of a power external and essentially foreign to her. One of the essential features of the Triumph of Love was the description of the victims that have fallen to Love's power. Thus Ovid made Conscience (Mens Bona) and Modesty (Pudor) appear bound and fettered in Love's procession. Amoret's heart is shocking because it belongs not to a personification, but to a living character whom we have come to cherish and wish to protect. For Amoret the House of Busyrane is the final test of her chastity—Psyche's journey to the underworld, if you will. By submitting herself to the infernal experience of love's maladies, Amoret earns the opportunity to be reunited, at least in the 1590 version, with Scudamour, "For louers heauen must passe by sorrowes hell" (4. 6. 32).

The Masque of Cupid distinctly bears the marks of the classical theme of Cupid's Triumph. Ovid's Amores, 1. 2 is the earliest and most typical example of this minor genre. It is essentially a paean to Love who is imagined to be leading, like a victorious Roman general, the triumphant procession, loaded with spoils of war and hailed by his soldiers and followers who include Caresses, Error, and Madness. Many young men and women, including the author himself "with wound all freshly dealt," are led as captives. Petrarch revived the genre in his Triumph of Love. In a dream Petrarch sees the procession of Love

riding on a fiery chariot, leading numerous victims who consist of mythological and historical famous lovers. The author, smitten with the love for his lady, joins the procession. Also in Francesco Colonna's Hypnerotomachia Cupid's triumph appears, in which the love god rides on a chariot drawn by four tame dragons (Alciati's commentary on a dragon and Pallas may again be pertinent here) and the lovers are led in rose fetters. The procession is lavishly supplied with incense, holy water, and music.

Spenser's Masque of Cupid is a fitting sequel to canto eleven where Cupid's battle with the gods is fully developed. As a prelude to the masque proper the shrill sound of the trumpet is heard, "Signe of nigh battell, or got victory" (3. 12. 1). The military images that pervade the House of Busyrane are in fact the preparation for this Love's Triumph. Cupid usurps Jove's throne while all the gods have descended on earth to engage themselves in amorous pursuits. He is now, at least in the enchanted confines of the House of Busyrane, the universal lord of the world, the world in which shrewdness, deceit, and violence corrupt the innocence of genuine feeling.

The Masque of Cupid draws on another literary convention. In medieval literature the Court of Love is often thronged with allegorical personifications that represent the joys and tribulations of love. Thus in Chaucer's Knight's Tale we have the description of the temple of Venus in which assortments of allegorical personifications appear on the wall. They include Pleasure, Hope, Desir, Foolhardynesse, Beautee, Youth, Bauderie, Lesynge, Flaterye, and many more others.

Chaucer's passage shares Spenser's emphasis on the painful and tumultuous in love; "The broken slepes, and the sikes colde,/ The sacred teeris, and the waymentynge,/ The firy strokes of the desiryng/ That loves servantz in this lyf endure" (1920-23). Although Spenser's seven pairs of personifications present the same kind of conventionalized language of amatory poetry, none of them shows the positive side of the lover's experience during courtship. Chaucer's passage at least lists Pleasaunce, Hope, Beautee, and Youthe, the qualities that would sustain the drooping spirit of a lover in the moment of disappointment and despair. Spenser's personifications paint a grim picture indeed--Doubt, Danger, Fear, Dissemblance, Suspect, Grief, Fury, etc. Even the normally positive element like Hope is cast in a sinister light; she arbitrarily bestows favors, "Great liking vnto many, but true loue to feowe." In fact, the Masque of Cupid tries to portray love as a series of images of unrelieved pain and anguish--gnawing pain of jealousy, rewardless vigil before the dumb door, suspicion of the constancy of the beloved, pain of betrayal, repentance of wasted youth and lost opportunities, tantalizing commandment of the beloved to "be bold" and "be not too bold." As the figure of Death in the masque indicates, such an experience will inevitably end in death.

But we have to remember again that the distortion is part of Busyrane's strategy. Perhaps Busyrane is forcing these images on Amoret to persuade her that her love for Scudamour, and his love for Amoret, can develop in no other way, and that to continue is to inflict

mutual torment on each other. Amoret, educated to be purely feminine, has no resources to defend herself against such a delusion. Of course Scudamour cannot be of any help, because Busyrane makes sure that in Amoret's eyes Scudamour appears to be the cause of these terrible images. That is probably why Scudamour cannot pass the flames that guard the entrance of the castle. The flames are obviously the ardor of passion and the more Scudamour tries to overcome it with "greedy will" and "threatfull pride," the fiercer becomes the resistance of the flames.

Busyrane's guile lies in presenting a part as if it were the whole. To look no further than what he allows us to see is to fall into his trap. Busyrane is trying to persuade us that all lovers are destined to the Lover's Limbo. Of course it is not true. In An Hymne in Honour of Love (259-65) Spenser enumerates love's tribulations in a vocabulary reminiscent of the Masque of Cupid and calls love itself "a wretches hell." But in the next breath Spenser also adds that these tribulations are in fact love's purgatory which is somehow necessary to make the lovers more humble; the memory of pain will infinitely enhance the joys of "heauen." The image of hell in the Masque of Cupid is deliberate--its implied affinity with the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins, the suggestion that the personified figures are in fact all infernal spirits, for Scudamour says that Amoret is guarded by "many dreadfull feends" (3. 11. 16). Spenser may have meant the masque to be an illusion created by necromancy, just as Archimago borrowed the help of infernal daemons to create false dreams in order to tempt the

Red Cross Knight. Busyrane tries to make us focus on it and nothing else, while the truth is that his hell is a stage in the preordained scheme of things as old as love poetry itself.

Why is Amoret tortured? I hope that the answer to that question has been partially provided in the foregoing discussion. Any interpretation that suggests a fault, specifically lasciviousness, on the part of Amoret⁹ must be discredited because Spenser shows no indication of it. Besides, the identification of Busyrane with inner lust, for the reasons already mentioned, is untenable. Hamilton's thesis that Scudamour's sexual desire is the cause of Amoret's imprisonment (pp. 154-55) must be also discarded, because the interpretation fails to give any meaningful role to Busyrane and his magic, and furthermore mere womanly fears of male aggressiveness need not require the complex allegory of the House of Busyrane. The causes of Amoret's torture are the false images of love created by Busyrane's magic. Amoret and Scudamour are in no way responsible for what happens to them. The parallel between Amoret's adventure and Florimell's will illustrate the point. Amoret is confined in the House of Busyrane for seven months (3. 11. 10). Florimell is imprisoned in Proteus' cave also for seven months (4. 11. 4). These correspondences are made especially meaningful by the fact that among major heroines of the Faerie Queene only Amoret and Florimell can wear Cestus, the girdle of Venus which does not fit a lady's waist unless she is chaste. Busyrane and Proteus are both enemies of chastity and try to violate these women's fidelity. In fact Proteus' method of seduction involves the

kind of magic used by Busyrane. Known for his skill in transforming himself into various shapes, Proteus metamorphoses himself into a handsome fairy knight and a king, and then to terrify Florimell into subjection, into a giant, a fiend, a centaur, etc., and then realizing that all his wiles have been spent in vain "Downe in a Dongeon deepe he let her fall,/ And threatned there to make her his eternall thrall" (3. 8. 41).

But what about the fact that Amoret was abducted from the wedding feast? At the beginning of Book IV Spenser tells us that after Amoret was wedded to Scudamour, and just before they were bedded, Busyrane brought in the masque which we saw in his castle and "By way of sport, as oft in maskes is knowen" secretly conveyed away the bride. How are we to understand this information in relation to the meaning of the entire House of Busyrane episode? Roche gives it a paramount importance and interprets the House of Busyrane "as if it were an objectification of Amoret's fear of sexual love in marriage" (p. 77). Now there is a gap of six years between the publication of the first and second installment of the Faerie Queene, that is, between the end of Book III and the beginning of Book IV. Either Spenser had, at the time of the publication of the first installment, the well thought-out chain of events that began with the wedding feast and ended in the House of Busyrane, or the circumstance of Amoret's abduction is entirely an after-thought. The latter alternative is more likely, considering Spenser's predilection for revision, as witnessed by the altered ending of the twelfth canto of Book III and by Spenser's mode of working upon old materials and reshaping them as need arises, as suggested

by Bennett.¹⁰ I think it is an extremely unwise critical procedure to attach a primary emphasis to the material added years later to the main body of the work. We may construe the added material as a supplement or modification, but we cannot use it as the basis for building an otherwise unwarranted interpretation. The primary clue for the correct interpretation of the House of Busyrane has to come from inside the unified experience of reading it, not from outside it. Roche's analysis of the Masque of Cupid as the objectification of Amoret's fears before going to bed with Scudamour exclusively depends upon the added information and is valid only when we treat the after-thought as the integral, in fact central, part of the meaning of a given poetic passage.

We have to remember that it is Busyrane who orchestrates and presents the masque at the wedding feast. The masque, as we have seen, is the image of distorted love which Busyrane is trying to impose upon Amoret. In another word, in the context of Amoret's marriage to Scudamour, Busyrane is trying to replace Hymen with Cupid as the presiding deity of marriage. Spenser would never have allowed the presence of the "cruel" Cupid in an epithalamial celebration. In Una's betrothal to the Red Cross Knight, in the marriage of the Medway and the Thames, and in Epithalamion, Cupid is never allowed to participate--in Epithalamion we have instead the little Erotes who have functions different from Cupid, as we have seen in the discussion of the Temple of Venus. Busyrane's deception consists in presenting marriage as if it were the virtual continuation of the pain

and deceit that permeate "courtly" love and the Ovidian tactics of wooing. On the tapestries Cupid usurped Jove's throne; here he usurps the priesthood of marriage rite. The reader familiar with Spenser's symbolism detects Busyrane's falsehood at once, but Amoret does not. For her, marriage seems dreadful, threatening, and barren.

As a final word on the House of Busyrane, and also as a tribute to its fruitful ambiguity, I would like to touch on one detail which, to be perfectly honest, I do not fully understand. On the second night when Britomart finally penetrates into the third room and finds Busyrane writing magic characters in Amoret's blood in an effort to break her will to resist, Spenser exclaims "Ah who can loue the worker of her smart?" (3. 12. 31). In An Hymne in Honour of Love, when he tries to enlist the aid of those who tasted Cupid's sweet pangs, Spenser calls on the nymphs who "oftentimes haue loued/ The cruell worker of your kindly smarts" (31-32). Also Spenser tells us that Calidore's pain can be healed only when he returns to "his wounds worker, that with louely dart/ Dinting his brest, had bred his restlesse paine" (6. 10. 31), meaning Pastorella. What shall we make of this possible double meaning? Is it a mere coincidence? In the immediate context the exclamation "who can loue the worker of her smart?" means "how can Amoret love Busyrane who inflicts such a torture?" But when we take into consideration the use of the same phrase as the expression of the paradox of love, it seems to say "who can refrain from loving the beloved that inflicts such a pain?" Paul Alpers, although he is sceptical about identifying Busyrane with a particular concept such as courtly love, sees the House of Busyrane as the

objectification of the reader's awareness of the pains in any kind of human love: "Human love must involve the flesh and hence must involve desire and pain. . . . Her [Amoret's] torment presents something characteristic of all human love and not the unique suffering of an individual" (The Poetry of the Faerie Queene, p. 18). Amoret's transfixed heart conveys the same kind of paradox observed in the poet's outcry, "who can loue the worker of her smart?" The arrow is apparently the "false" Cupid's, the instrument of actual torture. But the heart pierced with an arrow is the universal symbol of being in love, to surrender oneself to Eros. Could it be that the pierced heart symbolizes Amoret's passion toward Scudamour simpliciter? In other words, can we brook in our perception of the pierced heart the coexistence of the symbol of evil and the symbol of a universal truth? The answer does not come easily. Probably we have to admit the limited capacity of critical language in translating such poetic symbols. Spenser's poetry and its vivid images convey more than we can neatly categorize.

Any discussion of the House of Busyrane without mentioning Britomart is incomplete. How could she rescue Amoret? What is it that qualified her to do it? She is the titular heroine of the Book of chastity. She is also a female warrior in the tradition of Virgil's Camilla and Ariosto's Bradamante. The virtue she embodies cannot be the passive virtue of Amoret or Florimell. Instead of being courted and wooed, she actually has to fight her way through strange land in order to be united with her lover, exposing herself to dangers and

temptations with no aid on which to rely but her own knightly prowess and perseverance. Moreover, as Spenser's image of perfect womanhood, Britomart combines and reconciles Amoret and Belphebe, the romantic passion and Chastity, in her role as a devoted wife to Arthegall.

Britomart is the matrimonial emblem of Venus-Virgo. The name Britomart is derived from Britomartis, one of Diana's nymphs,¹¹ and yet she is fully experienced in the darker way of Love's mysterious working and also in the tremulous joys which the spiritual bond between husband and wife creates. It is the combination of these qualities that enabled her to expose the deceits of the Masque of Cupid and Busyrane's magic.

Britomart is Spenser's image of heroism motivated by love. The traditional image of Venus armata always hovers around her.¹² She is also compared to Minerva (3. 9. 22) and to Bellona (4. 1. 15). Female heroism as Spenser conceived it has an origin and function different from men's and it is best illustrated in Britomart's encounter with Marinell on the Rich Strond. Immediately before the encounter Britomart is deeply troubled with distressing thoughts about her quest for Arthegall. She compares herself to a feeble vessel on the stormy sea, tossed and nearly wrecked by the angry waves. But she does not react like an ordinary woman; "She shut vp all her plaint in priuy grief;/ For her great courage would not let her weepe" (3. 4. 11). Marinell cannot meet her in more ominous hour. As soon as she spies the approaching Marinell, her mind is made up for a fight. She converts her sorrow into anger, "Both coosen passions of distroubled spright." The eruption of her violent emotion is expressed in a

simile of mist turning itself into pouring rain; "So the faire Britomart hauing disclo'st/ Her cloudy care into a wrathfull stowre,/ The mist of grieffe dissolu'd, did into vengeance powre." Here the turbulent emotions of love-thought drive her into heroic action. It is diametrically opposed to Guyon's heroism which thrives on temperance, i.e., controlling and mastering naked emotions. To prove that Britomart's encounter with Marinell is not a stray instance, let us examine one more example--Britomart's duel with Radigund. On her journey to Radigund's palace, Britomart is strangely quiet: "Sadly she rode, and neuer word did say,/ Nor good nor bad, ne euer lookt aside,/ But still right downe, and in her thought did hide/ The felnesse of her heart, . . ." (5. 6. 18). Although Talus has informed her that Arthegall was guilefully subdued in knightly encounter, not amorously involved with Radigund, Britomart is still jealous. Therefore when she actually encounters Radigund, it is basically a battle of one woman against another over a man. Spenser uses a simile of a tiger and a lion fighting over a prey (5. 7. 30). The fierceness of the battle exceeds the bounds of chivalrous code and manners; "But through great fury both their skill forgot,/ And practicke vse in armes" (5. 7. 29). This is not like Spenser's heroes who keep a quite cool head even in the midst of hottest battle. Britomart derives her strength from being a woman, from harboring conflicting and passionate emotions.

We have already noticed that Cupid is most heavily concentrated in those parts of the narrative which deal with Britomart and the

inception of her love for Arthegall. In other words, Britomart is quite familiar with the pains of love's wound. Unlike Amoret who enjoyed the protection of the goddess of love since her childhood, Britomart has to assert her womanhood in the fallen world, in the garden where the trees of both good and evil grow. She has experienced the paradox that Cupid is most tyrannical with those who are most obedient. The initial stage of the development of her love is predominantly painful. At one point (3. 2. 39) her love maladies are described in terms of an ulcer spreading through her entrails. Her anguish and torment are so intense that "She shortly like a pyned ghost became,/ Which long hath waited by the Stygian stround" (3. 2. 52). She knows by experience that Cupid is a mighty god that laughs at man's puny resistance. At the gate of the House of Busyrane Britomart encounters the pillars of flames that prevent the entrance of a stranger, and she exclaims, "What monstrous enmity prouoke we heare,/ Foolhardy as th'Earthes children, the which made/ Battell against the Gods? so we a God inuade." "A God," as Church suggests (*Variorum*, vol. 3, p. 291), may be Mulciber, the god of fire. But judging from the allegorical meaning attached to the same kind of flames in Spenser's analogues,¹³ the "God" is most likely Cupid, the inflamer of human heart. Britomart, knowing her insignificant stature before the god of love and being aware of the difficulty of the task that lies ahead, compares her enterprise with the giants' futile battle against the gods. In order to appreciate the humility of Britomart's utterance, we have to recall that she was earlier compared

to Minerva who terrified the giants with her aegis. As a mortal girl in love Britomart is not above the ordinary. Britomart is wounded twice--once in the Castle Joyous, and the other time in the House of Busyrane. She was vulnerable in the Castle Joyous because as a woman she sympathized with Malecasta's passion; she knew what it felt like to yearn after the impossible. In the House of Busyrane she was susceptible, not to Busyrane's magic, but to the tyranny of Cupid; she knew that she herself might as well be one of the fettered victims of the Masque of Cupid. Only she could penetrate the falsehood of Busyrane's deception because she was fully aware that there was more beyond what Busyrane allowed us to see--Love also fosters hope, perseverance, and faith.

Another thing that distinguishes Britomart from the rest of Spenser's heroines is that she approximates most closely the "character" in modern sense of the word. Of course she is far from a fully developed three-dimensional character. She is too tightly clothed in the armor of allegory to move with the grace of Sidney's Philoclea. C. S. Lewis may be right in his observation that compared to Ariosto's Bradamante "Britomart is little better than a big-boned country girl" (*The Allegory of Love*, p. 306). But despite all these reservations, Britomart displays far wider emotional range than Belphebe or Amoret and projects herself to us as a living person. The scene where she gathers information about Arthegall from unsuspecting Red Cross Knight pretending that he is her enemy, is excellently done; as soon as she mentions the name of Arthegall, "The word gone out, she backe againe would call,/ As her repenting so to haue missayd" (3. 2. 9). Her

feigning masculine traits to Amoret in order to disguise her true sex is rather clumsily executed ("to her she purpos made/ Of loue, and otherwhiles of lustfulnesse," 4. 1. 7); crisp, agile comedy of wit is not Spenser's forte. Her confusion and ecstasy on first actually meeting Arthegall (4. 6. 26 f.) reveals Spenser's skill in conveying the subtle surge of emotions through conventionalized language and imagery.

Her jealousy is most vividly portrayed. Of course her suspicion of Arthegall's faithfulness is ungrounded but its effect on Britomart is real. Here and there Spenser adds touches that recall Shakespeare. Britomart's curt and angry dismissal of Talus in the middle of his report and her jumping to wrong conclusions by misconstruing an innocent phrase, display Cleopatra's royal impatience and her habit of maltreating the messenger of bad news. Britomart momentarily slips into Rosalind's way of speech when she demands Talus, "And where is he thy Lord, and how far hence?/ Declare at once; and hath he lost or wun?" (5. 6. 9). Although answering Britomart's question does not require the mouth of Gargantua (As You Like It, III.ii.), it catches Britomart at her most unpretentious moment when the irrational in her pushes aside prudence. She sometimes blames herself "For yeelding to a straungers loue so light," and sometimes blames Arthegall's inconstancy. Spenser compares Britomart's torment in a telling simile of a froward baby whose sound sleep has been interrupted.

Like as a wayward childe, whose sounder sleepe
Is broken with some fearefull dreames affright,
With froward will doth set him selfe to weepe;
Ne can be stild for all his nurses might,
But kicks, and squals, and shriekes for fell despight:

Now scratching her, and her loose locks misusing;
 Now seeking darkenesse, and now seeking light;
 Then crauing sucke, and then the sucke refusing.
 Such was this Ladies fit, in her loues fond accusing.
 (5. 6. 14)

The spirit of the simile is playful, but it certainly helps to add a touch of common humanity to Britomart's character.

It is upon the strength of these traits that Britomart's rescue of Amoret from the House of Busyrane appears credible to the reader. The House of Busyrane is not entirely unfamiliar to her. The images of maladies of love presented there, as many "as there be phantasies/ In wauering wemens wit" (3. 12. 26), have been a part of her education. If Amoret is the romantic passion, Britomart has the virtues to solidify and toughen it so that it can live among the perils and seductions of life. To survive the danger of the House of Busyrane, unsullied femininity and true wifehood are not enough. It requires experience, strong will, and stalwart belief. Among Spenserian heroines Britomart comes closest to achieving these qualities.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOWRE HYMNES

Spenser was always an innovator. He burst on the English literary scene with the Shepheardes Calender which ushered in the age of the full blossoming of pastoral literature in England. With the Faerie Queene Spenser answered the long neglected call for a full-scale classical epic written by a native talent. The Fowre Hymnes add another chapter to the series of experiments--the naturalization of the Neo-Platonic philosophy of love. Cupid and Venus in the Fowre Hymnes, to whom the first two hymns are dedicated, bear a strong Neo-Platonic influence, greater than we have ever encountered in the Faerie Queene. They are not only the literary and mythological symbols of sexual love, but also the embodiment of philosophical ideas that originated with Plato and were later modified by the Italian Neo-Platonists and the successful popularizers of their creed, such as Castiglione and Leone Ebreo. Following the Neo-Platonic belief in the participation of Love in the emergence of the universe out of Chaos, Spenser depicts Cupid as a luminous, awe-inspiring deity that hovers over the dark abyss with a prophetic flutter of his mighty wings. Likewise, Venus in the second hymn represents Universal Beauty, and the Ideas which served for the Creator as the Model of creation--an idea that goes back ultimately to Plato's Timaeus.

The important point, however, is that the undue emphasis on the Neo-Platonic elements in the poem tends to obscure the fact that it is a love poem steeped in the Petrarchan¹ tradition. Spenser never professes to write a formal treatise on Neo-Platonic metaphysics. His ultimate allegiance rests with incarnate beauty, not with Intellectual Beauty. The Fowre Hymnes are often interpreted as a poetic rendering of the Neo-Platonic scala, by which a lover ascends from the beauty of a woman to the height of the Idea of Beauty. The interpretation implies that Cupid and Venus, and the Petrarchan perception of love they embody, represent an inferior, less pure stage of spiritual progress; the more quickly one outgrows it, the better. Nothing is further from the truth.

The two hymns on profane love, especially the first, depict the process of courtship and marriage quite consistent with Spenser's earlier exploration of marriage as a romantic ideal in the Faerie Queene, the Amoretti, and Epithalamion. The Lover's Paradise which Spenser describes near the conclusion of the first hymn is another monument of the poet's vision of perfect matrimonial love, comparable to the Garden of Adonis. The symbolic union of Venus and Adonis, Cupid and Psyche is refashioned in the Lover's Paradise into the myth of Hercules and Hebe, marriage of the classical hero par excellence and the "eternal youth." The basic formula of the first hymn, the pains and despair of courtship rewarded by fruition in marriage, reproduces with fair exactitude the torturous experience of Amoret in the House of Busyrane and her subsequent reunion with Scudamour through

the heroic effort of Britomart. The poet's repudiation of the content of the profane hymns in the dedicatory epistle and in the beginning of the third hymn was necessitated, not by personal repentance, but by a recognition that Eros must be subordinated to the Christian Agape. Even in the last two sacred hymns, Spenser's preoccupation with the theme of marriage manifests itself strongly. Following the mystical tradition which interpreted the relationship between God and Christ in terms of male and female union, Spenser concludes the entire poem on a triumphant note in adoration of Sapience, God's "owne beloued," sitting next to the Almighty in full majesty and celestial beauty. Spenser's lofty ideal of marriage, thus elevated into the realm of pure spirituality, finally meets its sacred archetypal model.

Thematically the Fowre Hymnes are about conversion. Having fervently sung in praise of erotic love represented by Cupid and Venus in the first two hymns, the poet suddenly changes his theme and directs his meditation heavenward. Just as earthly things below looked dark to St. George who beheld the splendor of the New Jerusalem, for the poet who has tasted the saving love of Christ, the "great Lord of Loue," the memory of "that mad fit, which fooles call loue" (H. H. L., 9) is irksome. The dedicatory epistle attached to the poem upon its publication in 1596, addressed to Margaret, the Countess of Cumberland and Anne (Spenser mistakenly refers to her as Mary), the Countess of Warwick, attributes the conversion to the remonstrance of one of the ladies. According to the epistle, Spenser composed the two hymns on earthly love and beauty in the "greener times" of his youth.

Discovering, however, that the reader did "rather sucke out poyson to their strong passion, then hony to their honest delight," and meeting the displeasure of the Countess, Spenser wished to suppress the manuscripts of the poem. The problem was that they were so widely scattered that he could not possibly do it. Instead, "by way of retraction," he composed another pair of hymns on heavenly love and beauty.

Is Spenser telling the truth about the origin of the poem, or does his apology contain a fiction, especially the reference to the two early hymns as the product of his youth? The question is of considerable importance because the poet's statement implies that the content of the early hymns is immature and "lewd" (H. H. L., 8), something he is more than glad to commit to oblivion. However, the statement of the two early hymns is basically consistent with the conception of love in the middle books of the Faerie Queene. If Spenser really repudiated sexual love as depicted in the first two hymns, he also recanted his lifelong loyalty to the noble passion represented by Britomart and Amoret.

The date of the composition of the poem, therefore, is of special interest. The early editors, including Church, Todd, Craik, and Child, accepted Spenser's statement that he wrote the two early hymns in the "greener times" of his youth at its face value. Consequently, the first two hymns were given an early date of composition, ranging from the late seventies to the early eighties.² Fletcher ("A Study in Renaissance Mysticism: Spenser's 'Fowre Hymnes,'" p. 452) conjectures that the two early hymns were originally written

"probably during, or shortly after, his residence at Cambridge University." But the early date has been recently challenged by several critics who believe that Spenser composed the entire poem as a whole, and therefore prefer a much later date. Although their line of argument is individually different, Bennett, Ellrodt, and Welsford all date the poem between 1595 and 1596.³ Spenser may have used early materials, but "the stylistic, prosodic and structural uniformity of all four poems proves that this re-handling was very drastic and, indeed, amounted to fresh creation" (Welsford, Spenser: Fowre Hymnes and Epithalamion, p. 59).

The discussion of the relationship between the first two hymns and the later hymns on heavenly love and beauty has undergone the same change as the critics became increasingly skeptical of the literal acceptance of the poet's statement in the dedicatory epistle. Padel-ford gives expression to the earlier consensus when he says that the first two hymns are the result of Spenser's flirtation with the Neo-Platonic mysticism in his youth ("Spenser's Fowre Hymnes," p. 418) and that in the last two hymns the stern Calvinism replaces the "pleasing fancy of the Italian mystic" (p. 425). Against this "recantation" theory, Fletcher and Bennett insist on the essential continuity of the whole poem and argue that the poem illustrates the progressive conversion of the soul according to the Neo-Platonic scheme of ascent from a woman's beauty to the union with the Universal Beauty of God.⁴ Although the Neo-Platonic interpretation has uncovered hitherto unnoticed analogues in Ficino, Pico, and Benivieni, and rightly

emphasized the artistic unity of the poem, it has its own pitfall. In tipping the balance unduly toward the doctrinal exposition of the Neo-Platonic scala in the Fowre Hymnes, both Fletcher and Bennett pay only scant attention to the elements of Petrarchan love poetry and sometimes deliberately undercut their importance.⁵ Spenser may have availed himself of the Neo-Platonic materials, but it is by no means certain that he wrote from the Neo-Platonic point of view. Despite the popular conception of the "Platonic philosophy of Eros," Plato's teaching on love is quite ascetic. Once you step on the ladder of spiritual ascent, the first rung, the love for an actual individual, must be quickly spurned and left behind, for "all such as have taken the first steps on the celestial highway shall no more return to the dark pathways beneath the earth" (Phaedrus, 256^d). We ought to listen to Renwick's voice of wisdom with more attention.

These are love-poems, in which Spenser used Plato and the Platonists as in other poems he used Virgil and Ariosto and Petrarch. He caught Platonism as he caught the Pastoral and the Sonnet--a convention of thought like the convention of setting and the convention of sentiment--and "imitated" this dignified and fashionable material that had come over with the rest from that almost fabulous Italy.

(Daphnaida, p. 211)

The most sane, reliable definition of the relationship between the two pairs of hymns is offered by Ellrodt, who remarks that "if a structural unity is discovered in the Fowre Hymnes, it will be the unity of a diptych with parallel but contrasted themes on each leaf" (Neoplatonism, p. 117). Spenser wished to write a poem which included the discussion of profane and sacred love. In the poet's eyes, both kinds of love were honorable and praiseworthy. Otherwise, it would be

impolite of him to call the two countesses in the dedicatory epistle, "the most excellent and rare ornaments of all true loue and beautie, both in the one and the other kinde." As a Christian, however, he had to make clear on which side his ultimate allegiance stood, and say with Sidney at one point or another, "Leave me, O love which reachest but to dust." The medieval convention of palinode was still very fashionable. It is interesting to note that, as pointed out by Bennett ("The Theme," p. 50), Benivieni, whose Canzona provides a close analogue to Spenser's poem, wrote to a friend that he had wished to make of his "ineptie puerile . . . uno sacrificio a Vulcano." The apology of both Benivieni and Spenser is an expression of literary convention or a gesture of humility, not of personal conversion.

In An Hymne in Honour of Love, Spenser dips his pen in the Platonic well of cosmic lore and depicts Love as the presiding deity of the creation of the world. The conception of the cosmogonical Cupid came to Spenser by a different channel from that of the God of Love of the Ovidian and Petrarchan tradition. The Greeks generally recognized the presence of the sexual principle at work in the formation of the cosmos. For them, the coming into being of the world was not simply a creation, but also a procreation, the conjunction of male and female and Love as the reconciliation of hostile elements through the mutual bond. The philosophers and the theogonists called this principle of mutual attraction Eros, or, as Parmenides and Empedocles did, Aphrodite.⁶ Greek literature and religious writings abound with examples of the cosmogonical Eros. Hesiod's Theogony, the so-called

Orphic hymns, and Aristophanes' Birds,⁷ all describe Eros as a resplendent and numinous daemon, untainted yet by the later Hellenistic conception of him as a chubby boy. The most influential work, however, is Plato's Symposium (178^b), in which Phaedrus asserts that Eros has no parents and is the oldest of the gods, citing passages from Hesiod and Parmenides. Through Plotinus this current of the cosmogonical Eros flowed into the philosophy of the Italian Neo-Platonists, most notably Ficino's commentary on Symposium. Spenser's knowledge of Ficino's work is almost certain, but he could also easily have found the description of the cosmogonical Cupid in any of the Renaissance mythological handbooks and dictionaries, such as Natalis Comes' Mythologiae or Cooper's Thesaurus.

Following the conventions of a paean or a hymn sung in the honor of a god, Spenser begins his narration of the cosmogonical Love with his nativity. However, Spenser bungles the attempt by introducing the contradictory accounts; "When thy great mother Venus first thee bare,/ Begot of Plentie and of Penurie" (H.L., 52-53). Mixed here are the popular belief in Cupid's birth from Venus and Plato's account of his birth from Plenty and Penury (Symposium, 203). As Lotspeich observes (p. 101), Spenser may have remembered Natalis Comes (4. 14) "who retells Plato's story and then, like Spenser, connects it with the more familiar myth of Cupid as the son of Venus." The Italian Neo-Platonists heavily allegorized Plato's account of Cupid's birth from Plenty and Penury and interpreted it as an explanation of the coming into being of Love in the Angelic Mind illuminated by God's goodness and beauty (Ficino, Commentary on Symposium, 6. 7;

Pico, Commentary on Benivieni, 2. 10). It is characteristic of Spenser that he shows little interest in dilating upon Neo-Platonic metaphysics even when he is given an opportunity. Welsford (p. 147) offers an ingenious explanation: "The possession of Plenty and Penury constitute a state of soul and thus linked together personify the father or efficient cause of the love of which Venus is the material cause or mother." But as she admits, "This makes good sense, whether it makes good poetry is another matter."

Again Spenser presents a Platonic paradox without explaining it when he describes Cupid as "elder then thine owne natiuitie;/ And yet a chyld, renewing still thy yeares;/ And yet the eldest of the heauenly Peares" (H.L., 54-56). The contradiction comes originally from Symposium, in which Phaedrus maintains that Love is the oldest of the gods, while Agathon, who represents the poetic tradition of Eros, describes Love as the youngest (195^{a-b}). Attacking the problem squarely, Ficino distinguishes the two phases of cosmic love (5. 10). At first "a certain love for the propagation of His own seed" flows from God and creates the Angelic Mind. Then originally in a state of Chaos, but illuminated later by God's beauty, the Angelic Mind turns toward its parent and loves Him. Thus Love at once precedes and follows the Mind which contains the Ideas, often referred to as gods. For Spenser, however, the paradox is attractive simply because it enhances the mysterious circumstances of Love's nativity, not because it offers an intellectual challenge.

No less intriguing is the fact that Cupid, who has long slept "in Venus lap" before the world emerged out of Chaos, is waked by

Clotho, one of the Fates (H.L., 63). In his gloss attached to the Masque of Beautie, Jonson also describes Cupid being awaked by Clotho.⁸ We do not know whether Spenser and Jonson drew the information from the same source, or Jonson's authority was Spenser. Bennett ("The Theme," p. 30) connects Spenser's mention of Clotho to Pico's identification of her with the present and the spheres of the planets; "It is to Clotho, mistress of the present, and of celestial change (as contrasted with temporal change below the moon) that Spenser assigns the duty of setting in motion the creation of the world." But why the Fates? Ficino (5. 11) helps to answer the question. According to him, God's creation of the second hypostasis, the Angelic Mind, is an act of pure love and free will. But at the same time, the Angelic Mind, although it is above time and space, necessarily degenerates in comparison with the eternal perfection of God. The Mind is the first stage in the travel from the Divine Unity into the realm of multiplicity and change. The divine light emanated from God grows dimmer as it travels through the Mind and the third hypostasis, the World-Soul, and finally disappears into the utter darkness of Matter. As Ficino says, "in this necessary progression and also degeneration of the effect, the power of Necessity consists." Therefore, it is appropriate that Clotho should wake Love, since Love's first stirring also signals the setting in motion of the operation of Necessity or the Fates.

The actual work of Cupid consists in tempering and harmonizing the warring four elements, both in the universe and in the constitution of the living bodies.

He then them tooke, and tempering goodly well
 Their contrary dislikes with loued meanes,
 Did place them all in order, and compell
 To keepe them selues within their sundrie raines,
 Together linkt with Adamantine chaines;
 Yet so, as that in euey liuing wight
 They mixe themselues, and shew their kindly might.

(H.L., 85-91)

We have seen this theme of universal amity from Concord in the Temple of Venus. The separation of the four elements from Chaos and their reintegration in the formation of the cosmos ultimately come from Plato's Timaeus. Spenser's mention of "loued meanes" that tie the "contrary dislikes" remotely recalls Plato's account (Timaeus, 31^b f.), in which the divine artificer Demiurge places the intermediaries—water and air—between fire and earth, because "two things cannot be rightly put together without a third."

The important thing to notice is that the idea of the pacification of the jarring elements through Love falls short of creation in its full Christian sense. The popularity of Timaeus in the Platonic canon throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance stems from the fact that it alone among the pagan cosmogonical writings envisaged the direct involvement of an anthropomorphic deity in the actual process of creation, and therefore was easily reconcilable with the account of creation in Genesis. But the concept of love as a universal bond, although Boethius perpetuated its importance in the main current of Christian sentiment, was something fundamentally alien to the teaching of love as a personal relationship between God and man in the New Testament. According to the Neo-Platonists, the world came into being because of the inevitable outflow of the abundance of the

luminous One; the process does not involve the will of a person. In theory, God would not be disappointed, even if the world was not born (Plotinus, The Enneads, 5. 12). On the contrary, Christian theology speculated that the world was the result, not of an impersonal emanation, but of the "loving will" of a caring, benevolent God. Therefore, when Spenser borrows the Timaeic account of creation here and elsewhere (H.B., 29 f.), he is deliberately and conscientiously Neo-Platonic and avoids introducing any echo of Genesis. For him, the real creation is described in An Hymne of Heavenly Love (22-119), in which the triune deity creates the Angels out of "fruitfull loue, that loues to get/ Things like himselfe, and to enlarge his race" (51-52), and subsequently mankind. Strictly speaking, Love as depicted in An Hymne in Honour of Love does not create anything. His work is limited to giving shape to, and harmonizing the already existent materials. The distinction, as we shall see later, is basically between the Neo-Platonic Eros or Amor and Agape of the New Testament.

Spenser also identifies cosmogonical Love with the procreative impulse in animals and men. Through the "secret sparks of his infused fyre" every living creature endeavors to multiply its own kind by the act of generation. This function is exactly that assigned to Venus in the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus. The Platonists always maintained that sexual love which aimed at the propagation of offspring was honorable. Plato (Symposium, 207^a) defines sexual love as longing for immortality by means of procreation. Spenser says that man, "that breathes a more immortall mynd" than animals, propagates, not for lust's sake, "but for eternitie" (H.L., 104). If Spenser

meant what Plato said, his remark is nonsense, since both animals and men perpetuate their species and thus battle against time through procreation. As Welsford points out (p. 150), however, Spenser is speaking here as a Christian, for "Human beings desire to populate not only the earth but Heaven." In the closing section of Epithalamion, the poet entreats the heavens to grant him large posterity and that they

Vp to your haughty pallaces may mount,
And for the guerdon of theyr glorious merit
May heauenly tabernacles there inherit,
Of blessed Saints for to increase the count. (420-23)

Here again behind the Neo-Platonic facade appears a genuine Christian sentiment.

The presence of Venus is keenly felt around Spenser's cosmogonical Cupid, not simply because she is his mother, but also because she represents Universal Beauty, the object of Love. Before he awakes, Cupid sleeps securely "In Venus lap, vnarmed then" (H.L., 62). Also in Colin Clouts Come Home Againe (840), Cupid is described to have been "bred aboue in Venus bosome deare." Spenser may have been influenced by Benivieni's lines, "for that he on the amorous breast/Of the fair Cyprian at the first has lain" (Canzona, 55-56). Even after Cupid is weaned and soars through the sky on his own strength, he is still in some measure dependent upon his mother's kindly care. To guide her son's path in Chaos yet wanting light, "His owne faire mother, for all creatures sake,/ Did lend him light from her owne goodly ray" (H.L., 72-73). Before activated by the life-giving power of Venus, Love remains a mere potentiality. It is Beauty that arouses Love,

enkindling him with the desire to shape the formless Chaos into a comely creation. This identification of Universal Beauty with Venus becomes more explicit in An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, in which Venus is depicted as the Idea of Beauty upon which God modelled his creation.

In expounding the nature of Universal Beauty, of which every physical loveliness is a manifestation or reflection, Spenser utilizes two Platonic myths in the second hymn--God contemplating a Model or Pattern in creating the world, and the descent of the soul into the body. The first myth ultimately comes from Timaeus (29^a), in which Plato argues, true to the mimetic spirit of Greek art, that the world, fair and perfect as it is, must have been copied from some eternal, unchangeable model. The later Neo-Platonists identified this eternal pattern of creation with the Ideas, the sum of the prototypes of all possible creations, and the principle of Universal Beauty, in the Angelic Mind. Likewise, Spenser calls the heavenly pattern, which "this worlds great workmaister" contemplated in creating the world, "perfect Beautie" (H.B., 40). Every earthly thing must partake in this fountain of eternal beauty to appear lovely to mortal eyes. The ray poured down from the Celestial Beauty penetrates the "grosse matter of this earthly myne" and transforms the formless mass into an organic, living body. Spenser calls this eternal source and pattern of beauty Venus, the "Cyprian Queene" (Ibid., 55).

The identification of Venus with the Ideas or Universal Beauty is the hallmark of the Italian Neo-Platonists. They found in Plato's Symposium (180-81) the definition of the two Aphrodites, Aphrodite

Urania ("Celestial") and Aphrodite Pandemos ("Vulgar"). In Plato the distinction was mainly ethical. Aphrodite Urania, the elder of the two and born from no parents, signified the intellectual love between males, while Aphrodite Pandemos, the younger and the daughter of Zeus and Dione, signified the more earthly love between male and female, love of the body rather than of the soul.⁹ Plotinus, however, gave the distinction a metaphysical meaning (The Enneads, 3. 5. 2 f.), providing an excellent formula for the later Neo-Platonists to seize on. Pico in his commentary on Benivieni (2. 7) identifies the Earthly Venus with Sensible Beauty, the Celestial Venus with Intellectual Beauty in the Ideas. Ficino (2. 7) gives the idea of the two-fold Venus a classic expression. He contends that the Celestial Venus signifies the Intelligence in the Angelic Mind, while the Earthly Venus stands for the generative power in the World-Soul, the third hypostasis and the principle of motion and life. Each Venus implies a love of a different sort. The Angelic Mind contemplates and loves the divine beauty of God and aspires to be united with it. The World-Soul tries to procreate the same beauty in bodies, and thus represents the downward flow of love working in the temporal domain and in the world of corporality. In Neo-Platonic terms, Spenser's Venus in the second hymn, the eternal pattern of beauty, corresponds to the Celestial Venus, the Intelligence-Ideas in the Angelic Mind. In the same way, the Venuses in the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus clearly display the essential qualities of the Earthly Venus of the Neo-Platonists.

We must be careful, however, not to overstate the correspondence. Spenser is not a Neo-Platonic disciple and sometimes betrays a surprising trait of heresy. Any admirer of Plato or Ficino would balk at Spenser's statement that the great Model of creation might be "in earth layd vp in secret store" (H.B., 37). More importantly, his description of the Heavenly Venus lacks imaginative conviction and fire; it gives the impression that Spenser is merely echoing some Neo-Platonic sources. It is by the more "earthly" Venus of the Garden of Adonis that Spenser's poetic genius is fully aroused. The disparity in the depth of feeling is odd only if we assume that Spenser espoused the Neo-Platonic belief that, equally honorable as they are, the contemplation of the Divine Beauty is nobler than that of procreative love. But, as Ellrodt observes (p. 207), it is the "God of Nature," Venus in the Garden of Adonis or Nature of the Mutability Cantos, that drew the deepest emotional response from the poet. For the Neo-Platonists, Nature is the generative power of the World-Soul, i.e., a faculty lower than the rational faculty of the soul (Ficino, 2. 3). As the metaphor of the transfiguration of Christ indicates (F.Q., 7. 7. 7), Nature represents for Spenser a much more numinous figure, a surrogate deity in her own right. The whole world, and Spenser's mind too, are brightened and revived by the mention of her name. Venus in the second hymn fails to touch this string in the poet.

Platonism appealed to his aesthetic sensitiveness, but it could not evoke a truly religious response. For Spenser proved mainly susceptible to beauty incarnate. In the Hymne in Honour of Beautie, which had to be

devoted to Beauty itself, I never hear the tremulousness of delight, the breathlessness of ecstasy with which the poet beheld not only the face of Una unveiled but the golden hair of Britomart unhelmeted.

(Ellrodt, p. 205)

The second myth, the descent of the soul into the body, offers to Spenser another way of illustrating the refining power the Venus-Beauty has upon earthly matter. Each individual soul, first derived from "that great immortal Spright," i.e., God, borrows light and "liuely spirits" from the "fayrest starre," presumably the sun, and descending upon matter frames it into a comely body worthy to receive such a noble guest. Here Spenser closely follows his Neo-Platonic sources. The image of an architect building a house (H.B., 117-19) appears both in Benivieni (Canzona, 100) and Ficino (5.5). In emphasizing beauty's power to transform matter, however, Spenser slightly changes the tone of Platonic account of the soul's descent. In Plato, the descent of the soul is equivalent to the Christian Fall. Originally the souls, flying in the higher regions of the heavens, were privileged to converse with the gods and knew the ultimate mystery of things. But due to some innate tendency to evil the soul sheds its wings, sinks down to the lower world and forms a body (Phaedrus, 246-48). Adding some Christian coloring to Plato's account, Ficino (4. 4) explains the descent of the soul as the result of the soul's unruliness and reliance on its innate rational faculties; "Hence it happens that the soul turns instinctively to its own natural light, and forgetting the divine, devotes its attention to itself and to those of its powers which have to do with the care of the body," In Spenser's retelling of the myth, there is no suggestion of the Fall. He is not

concerned with the theological implications of the myth or its place in the Platonic system of thought; his only objective is to delineate the aesthetic process through which the earthly beauty, specifically the "chearefull grace and amiable sight" of women, came into being. According to Spenser, the soul acquires, not loses, something in its downward journey to the earth.

In An Hymne in Honour of Beautie (64-98), Spenser attacks the age-old problem of the aesthetic definition of beauty. His answer, or his attempt toward it, is neither complicated nor controversial. His sole line of argument consists in denying any corporality to beauty. The Neo-Platonists generally admit that physical beauty is the result of a certain harmony of well-arranged parts and colors.¹⁰ Spenser, however, brushes aside the suggestion that beauty is "but mixture made/ Of colours faire, and goodly temp'rament/ Of pure complexions" or "comely composition/ Of parts well measurd" (H.B., 65-70). He argues that natural objects and the work of art are sometimes far superior to feminine beauty in excellence of symmetry and vividness of colors; and yet these objects fail to evoke our deepest response so as to "rob both sense and reason blynd." Spenser's strongest objection against the "naturalistic" definition of beauty is that it captures only the beauty that fades; the rosy cheeks and lily complexion shall decay, "To that they were, euen to corrupted clay." With this view most Neo-Platonists agree. The true source of beauty resides in the subjective, incorporeal image of an object grasped by the soul (Ficino, 5. 3), and the flawless disposition of outward forms and

colors sometimes fails to attain certain "gracefulness" which is the real secret of what we feel beautiful (Pico, 3. 6). Since beauty is the emanation of "the splendor of the divine countenance" (Ficino, 5. 4), beauty betokens moral goodness in a person that possesses it. Castiglione (The Courtier, 4. 57) gives the idea the classic expression; "beauty springs from God and is like a circle, the center of which is goodness." Thus Spenser asserts that "all that faire is, is by nature good;/ That is a signe to know the gentle blood" (H.B., 139-40). The beauty of the body depends upon the degree with which the soul reflects the divine refulgence, "with faire conditions thewed,/ Fit to receiue the seede of vertue strewed." And in the aristocratic society in which Spenser lived, to have a superior soul is both a badge and an obligation of nobility, "the gentle blood." This patrician definition of moral goodness and beauty runs beneath "the blood will tell" philosophy that is responsible for the creation of Sir Tristram and the "salvage man" in Book VI of the Faerie Queene.

As we learn from observation, however, beauty and goodness do not very often coincide. There are wicked persons who are physically attractive, and morally unimpeachable persons not endowed with beauty. Spenser explains the latter case as the result, first, of the interference of chance in the soul's impression upon matter; for some unknown causes, "against the course of kynd" (H.B., 143), the beauty of the soul is thwarted from conveying its essence into the body. Secondly, there is an innate unpreparedness in matter which resists the impression of the soul; the defective wax will produce only an imperfect seal. By attributing the fault to matter, Spenser follows

the consensus of the Neo-Platonists,¹¹ being keenly aware of the limitations of the power of beauty in penetrating the darkness of matter. Thus God created the cosmos according to the Model "as comely as he could" (H.B., 33); the native defects of the material cannot be completely overcome. As for the opposite case, that is, a wicked, yet beautiful person, Spenser avoids directly addressing the issue, blaming male egotism and deceit for corrupting female integrity; beauty is made "but the bait of sinne, and sinners scorne," and everyone seeks beauty, "but to deprave it" (H.B., 152-54). Similarly, Castiglione ascribes the reproachable behavior of women to the "unbridled appetites of men," bad education, and other causes (4. 59). The truth, however, is that the ethical approach toward beauty simply cannot explain how a cruel, proud woman came into being. Besides, Spenser's basic stance is not that of a systematic thinker. He projects himself as a man enslaved by Cupid's tyranny and his utterance is the purposeful rhetoric of a man in love; for the speaker of the poem, the existence of a proud woman is not an intellectual puzzle, but a dreaded fact.

So far we have examined the Neo-Platonic elements in the Fowre Hymnes. For some critics, notably Fletcher and Bennett, who regard the poem as the verbalization of the basic tenets of the philosophy of Ficino, Pico, or Benivieni, the critical procedure consisted in pointing out parallels in Spenser with the Neo-Platonic sources and establishing the poet's indebtedness. This kind of endeavor, however, involves certain distortions. Unlike Benivieni, who makes clear at

the beginning of his poem that he is going to write a versified treatise on the Neo-Platonic concept of love ("I tell how Love from its celestial source/ In Primal Good flows to the world of sense, etc." Canzona, 19-20), Spenser never professes to treat love in that abstract, philosophical sense. In the first two hymns, the love he talks of is the love for a woman, and the beauty with which he is chiefly concerned is physical, incarnate beauty. The first two hymns are basically a love poem uttered by the poet who bewails, and at the same time sublimates, his bondage to the cruel mistress. The whole conception of the hymn of "profane love" is derived from the imagined situation in which the poet, stricken with the pangs of unrequited love, strives to propitiate the ire of tyrannical Love by writing a paean glorifying his godhead. In the second hymn, the poet's purpose is to move the goddess of beauty to persuade his cruel mistress, "faire Venus dearling," to show some signs of mercy and grace upon his wretched plight; "When your faire eyes these fearefull lines shal read,/ Deigne to let fall one drop of dew reliefe, . . ." (H.B., 283-84). The Cupid and Venus who control the structure and the tone of the hymns of profane love belong to the world of erotic love poetry, not to the Neo-Platonic metaphysics. The Neo-Platonic myths of love and beauty are rather rhetorical tools for giving to the description of Cupid and Venus the kind of depth that only learned allusions can bestow. Bennett, who sees Benivieni's Canzona and Pico's gloss on it as "a commentary on the Fowre Hymnes" ("The Theme," p. 48), belittles the importance of the Petrarchan passages in the hymn to love and

considers them to be the vestige of old materials "used by Spenser to fill up this first hymn" (p. 31). If we choose to interpret the whole poem as the systematic exposition of the soul's ascent toward the heavenly beauty, the non-Platonic materials steeped in the sonnet tradition are nothing but distraction and nuisance. But is this really the case?

Take, for example, the relative shortness of the passages which deal with the Neo-Platonic Cupid in An Hymne in Honour of Love. In lines 50-119, the poet describes Cupid as a Platonic daemon exerting his mysterious power over the brooding shades of Chaos. Echoes from Benivieni are occasionally heard.¹² The Platonic tendency, however, does not last long. Line 120 is the turning point of the hymn. From then on Spenser resorts to the Petrarchan Cupid and never leaves him; ". . . that imperious boy/ Doth therwith [with beauty] tip his sharp empoisoned darts;/ Which glancing through the eyes with countenance coy,/ Rests not, till they haue pierst the trembling harts," The rest of the hymn is a little compendium of Elizabethan love psychology: how love-woes waste the life of a lover (125-26), how Cupid hardens the heart of the "rebellious Dame" to spite the lover (134-54), how true love should be distinguished from mere lust (169-189), how love makes the lover nobler and more courageous (218-51), the lover's Hell and Paradise (252-93). Cory (Variorum, vol. 7, p. 515) believes that these passages reflect "that unworthy mood that Spenser . . . would fain have altogether erased but was forced to send forth." But the ideas expressed in these passages are Elizabethan commonplaces and contain nothing that can be viewed as indecent

by any stretch of imagination. If we adjust our perspective rightly and see the poem as Spenser meant it to be, we have no difficulty in perceiving that the Petrarchan courtship and the vision of the Lover's Paradise, the goal happily reached, are the mainstay of the hymn.

The entire first hymn concludes on a note consonant with the poet's general scope. Anticipating the day when his lady will finally accept his suit, the poet promises to dedicate to Love "An heavenly Hymne, such as the Angels sing,/ And thy triumphant name then would I raise/ Boue all the gods, thee onely honoring" (302-4). Bennett asserts that the Cupid addressed here "is not the god of sensual love, but is the earthly counterpart of the God prayed to at the opening of the third hymn" ("Addenda," p. 151). Bennett's interpretation is based upon the unwarranted assumption that Spenser shared with Ficino and Pico the view that human love, as opposed to bestial love, aimed at finer mode of satisfaction than physical union. For Ficino, human love meant enjoyment by sight (6. 8), and Castiglione replaced physical union, which he reluctantly allowed to the younger, inexperienced lovers who had difficulties in restraining their sexual urge, with the highly sophisticated philosophy of kisses, through which "a single soul, composed thus of these two, rules as it were over two bodies" (4. 64). Because the fully sensual, erotic love falls short of the Neo-Platonic ideal, Bennett hesitates in identifying the Cupid of the first hymn with "the god of sensual love." But as witnessed by the Hermaphrodite image used to describe the union of Amoret and Scudamour at the end of the third Book of the Faerie Queene in the 1590 version, Spenser has no qualms about the participation of senses in the ideal form of

love. Rather, the physical enjoyment completes the ethical and spiritual commitment of the lovers. Castiglione's courtly sophistication and worldly game have no room for Spenser's serious views about procreative love. Ficino (6.11) admittedly gives praise to procreative love (love "desires to feed its body upon dishes as charming, pleasant, and beautiful as possible and to generate a handsome offspring by a beautiful woman"), but his mention of a woman, although it may be an advance from the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists who approved love only between males, is still a far cry from Spenser's romantic idealization of Una, Britomart, and Amoret. As Jayne comments (Ficino's Commentary on Plato's Symposium, p. 204, Note 59), "the woman is merely a means to an end" for Ficino, a means for the immortalization of self in terms of begetting an offspring.

The discrepancy in assessing the value of the erotic elements in the profane hymns is nowhere so apparent as in the interpretation of the Lover's Paradise (H.L., 280-93). According to Spenser, the lovers who have successfully endured the "paines of Purgatorie" are granted the privilege of dwelling in a paradise with Hercules, Hebe, and other "Venus dearlings." There, living like gods and feeding on nectar, they play with Pleasure, Cupid's daughter,

Their hurtlesse sports, without rebuke or blame,
And in her snowy bosome boldly lay
Their quiet heads, deuoyd of guilty shame,
After full ioyance of their gentle game,
Then her they crowne their Goddesse and their Queene,
And decke with floures thy altars well beseene.

The description evokes the image of mythical earthly paradise, and the mention of Pleasure inevitably recalls the Garden of Adonis where

"Frankly each paramour his leman knowes." Winstanley (*Variorum*, vol. 7, p. 521), who initiated the Platonic approach in her edition of the Fowre Hymnes, calls the passage "a somewhat feeble termination for the hymn," comparing it with the similar description in Phaedrus. Bennett ("Addenda," p. 151) argues that the paradise is the celestial, not earthly, paradise.

What Spenser is saying at the close of the first hymn is not that he hopes to enjoy physical possession of his mistress, but that, through the discipline of Platonic earthly love he hopes to achieve that heaven which is innocent enjoyment of beauty.

Bennett adduces the reason that the birth of Pleasure to Cupid and Psyche took place in heaven and, moreover, interprets "play their hurtlesse sports . . . deuoyd of guilty shame" as if it suggested non-physical, non-sensual love. We have already seen that Pleasure in the Garden of Adonis represented the pleasure of the marriage bed and we have no reason to believe that she means otherwise here. Ficino's definition of Pleasure—the last phase of the circular motion of love from God to the world and then back again to God; "inasmuch as it [the circle] returns to its source and with Him joins its labor, then we call it Pleasure" (2. 2)—does not seem relevant either in the Garden of Adonis or in the paradise in the first hymn. The "hurtlesse sports" recall the "litle loues, and sports, and loyes" that fluttered around the statue of Venus in the Temple of Venus (4. 10. 42) and, despite Bennett's objection, definitely mean sexual enjoyment. Bennett is guilty of editing the text, for in quoting "hurtlesse sports . . . deuoyd of guilty shame" she omits a line that runs against her thesis;

"hurtlesse sports, without rebuke or blame,/ And in her snowy bosome boldly lay/ Their quiet heads, deuoyd of guilty shame." Ficino's three loves--divine love (mind), human love (sight), bestial love (touch)--are merely dogmatic categories and cannot explain the living, personal response to the tremor of joys aroused by love's ecstasy.

Lightly he clipt her twixt his armes twaine,
And streightly did embrace her body bright,
Her body, late the prison of sad paine,
Now the sweet lodge of loue and deare delight:
But she faire Lady ouercommen quight
Of huge affection, did in pleasure melt,
And in sweete rauishment poud out her spright:
No word they spake, nor earthly thing they felt,
But like two senceles stocks in long embracement dwelt.

(F.Q., 3. 12. 45, the 1590 version)

Welsford (p. 41), who interprets Spenser's Lover's Heaven as an earthly paradise, asserts that "These lovers are not standing on any rung of the Platonic ladder; they have settled down into a home which leaves nothing further to be desired."

The Lover's Paradise in the first hymn is in fact another instance of Spenser's image of perfect matrimonial love, a long wished-for "haven" dreamt by the lover beset by rejections and numerous obstacles during his courtship. The Amoretti, in which Spenser examines the Petrarchan love psychology of courtship from innumerable angles in a way similar to the first hymn, never quite reach the point of fruition; despite the scattered flickers of hope (Sonnets, 6, 51, 63, 65, etc.), at the conclusion of the poem the lover is as frustrated and uncertain with respect to the fulfillment of his desire as in the beginning (of course if we view the Amoretti and Epithalamion, published together, as a unified poetic sequence, the Petrarchan situation

does lead to the fruition in marriage). But in An Hymne in Honour of Love, Spenser actually presents a vision of the goal happily reached. The central symbol of the Lover's Paradise is Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche, and the embodiment of the joys of married love.

Equally important is the myth of Hercules and Hebe. Without doubt Hercules is the most prominent of the Greek heroes. After a tumultuous life on earth filled with constant labors, wars, sieges, and duels, Hercules is elevated to heaven as a god and there being reconciled with his lifelong enemy Hera, weds her daughter Hebe, the goddess of eternal youth. Like most Greek heroes, Hercules' love relationship is quite "unromantic." He marries twice and carries away Iole, slaying her father and her brothers. It is the jealousy of Deianira, his second wife, over Iole that costs him his life. But after his apotheosis Hercules finds his eternal mate Hebe. They are, at least in Spenser's romantic view, "star-crossed" lovers meant for each other by destiny. As Lotspeich points out (p. 66), Boccaccio interpreted Hebe as "viriditas perpetua," the power which makes for "the renewal of all things, leaves, flowers, and all seeds." In Epithalamion (405), Spenser invokes Hebe in his prayer for fruitful progeny together with Juno, Genius, and Hymen. The marriage of masculine heroism and eternal viridity evokes the image of the union of Adonis and Venus in the Garden of Adonis, and also of the myth of Psyche who was apotheosized and reunited with Cupid after having performed difficult labors imposed by angry Venus, just as Hercules accomplished the famous twelve labors under the watchful eyes of vengeful Hera.

The pattern of "through Purgatory to Heaven" in the first two hymns finds its immediate precedent in the House of Busyrane, where the nightmarish experience of Amoret is redeemed by Britomart's rescue of her out of the tyranny of the "cruel" Cupid, and by the rapturous embrace of reunited Amoret and Scudamour. Preoccupations with the identification of Neo-Platonic sources have obscured the fact that the basic imaginative situation of the first hymn resembles closely the general setting of the House of Busyrane and the Masque of Cupid. At the beginning of the hymn, the poet declares his purpose to celebrate Cupid's "victorious conquests" and "wondrous triumphs," following the pattern of the Ovidian Triumph of Love. Marching among the band of captives are "mighty Victors, with wyde wounds embrewed,/ And by thy cruell darts to thee subdewed" (13-14). The image of the "cruel" Cupid in the House of Busyrane--menacingly brandishing his arrows and riding with regal air on tame lions--is perfectly appropriate here. Cupid's triumphant procession is followed, not by pitiful Amoret tortured with the threats of diseased love, but by the Muses and nymphs who have tasted the sweet pangs of love, and even the poet himself "whose yet bleeding hart,/ With thousand wounds" Cupid has "mangled." Furthermore, the poet invites the cruel beauties who feed the young lover's eyes, but starve his heart, to join the procession so that they "all the way this sacred hymne do sing"--meaning that the stony heart of his cruel mistress will finally melt with the flames of passion. Much later in the hymn (252 f.), we encounter again images and language that are strongly reminiscent of the House of

Busyrane. The "Sights neuer seene, and thousand shadowes vaine" which the jealous lover's "fayning fansie" presents hark back to the enigmatic golden images on the wall of the second chamber of the House of Busyrane: "A thousand monstrous formes therein were made,/ Such as false loue doth oft vpon him weare" (3. 11. 51). A few lines later in the hymn, we meet the "doubts, the daungers, the delays"--the names familiar as the allegorical personifications in the House of Busyrane and the Temple of Venus--which make a lover's life "a wretches hell." But unlike the House of Busyrane, the hellish experience of the lover in the first hymn is neither destructive nor humiliating, but rather redemptive. The dialectic of love requires that the lover should get the full taste of the old dictum, "harder won, more dearly cherished." As Spenser himself says, "So hard it is to kindle new desire,/ in gentle brest that shall endure for euer:/ deepe is the wound, that dints the parts entire/ with chaste affects, that naught but death can seuer" (The Amoretti, 6). In Spenser, conjugal happiness is bought with heavy price indeed--Amoret must first be tortured, Psyche must undertake a journey to the underworld, and Britomart has to lose a few drops of blood in combatting her enemies. The Petrarchan situation in the first hymn does not end in the Lover's Limbo where jealousy, suspicion, despair, and the ennui beset the beleaguered lover. By concluding the hymn to Love with the vision of felicitous married love, Spenser proves the basic continuity of belief in the Faerie Queene and the Fowre Hymnes.

We have incidentally touched on the problem of the Platonic scala several times. We cannot avoid facing the issue, for it is deeply related to the interpretation of love and beauty in the Fowre Hymnes. If the poem illustrates a systematic account of the soul's ascent on the scala, the logical inference is that earthly love which culminates in the extolment of married love in the Lover's Paradise represents the first, and inferior, stage in the mystical ascent that does not end until it reaches absolute separation from corporality. Are the two hymns on profane love no more than a stepping stone to celestial flight? Besides, the Neo-Platonic interpretation presupposes that there is no discontinuity with regard to the kind of love treated in the profane and sacred hymns. The ascent is a steady one, each step logically leading up to the following, like the links of a chain; the love of a woman prepares the soul for the love of God. But is this true of Spenser's poem?

Plato gives his most exhaustive account of the ladder in Symposium, 210-12. His version, however, cannot be applied to Spenser, since his first step is the non-physical love of one male for another, and his intermediary steps are the beauties of law, institutions, science, and philosophy--an idea quite unattractive to Spenser. The Italian Neo-Platonists modified Plato's version, and here I shall paraphrase Pico's description of the scala which appears in his commentary on Benivieni (3. 6-8).

1. The lover's soul presents an image of the beloved through sight.

2. The lover purifies the lady's beauty into an incorporeal image, completely separated from physical elements.
3. Aided by his intellectual capacity to abstract, the lover contemplates the prototypal form of Beauty that incorporates all beauties on earth.
4. The lover realizes that it is his intrinsic creativity, not the object, that enabled him to abstract the universal beauty out of the particulars. Turning into his own soul, he discovers the image of Ideal Beauty.
5. The lover ascends from this inner Idea to Celestial Venus, longing to be united with this source of Universal Beauty.
6. Obtaining his goal, he ceases his quest.¹³

Critical opinions do not agree as to how far Spenser has ascended on the scala. Renwick (Daphnaida, p. 210) thinks that the poet does not go beyond the second step. Bennett ("The Theme," p. 22) believes that Spenser goes as far as the third. To Fletcher ("Benivieni's 'Ode of Love,'" p. 557), Spenser rises even to the fifth step. The passages that draw these various interpretations are lines 190-96 in the first hymn, and lines 176-82 and 211-24 in the second.

We first meet what appears to be the initial step of abstraction in the passage in which Spenser discusses the high flight of noble love, distinct from the earth-bound lust of "dunghill thoughts."

Such is the powre of that sweet passion,
 That it all sordid basenesse doth expell,
 And the refyned mynd doth newly fashion
 Vnto a fairer forme, which now doth dwell
 In his high thought, that would it selfe excell;
 Which he beholding still with constant sight,
 Admires the mirrour of so heauenly light.
 (H.L., 190-96)

Most critics agree that the passage describes the second rung of the scala, the creation of the incorporeal image of the particular feminine beauty.¹⁴ Ficino (6. 6) observes that through this subjective image evoked by imagination the "eyes of the soul are wakened to behold the Universal Ideas of things which the soul holds within itself," referring to the third and fourth steps of Pico. Spenser, however, does not leave the particular, individual beauty. The "fairer forme" in the lover's mind is above the physical, concrete beauty of his lady because it is immaterial and knows no decay. But Spenser never goes so far as to suggest that this incorporeal image is identical with the universal concept of beauty described as the third step by Pico, i.e., putting together all earthly beauties and unifying them into a single model of beauty. What Spenser's lover is advised to admire is the individual beauty of his lady, now made incorporeal and thus protected from the threat of mortality, shining more brightly than in her former bodily state. The lover's mind, inspired and elevated by the lady's beauty, becomes a mirror which purges the dregs and impurities of matter and shows her beauty in its immaculate perfection. But, as Welsford observes (p. 152), the abstraction "does not lead to any repudiation of sexual love; if anything it intensifies it." Advancing to the second step of the ladder, Spenser's lover does not descry a remote glimmer of

the Ideas, but beholds the uncorruptible radiance of his idol, "His harts enshrined saint" (H.L., 215).

In An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, lines 176-82, Spenser reiterates the doctrine of the inner vision, with no suggestion of an advance beyond the second step.

But gentle Loue, that loiall is and trew,
Will more illumine your resplendent ray,
And adde more brightnesse to your goodly hew,
From light of his pure fire, which by like way
Kindled of yours, your likenesse doth display,
Like as two mirrours by opposed reflexion,
Doe both expresse the faces first impression.

The emphasis is on the reciprocal nature of the rapport between the enamored souls. The incorporeal image of the lady's beauty not only illuminates the lover's soul, but also is enhanced by the innate beauty of the lover's soul, the "light of his pure fire," since the souls of both the lover and the lady derive their beauty from the same source, the Celestial Venus. To illustrate this mutual illumination, Spenser borrows the Platonic mirror image, as he has done in line 196 of the first hymn.¹⁵ The metaphor of the two opposed mirrors should not be taken literally.¹⁶ The analogy is only apt on condition that the mirror actually increases the brightness of the object, not merely reflects it. The solitary soul, however beautiful, cannot be called truly beautiful until it meets another kindred soul that can transform that beauty into a purer, eternal form. It is only through such an encounter of "likely harts composd of starres concent" (H.B., 198) that the earthly beauty can transcend its bodily limitations and approximate the refulgence of the First Fair. Spenser's argument,

however, leads, not to the repudiation of the sensual in human relationship, but to the incitement to love; "Therefore to make your beautie more appeare,/ It you behoues to loue." Spenser uses the Neo-Platonic philosophy of the inner vision as a rhetorical instrument of persuasion, just as the Elizabethan sonneteers use the classical carpe diem motif in order to convince their lady that by resisting love she is acting against her own interest. Then Spenser adds, "what booteth that celestiall ray,/ If it in darknesse be enshrined euer,/ That it of louing eyes be vewed neuer?" The poet's glances are firmly fixed on a single goal--to move his lady to return his affection.

In the third important passage (H.B., 211-24), Spenser again talks of drawing a "more refyned forme" of a woman's beauty, "free from fleshs frayle infection."

And then conforming it vnto the light,
Which in it selfe it hath remaining still
Of that first Sunne, yet sparkling in his sight,
Thereof he fashions in his higher skill,
An heauenly beautie to his fancies will,
And it embracing in his mind entyre,
The mirrour of his owne thought doth admyre.

Bennett ("Addenda," p. 144) believes that Spenser is here describing a "progress from a visual to an intellectual concept" and Pico's third step, "from a disembodied image of a single beautiful woman to an intellectual idea of Beauty." Ellrodt (pp. 131-32) counters Bennett's view by arguing that "An heauenly beautie" cannot mean the Heavenly Beauty, since it is still perceived through imagination ("to his fancies will"):

If Spenser is speaking with any degree of precision,
this means that we have to do with an "image" as in
the second step, not with a pure "idea" as in the

third and fourth steps. Spenser simply means that the lover fashions out of the image abstracted a more perfect image agreeable to his own idea, the image of "an heavenly beutie."

Ellrodt's assertion is justified, for when we read Spenser's lines a little further, we find; "For louers eyes more sharply sighted bee/
Then other mens, and in deare loues delight/ See more then any other eyes can see, etc." In the following passages which conclude the hymn (232-87), Spenser reverts to the sensuous language of Petrarchanism. The beauty he talks of is not Intellectual Beauty, but the "Armies of loues" that flutter around a woman's glances, "Ten thousand sweet belgards" that send joyous shivers through the lover's body, "So many millions of chaste pleasures." Bennett ("Addenda," p. 152), who is dissatisfied with this "less exalted strain," prefers to consider the closing stanzas as "a rather awkward incorporation of earlier materials." But this is to put the cart before the horse. It is unjust to chide Spenser for ending a hymn to earthly beauty with a tribute to the joys of sensual gratification.

The general conclusion that can be drawn from the foregoing discussion is that Spenser does not go beyond the second rung of the scala and that he shows no interest in the rigid formula of the Neo-Platonic ascent. If there is any ascent in the first two hymns, it is, as Welsford observes (p. 41), "the ascent from the pains of wooing to the bliss of consummation." Spenser's lover never leaves the "dolce error," the idealization of the physical beauty of a woman, which his counterpart in Benivieni quickly transcends. Ellrodt (p. 146) puts well Spenser's "romanticizing" of Neo-Platonism:

The originality of Spenser's philosophy of love lies in the association of Platonic idealism with an acceptance of bodily union limited by ethical standards. The "Englishness" of this attitude is obvious. It rejected the worldly game and mere pretence of courtly Platonism, but it also excluded the higher flights of mysticism. . . . he turned into an essentially human experience what had earlier been a reaching-out toward the divine in Ficino or Benivieni. What had only been a "step" became with him a self-contained, self-complete experience. The "happie port" was reached with the lover's possession of his mistress. Scudamour wins Amoret; Spenser weds Elizabeth Boyle, and the story ends. Romantic love, contrary to Platonic love, does not transcend itself.

Spenser never takes the crucial fourth step of Pico, the realization that the creation of ideal beauty in the lover's mind is the work of the intrinsic power of his own soul and its knowledge of Intellectual Beauty, and the subsequent shift of attention from the beloved to the self. This glorification of the creativity of the soul and the subjective, even egocentric, approach toward immortality, are the hallmark of the Platonic philosophy of love; they are evident in Plato, and markedly so in Pico and Benivieni.¹⁷ Spenser is fascinated by the rarefied image of a woman; the Platonists are more impressed by the soul's power in producing that image. Spenser turns his back on profane love in his last two hymns, not because he has ascended high enough on the scala to find the seed of immortality in himself, sloughing off the illusionary attachment to a woman's beauty, but because he has exhausted his meditation on earthly love and beauty. He has successfully contrived a propitiatory offering to Cupid and Venus, and now he rests, satisfied, although a little apprehensive of his mistress' reaction upon reading the poem. In the hymns to

sacred love, Spenser makes a fresh start. His theme is the prevenient love of Christ and the heavenly beauty of Sapience, the "soueraine dearling of the Deity." The Neo-Platonic approach fails to grasp this fundamental transition in the kind of love discussed in the profane and sacred hymns. It wrongfully assumes that earthly love is magically transformed into the adoration of the beauty of God through the progressive purification of the scala. But Spenser is too sound a Christian to believe it. It is impossible for him to ignore the traditional tension between secular and divine love, or, as C. S. Lewis puts it, between Camelot and Carbonek. When Spenser deliberately inserts a few stanzas of recantation at the beginning of the third hymn ("Many lewd layes . . . / In praise of that mad fit, which fooles call Loue, / I haue in th'heat of youth made heretofore, / . . . But all those follies now I do reprove"), he is following the steps of Chaucer, who in the conclusion of Troilus and Criseyde made his hero, now dead and in heaven, laugh at the vanity and "blynd lust" of the world below, or Gower who ended his Confessio Amantis with a penitent note; Venus hands Gower the black beads, saying "tarie thou mi Court nomore, / But gother vertu moral duelleth" (8. 2924-25). As Ellrodt observes (p. 149), what Spenser is concerned with is a Christian turning-away, not a Platonic passing-beyond.

As an epilogue to the discussion of Spenser's profane hymns, we must examine the contrast between the kinds of love treated in the profane and sacred hymns. This is necessary since the Neo-Platonic approach presupposes that the transition from profane love to sacred

love involves no generic change. If we accept the Neo-Platonic thesis, the Fowre Hymnes are the poetic exposition of the ascent from the love of a woman to the love of the Intellectual Beauty, and we may safely assume that, although the object of love changes, there is no basic change in the nature of love, for the love of a woman and the love of the Intellectual Beauty do not differ in that they are both the expression of an awareness in an individual of a lack of something vital to his being, a realization that until the need to supply that lack is answered, one will perpetually remain in a state of unfulfilled yearning and incompleteness. That is why we detect a grain of truth in Aristophanes' half-mocking tale of the original Hermaphrodites who were cut in half by Zeus and since then have begun to pursue each other with burning desire in the hope of being united and regaining former wholeness (Symposium, 190-93). Insofar as this love begins with the personal need of an individual, it is egocentric and may be termed, to borrow C. S. Lewis' phrase, "need-love." The goal of such love is without exception the union with the beloved; a lover longs to embrace his mistress. In short, we call this need-love Eros.

In the two sacred hymns, however, the theme is not the mystical elevation of Eros, but the prevenient love of Christ and his personal response to the creaturely need of mortals. Christ's vicarious sacrifice is a pure act of love, completely voluntary and unselfish. There is no element of need or the consideration of merit in his love for mankind; he loved man because he simply and inexplicably chose to, out of "that eternall fount of loue and grace,/ Still flowing

forth his goodnesse vnto al" (H.H.L., 99-100). The whole viewpoint has changed. There is no longer an arduous ascent to the metaphysical heights by means of philosophical self-discipline; by the mystery of the Incarnation, God has descended on earth and redeemed mankind, at the same time showing the pattern of unselfish love that rains on whoever may need it. Thus man learned not only to love God, but also to love his brethren (H.H.L., 197 f.). As Welsford points out (p. 11), the shift is from egocentric to theocentric love, from "need-love" to "gift-love," love as an act of pure grace; the distinction is between "the love that descends to give and the love that ascends to get." The New Testament called the former kind of love Agape.

The third hymn on heavenly love is chiefly about this descending flow of Agape that created the universe and mankind, and about Christ's incarnation and sacrifice, the ultimate act of love, and how man should read the lessons of love by contemplating the sequence of Christ's life here on earth from the moment of his birth to his death. Before the beginning of time, God spontaneously loved Himself ("It lou'd it selfe, because it selfe was faire," H.H.L., 29), and out of that love the Son and the Holy Ghost were "begotton."¹⁸ Moved by the "fruitfull loue, that loues to get/ Things like himselfe, and to enlarge his race" (Ibid., 51-52), He later creates the Angels in their nine-fold hierarchies, and after the fall of the rebel Angels, mankind to replace them, "A new vnknown Colony." The culminating episode of this theocentric love, of course, is the Son's volunteering to die as a man to atone for the transgressions of mankind. The Platonic Eros

knows nothing of this idea of God's love as a personal relationship, a gracious reaching-out of the Deity.

To Plotinus it appeared inconceivable that the immutable "One" should act upon the many except as a principle of attraction. It could not go after the lost sheep: at best it would draw all things towards itself; whereas the Gospel proclaimed an actual descent of Deity into the very heart of the world to redeem, to heal and to aid the aspiring will of man: an Incarnation of the Divine, uniting matter and spirit. Such an idea was wholly congenial to Neo-Platonic thought: Indeed pagan Neo-Platonism used its influence to revive the gnostic fantasy of a chain of mediators; its whole tendency being to remove the divine nature as far as possible from any possible contact with the material universe. (Canon Ottley, Studies in the Confessions of St. Augustine, pp. 58-59, quoted in Padelford's "Resurvey," pp. 222-23)

Plato understood love as a want, a lack of something--that is why one of the parents of Love is called Penury (Symposium, 203). No Platonists would dream of considering love as one of the attributes of their god. When Ficino talks of love, it is usually Eros directed toward the Luminous One--the kindling of passion in the Mind which, illuminated by divine light, cleaves to God and receives forms (l. 3). In the same way, the Soul loves the Mind, Matter loves the Soul, according to the law of illumination and attraction. The flow of love is invariably from the lower to the superior being. In Christian theology, and in Spenser's sacred hymns, this Eros, this heavenward aspiration, is the result, not of the attraction of the Heavenly Beauty, but of the saving love of Christ. It is Christ's overflowing love that justifies man's love toward Him. The third hymn ends with the exhortation to love Christ with "burning zeale" and "sweete enragement of celestiaall loue." But this religious love is made possible only after the poet has conducted the reader through the imaginative exercise of

visualizing Christ's life on earth so that he may "read through loue his mercies manifold" (H.H.L., 225-66). The initiative rests with God's stooping, not with man's reaching-beyond.

The fourth hymn on heavenly beauty seems to exemplify the Platonic Eros more than the preceding hymn. It describes the soul's ascent from the earth to the empyrean heaven and it is centered upon Sapience, the personification of Universal Beauty. We should, however, read the fourth hymn in the context of the third. The third hymn concludes at the moment when the contemplation of Christ's life leaves the reader with a rarefied image of his glory ablaze with celestial light. The next step, naturally, is to redefine this heavenly beauty around an appropriate female figure. The profane pair, Cupid and Venus, calls for a static female figure contrasted with the masculine and more dynamic Christ. Spenser found it in Sapience, a figure in biblical wisdom literature (e.g., Proverbs, 8). Although the fourth hymn is an independent piece, it is still controlled by the basic sequence of thought of the third hymn--the flowing down of God's love, the heart-felt appreciation of Christ's love, spiritual exercise in conjuring up the vivid image of his life, and the emergence of "Th'Idee of his pure glorie." In other words, the Eros-worship of Beauty is motivated by Agape and constitutes the returning flow of love that answers the original call of divine love. As the Aristotelian cosmos ceases to move when the Primum Mobile, the universal power plant, stops its grand rotation, Christian love loses its justification and its center when deprived of what initiated it in the beginning, the prevenient love of Christ. Besides, the soul's ascent as described in

the fourth hymn differs markedly from the authentic Neo-Platonic scala. The ascent begins, not with a woman's beauty, but with the traditional contemplation of nature as a book written by God ("The meanes therefore which vnto us is lent,/ Him to behold, is on his workes to looke,/ . . . as in a brasen booke, etc." H.H.B., 127-30). The ascent ends differently too. As Welsford observes (p. 52), when the Christian mountaineer arrives at his goal, "he experiences not an apotheosis, but a prostrating sense of creaturely nothingness."

Christian Neo-Platonism was inclined to repair the chasm that opened between Eros and Agape, pointing at the biblical passages which seemed to describe God's relationship with man in a language that strongly recalled erotic love, the Song of Songs particularly. Origen, in his commentary on the Song of Songs, boldly equates Eros of Platonism and pagan poetry with Agape of the New Testament. The mystical bride of Christ, moved by heavenly love and longing, receives from Him a dart and wound of love; Christ is here imagined as a divine archer, a kind of celestial Eros figure. We have the classic expression of the idea of the religious Eros and the concept of the vulnus amoris, "wound of love," in Augustine's Confessions (9. 2); "Thou hadst shot through our hearts by the arrows of thy charity, and thy winged words were sticking in our flesh" ("Sagittaveras tu cor nostrum caritate tua, et gestabamus verba tua transfixa visceribus"). The idea of the vulnus amoris was later transmitted to the Carmelite mystics, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, and in England Crashaw's fervid poems on St. Teresa made the idea familiar to the literary reader. Since in Spenser's

poem Christ appears as the heavenly counterpart of Eros-Cupid, it is quite understandable if Spenser had chosen to present Christ at one time or another as an archer that inflames the heart of man with divine love. In fact, in the third hymn Spenser does refer to the wound of love. Significantly, however, it is the wound Christ received on the cross, not the wound inflicted upon a Christian heart by Him.

O huge and most vnspeakeable impression
Of loues deepe wound, that pierst the piteous hart
Of that deare Lord with so entyre affection,
And sharply launching euery inner part,
Dolours of death into his soule did dart.

(H.H.L., 155-59)

The wound of love is the pledge of the illimitable love promised to mankind by Christ. The meditation on the Crucifixion, not the mystical sublimation of Eros, is Spenser's immediate concern.

The disagreement between the Christian and Neo-Platonic interpretation is nowhere so glaring as in the identity of Sapience, the symbol of Heavenly Beauty in the fourth hymn.¹⁹ Both Fletcher ("Spenser's Fowre Hymnes," p. 457) and Bennett ("The Theme," pp. 43-48) identify Sapience with the Neo-Platonic Heavenly Venus, the Intelligence in the Angelic Mind. To support the thesis, Ficino's identification of the biblical Wisdom with the Angelic Beauty (6. 18) has been adduced. Sapience, according to Bennett ("The Theme," p. 45), "is neither the Holy Ghost, nor the second person in the Christian trinity, . . . She is rather the 'only begotten,' the Word, the Logos, of the Neo-Platonists, but not of the Christians."

The problem with this interpretation is that it fails to conform to the pattern of contrast built between the profane and sacred

hymns. If Venus in the second hymn represented the Earthly Venus of the Neo-Platonists, the generative power in the World-Soul, it would be symbolically convincing that she should be superseded by the Heavenly Venus in the sacred hymns. Actually, however, Venus in the second hymn is a curious amalgam of the conventional Venus of love poetry and the Neo-Platonic Heavenly Venus, Universal Beauty and the Model of creation. The only way to preserve the contrast between the earthly and heavenly Beauty is to abandon using the name of Venus at all in the fourth hymn and replace her with a purely Christian symbol that suggests transcendence over the Platonic Venuses. This Spenser did by presenting Sapience, God's "owne Beloued" (H.H.B., 241), as the universal paradigm of beauty, drawing from the Hebraic Wisdom who, created by God before all things, was His chief delight (Proverbs, 8. 22-31). To insist on applying the Neo-Platonic term of Venus Urania to the Judaeo-Christian Wisdom, especially when Spenser makes no mention of the Angelic Mind or Ideas which she is supposed to symbolize, is to ignore the basic tenets of Spenser's Christian beliefs. As Ellrodt observes (p. 155), Spenser might have used the Heavenly Venus as a symbol for the Christian Sapience, but "he would never have dreamt of turning the Christian Sapience into an allegory of Venus Urania." As for the identity of Sapience in terms of Christian Trinity, she, in all probability, corresponds to the second person--Christ, the Son, and the Word. In the closing section of the third hymn, Christ appears in "celestiall beauties blaze" (277) to the inner eyes of the meditator, and in the beginning of the fourth hymn, in which the poet apostrophizes the Holy Ghost, Spenser imagines the

celestial beauty to be residing "there with thee" (13). Since Sapience is the "soueraine dearling of the Deity" (H.H.B., 184) and therefore cannot be the first person of the Trinity, the only logical conclusion is that she stands for the Son, provided "there with thee" means "co-existent with thee," not "embodied by thee."

By presenting Christ as a female figure Sapience, Spenser in effect established a marriage relationship between God and the Son. Sapience, "that faire loue of mightie heauens king" (H.H.B., 235), sits beside God's throne in full majesty, "Clad like a Queene in royall robes" (Ibid., 185). There are numerous precedents in Judaeo-Christian mystical thought for defining God in terms of sexual union of male and female. The Hebrew Wisdom (Sophia, or Sapience) of Proverbs, Job, and the apocryphal books of Wisdom, is presented as the first created beloved of God: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. . . . Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (Proverbs, 8. 22-30). Like Spenser's Sapience, Wisdom sits beside God's throne (Wisdom, 9. 4). Also interesting is the Kabbalistic figure Shekhinah, who symbolizes "the glory of God, the Kavod, i.e., that aspect of God which He reveals to Man," the first created radiant spirit, the ruah ha-kodesh (Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p. 111). Shekhinah was interpreted as the procreative life force dynamically active in the universe. Her union with God, the marriage of the Celestial Bridegroom and the Celestial Bride, formed the nucleus of the Kabbalistic conception of the mystery of sex according to which marriage was not a "concession to the frailty of

the flesh but . . . one of the most sacred mysteries. Every true marriage is a symbolical realization of the union of God and the Shekhinah" (Ibid., p. 235). Likewise, Origen, Dionysius the Areopagite, and St. Bernard interpreted the Song of Songs as a Christian allegory of the marriage of God and the Church or a Christian soul, the mystical bride of the Deity. Christ was sometimes characterized as Beauty, and his love-relationship with the Father received explicit emphasis. As Ellrodt observes (p. 167), Augustine repeatedly refers to the idea of pulchritudo Christi or pulchritudo Filii (In Psalmum, 44.3). The English mystic Julian of Norwich calls the Son a "Mother": "All the fair working and all the sweet natural office of Motherhood is impropriated to the Second Person" (The Revelations of Divine Love, 59).

Furthermore, we detect in Spenser's presentation of the union of God and Sapience an archetypal model of delicate and fruitful interaction of male and female principles observed in his idealized picture of married relationship in the Faerie Queene. Britomart, a warrior of fiery mettle and independent spirit, girlishly submits herself to Arthegall's authority once she is betrothed to him, for "vertuous women wisely vnderstand,/ That they were borne to base humilitie" (5. 5. 25). Radigund's vengeful dominance over males is an abhorred anomaly, "a licentious libertie." But, to quote C. S. Lewis again, this is a mere "doctrinal facade." In the Temple of Isis, the prophetic dream of Britomart reveals that Arthegall represents only inflexible Justice, the power to prosecute and punish, while Britomart embodies "That part of Iustice, which is Equity" to show that "clemence oft in things amis,/ Restraines those sterne behests, and cruell doomes

of his." Arthegall, who is Osyris, is a crocodile that lies under the feet of Isis, Britomart. Although placed in a socially subordinate role, Britomart represents transcendental values which Arthegall's rigidly legalistic view of justice cannot imagine. The same mollifying power of female principle can be observed in Sapience's relationship with God. God of the fourth hymn is the God of Justice. "His scepter is the rod of Righteousnesse,/ With which he bruseth all his foes to dust,/ And the great Dragon strongly doth represses,/ Vnder the rigour of his iudgement iust" (H.H.B., 155-58). His hand is the sword of wrath that scathes the reprobate and humbles the proud. All that a man can do to appease his righteous anger is, as Spenser advises, to throw oneself before His presence "with trembling innocence." But Sapience, being married to God and endowed with "Th'eternall portion of her precious dowre,/ Which mighty God hath giuen to her free" (250-51), has power to salvage and enliven the fearful spirit of mortals through the radiance of her beauty. Heavenly Grace and Mercy have their seat "Within the closet of her chastest bowre." Whereas God created the universe, Sapience presides over its preservation in perfect order and harmony.

Both heauen and earth obey vnto her will,
 And all the creatures which they both containe:
 For of her fulnesse which the world doth fill,
 They all partake, and do in state remaine,
 As their great Maker did at first ordaine,
 Through obseruation of her high beheast,
 By which they first were made, and still increast.
 (197-203)

This downward flow of love, this active divine interest in the welfare of earthly beings, is already familiar to us from the paean to

Venus in the Temple of Venus or the description of Nature's power in the Mutabilitie Cantos. It is no coincidence that Spenser's Venus, Nature, and Sapience are all female figures, although Venus in the Temple of Venus and Nature in the Mutabilitie Cantos are described as androgynous. Apparently Spenser had proclivity for envisaging the flowing down of God's love in an image of all-embracing, universal goddess of beauty, the ultimate "She." He understood God as the unification of the highest male and female principles--Justice and Mercy, Majesty and Grace, Contemplation and Charity, and One and Many. Like the Kabbalistic Shekhinah or Christ, Sapience symbolizes the spiritual outflow of God's illimitable love, and Spenser captures it in an image of eternal womanhood. The heavenly aura that surrounds Una and Britomart, and the poet's breathless excitement in describing their beauty, simply cannot be explained away as another instance of courtly Frauendienst. They are the earthly images of the divine womanhood that constantly intercedes for man's sake and shields him from the just wrath of the Almighty. Una is a celestial light that guides St. George through the labyrinth of temptations. Britomart rescues Arthegall from captivity and humiliation. The clear female superiority in these married (technically Britomart and Arthegall are only betrothed) couples adumbrates Spenser's orthodox Christian belief that the mystery of the Incarnation and Christ's love have enabled mankind to escape the rigor of the Law of the Old Testament. To Spenser, marriage is a sacred institution because it imitates the heavenly

union of the Celestial Bridegroom and the Celestial Bride, Judgment
and Love, in God.

CONCLUSION

The romantic ideal of marriage which Spenser shaped in the Faerie Queene was not a purely literary phenomenon, but part of the vast religious, sociological change that was taking place in the second half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century. In the Middle Ages marriage was regarded solely as an institution for the passing on of family name and property. Frequently the prospective husband and wife were paired off in their early teens without having a personal interview prior to the engagement. The match was struck between the parents after careful negotiations about portion and jointure. There was little room for personal affection and the sense of companionship for the couples, hence the golden rule of medieval courtly love--true love blossoms outside marriage. As Haller observes (Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution, p. 81), "Guinevere and Iseult never thought of divorcing their husbands in order to marry their lovers."

The situation was basically the same in the early Tudor period. However, according to Lawrence Stone's Crisis of the Aristocracy, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, the Puritan divines and the urban bourgeoisie gradually changed the common attitude toward marriage, asserting that marriage was an instrument of religious and moral improvement. Revolting against the medieval belief that marriage was the next best thing to celibacy and also against the dominance of

pecuniary interest in matchmaking, the Puritan divines and Puritanical aristocrats stressed the importance of affection and intimacy in marriage. This was the application of Puritan ethics—encouragement of the growth of individualism, not only in man's relationship to God, but also in human society in general. The Puritan preachers who extolled the virtues of the amour bourgeois "discovered matrimony to be much more endurable when they had the good luck or the good judgment to marry congenial women and when they relied most upon affection, sympathy, and understanding as the means to domestic harmony" (Haller, p. 84).

So the preachers taught that a wife should be treated not as a servant or simply a bedfellow but as a spiritual equal and companion. . . . They dilated upon the joys of spiritual love, sealing and sanctifying the union of the flesh, and upon the miseries of those who, coupled in body, were divided in soul. Some like William Whately or Daniel Rogers went so far as to suggest that husband and wife in their spiritual communing with one another might attain communion with God himself. (Ibid., pp. 84-85)

Although a husband's right of rulership over his wife was still uncontested, "She was not to be made into a drudge or ordered about like a servant, but the husband was to command her 'as the soul doth the body'" (Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 454). The Puritans forbade the practice, permitted by the common law, of husband's beating his wife "with a rod no bigger than his thumb." The preacher Henry Smith warns a husband that his wife's cheeks "are made for thy lips and not for thy fists" (Ibid., p. 455). In the early seventeenth century a woman's right to assert her personal preference in the choice of her husband generally came to be respected. The old double standard of sexual mores for men and women also came under fire. A married male of

the gentry and the aristocracy normally had a mistress, and the custom was a tacitly approved part of the arranged marriage. The Puritans strongly condemned adultery by men and pointed out forced marriage as the root of the evil. Lawrence Stone summarizes the nature of the transformation of the views about marriage among the aristocrats and upper gentry:

The most striking feature is the emergence of a sense of family responsibility for personal harmony and moral virtue. . . . In conformity with this emphasis on privacy and intimacy, the family withdrew from the hall to the great chamber and the private dining-room; by the end of the seventeenth century corridors were being built to avoid the necessity of tramping through rooms to get from place to place, the promiscuous habit of putting up truckle beds here, there, and everywhere was giving way to the establishment of private bedrooms. The concept of an inward-turned, isolated, conjugal family, already familiar to the bourgeoisie, was well on the way to acceptance among the aristocracy.¹ (The Crisis of the Aristocracy, pp. 301-302)

So far as literary history is concerned, we can reasonably name Spenser as the first author who passionately extolled the virtues of marriage as a romantic ideal. But the romance of marriage could not have been born, if the society in which Spenser lived had not felt the sense of anachronism toward the medieval rules and customs surrounding marriage.

Spenser's allegory of Venus and Cupid in the Faerie Queene is the last major blossoming of medieval love allegory in English literature. It is one of the paradoxes of literary history that sometimes a dying genre gives birth to a masterpiece at the very moment of extinction. We have only to remember Malory's Morte Darthur, written at the time when the old stories of Launcelot, Gawain, Percival, and Kay the

seneschal, were rapidly receding from the foreground of literary production. The emergence of the "metaphysical" school and neoclassicism during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods worked in effect toward making obsolete the "dark conceits" of allegory and the use of personifications in a long narrative poem. Phineas Fletcher's muddled attempt at his Spenserian allegory of the human body in the Purple Island only proves how disastrously medieval allegory had deteriorated at the turn of the century in the hands of a poet who used allegory as an instrument of Gothic grotesquerie. The allegorical interpretation of Graeco-Roman mythology that had thrived throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance at last began to show signs of slackening in the intellectual climate of the seventeenth century which saw the vigorous growth of a scientific and empirical approach toward learning and antiquity. The long-held belief that the most outrageous, even disgusting stories of the gods contained moral, religious, and scientific truths under a thin veil of allegory was no longer immune from the scrutiny of scientific scepticism. The activities of the seventeenth century antiquarians and "virtuosi" contributed toward establishing non-literary sources--coins, inscriptions, base-reliefs, statues--as the primary tool for identifying the meaning of pagan symbolism.²

However, Spenser's romantic ideal of love and marriage had a reverberating impact on the course of subsequent English literary history. By eliminating the sentiments and formulae of medieval courtly love from romance and by establishing a new pattern of romantic story centered upon the unique felicity of marriage and the confirmation

of the values of Christian monogamous life, Spenser opened a wide door for all kinds of variations on epithalamial celebrations in poetry and drama alike. Shakespeare's early, "happy" comedies--A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, and Twelfth Night--are in essence the romance of marriage in which every Jack obtains his Jill under the protection of smiling Hymen: "Wedding is great Juno's crown./ Oh, blessed bond of board and bed! . . . Honor, high honor and renown,/ To Hymen, god of every town!" (As You Like It, 5. 4. 147-52). Britomart in male disguise, in pursuit of her lover, is the prototype of Rosalind or Viola, and much later in Shakespeare's career, Imogen. Amoret, the romantic passion incarnate and a bashful bride educated by Cheerfulness, Modesty, Shamefastness--we glimpse her profile in many Shakespearean heroines in their attitude of girlish surrender and humility:

But the full sum of me
Is sum of something which, to term in gross,
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpracticed,
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn. Happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn.
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
(The Merchant of Venice, 3. 2. 159-67)

The dynamic allegory of generation in the Garden of Adonis cannot be directly transplanted into a comedy, but Spenser's prayer to Juno, the goddess of childbirth, for fruitful progeny in Epithalamion (390 f.) is heard again in the gentle whisper of Oberon blessing the nuptial bed of the lovers:

Now, until the break of day,
 Through this house each fairy stray.
 To the best bridebed will we,
 Which by us shall blessed be,
 And the issue there create
 Ever shall be fortunate.

. . .

Never mole, harelip, nor scar,
 Nor mark prodigious, such as are
 Despised in nativity,
 Shall upon their children be.

(A Midsummer Night's Dream, 5. 1. 408-21)

Jonson's Hymenaei and other epithalamial masques also bear unmistakable Spenserian influence. Jonson uses the myths of Venus and Cupid in a way strongly reminiscent of Spenser's treatment of them in the Faerie Queene. For example, in Hymenaei Venus is invoked, together with Genius, as the goddess of universal generation: "And Venus, thou, with timely seed/ (Which may their after-comforts breed)/ Inform the gentle womb," The contrast between two kinds of Cupid, experimental in Spenser, is almost taken for granted by Jonson.³

It is Milton, however, who studied most deeply Spenser's doctrine of love. Milton's serious interest in Spenser's works can be measured by the fact that Spenser's success in establishing the "Matter of Britain" as the legitimate theme for a long narrative poem led Milton to contemplate the story of Arthur as the possible material for his attempt at an English epic. Milton certainly must have remembered Spenser's Belpheobe and Amoret when he extolled "the sun-clad power of Chastity" and "the sage/ And serious doctrine of Virginity" in Comus (782-87)--did Milton not hail Spenser as "our sage and serious poet Spenser" in Areopagitica? What is Milton's praise of "the rites/ Mysterious of connubial love" as opposed to "the bought smile/ Of

harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,/ Casual fruition" and "court amours,/ Mixed dance, or wanton masque, or midnight ball" (Paradise Lost, 4. 742-68), but the basic tenet of the allegory of the House of Busyrane? Spenser's myth of Venus and Cupid in the Garden of Adonis reappears near the conclusion of Comus, in which the attendant Spirit describes the celestial paradise whose inhabitants include wounded Adonis and the mourning "Assyrian Queen." Far above them, ablaze with radiant beauty, is the "Celestial Cupid" reunited with Psyche, and Youth and Joy, "Two blissful twins" born from their marriage. Following Spenser, Milton interprets the myth of Cupid and Psyche as the allegory, not of the union of human soul with God, but of the sacredness of Chastity. The phrase "Celestial Cupid" suggests Milton's familiarity with Spenser's distinction between the "cruel" and "gentle" Cupid, blind passion and matrimonial love. Furthermore, the emphasis on procreative love and the human need for a helpmate is clearly defined in the plea of Adam, still alone in Eden, for a companion; man has to repair his "single imperfection" by begetting the like of his image and for that purpose he requires "Collateral love, and dearest amity" (P.L., 8. 422-26). Milton is never weary of attacking "Whatever hypocrites" who cast unapproving eyes upon the sensuous love in marriage and "austerely talk/ Of purity and place and innocence,/ Defaming as impure what God declares/ Pure, . . ." (Ibid., 4. 744-47).

Beyond Milton, it is difficult to trace the course of the direct influence of Spenser's love allegory upon the English authors, because the idea of conjugal intimacy became the universal norm in

literature and social attitude alike in the eighteenth century and onwards. Spenser's role as the literary fountainhead of this major revolution in sexual mores cannot be overemphasized.

In the history of sentiment he is the greatest among the founders of that romantic conception of marriage which is the basis of all our love literature from Shakespeare to Meredith. The synthesis which he helped to effect was so successful that this aspect of his work escaped notice in the last century: all that Britomart stands for was platitude to our fathers. It is platitude no longer. The whole conception is now being attacked. Feminism in politics, reviving asceticism in religion, animalism in imaginative literature, and, above all, the discoveries of the psycho-analysts, have undermined that monogamic idealism about sex which served us for three centuries. (C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, p. 360)

A stream runs purest at its headspring. At the time when the romantic ideal of marriage is crumbling and becoming an object of scorn, it is a rewarding pilgrimage to revisit the fountainhead of that ideal and experience the inspiration and pristine vigor of the then revolutionary conception at the moment of its birth.

NOTES

NOTES

Chapter I: The Garden of Adonis

¹There is nothing intrinsically sinister about these artifices. In the entertainment held for the Queen at Killingworth in 1575, one pageant included a post, dedicated to Bacchus, decorated with clusters of artificial grapes. It is reported that some of the viewers were so enthralled by their simulated reality that "they could have found in their hearts (as the evening was hot) to have kissed them sweetly, and thought it no sin" (John Nichols, The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth, vol. 1, p. 432). Spenser makes the artifices appear dubious by using the phrases like "As lurking from the view of courteous guest."

²C. S. Lewis, in his essay "Genius and Genius" in Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature, pp. 169-74, distinguishes two types of Genius. Genius A is the universal god or spirit of generation prevalent in medieval literature. Genius B is the individual daemon originally derived from the Roman belief in man's external soul or higher self. Depending on its good or evil nature, Genius B can be either Genius B I, a good spirit, or Genius B II, a bad spirit. Genius in the Bower of Bliss is obviously Genius B II, while Genius of the Garden of Adonis is Genius A.

³For the development of the goddess Natura in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, see Knowlton's following articles: "The Goddess Nature in Early Periods," JEGP 19, pp. 224-53; "Nature in Old French," Modern Philology 20, pp. 310-29.

⁴Panofsky, "The Neoplatonic Movement in Florence and North Italy," Studies in Iconology, pp. 129-169, and Wind, "Botticelli's Primavera," "The Birth of Venus," and "Sacred and Profane Love," Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, pp. 113-51.

⁵Moschus' poem was very popular and was imitated and translated frequently. According to James Hutton, "The First Idyl of Moschus in Imitations to the Year 1800," among the classical imitators are Meleager and Apuleius (Met., 6. 7-8). Later Politian, Sannazaro, and Pontano rendered the poem in Latin. Among the Italian imitators are Benivieni (translation of Politian), Castellani, and Tasso in the prologue and epilogue of Aminta. Marot contributed his own in French. The English poets who tried their hand on this theme include Turberville, Of Ladie Venus (1576); Barnabe Barnes, The First Eidillion of Moschus,

describing Love (1593); and Jonson, The Haddington Masque, or as formerly known, The Hue and Cry after Cupid (1608).

⁶Britomart's connection with Bradamante is obvious. As for Florimell and Belphoebe, McMurphy believes that Spenser has split the character of Ariosto's Angelica into two, creating Florimell and Belphoebe. Angelica as an ever-flying, fearful virgin is captured in Florimell, while Angelica's coquetry is portrayed in Snowy Florimell. But another aspect of Angelica, the proud maiden and contemner of love, is absorbed by Belphoebe who, just as Angelica pities and rescues the wounded Medoro, tends the wounded Timias.

⁷The examples that could not be cited in the text are listed here. Firmicus Maternus, De Errore Profanarum Religionum, 4. 1, "For exactly this, the air, is what they have consecrated under the name of Juno or Venus the Virgin--if Virginity ever suited the fancy of Venus." St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, 4. 10, "Are there two Venuses, one Virgin, the other woman?" Boncompagno da Signa, Rota Veneris; Venus, "a virgin," appears before the author and rebukes his idleness in not extolling her in his works. Chaucer, The House of Fame, 225-30, describes Aeneas' meeting with Venus closely following Virgil. Venus "Goynge in a queynt array,/ As she had ben an hunteresse,/ With wynd blowyng upon hir tresse." Giambattista Marino, L'Adone, 3. 61 f., depicts Venus' first encounter with Adonis. She disguises herself in Diana's attire; "She goes like Cynthia, plain, unadorned,/ and wears a gown the color of fresh grass."

⁸In the recent article, "Heavens Favorable and Free: Belphoebe's Nativity in The Faerie Queen," Richard J. Berleth calculates the exact position of the planets Jove, Venus, and Sol at the time of Belphoebe's birth on the basis of the passage, "Ioue laught on Venus from his soueraigne see,/ And Phoebus with faire beames did her adorne, etc." He concludes that such a stellar configuration was miraculously rare and quotes Ferrier with regard to its extremely benevolent influence; "The trine of Jupiter and Venus denoteth beauty, grace, faithfulness, honesty, profit of wives, . . . The trine of Jupiter and Sol is greatly favorable to glory, honor, government, . . ." (p. 492). The application to the qualities of Belphoebe and Amoret seems to be self-explanatory.

⁹Stirling is heavily censured by Bennett for this assertion ("Spenser's Garden of Adonis Revisited," pp. 67-69), but does not want an advocate. Hankins (Source and Meaning in Spenser's Allegory, p. 237 f.) defends Stirling's position by citing Ficino's Commentary on the Symposium, II. vii and other passages, arguing that "Venus is not identical with matter, but she operates in matter as her normal place of abode."

¹⁰Stirling's basic contention is that the Garden of Adonis is about the arising of phenomenal, transient forms out of substance and that the "naked babes" passage and the Form-Substance passage both illustrate this fundamental scheme (pp. 516-18). Pursuing his argument to its logical conclusion, Stirling identifies the "naked babes" with substance or "formless matrix, as far as Spenser conceived of the latter" (p. 517). But this cannot be, since it runs squarely against our initial reaction to the "naked babes" passage. The babes that are clothed in "fleshly weedes" and "sinfull mire" cannot be substance. The common association of soul or form clothed in flesh is too strong to accept his reading. The "sinless substance" may be intellectually true, but sounds false to the ear of common sense. Stirling accuses Bennett for juggling the syntax in interpreting the Form-Substance passage (pp. 522-24), but he commits the same kind of mistake by reading the Form-Substance passage into the earlier "naked babes" passage when the connection between the two passages is unjustified.

¹¹The belief that there were several Cupids is quite common. For example, Cicero in Natura Deorum, 3. 60, says that there were three Cupids; the first, the son of Mercury and Diana, the second, of Mercury and Venus, and the third, Anteros, the son of Mars and Venus.

¹²But Hamilton seems to lose credibility by being overbold and dogmatic in the application of his theory. Thus, recognizing Belpheobe, Amoret, and Florimell as the different revelations of Britomart's role in the allegory, Hamilton argues that "In terms of the legend of Psyche, Belpheobe represents her state before being sacrificed; Amoret shows her marriage and suffering through love; and Florimell expresses the labours which end in her deification" (p. 144). I do not think that Spenser conceived of the ramification of the Psyche myth in such a systematic and rigid way.

¹³The note of Variorum editor; "Perhaps 'pleasure' should be 'Pleasure,' as it is personified, and the lines seem to reflect a reminiscence of the story of Cupid and Psyche so cherished by Spenser" (vol. 8, p. 488).

Chapter II: The Temple of Venus

¹For the pictorial representations of Venus with a mirror, see Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods, plates 31 and 32. Prudentius (Psychomachia, 310-28) draws a full picture of Luxuria, Venus' double, as a voluptuary. Gower (Confessio Amantis, 8. 1421 f.) refers to the Euhemeristic interpretation that Venus was the first courtesan to practise that profession.

²For Erotes in Greek literature, see for instance, Theocritus, Idyl, 7. 118 f., or Bion, I ("Lament for Adonis"). For the pictorial representations of Erotes in Hellenistic art, see P. E. Arias, History

of Greek Vase Painting, p. 384, 389, etc. Erotes were originally depicted as a slender, well-proportioned adolescent youth, but during the Hellenistic period they were transformed into chubby putti and remained so ever since. Amores or Cupidines are ubiquitous in Roman poetry.

³James J. Sheridan, in his translation of Alanus' book (The Plaint of Nature, Toronto, 1980, p. 163), adopts the reading "Antigenius" instead of "Antigamus."

⁴The ultimate source of this passage is Boethius' hymn to love in the Consolation of Philosophy, 2, meter 8; and 4, meter 6. Spenser probably knew Chaucer's imitation of it in Troilus and Criseyde, 3. 1-35 and 1744-71, or in the Knight's Tale, 2987-93.

⁵Chaucer, The Squire's Tale 272-74; Troilus and Criseyde, 2. 680-83, 3. 715-21 and 1255-57. Lydgate, The Temple of Glass, "Fairest of sterres, that with youre persant light/ And with the cherisshing of youre stremes clere,/ Causen in loue hertes to be light/ Oonli thurugh shynyng of youre glade spere,/ Nou laude and pris, O Venus, ladi dere,/ Be to your name, . . ." (1341-46). James I of Scotland, The Kingis Quair: "Hye quene of lufe, sterr of beneuolence,/ Pitouse princes, and planet merciable,/ Appesar of malice and violence" (687-89).

⁶Lotspeich (Classical Mythology, p. 116) has an interesting theory that Spenser probably found the idea of Venus as the creatress of the world in Natalis Comes' Mythologiae ("Venerem mundum procreasse et conservare"). He also observes that Spenser's phrase "queen of the aire" (4. 10. 47) may refer to Comes' idea that Venus "ex aeris temperie gignatur" and that, since Comes quotes Lucretius extensively, Spenser possibly had Comes' pages open before him when he wrote the hymn to Venus.

Chapter III: The House of Busyrane

¹The epigram by an anonymous author in the Greek Anthology (Loeb, vol. 5, p. 279), entitled "On Love Garlanded": "I am a little Love and country-bred, the son of the Nymph who dwells hard by, and I further but the gardener's labor. Hence from my dear fruitful plot I am crowned with four crowns by the four seasons." The same idyllic Eros appears in Longus' Daphnis and Chloe, 2. 5. In Gavin Douglas' Palice of Honour (London edition, 479) Cupid appears clothed all in green "as ane hountare."

²For the general description, see William A. Neilson, "The Origins and Sources of the Court of Love," Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature, 6, 1899.

³The association of Love with Fortune goes back to antiquity. Pausanias (7. 26. 8) informs us that in Aegeira there was an image of Fortune and "By her side is a winged Love, the moral of which is that even success in love depends for mankind on fortune rather than a beauty." In the Middle Ages Love and Fortune were coupled together very often, e.g., Gower, Confessio Amantis, l. 42-47, or Pierre Michault, Le Danse des Aveugles, where Love, Fortune, and Death appear as the rulers of the world. Tasso (Aminta, epilogue) even goes so far as to depict Cupid with abundant forelock, but bare on the back of his head--the traditional feature of Fortune or Chance.

⁴For instance, Roche, The Kindly Flame, pp. 110-111.

⁵In Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric (1968), Peter Dronke writes a critique of the idea that "amour courtois was a new conception of love, a new feeling, which arose for the first time in a particular aristocratic, chivalric, courtly society." Dronke argues that "the feelings and conceptions of amour courtois are universally possible in any time or place and on any level of society. They occur in popular as well as in learned or aristocratic love-poetry" (vol. 1, p. 2). To prove his thesis, the author examines the "courtly love" elements in love lyrics of the ancient Egypt, Byzantium, Caucasus, Islam, etc.

⁶The epigram by Marcus Argentarius in the Greek Anthology (Loeb, vol. 3, p. 115), on an image of Love on signet-ring, driving a chariot drawn by lions; "I shudder as I look on the destroyer of men, for he who can tame wild beasts will now show the least mercy to mortals." Also see Lucian, The Dialogues of the Gods, XII; Tibullus, 3. 6. 13-16; Virgil, Ciris, 135-36.

⁷For the use of the phrases like "caecus amor" or "caeca cupido" among the ancient authors, see Panofsky, "Blind Cupid," Note 2, Studies in Iconology, p. 96.

⁸For instance, Berchorius' introduction to the Moralized Ovid; "Cupid is depicted blind, because men are made blind by him. Nothing is blinder than men inflamed by the love of someone or something. Therefore Seneca says that Love has no judgement." This tradition persists strongly during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Lydgate, The Complaynt of a Loveres Lyfe, 463-67; "And for that he hath no discretion/ Withoute avise he let his arow goo,/ For lak of syght and also of resoun,/ In his shetyng hit happeth ofte soo/ To hurt his frende rathir than his foo." Comes, Mythologiae, p. 220, "Thus Cupid is said to be blind on account of turpitude which is committed by men oblivious of their own honor."

⁹Thus Padelford, "The Allegory of Chastity in The Faerie Queene," p. 376; "Thus reared in the midst of luxury and ease and social largesse, she was not prepared--any more than was Scudamour,

her lover--to place the spiritual values of matrimony uppermost. Rather, she could not refrain from surrendering herself to physical delight when once it enjoyed the conventional sanction of marriage." Or Bennett, "Spenser's Garden of Adonis," p. 79; "Amoret's subsequent captivity in the house of Busyrane is an allegory of natural temptation nobly overcome. Spenser is attacking the delicate problem of chastity (in the sense of absence of lust) in the marriage relation. Amoret is carried away during the celebration of the wedding feast, she is tortured by lust, etc."

¹⁰Bennett (The Evolution of The Faerie Queene, p. 106) describes Spenser's actual method of composition "by which an old passage was reinterpreted and augmented and then added to again and once again, as idea led to further idea, until the elaborate whole was completed and cemented neatly into its place." The entire Faerie Queene, as Bennett sees it, is the reworking of old materials revised to fit into new ideas and structure.

¹¹See Warton's note in Variorum, vol. 3, p. 330. Also Lotspeich, Classical Mythology in Spenser's Poetry, p. 43.

¹²Fowler, Spenser and the Numbers of Time, pp. 123-24; "One element in Britomart's mythological character, in fact, is that paradoxical Renaissance composite deity, the bellicose Venus or Venus Armata. As Professor Wind has justly remarked, often 'the martial Venus may stand for the strength that comes from love'; alternatively, she may signify a pure love guarded and braced by virtue. Both these conceptions are relevant to Britomart, who is first inspired to enter on her perilous enterprise by a vision of Arthegall granted to her as she views herself--Venus' classic stance--in a looking-glass."

¹³In Orlando Furioso, the magician Atlante snatches away Pinnabello's lady riding on his Hippogriff and pens her up, together with numerous other prisoners, in his inaccessible castle. Bradamante intends to free her lover Ruggiero from captivity and assails the castle, which is protected by vases filled with fire. When Bradamante compels Atlante to destroy them, the whole castle disappears (4. 38). McMurphy (Spenser's Use of Ariosto for Allegory, in Variorum, vol. 3, p. 373) finds this analogous to the fire at Busyrane's house, and cites the interpretation of Fornari, one of the Italian commentators of Ariosto, that the vases of fire signify the ardors and the sighs of love and that Atlante is the symbol of carnal love. Likewise in Espejo de Caballerias which Atkinson adduces as a possible source of the House of Busyrane, Rosicleer, the knight of Cupid, is able to pass through the flames of the cave of Artidon because he is a true lover. Both in the Faerie Queene and the Spanish romance the fire is love test; "success in the test depends on perfect chastity" ("Busirane's Castle and Artidon's Cave," pp. 189-90).

Chapter IV: The Fowre Hymnes

¹Neo-Platonism and Petrarchanism are similar, but a clear distinction must be made. By Neo-Platonism I mean the philosophical system of Plato elaborated into a full mysticism by Plotinus and Christianized by Ficino and Pico. Petrarchanism is comprised of medieval love poetry ideals, represented by dolce stil nuovo and amour courtois, refashioned and refined through the encounter with the aesthetic Neo-Platonism such as we find in Castiglione and Leone Ebreo. Both Hellenistic and Italian Neo-Platonists defined earthly love as the first rung in the ladder in the mystical ascent toward the Luminous One, the First Fair. Petrarchanism borrows Neo-Platonic terminology and images—Idea, Celestial Beauty, "emanation" of light, etc.--but the purpose of borrowing is purely aesthetic: idealization of a woman's beauty does not lead to the abstraction of Universal Beauty. Neo-Platonism is essentially quite ascetic, and Petrarchanism conveniently absorbed from Neo-Platonism only those elements that could be assimilated into the exaltation of erotic experience.

²A convenient summary of the various dates of composition proposed by the past critics can be found in "Date and Retraction," Variorum, vol. 7, pp. 657-62.

³Bennett ("The Theme," p. 56) dates the poem "sometime between the publication of the Amoretti in the spring of 1595, and September of 1596, when the 'Epistle Dedicatorie' to the hymns was written." Ellrodt (p. 23) thinks that "all four hymns, in their present shape, were written some time after the publication of Colin Clout in 1595, and, in all likelihood, after the Faerie Queene I-VI had been entered in the Stationer's Register in January 1596." Welsford (p. 59) believes that the poem was "published in 1596 and quite probably written in 1595."

⁴Bennett ("The Theme," p. 48): ". . . it is hard to escape the conclusion that Spenser not only knew this work of Pico and Benivieni, but that he used it as a guide to the writing of his hymns. Pico's distinctive account of the six steps, with the renunciation of the world in the fourth step, and the community of ideas on the subject of Sapience, points strongly in that direction." Fletcher ("Benivieni's 'Ode of Love'," p. 2) argues that the first two hymns on earthly love and beauty "suggest briefly the dialectic ascent from sensual to intellectual love as it is developed in Benivieni's Canzone,"

⁵Bennett, for instance, persistently disposes of the Petrarchan passages in the first two hymns as the vestige of earlier composition. See "The Theme," p. 31 and 35; "Addenda," p. 152.

⁶William K. C. Guthrie, History of Greek Philosophy, vol. 2, p. 61, 182, 188, etc.

⁷According to the Orphic hymns, there was first Chronus (Time), who later produced Aither, Chaos, and Erebus. Next Chronus fashioned in Aither an egg, out of which was born Phanes, identified with Eros or Protogonos, the first-born of the gods. Phanes was the creator of all the world, imagined as marvellously beautiful with shining light, with golden wings and four eyes, and the head of various animals. For further details, see Guthrie, Orpheus and Greek Religion. In Aristophanes' Birds, it was Night that laid an egg out of which sprang Eros, "the entrancing, the bright, Love brilliant and bold with his pinions of gold, like a whirlwind, refulgent and sparkling."

⁸"When Love, at first, did moove/ From out of Chaos, brightned/
So was the world/ and lightned,/ As now! . . ./ It was for Beauty,
that the World was made,/ And where she raignes, Loves lights admit
no shade." Jonson's note: "So is he fained by Orpheus, to have
appear'd first of all the Gods: awakened by Clotho: and is there-
fore call'd Phanes, both by him and Lactantius" (Herford and Simpson,
vol. 7, p. 190).

⁹Plato's definition of the names Urania and Pandemos was something foreign to the contemporary cult of Aphrodite. The name Urania, which was the literal translation of the Semitic title "the queen of the heavens," referred to Aphrodite in her oriental aspect, irrespective of moral connotations. The name Pandemos, too, had little perjorative meaning which Plato attached to it. On the contrary, the Greek state religion understood Pandemos in the sense of "worshipped by the whole people." Thus Pausanias (1. 22. 3) states: "When Theseus had united into one state the many Athenian parishes, he established the cults of Aphrodite Pandemos and of Persuasion." For further information on the topic, see L. R. Farnell, The Cults of the Greek States, vol. 2.

¹⁰Ficino (1. 4): "Beauty is, in fact, a certain charm which is found chiefly and predominantly in the harmony of several elements." The beauty of the soul consists in the harmony of several virtues, the beauty of material objects in the harmony of several colors and lines, the beauty of sound in the harmony of several tones. Developing this definition to extremes, in his commentary on Benivieni (2. 5) Pico denies beauty to God since He is above plurality and eternally one.

¹¹Benivieni, 101. Ficino, 5. 5; 6. 6. Pico, 3. 8. Castiglione, 4. 59.

¹²The intimate relationship which Spenser's cosmogonical Cupid has with Venus ("His owne faire mother, for all creatures sake,/ Did lend him light from her owne goodly ray," H.L., 72-73) can also be found in Benivieni (55-58); "This love, for that he on the amorous breast/ Of the fair Cyprian at the first has lain,/ To follow still is fain/ The starry splendor of her fairest face."

¹³A similar description of the scala can be found in Castiglione's Courtier, 4. 66-69. Although Bennett perceives a subtle difference between the versions offered by Pico and Castiglione, for all practical purposes the two versions are identical on crucial points.

¹⁴Renwick, Daphnaida, p. 216. Bennett, "The Theme," p. 22. Welsford, pp. 151-52.

¹⁵The locus classicus of the Platonic mirror is Phaedrus, 255^d, in which the beloved is compared to a mirror in which the lover beholds himself. Ficino (5. 6) refers to the soul as a mirror in which the image of the divine countenance is reflected.

¹⁶C. S. Lewis (English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, p. 375) takes the image of the two opposed mirrors very literally and complains that "the results would be very uninteresting," in all likelihood referring to the indefinite multiplication of images in the mirrors. Rebutting this objection by Lewis, Welsford (p. 161) defends Spenser's use of the double mirror image: "The originating image is the lady's beauty; this is reflected in a mental image in her lover's mind, which is the first mirror; the lady, whose mind is the second mirror, gains a fresh idea of her own beauty by seeing it, as it were, through her lover's eyes."

¹⁷The strongest incentive behind the heavenly aspiration of the Platonic searcher is the desire for self-immortalization (Symposium, 208c-d). The goal of the "scale of perfection" is apotheosis; "he shall be called the friend of god, and if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him" (Ibid., 212^a). The crucial fourth step of Pico is reached when the lover realizes that the universality of the incorporeal image of beauty proceeds, not from the outward object, but from the "intrinsic Power" of his own soul.

¹⁸This obviously runs against the orthodox doctrine that the three persons of the Trinity are coeternal. Bennett ("The Theme," p. 45) interprets the expression "begotten" as a proof of her thesis that Sapience is the Logos of the Neo-Platonists, not of the Christians. Milton also refers to the Son as the "Only begotten" (Paradise Lost, 3. 80), but obviously he does not equate Christ with the Neo-Platonic second hypostasis. Spenser's use of the word "begotten" is certainly controversial, but should not be construed as a proof of his espousing Neo-Platonic doctrine.

¹⁹Bennett ("The Theme," p. 43, note 34) has an excellent list of various interpretations of Sapience which preceded her.

Conclusion

¹The fact that the new sense of conjugal intimacy was spreading fast through the rural squirearchy can be attested by one of Herrick's "country-house" poems, "A Country Life: To His Brother, Master Thomas Herrick." In fact, the poem is an epithalamion; "But that which most makes sweet thy country life/ Is the fruition of a wife,/ Whom (stars consenting with thy fate) thou hast/ Got not so beautiful as chaste." Thomas was a farmer, and despite the poet's pastoralizing the life at the farm, the agricultural life in province, with the nearest neighbor miles distant, might have meant bearing frequent loneliness and boredom. Under such circumstances, the importance of a wife as a companion and helpmate must have been recognized with added appreciation.

²D. C. Allen's Mysteriously Meant contains chapters on how during the second half of the seventeenth century a new rationalistic trend, itself the offspring of the Euhemeristic and physical interpretation which had existed side by side with Christian and moral interpretation of the ancient myths, has finally got an upper hand and, aided by the then current deistic ideology, put an end to the long allegorical tradition.

³In Love Restored, Jonson defines "Anti-Cupid" as "the Love of Virtue." In A Challenge at Tilt and Loves Welcome, the King and Queenes Entertainment at Bolsover, Eros and Anteros are described as two brothers with complementary functions: "You are both true CVPIDS, and both the sonnes of VENVS by MARS, but this the first-borne, & was called EROS: . . . VENVS must bring forth a brother to him, and name him ANTEROS: that with reciprocall affection, might pay the exchange of loue" (A Challenge at Tilt, Herford and Simpson, vol. 7, pp. 394-95).

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