René Girard's Theory of Mimetic Desire and Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene

by

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Mimetic Desire in The Faerie Queene, III and IV.

Abstract

René Girard's theory of mimetic desire provides a framework for the understanding of desire as it is manifested by the figures in Books III and IV of Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queene. Book III introduces Cupid into the narrative for the first time as the figures learn to accommodate themselves to the experience of desire. With desire comes a new ambiguity in the interaction between the figures. The conflicts between the knights seem purposeless, and the perception of the other is patently influenced by the self. Desire in Books III and IV is mimetic. It is informed by a "text of desire" which influences the structure of the subject's identity and his perception of the other, as well as influencing the interaction between the reader and the text.

Résumé

La théorie du désir mimétique proposée par René Girard avance des concepts fondamentaux pour l'analyse du désir tel que manifesté par les personnages des livres III et IV du Faerie Queene d'Edmund Spenser. Le livre III introduit Cupidon pour la première fois lorsque les personnages s'apprentissent à l'expérience du désir. A la même fois, une nouvelle ambiguité s'introduit dans les relations entre les personnages. Les conflits qu'entretiennent les chevaliers paraissent sans but et la perception de l'Autre est influencée par le Soi d'une manière évidente. Dans les livres III et IV du Faerie Queene le désir se manifeste comme étant mimétique. Il se nourri d'un "texte du désir" qui influence la formation de l'identité du sujet et sa perception de l'Autre de même que l'interaction entre le lecteur et le texte.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

In recent years, the place of desire in the interpretation of Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene has become increasingly important. We have come to focus on the "meaning" of desire within the text, as well as the reader's desire for the text, and the desire of the poet to be read. This interest may be viewed as one which tends to betray an individual critic's own state of mind rather than adding anything useful to anyone else's knowledge of the poem, since a focus on desire undermines a number of the Christian assumptions about the poem. Spenser's positive moral intention is sacrosanct. The shift in focus to the morally ambiguous term "desire" draws our attention away from the Christian ideal of "love"; Spenser's "intention" is thus betrayed. What the shift accomplishes, however, may be worth the sacrifice, since it brings to our attention not only the wide variety of conditions implied in "lust," "false love," and "love," but also makes us aware of the crucial interaction between reader and text. Spenser's intention is to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." He offers a "model" with which he promises to shape the reader in each of the virtues. At the

same time, however, he frustrates the reader, for the text acts as an obstacle to the accomplishment of this goal.

Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene have long been recognized as linked by a common concern, which is love. For Roger Sale, "Book III, everyone knows, is about the morality of sexual love."[1] Thomas Roche believes that "Chastity and Friendship are merely Spenser's name for the proper use of love in individuals and between human beings."[2] These statements are agreed upon by an unusual number of Spenserians. Once we attempt to go beyond them, however, the existing array of contradictory positions, approaches and conclusions is revealed. For although we may say that the Books of Chastity and Friendship are about the accommodation of the self to the experience of love or desire for another, the nature and meaning of this accommodation remain in question.

The indeterminacy of the interpretation of this accommodation arises in part because of the variety of possible approaches to the question. If we look at the text as an "object" for study, then we look for particular and defined meanings that attach themselves to the images and result in the production of a coherent whole. Thus, earlier readings of The Faerie Queene, like those given by Lewis and, later, Roche, which focus their attention on the coherence of the allegory and the role of the characters or figures in contributing to a meaning which is conveyed to the reader, are able to make statements that equate Amoret with Married Love, for example.

Amoret is a "good girl," a husband's blessing.[3] Under these conditions it is relatively easy to make distinctions between elements in the text that convey an understanding of good and bad behaviour: Britomart is inspired by a "sacred flame," whereas Malecasta is driven only by "base love." Alternatively, they may both be driven by the same force, "celestial fire," but their characters differ to the extent that their actions are different: Britomart is moved to noble action, whereas Malecasta is driven only to possess. Florimell needs to learn to distinguish between good and bad knights, and, similarly, Britomart and Amoret need to overcome their fear of loss of identity and aggressive male sexuality in order to accede to the happiness of marriage (as figured in the 1590 ending of The Faerie Queene). Such a reading is satisfying because it leaves the reader with a sense of completion and wholeness.

These approaches view the text as a "unified object," contained by a self-defined allegorical framework and specific, determined symbols; the text is able to convey a single, final meaning to the reader through the agency of its various parts. Such approaches tend to look outside the poem only when the meaning of an image or allusion is uncertain. Other readings, however, undermine the certainty of meaning we attach to these two books. Once the Pandora's box of informing sources is opened, we discover that much of the thought prevalent in previous ages may find a space for itself in Spenser's text: neoplatonism, Boethius' philosophy, Ovid's mythology, and the

codes of courtly love, chivalric performance, and Petrarchan adoration all make their way into The Faerie Queene, along with Tasso, Ariosto, Chaucer, and many others. An awareness of the considerable variation and outright contradiction among the informing contexts and mythological glosses[4] lessens the power of any single one to give us the satisfaction of a final answer. As Millar MacLure states, "Spenser was not a philosopher, but he had what Wordsworth called 'the philosophic mind,' which is not the same thing, but rather what exasperated source hunters have called eclecticism. Everything is relevant."[5] Thus while Northrop Frye may point to a myth of vegetation as one of the most informing principles of Book III, and equate Florimell with Proserpine and Proteus with winter,[6] Thomas Roche may, with equal authority, equate her with Beauty, the first mover of love.

The difficulty lies in part in the difference between Book III and the preceding books. Whereas Books I and II follow one titular hero throughout their course, the heroine of Book III vanishes during the middle cantos, thus depriving the reader of a stable mirror in which to view the perfection of the virtue at hand. Whereas both I and II concern themselves mainly with the man within, and focus on his state alone, the perceptions in III are no longer as stable. Book II concerns the keeping of the mean, and, as demonstrated in Guyon's destruction of the Bower of Bliss, rejects the passions which tend to sway a man from this mean. Book III, on the other hand,

concerns the passionate self as it begins to interact with others in an interested manner. The sacrosanct identity of the self is wounded. It can no longer act as if it were wholly distinct and separate from others, completely self-determined.

In the Letter to Raleigh, Spenser outlines his plan, which is to provide twelve knights to be the "patrones" of twelve virtues. Although some would have him speak plainly, as in a sermon, rather than in the "cloudily enwrapped" manner native to allegory, Spenser uses this form because he knows that, in this way, he stands a much better chance of involving his reader, for men "delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profite of the ensample." Moreover, he considers that, rather than sermonizing, "so much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule."[7]

Many critics have pointed out the faultiness of the plan as described in "The Letter to Raleigh." The plan fails to correspond in many essential details to what we actually have of The Faerie Queene. For one thing, Spenser did not write twelve books of The Faerie Queene. For another, the description of the Legend of Chastity, in which Britomart is dispatched to rescue Amoret from the House of Busirane when Scudamour fails at the same task, bears no resemblance to the actual inception of the Legend, unlike the descriptions corresponding to Books I and II. The "Letter to Raleigh" leads us to expect a perfect correspondence of hero to book, and an established pattern of learning. The poem itself denies these expectations, especially

in Book IV, when one of the titular heroes fails to appear at all. Thus Spenser's allegory is not one of defined correspondences and fixed virtues, but is rather characterized by swiftly moving, not quite identifiable patterns of change and understanding.

Thus, the Letter to Raleigh does not describe the structure of the poem. It does describe the effect he wishes to have on the reader, that is, it describes the relationship between the text and its reader. The reader of the letter is male, which may account for the variation in the described structure, which places Scudamour's story as the centre of focus. The implied readers of The Faerie Queene are, however, both male and female, and the Queen, who may be the "ideal" reader, is androgynous, since she is both "Queen" of love, and "Prince" of peace.

If we regard the poem as a "subject" rather than an object for study, as Margaret Ferguson suggests,[8] then the ambiguity inherent in the relationship between reader and text becomes more noticeable, and allows us to realize the indeterminacy of many of the images Spenser uses. Cupid and Venus, for example, are invoked or represented many times in the course of Books III and IV, in widely varied contexts. "That wanton boy" strikes frequently and with increasing randomness throughout Book III. The contrast between his appearance in the Garden of Adonis and at the House of Busirane, and that between the Venus of the Castle Joyeous and of the Garden, has led some critics,

notably C.S. Lewis, to remind us of the medieval distinction between the Good Venus and Cupid and the evil pair. The first act as agents of cosmic love, the force that keeps the stars in their places, and causes men to aspire upwards toward God. The second pair is inspired by lust, inclining downwards towards "earthly myre."[9] Such a sharp division suggests that it is simply a case of preferring one direction over another.

Spenser does not allow such easy responses, however. Each appearance of the pair modifies a prior appearance. Cupid can therefore be at once a "cruel archer," and "wanton boy," as well as "the victor of the gods." And the different Venuses are in fact different versions of the same story, for the tale told in the Castle Joyeous is contained within that of the Garden of Adonis.[10] Cupid, as desire, is the initiator of most of the stories contained in Books III and IV. He causes Britomart to fall in love with Artegall, and is equally responsible for Malecasta's "paines" and Paridell's languishing. Cupid does not differentiate between his victims: no one is spared.[11] As Elizabeth Story Donno points out, "the moral qualities which Hellenore and Britomart represent are in direct contrast, yet the response of Cupid to the two situations is the same. As Timias, complaining of his fruitless love for Belphoebe, observes: 'love taketh equall vew' of all conditions and all states"(5.47).[12]

The role of Cupid in initiating desire is most evident in Book III, where Spenser employs all the traditional imagery

associated with this figure. As we move forward into Book IV, his importance as external cause diminishes as we become more aware of the fact that he is not an external cause at all but a literary figment of our imaginations.

In fact, Cupid, initiating the stories in Book III, may be said to initiate the poem as a whole. As Jonathan Goldberg points out, Cupid appears in the proem, where "his disturbing function is to be an image of the generation of the text." Goldberg suggests that his meaning is highly ambivalent, since he causes the narrator to tell the story, perhaps against his will; his genealogy is also ambivalent since he is equally "dreaded impe of Joye,/ Faire Venus sonne" and the child of Mars and Venus.[13]

We seek a structure because we seek a way of acceding to the "lesson" that Spenser provides. If Spenser's intention in the whole of The Faerie Queene is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" then we seek to know how he intends that fashioning to occur, and what result is expected.

If, as Isabel G. MacCaffrey says, "The Faerie Queene is about processes of coming to know," then how do these processes occur?[14] The labyrinthine quality of Spenser's Allegory, noted by MacCaffrey and Fletcher, has been compared with man's erratic progress through this "fallen" world, and Fletcher and MacCaffrey both point to those moments of "sacred" vision as the alternatives that free man from the darkness of the human

condition. Therefore, the reader would learn from the mistakes and wanderings of the figures, and obtain what Fletcher calls a "corrected" vision in the temples of the poem.[15] The profound ambiguity that underlies many of these visions, however, can undercut any finalized version of virtue. After the Temple of Isis, for example, where Britomart receives a vision of Equity, she is moved to take the life of Radigund in the name of justice; the new violence of her behaviour in Book V is unprecedented, and is unusual given the restraint that she has previously demonstrated.

In such a view, the vision is "given" to the figure and reader, enabling them to enact a "virtue." This view privileges the people who receive it; they are the "noble minds" who can aspire to "heroic love." This would be ratified by the general attitude towards allegory that ranks it with parable in the manner that it teaches. It is veiled to guard it from the misconstructions of the profane. Yet, even so, if we relied on completion to validate the worth of these allegorically represented virtues, we would be sadly disappointed. Britomart never marries Artegall, Scudamour never finds Amoret, Artegall is withdrawn in disgrace, unable to continue his project of reform, and the poet himself is finally attacked by the Blatant Beast. Each Book ends with somewhat of an anticlimax. The implication is that the moments of final vision are more equivocal than we would like to believe.

Paul Alpers points out that each moment in the poem is to be regarded as provisional; it is a way station in the passage to understanding. Thus, for Alpers, the role of the reader is not to judge, but is instead to understand "general themes, issues, and problems of a man's life."[16] The problem is not so much to distinguish between right and wrong behaviour, but to understand that it is difficult to do so. No single statement can be excerpted and given as final.

Thus the text is situated in an ambiguous relationship between itself and the reader. Statements, situations, and meanings shift as radically as Proteus himself, and, as DeNeef points out, there is always the danger of misreading. While Spenser uses his words to "sing of love," there is implied misinterpretation which accuses the poem of "wantonness." The possibility of misinterpretation may be inherent to allegory; certainly Spenser takes it into account in his "Letter to Raleigh, in which he states that the outline is given both for the better understanding of the reader and to avoid "gealous misconstruction." The potential misuse of any of the situations exists precisely because the poem is "provisional." Goldberg calls the indeterminacy of the text "writerly": it denies any final authority to the text, and encourages in the reader an awareness of the ambiguity of discourse, of the dangerous process of "coming to know."[17]

Spenser in essence provides us with a text within the space of the mind. His is an allegory which, while attempting

to form in us a sense of the virtues it discusses, at the same time informs us of the processes by which it achieves its goal. His peopled world operates at once as a figure of discourse, and as a vehicle for accession to the inner parts of intuitive knowing. The indeterminacy of meaning and image in the poem makes for a profound accessibility, and accounts for the wide variations in interpretation.

For Goldberg, the subject of Book IV is desire: he believes that this book in particular reveals how the identity of an individual figure is created only in the context of his social and political relationships. That is, the stories that each figure relates are the stories of and for an "Other." Goldberg defines the "other" differently from most critics of the books, in that the other is the person who controls and dictates identity in desire[18]; he believes that this figure is ultimately the Queen, with her "Petrarchan politics," and this position certainly has foundation in the "Letter to Raleigh", when Spenser sets the scene for his story-telling at a twelve-day festival in Gloriana's court, in which each of the guests is commanded to tell a story.

Goldberg's method tends to return all situations and images in the poem to one term, which is desire. Other critics as well see desire as the primary "subject" of these two books (the word subject here takes on two-edged significance, as Goldberg points out). Harry Berger's approach also realizes the significance of desire in these two books; he sees them largely

as the attempts of figures to learn to cope with desire, and sees Spenser as writing a more humane space for desire, apart from the destruction and wantonness of "earlier phases."[19]

In Goldberg's approach, all stories are told for or of another, never of the self. Thus, the only structure is given by the desire of others. This, however, may not be the case. Desire is also the desire for honour, which figures equally in Book II. Spenser in fact sets the terms for self-consuming desire in the Cave of Mammon, with the figure of Tantalus, as well as the desire for honour such as experienced by Guyon and Arthur. The threatening form of desire (described by Goldberg) appears in the Bower of Bliss, where Acrasia is perceived as consuming Verdant. Thus, in Book II, desire is at once a dangerous force and the force that propels people into the world, rather than keeping them cloistered. Thus, although love may be perceived as a "siren, fury, monster,"[20] desire is already known. Yet, it is only in Books III and IV that the full nature of desire becomes apparent.

The structure of these two books, as discussed, may be compelled by the fact that "lover's deare debate" necessitates the Romance form. Or it may be compelled by the desire of another. Or, the structure may in fact be what is necessary for Spenser to educate us in the accommodation of the self to desire, both our own and that of others. Daniel Javitch's comments on Ariosto become appropriate here: both Ariosto's and Spenser's texts are said to be episodic. According to Javitch,

this style is appropriate to Ariosto's intention, which is to inure his reader to the effects of desire by repeatedly denying him the satisfaction of closure, using the technique of "cantus interruptus."[21] Thus, for Javitch, the reader and the figures in the text share the same condition of frustration.

Similarly, the ambiguity of the images Spenser places in the text allows us to realize how much of a role the individual figures have in the interpretation of these images. If Cupid treats everyone in the same way, not respecting differences of degree, and yet is viewed differently by different people, then the contributing differentiating factor is the perception of him, rather than any quality he possesses. Thus, the destruction of the Bower of Bliss may not necessarily be a result of the evil nature of Acrasia, but may also be caused partly by Guyon's perception of the situation. Acrasia and Verdant present much the same picture (Verdant in repose, with Acrasia leaning over him) as Venus and Adonis do in cantos i and vi of Book III. Thus, many of the effects of an individual experience of desire depend on how the situation is "read" or interpreted. I suggest that Guyon would perceive any influence that puts the individual's identity at risk as evil and wanton.

If Spenser's intention is to educate us in the nature of desire and its effects, the levelling of his text exempts no-one. All are equally wounded. The collapse of distinctions that occurs frequently and the ambiguous use of names and referents such as "she" that will not let us discern the identity of

participants in a situation contribute to a radical ambivalence that is fruitful to a growing understanding of desire. Spenser does not show us only that desire binds us: he also shows us how it occurs. In view of the levelling nature of recent criticism, another theory, the theory of mimetic desire, may help us to understand how Spenser explores desire and its terms, and how to overcome the constricting effects it can impose, given the wrong interpretation.

René Girard's theory of mimetic desire demonstrates how individuals learn to desire, as well as how desire forms or shapes the individual's identity. He discusses the effects of desire in great detail, and applies his theory to both literature and culture. Thus, it will be very useful in discovering how desire levels distinctions between lust and love, between chaste and unchaste, and how the interpretation of desire dictates the experience, both on individual and social levels.

This thesis will examine Girard's theory of mimetic desire in conjunction with Spenser's view of the role of desire in the world, in order to discover how desire binds the individual and forces him or her to participate actively in the world (rather than remaining detached from it). The first chapter will discuss the theory of René Girard. The second chapter will examine the crisis of desire that occurs in the conflict over identity in several episodes of Books III and IV, and discuss the implications of the collapse of distinctions between

different "modes" of desire. The third chapter will discuss the desire for the perfect and enclosed other, in which the woman is imaged as "intact paradise." The fourth chapter will examine the "reading" of desire: how individuals learn to desire through cultural constructs, and how Spenser teaches the reader to read with compassion in order not to be bound by the constrictions of culturally dictated texts of desire.

Notes to Introduction

1. Roger Sale, Reading Spenser, (N.Y.: Random House, 1968), p.63.

2. Thomas P. Roche, The Kindly Flame, (Princeton, 1964), p. 200

3. Charles W. Lemmi states that "needful of protection but strong in faithfulness, affectionate but wholly chaste, soft and sweet, yet capable of patient fortitude, Amoret would once have been called 'a good girl.' God created such, one might almost say, for the convenience and comfort of husbands." "Britomart: the Embodiment of True Love," Studies in Philology 31 (1934), p. 139.

4. James Nohrnberg, The Analogy of The Faerie Queene, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976).

5. Millar MacLure, "Spenser and the ruins of time," in A Theatre for Spenserians, eds. Judith M. Kennedy and James A. Reither, (Toronto and Buffalo: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 6

6. Northrop Frye, "The Structure of Imagery in The Faerie Queene," University of Toronto Quarterly 30 (1961). See also William Blisset, "Florimell and Marinell," Studies in English Literature 5 (1965), p. 87.

7. "Letter to Raleigh", in Poetical Works, ed J.C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1912; rpt 1970). Cheney points out that each of the knights, as "ensamples", may be both 'patrons' and 'patterns' for virtues. Spenser's Image of Nature, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), p. 6.

8. Margaret Ferguson, Trials of Desire, (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 12-13. Ferguson here elaborates on the relationship between the trained reader and the text. She states that "Freud's theoretical elaboration of the relation between the observing and the observed subject (whether that subject is oneself or another) counters the notion that a "human science" can exist in the form envisioned by a critic like Frye, who asserts that "literature is not a subject of study but an object of study: the fact that it consists of words makes us confuse it with the talking verbal disciplines.

[Anatomy of Criticism, p. 11-12]."

9. Cf. George Economou, "The Double Venus Tradition of Medieval Mythography," in In Pursuit of Perfection, eds. Joan M. Ferrante and George D. Economou, (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1975).

10. Neither Hamilton nor Alpers believes that Spenser is using the double Venus tradition. Hamilton does not believe "that Spenser uses the traditional concept of two Venuses any more than he allows that love and lust differ in their cause however much they do in their effects."A.C Hamilton, The Structure of Allegory in The Faerie Queene, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 155. Hamilton sees several versions of Venus in the poem; she is also reiterated in the statue of Isis. Alpers believes that "Lewis oversimplifies when he speaks of a bad or a good Venus, and he is incorrect when he makes the issue a matter of preferring one or the other." The Poetry of The Faerie Queene, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967), p. 376.

11. If we consider desire for another human being to be only that inclination which arouses us sexually, then we must say that Belphoebe is one exception to this rule. Yet she is not entirely exempt from one form of passion: compassion. Her heart is "pierced" with pity; this is the same effect that Spenser would have his text create in the Queen, and we must include pity in the emotions that incline one being towards another, although it is not perceived as directly caused by "Cupid."

12. Elizabeth Story Donno, "The Triumph of Cupid: Spenser's Legend of Chastity," Yearbook of English Studies 4 (1974), p. 43.

13. Jonathan Goldberg, Endlesse Worke, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1981), p. 22.

14. Isabel G. MacCaffrey, Spenser's Allegory: The Anatomy of Imagination, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p.6.

15. Angus Fletcher states that "Spenserian heroes are always learning something, and sometimes they gain corrected visions of their lives, when they receive enshrined wisdom." The Prophetic Moment, (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 43.

16. The Poetry of The Faerie Queene, p. 286.

17. Endlesse Worke, p.11.

18. The term "other" is a difficult one: in most studies, "other" refers to the "object" of desire, the one whom the lover wishes to "know." For Girard, "other" may occasionally indicate the object, but it also tends to indicate the rival, the model that creates the shape of desire. For Goldberg, "other" actively refers to the commanding presence of the person who dictates desire, whether that person is another writer, another text, the "friend," or Queen Elizabeth herself. In all cases, Goldberg's "other" tends to be the one who keeps the subject imprisoned in desire.

19. Harry Berger, "The Faerie Queene, III," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser," ed. A.C. Hamilton. (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1972).

20. MacCaffrey, Spenser's Allegory, p. 236.

21. Daniel Javitch, "Cantus Interruptus in The Orlando Furioso," Modern Language Notes 95 (1980), pp. 66-80.

I. Girard's Theory of Mimetic Desire

In Spenser's work, desire is the force which propels the individual self into an active relationship with the world around it. The desire for honour, and the desire to fulfill the quests that have been enjoined upon them, provide the impetus that spurs many of the knights into and through their tales. When desire becomes the desire for an "other," the role of desire in activating the self becomes more evident. In Books III and IV, the numerous wounds received by the figures demonstrate the effect of desire on the self: the "intactness" of the self disintegrates under desire's assault. Thus, the stability of the figure's identity is called into question.

The experience of desire carries with it many terms for its incorporation into the structure of identity (whether individual or social). Spenser's task seems to be to show how desire necessitates the use of a structure of terms or conditions which help the self to cope with the experience, and, in turn, how the "structure" dictates the success or failure of the "desire."[1] In Books III and IV, we see a growing awareness of these conditions, conditions which determine how the "subject" of desire views both himself and his beloved.

Except for its occurrence as a natural energy in the Garden of Adonis, desire as it appears in The Faerie Queene has been largely viewed as pathogenic because of the disruption and pain it causes. The pain is inherent, it seems, in the experience of desire, pain which can be relieved if the subject gains his object. The success of his efforts depends on the manner in which he "interprets" desire, and thus, in situations in which the subject is prevented from obtaining his beloved, we often fault the "interpretation" he gives to desire. Several critics have approached the question of "faulty" interpretations of desire: Harry Berger, for example, divides the episodes of Book III into examples of "early" and "late" phases of experience, and demonstrates that some interpretations, such as those provided by Malecasta and the False Florimell, belong to earlier phases, which cannot cope with love as Spenser describes it. Berger's analysis cites the difficulty of recognizing that the "object" of desire is an "other" self, rather than a thing to master or possess, as the primary contributing factor in the disruptions in Books III and IV.[2]

Berger points to many of the elements inherent in the manifestation of desire, such as the alternation of hate and love in the expression of desire for an other. He also discusses Spenser's "revision" of epic to include women, and the writing of Books III and IV from a feminine perspective. While he describes a kind of "psychology" of desire as it is

presented in Spenser, he does not look at the source of desire. He seems to assume that it is a natural biological force that is expressed either generatively or destructively, one that propels both lover and world through different phases of "growth" and "decay."[3]

René Girard's theory is, like Berger's, concerned with the effects of desire. And, like Berger, he looks at the way desiring subjects "read" their fate. However, Girard's theory focuses on the effects of desire on identity. He looks at the causes of desire which, rather than resulting solely from biological impulses, result from a need for structured identity. His theory of mediated desire is in many ways similar to Spenser's concern with the "texts" of desire, and may thus prove illuminating.

Girard's theory bases itself on the primary observation that all desire is mimetic, that it is mediated or imitated. In other words, the impulse itself, and the object, are appropriated from, or selected by, a model, which can be a human being, a literary work, or a culture, but which always serves as a kind of text through which the subject "reads" both himself and the world.[4] In mimetic desire, there is no one-to-one relationship between the subject and the object such as is normally posited in theories of desire and perception: the relationship is instead triangular. The mediator serves to focus the subject, and provides him with a sense of identity and a set of values with which he can understand the world.

Girard first discovers this principle in texts known as literary masterpieces, such as Cervantes' Don Quixote, as well as the works of Proust and Dostoyevsky.[5] Girard makes the distinction between romanesque texts, which reveal this principle, and romantic texts, which conceal it. Thus, according to his theory, "romantic" texts privilege desire and the individuals who experience it, and promulgate our cultural misconceptions about the nature of desire. "Romanesque" texts, on the other hand, demonstrate the illusory satisfactions inherent in desire, and enable the individual to escape from its bonds.

According to Girard, his theory represents a fundamental break with most of the preceding cultural, anthropological and psychological theories, which view desire as an innate and individual force or drive.[6] For Girard, although there may be a natural biological impulse, the forms which desire takes and the objects at which it is directed are dictated by the model from whom it is imitated. Thus, for Don Quixote, who wishes to be a perfect knight, desire is mediated by the model, Amadis de Gaul, who is the exemplar of knightliness.

The situation in Cervantes' novel is comic: Comedy is a function of the distance between the subject and his mediator, and of the errors in interpretation which occur because he views one kind of world through a model that inherits an ontologically separate universe. For example, he mistakes windmills for giants, a barber's basin for a helmet, and a

prostitute for a lady. The distance between subject and mediator exists because Don Quixote cannot come into conflict with his model.[7] They occupy different realms of existence, since Amadis is in fact a dead and literary model, and can never act to reject Don Quixote's imitation. The situation is different when subject and model occupy the same realm: in the novels of Proust and Dostoyevsky, for example, the subject takes for his model someone who is much more accessible to him. Thus, when he filters his perceptions and ideals through the figure of his model, he desires the same objects as the mediator and thus comes into conflict with him, whether the desired object be a commodity, a position in society, or a woman.

Once the subject's desire centres on the same objects as the model's, the subject's imitation of him may be perceived by the model as threatening. The pair turn into rivals for the possession of that object, and the relationship between them becomes a "conflict of doubles." According to Girard, "in 'romantic' literature, in the animistic theory of primitive religious practices and in modern psychiatry, the term <u>double</u> is perceived as essentially unreal, a projection of the imagination."[8] In Girard's theory, however, the "doubles" are not "projected." Because the pair are essentially rivals for the same "identity," as conferred by possession of the object, the differences between them quickly vanish; any difference is largely illusory, and usually only perceived by the combatants

themselves. Girard finds the theme of the conflict of doubles at the centre of myth, and in many great tragedies, particularly those of Shakespeare. For example, in Hamlet, the conflict between Hamlet's uncle and father is one in which both desire the same objects: the kingship and the queen. Gertrude dissolves the differences between them by marrying both, and Hamlet's indecision rests, for the most part, in his difficulty in distinguishing between them.[9]

The disappearance of differentiation inherent in the loss of perceived distinctions is at the root of what Girard distinguishes as the "founding" moments of culture: one of the doubles must expel the other in order to regain his identity. The violence committed here may proliferate: both mimetic desire and the ensuing violence are perceived as "contagious," and the social and psychological disorder inherent in the situation borders on a kind of delirium. For, once mimetic desire begins, it sets off a chain of like desires which compound as they spread, threatening the stability of the community. Girard sees an affinity between the occurrence of the plague and instances of social upheaval: the threat posed by both is one of rapid spread, and violence. The result in both cases is death (DBB,p.153).[10]

Although the violence may originate in a single conflict of doubles, and may be committed with the intention of righting the balance lost in the conflict over identity, it has the effect of unbalancing the harmony of the community, and

requires a reciprocal act of violence to restore it. Revenge sparks revenge. According to Girard, "the lack of differentiation is no mere starting point, but reflects the vicious and undecidable nature of the revenge process; the world of reciprocal violence is one of constant mirror effects in which antagonists become each other's doubles and lose their individual identities"(DBB, p.186).

The only way to resolve a crisis of this kind without endangering the whole community is through a coping mechanism which Girard calls "unanimous victimage." Instead of proliferating doubles, the community resolves into a single pair of doubles, the community and its victim. The victim becomes the scapegoat for the violence and chaos afflicting the community. In sacrificing the victim, the community repossesses the identity that had been called into question by the mimetic crisis.[11]

Girard believes this mechanism to be at the heart of the founding moments of community; the "meurtre fondateur" is hidden, in some form or other, in all myths of genesis. The story of the founding of Rome provides a particularly good illustration of Girard's thesis: the only difference between Romulus and Remus lies in their perception of appropriate boundaries for the city. When one brother contravenes the divinely delineated boundary, the other kills the transgressor.

In order for the sacrificial mechanism to work, the victim must be perceived as truly guilty, as in the case of Remus,

for, unless unanimity is achieved, the mechanism cannot create the necessary polarization of the community. Thus, the selection of the victim is an important part of the process, as in Jonah I, in which the "passengers cast lots to determine who is responsible for the crisis" since "chance can always be trusted to reveal the truth, for it reflects the will of the divinity"(VS, p.313). In the original murder, the victim is always blamed for the violence. In later instances, the victim is marked out in some way. According to Girard, all sacrificial victims "are invariably distinguishable from nonsacrificeable beings by one essential characteristic: between these victims and the community a crucial social link is missing, so they can be exposed to violence without fear of reprisal"(VS, p.13).

The myths and texts which reveal the murderous foundation of community also reveal the unwillingness of man to take responsibility for his own violence. By expulsing the victim, he keeps violence at a distance. In many of the myths, the death of the victim is believed to be caused by the victim himself. The myths of the Tikopia and the Ojibwa contain references to an act of violence perpetrated by the god against the community; the god is then expulsed. Yet the community does not admit responsibility for the expulsion; other gods force the transgressor to return 'whence he came,' or else to fly away. Girard sees in these myths references to the "meurtre fondateur": the guilty "god" is either drowned or falls off a cliff, driven to it by his pursuers.

The victim is thus transformed into a god: he becomes sacred. Violence is further removed from the community, for now it belongs to the realm of the gods. A man who commits a violent act is said to be under the influence of that god: violence originates from without rather than from within. The transfer of violence onto the victim is necessary for him to become 'sacralized': the victim is responsible not only for the original disorder, but also for the re-ordering of the community.[12] The conflict is resolved in favour of the community; yet, in making the victim divine, the balance of differentiation is retained. The divinity can truly "oppose" the community, providing a continuing source of differentiation. It is this dynamic that Girard sees at the heart of the elaboration of rituals and taboos, which always takes place after the sacrifice of the victim.[13] The development of structure through ritual and taboo provides a stable system of differentiation, around which the community becomes organized.

The rituals enable the community to accommodate change with a minimum of disturbance (VS, p.284). Because the community articulates a system of "differences" among its members, it can preclude, as far as possible, the danger of mimetic rivalry. Those situations which call for a change from one category for another, such as birth, coming of age, marriage, and death, are always protected and isolated by ritual of some kind.[14] All institutions have their source in

protective ritual. In the later stages of structure, the victims are selected and sacrificed at ordained times, in accordance with ritual. The victim will be regarded, even prior to the sacrifice, as in some way sacred, partaking of "all possible difference within the community, particulary the difference between within and without; for he passes freely from the interior to the exterior and back again. Thus, the surrogate victim constitutes both a link and a barrier between the community and the sacred"(VS, p.271). The victim becomes a "monstrous double"; he is encouraged to transgress all of the community's sacred laws. He may be a part of a marginal group, or a prisoner-of-war, or a sacrificial king, but the victim is always privileged and isolated in important ways.

The displacement of violence onto the surrogate victim reappears in other, later sacrificial crises. Whenever the community is threatened by social disorder, the responsibility for it is shifted onto some member, who is often accused of breaking important communal laws, usually those forbidding patricide or incest. This is one of the traditional accusations against the Jews of medieval Europe. It is also a common factor in Greek myth, and is part of the 'exclusionary' process necessary to creating a victim who will not engender further violence: the community believes the victim to be guilty of crimes so heinous as to have excluded himself. In Oedipus Rex, Oedipus is accused of causing the plague in Thebes by

committing both patricide and incest. His presence contaminates the whole city.

The key elements in the sacrificial crisis -- the conflict of doubles, the contagion of violence, the substitution of a sacrificial victim -- arise out of a concern for the definition of identity. The ambivalent nature of the victim, who partakes of both the sacred and the profane, allows the community to redefine itself against him.

Thus, the entire mimetic process, from the imitation of desire, through the conflict of doubles, to its resolution by violence, can be seen as the result of the pursuit of a "too perfect" identity , as in the story of Romulus and Remus, whose conflict results from a disagreement over the "ideal limits" of the city.[15] The victim, in crossing the boundaries of established identity, threatens the stability of the community in its self-perception. By killing him, they once more exorcize the violence and instability within them. In rejecting the flaws in themselves, they refuse any knowledge of the true nature of the sacrificial mechanism, which, because of mis-recognition, continues to operate. Knowledge of violence is in fact "entombed" along with the bodies of its victims. Violence always belongs to someone else.[16] In the creation of identity without the recognition of mimetic violence, violence is always employed.

The Old and New Testaments remove the satisfying, enclosing effect of the us-them victimage mechanism so useful

in earlier times.The destruction of the sacrificial mechanism is accomplished in two stages. The first takes place in the Old Testament, which radically reverses the picture of mimetic conflict contained by the myths of "founding murder" that describe the survivor as innocent. In the story of Cain and Abel, however, the survivor is a "vulgar assassin" (DCC, p.170). This time, the survivor, rather than the victim, is marked. In the stories of Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, and Joshua, the victim is seen as the object of unmerited persecution. It is the envy and desire of the persecutors that is at fault.[17] Moreover, in the Old Testament, the wrath of God is visited upon whole communities instead of single victims. Only a single, innocent man, or small group, flees the larger site of violence or slavery. The reversal of the sacrificial mechanism involves a "victim" who exiles himself, rather than being forcibly expulsed.[18]

The Old Testament constitutes a fundamental revision of the mythically encoded sacrificial mechanism. While violence remains in the hands of God, the true nature of mimetic desire is revealed. The story of the Judgement of Solomon illustrates the Old Testament's anti-sacrificial effect. In this story, two women dispute over the possession of a child. The king, unable to differentiate between the doubles, offers to "divide" the "living infant" (DCC, p. 262). The real mother offers to relinquish the child to save his life. The other's desire has

become so exacerbated that concern for the object is lost; only the envious fascination with the "model-rival" is important.[19]

The New Testament, like the Judgement of Solomon, is anti-sacrificial because it refuses to differentiate between doubles. Christ refuses violence, choosing to be killed rather than to kill. Thus, according to Girard, he is the epitome of the truly innocent victim who is sacrificed at the heart of the mimetic crisis. Jesus's role is to reconcile the doubles by refusing to differentiate between them, and by refusing to participate in the cycle of violence. Thus, the responsibility for violence is replaced in the hands of those who commit it, rather than being attributed to a god.

Because the Old and New Testaments destroy the sacrificial mechanism by revealing its existence, the contagion and violence of mimetic desire can no longer be exorcized by sacrificial rituals. Instead of believing himself part of a community, enclosed and defined within its hierarchies, the essential patterns of life governed by ordering ritual, the desiring subject sees himself as the excluded victim.[20] In the absence of the principle of unanimous victimage, which reorders the self and the community, the self needs something to structure his world and his identity. The structure is sought in differentiation: the subject seeks limits and indications that he is separate and different from his fellows. The model, which the self uses as a pattern, always possesses something

that the self does not, and which differentiates him from others.

The model Girard uses to describe the effects of desire and its proliferation is an essentially pathological one: he proposes mimetic desire as the one principle animating both Freudian models for the study of personality -- the Oedipal complex and narcissism -- and focuses on the psychotic and the coquette. For Girard, there is no need to make the distinction between object-oriented love (mature) and subject-oriented love (narcissistic): both are motivated by mimetic desire. In fact, says Girard, our desire is for that perceived, yet non-existent, narcissism, which we believe to be possessed by the other (object or rival).

Girard distinguishes between his own theory of mimetic desire and that of Freud, who posits two kinds of love: object-oriented and narcissistic love. According to Freud, a "human being has originally two sexual objects -- himself and the woman who nurses him -- and in doing so we are postulating a primary narcissism in everyone, which may in some cases manifest itself in a dominating fashion in his object-choice."[21] The narcissistic expression of desire is displayed in its secondary phase in the "sexual overvaluation of the object"; the object becomes the receptacle in which the subject places his own lost sense of perfection.[22] The gradual abandonment of his own narcissism is what marks a man's transition to mature or object-oriented love. In women, on the

other hand, the primary narcissism is not abandoned; the "truest" type of femininity is one that is marked by the clearest existence of narcissism. Men are naturally attracted to this type, since "another person's narcissism has a great attraction for those who have renounced a part of their own narcissism and are in search of object-love."[23] The difficulty lies in the inverse relationship between "ego-libido" and "object-libido," for one increases as the other is depleted. If love is not returned, an unhealthy imbalance exists, since the ego is being depleted without being bolstered by a return of its gift.

Girard believes that the opposition between object-oriented love and narcissistic love masks the real truth about desire, namely, that all desire is primarily narcissistic. According to Girard,

> There is an absolute contradiction between Oedipal [object-love] exigencies and the desire that comes to light here. Far from seeking what is maternal and nurturing, the desire which shows through in the essay on narcissism always directs itself toward a mirage capable of aggravating its lack rather than filling it; it is the desire which little by little renders any satisfaction or even communication with the beloved impossible, the desire which leads to dissociation, decomposure, and death.[24]

Mimetic desire does not seek an object, as such. Rather, it is in pursuit of the "intact narcissism" it has lost (rather than renounced), and which it believes the Other (model) to possess, and the object to confer. "The Other's intact narcissism is the

ineffable paradise which the beings one desires seem to inhabit, and for this reason one desires them."[25]

The rivalry with the model-obstacle, who is the one that both incites the subject's desires and refuses him access to them, has its roots in the early stage of childhood. The child is encouraged to imitate the model (father) as a way of being loved. Unfortunately, this injunction -- "imitate me" -- has its opposite in the rejection that takes place when the child's imitations become a threat. For Girard, Freud's Oedipal complex does not lay enough emphasis on the inevitable conflict between father and son over the mother, which results in the rejection of the son by the father, and leads to the "double-bind." The self is rejected as unworthy by doing the very thing he had previously believed to be necessary to worthiness: imitation of the model. Out of this arises a complex relationship between the subject and the model, in which the model is the measure of the self's worth; due to the rivalry arising out of the competition over the object, which the self must possess in order to be 'worthy' or like the model, the self sets himself up for failure, since he will not only be rejected by the model for his attempt to appropriate the object, but, if he does manage to obtain the object, it immediately loses its desirability. If the self possesses it, it can no longer be a true measure. Possession, instead of conferring some measure of approbation, and a feeling of intact narcissism, results in a two-fold disappointment: the pleasure in possession is found to

be illusory, and he is rejected by the model. Either the model, or the object, or both, must be replaced.

As long as the model remains more or less in the shadows, the real nature of the mimetic rivalry will not emerge. The subject's desire for the object will seem to be his own, and the slight disappointment he experiences on gaining the object will not deter him from desiring again. In this "normal" stage of mimetic desire, "the object remains the principal pole of affectivity and desiring activity" (DBB, p. 53).

The value of the object (and thus the need for it) increases in direct proportion to the difficulty of acquiring it. The same applies to the "prestige" of the model.[26] In fact, as the subject enters more fully into the "spiral of desire," the stakes get higher. The "more the value of the object increases, and the more this object appears linked to a superiority of 'being,' to a superiority which is, finally, that of the model himself. There exists, therefore, a tendency on the part of the subject, to allow himself to be increasingly fascinated with the model. Desire, in fact, tends to abandon the object and to attach itself to the model himself" (DCC, p. 356).[27] The subject's focus tends to rest more and more on the rival rather than the object.

The desire of the subject for the object increases in direct proportion to the resistance he encounters from the model: the more the object is central to the model, the more

the subject will desire it, believing it will confer on him the model's 'sufficiency' (DCC, p. 319).

> Violent opposition, then, is the signifier of ultimate desire, of divine self-sufficiency, of that "beautiful totality" whose beauty depends on its being inaccessible and impenetrable. The victim of this violence both adores and detests it. He strives to master it by means of a mimetic counterviolence and measures his own stature in proportion to his failure. If by chance, however, he actually succeeds in asserting his mastery over the model, the latter's prestige vanishes. He must then turn to an even greater violence and seek out an obstacle that promises to be truly insurmountable. (VS, p. 148)

The very desire for 'difference,' distinction, a limit which marks out the identity of the desiring subject, is what causes the disappearance of identity (DCC, p. 325). No matter what happens, the subject necessarily fails to achieve his real goal, "intact narcissism." As the subject engages more fully in the spiral of desire, his pursuit of failure becomes more and more expert (DCC, p. 322). Rather than reject desire as the reason for his failure, the subject will reject himself, the model, and the object in his pursuit of this non-existent narcissism.

What Freud sees as the "narcissism" of the woman, the child, the humorist, and the criminal, Girard believes to be simply the inaccessibility of the object at the hands of mimetic desire. Freud's "true" type of femininity is in reality the coquette, who is simply better versed in the strategies of desire. She makes use of the "unemployed mimesis" of others; by seeming to desire herself, she attracts the desire of others.

But she is in reality no different from the others who are trapped in the spiral of desire; the only difference is that her desire is overtly, rather than covertly, self-centred.[28]

Desire is mimetic, inherently and always, according to Girard. In fact, in the flux and chaos of desire, desire itself becomes the subject. The human subject vanishes in its possession by desire.[29] The paradox of desire is that, in aspiring to difference, the ordering of the self, an alleviation of randomness, it loses the very object it desires. The triangular relationship prevents any real communication between the subject and the object. In fact, the triangular relationship between the subject and object prevents any true perception of the object, as is evident in the case of Don Quixote. Desire removes humanity from all three participants in its spurious web, impoverishing them with impartial thoroughness. "Ce qui appauvrit le Moi...c'est le désir même d'être ce Moi, c'est le désir de ce Narcissisme qui n'est jamais à nous mais que nous voyons briller sur cet Autre dont nous nous rendons esclaves" (DCC, p. 414). There are no objective measures of the limits of the self or other left: they disappear entirely into the mimetic spiral (DCC, p. 394).

In spite of the completely destructive effects of desire, the subject continues to participate in the spiral, for rivalry itself is necessary to the self-definition sought by the desiring subject. Girard suggests that the absence of rivalry places the subject before the "void," a condition less

tolerable than the rivalry itself (DCC, p. 384). Thus, the subject continues to desire, in spite of the intense humiliation and self-degradation involved, and in spite of the "intense rancour" experienced towards the "insolent inaccessibility" of both object and model.

Girard uses the difficult concept of the skandalon, along with the terms "scandal," "scandalous," and "scandalised," to describe the effects of the model-obstacle, the infection of the spirit with mimetic desire, and the stumbling-block posed by the revealed "victime émissaire." The skandalon is the model-obstacle of mimetic desire; it is the both unattainable and irresistible example which at once nurtures and defeats desire, and which sustains all man's "vain ambitions" and "absurd resentments." It is also mimetic desire itself; it is the envy that blinds, and which is the diametric opposite of the Christian love that banishes the cobwebs from men's sight (DCC, pp. 439-40). It is Satan, as he seeks to turn towards himself the worship that rightfully belongs only to the one God (DCC, p. 442).[30] It may even be Jesus, if he is imitated in the spirit of conquering zeal, which is always at one with mimetic alienation (BE, p. 232-33).

For Girard, the recurring "scandal" in the Old Testament is idolatry, the scapegoat made sacred, the sacrificed obstacle made divine, since idolatry acts to continue the sacrificial mechanism and guarantee the rejection of truth. It is a "skandalon" since it acts to spread mimetic desire. According

to Girard, children are the true victims of this process, since they are infected in their innocence with the scandal of mimetic desire (BE, p.199).[31] Yet the revelation of the innocence of all victims is also a form of scandal, since it acts as an obstacle to the completion of the sacrificial process. According to Girard, Jesus's association with the scapegoats of the Old Testament puts him in the place of the model-obstacle that cannot be sacrificed and discarded, since his manifest innocence prevents the necessary transfer of guilt and violence onto the dead rival.[32] Thus the "skandalon" can be any kind of model-obstacle; it is the "other" who incites and defeats desire; it can be oneself insofar as one becomes an obstacle to another[33]; it is also the revealed innocence of the victim, which prevents the satisfactory resolution of the mimetic crisis and returns the desiring subject to the spiral of desire. Thus, for Girard, Jesus can be a skandalon by being innocent, and refusing to participate in the cycle of violence, since he offers no opportunity for the sacrificial mechanism to continue the blindness of its participants.

Men create their own hell by the equitable reciprocity of their mimetic desires. Each community, in the grip of the mimesis, is divided against itself in the conflict over the object that each would like to monopolise, to preserve, living and intact, for himself. Yet, these desires which divide them, which become purely destructive, may reconcile: they never agree on the preservation of the object, but they can always

agree on its destruction, at the expense of the victim (BE, pp. 199, 216). Man, like Satan, is in pursuit of "divinity," in the form of narcissistic self-sufficiency believed to be possessed by the Other. Unfortunately, possession of the object belies the truth of this proposition. The "divine-model" must be impenetrable, must not incline towards the subject. In aggravated mimetic desire, no connection between subject and object is possible, for if the model-obstacle inclines towards the subject, its perceived worthiness, along with its potential for conveying that enclosed happiness, is lost. What men do not realize is that the truly divine refuses to be the "skandalon": men make of Jesus an obstacle and thus transform him into a perceived Satan.

According to Girard, in order to escape the cycle of mimetic desire, we must renounce any model that is also an obstacle. All mediators but Jesus lead to violence and the spiral of desire. Only Jesus, by remaining unequivocally innocent, refuses to participate in the cycle of violence, and is thus capable of communicating to us both the true nature of violence and our complicity in it.[34] The prophesied apocalypse, along with the promise of the kingdom, are therefore the results of man's actions and not God's. If man renounces violence, imitates Christ in turning the other cheek, and recognizes the illusion constituted by the conflict of doubles, then he has the potential to escape the spiral of desire and

enter the kingdom. If he does not, then he becomes further enslaved by mimetic desire.[35]

The renunciation of violence proposed by Girard becomes a kind of "religious conversion" which, in Des Choses cachées, takes on a somewhat mystical character: Men must renounce violence and accept death rather than be killed. Christ, if we imitate him like children, is the only model that does not risk becoming an obstacle and mesmerizing rival. This injunction appears in a slightly different form in Deceit, Desire and the Novel, where Girard states that we must renounce the mediator in order to escape "deviated transcendency" and achieve "vertical transcendency." In Deceit, Desire and the Novel, men make their rivals into gods who are obstacles to their success; even at this early stage in the development of the theory, Girard's writing suggests the oscillation between God and Satan in man's pursuit of identity. Mimetic desire, a species of idolatry and slavery, can be escaped if man abandons the idols he has made for himself and accepts his own humanity. The proposed "religious conversion" is also clarified in this work, in which Girard refers to the problem of the subject in the spiral of desire as one of "self-centredness," a concept he sees as central to the Proustian revelation of mimetic desire: "Proustian self-centredness gives rise to imitation and makes us live outside ourselves. This self-centredness is other-centredness as well; it is not one-sided egotism; it is an impulse in two contradictory directions which always ends by

tearing the individual apart" (DDN, p. 298). The hero in pursuit of divinity is truly self-centred, although this may be hard to believe, considering how low his self-esteem is.

This attitude, while promulgated as liberating, in fact enslaves the self, barring it from any true knowledge. Because the self aspires to divinity, it is unwilling to acknowledge its humanity, and therefore rejects any evidence that suggests it is a man like other men (the tendency is to regard oneself as greater, and to then wallow in guilt that is more deeply experienced, since even one's failures must be greater). Girard speaks of something like a religious conversion in this context: "In renouncing divinity the hero renounces slavery. Every level of his existence is inverted, all the effects of metaphysical desire are replaced by contrary effects. Deception gives way to truth, anguish to remembrance, agitation to repose, hatred to love, humiliation to humility, mediated desire to autonomy, deviated transcendency to vertical transcendency" (DDN, p. 294). Both the wise man and the Christian saint have achieved the tranquility given by renunciation of mimetic desire and divinity, according to Girard. Vertical transcendency leads to both increased detachment, and true intimacy. The self no longer gets in the way.

While in Deceit, Desire and the Novel Girard describes the process as usually provoked by a 'brush with death,' in Des Choses cachées, the process is accomplished by a "non-

sacrificial" reading of the Gospels. According to Girard, the modern reading of the Old and New Testaments "sacrifices" parts of the texts that display the innocence of the victim, and allow the reader to continue, untrammelled, in his state of desiring illusion. For example, the psychoanalytic readings of Job pass over his insistence on his own innocence, and tend to see the encircling persecutors as figments of Job's paranoid imagination. Job suffers from the 'persecution complex' characteristic of the early Christians (RA, p. 163). According to Girard, the same psychoanalysts do not hesitate to expound the innocence of victims who are accused of witchcraft. Thus, in order to comprehend the message of the Old and New Testaments, we must read the events described in them as true, rather than rejecting or sacrificing any of them according to the principles of mimetic desire, which would preclude any knowledge that would communicate to us the true nature of violence (RA, p. 164).

Thus, the escape from the spiral of desire is achieved through the process of "non-sacrificial" reading of the Gospels, which both reveal and cripple the effectiveness of the mimetic process. This kind of reading is possible to a innocent and child-like mind.[36]

Girard's concept of non-sacrificial reading poses some problems, however. While a non-sacrificial reading may be the only way out of the spiral of desire, the problem remains that a reading of this kind does not seem possible to the desiring

subject, since his inclination is, according to Girard, to avoid or mis-recognize that knowledge which will reveal the truth about desire. That is to say that the nature of the conversion described by Girard is too abrupt. He maps the path for increasing involvement in the spiral; he does not map a path in the opposite direction. While he states that the Christian era has seen increasing awareness of the sacrificial mechanism, with a corresponding decrease in the ability of the mechanism to operate and a gradual revelation of the truth of Christ's message, this principle applies only to the slow unfolding of history, and says nothing whatever to the individual experience of conversion. Girard's theory alternates between the kingdom and the apocalypse. There is little room for the "in-between."[37]

A second problem arises when mimetic desire is considered in relation to women for, in spite of his insistence on non-sacrificial reading, Girard's tendency is to focus on the male experience of desire. His discussion of the two prostitutes in the story of the Judgement of Solomon, of Emma in Madame Bovary, and his description of the coquette who is skilled at manipulating the desires of others all seem to indicate that women are equally subject to mimetic desire. At other points, however, women are primarily posited as pawns in the mimetic game. In Violence and the Sacred, for example, Girard discusses the displacement of the responsibility for violence onto women.

For Girard, The Bacchae describes the loss of sexual difference at the heart of the sacrificial crisis, yet

> it does not dare challenge the dominant feminine role in the origin of the Dionysiac rites. And if the lost sexual difference makes it easier to shunt the responsibility for violence onto the women, it still cannot explain away the necessity for violence. Like the animal and the infant, but to a lesser degree, the woman qualifies for sacrificial status by reason of her weakness and relatively marginal social status. That is why she can be viewed as a quasi-sacred figure, both desired and disdained, alternately elevated and abused (VS, pp.141-42).

Thus, for Girard, "the preponderance of women" in the Dionysiac cult hides a "secondary mythological displacement" which is in actuality an "effort to exonerate from the accusation of violence, not mankind as a whole, but adult males who have the greatest need to forget their role in the crisis because, in fact, they must have been largely responsible for it" (VS, p. 139). Here, women are transmuted into the monstrous double, an ongoing cultural sacrifice at the altar of male violence.

According to Toril Moi, "Girard's theory of mimetic desire cannot account for feminine desire....feminine desire is in fact absent from his works, and...the reason for this absence is to be found in Girard's exclusion of the mother from the Oedipal triangle."[38] Although feminine desire may not be entirely absent, the fact remains that little of Girard's discussion examines woman as a desiring subject; most of his theory considers her only in the position of object, or of marginalized sacrificial victim.

The "sacrificial" character of Girard's reading is especially evident in his approach to Anna Karenina. As Moi points out, Girard's discussion of mimetic desire in relation to this work assumes that Levin, rather than Anna Karenina herself, is the protagonist of the novel.[39] Because Girard focuses so exclusively on the relationship between rivals, there is little room in his theory for examining the perspective of the object. Thus, the text of desire he describes is an essentially "male" text, in that the woman as object, or victim, becomes almost superfluous in the mimetic game. The original marginalization of the woman that Girard describes in relation to both the Dionysiac cult and the Oedipal rivalries of father and son is repeated in his theory.[40]

Spenser, on the other hand, makes women central to Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene. Instead of dealing with exclusively male "texts" of desire, he incorporates both male and female perspectives into a single framework, where the workings of each are exposed to the other. Britomart, by combining male and female, acts as a "monstrous double" who refuses to be relegated to the margins. In Spenser's text, the woman acts as both model-obstacle and sacrificial victim within male texts. At the same time, the dual perspective provided by Britomart allows the reader to participate in the "revision" of these texts. Spenser, by revealing the workings of mimetic desire, can be said to disengage the texts of desire from those

who are subject to them. At the same time, he makes the texts apparent to the reader, and demonstrates their effects on all those caught in them, innocent and guilty alike. Like Girard, Spenser is concerned with the potential of desire for destruction. Unlike Girard, however, Spenser is concerned with the time "in-between" beginning and end, the space "in the middest." As Berger states of Dante, Girard's "obstacle course is literally vertical." He describes the achievement of vertical transcendency. For Spenser, "the dominant...vectors are in and out."[41] The formation of identity within the texts of desire is made evident, and, rather than "sacrificing" the other to the need for identity, Spenser refuses to relegate any part of the heterosexual discourse to the margins of irrelevancy.

Notes to Chapter I

1. This statement applies equally to the Amoretti, in which we see the poet struggling with the conceptualization of desire in order to find the way to win his beloved.

2. Berger, "The Faerie Queene, III," In Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A.C. Hamilton, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972).

3. Berger, "Busirane and the War Between the Sexes," English Language Review 1 (1971),

4. This is implicit in the discussion of Cervantes in Deceit, Desire and the Novel, tr. Yvonne Freccero, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1965), cited as DDN. It becomes more explicit in Part III of Des Choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde, (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1978), cited as DCC.

5. Only "romanesque" texts are masterpieces. This position makes Girard's theory almost unassailable, since any other version of desire will be "romantic," and thus misleading.

6. Girard extends his theory into four main areas of discussion: literature, anthropology, psychology and biblical interpretation.

7. Girard distinguishes this kind of relationship between subject and model as "external mediation."

8. Violence and the Sacred, tr. Patrick Douglas, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977), p. 79. Cited as VS.

9. "Hamlet's Dull Revenge," in Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 280-302. Cf. Joel Fineman, "Fratricide and Cuckoldry: Shakespeare's Doubles," in Representing Shakespeare, eds. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1980).

10. The metaphors of the plague, of proliferating disorder, of twin enemies, reappear consistently in myth and literature: "The doubles...are the unperceived reciprocity of violence among men. They are essential to the understanding of sacrifice

as a mitigation, a displacement, a substitution, and a metaphor of this same violence," To Double Business Bound, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978), cited as DBB, p. 153. Girard sees the traditional function of "katharsis" as a re-enactment of the "process of victimage" (DBB, p. 176). Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, and The Bacchae both contain all the elements of the scapegoat mechanism, and Shakespeare, in Coriolanus, "consciously provides his hero with all the ambiguous qualities that make a good scapegoat." Shakespeare's tragedies combine the concern for "degree" with the conflict of doubles and the sacrificial crisis, making "transparent" the metaphors for social disorder.

11. The role of identity in the proliferation of mimetic desire is not made clear by Girard until his discussion of "interdividual psychology" in Des Choses cachées, in which he isolates the pursuit of "intact narcissism as the main reason for imitation. I maintain that the pursuit of a clear-cut identity is central to the mimetic crisis as well, and has much to do with the desire for closure.

12. "La victime est divine parce qu'elle passe pour responsable et des désordres culminant dans le rassemblement unanime qui s'effectue contre elle et du retour à l'ordre qu'assure cette unanimité elle-même"(DCC, p.117).

13. Girard distinguishes three moments in the process of resolution: "1) la dissolution conflictuelle, l'effacement des différences et des hierarchies qui composent toute la communauté; 2) le tous contre un de la violence collective; 3) l'élaboration des interdits et des rituels" (DCC, p.166).

14. Girard states that "if the door is opened to admit change, there is always the risk that violence and chaos will force an entry. Some change, of course, is inevitable....But primitive societies have found procedures to direct the dangerous flow of energy generated by these events into channels prepared by the cultural order....Wherever there is a potential for dangerous change, the remedy lies in ritual; and the rites invariably entail a repetition of the original solution, a rebirth of differences. The model for cultural stability is identical with the model for non-catastrophic change" (VS, p. 284).

15. The idea of the "too perfect" identity is related to Girard's discussion of Coriolanus and his use of Kenneth Burke's work in this context. Girard states that "violence and victimage result from a desire for a form too perfect and therefore from an abuse of the formal principle; they are not essential to that principle itself. Victimage follows from the form, in other words, but the reverse is not true: the form does not follow from the victimage." DBB, p. 176. Girard cites

Kenneth Burke, "Coriolanus -- and the delights of faction," in Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley and L.A.: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1966), pp. 81-97. Girard sees a close relationship between the sacrificial victim and the characteristics of the tragic hero, as described by Aristotle.

16. Girard states that "les fils croient se désolidariser des pères en les condamnant, c'est-à-dire en rejetant le meurtre loin d'eux-mêmes. De ce fait même, ils imitent et répètent leurs pères sans le savoir"(DCC, p.183).

17. In the story of Job, as Girard points out, the envy of Job's position causes the initial polarization against him. In fact, Girard finds in Job many of the characteristics of the sacrificial king, but one who refuses to comply in silence with the accusations of his persecutors. La Route antique des hommes pervers, (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1985), p. 164.

18. Girard does not discuss the story of Adam and Eve, and their flight from the Garden, which does not bear any immediate relationship to the conflict of doubles. If we contrast the story with other myths of genesis discussed by Girard in Violence and the Sacred, several points become noticeable. Girard contrasts his theory of mimetic desire with Lévi-Strauss's theory of the reduction of the whole in accounting for the stories of the Tikopia and Ojibwa: in these stories, a god steals some part of the food available to the tribe, thus "reducing the whole" and promulgating rituals involving food taboos. If we see that the conflict of doubles arises out of a conflict over identity, these stories of genesis, which show a reduction at the hands of a god, are diametrically opposed to the Genesis story of the Old Testament. Adam and Eve are attempting to increase the range of consumption by including one food that has been denied them. They are instigated by the envy and desire of the snake and by their own desire to increase the whole, to transgress the barriers that have been drawn for them. In this motion, they make a "skandalon" of God, for they become His rivals, and see Him as the obstacle to their desire. They are subsequently expulsed: the loss of paradise is caused by desire.

19. Girard states that "en acceptant ce que propose le roi, la seconde femme se révèle dépourvue d'amour véritable pour l'enfant. La seule chose pour elle c'est de posséder ce que l'autre possède. Elle accepte, à la rigueur, d'en être privée pourvu que son adversaire en soit également privée. C'est le désir mimétique, de toute évidence, qui la fait parler et agir; il en est arrivé chez elle à un tel degré d'exaspération que l'objet de la dispute, l'enfant vivant, ne compte plus pour elle; seule compte la fascination haineuse pour le modèle-rival, le ressentiment qui cherche à abattre ce modèle et à l'entraîner dans sa propre chute, s'il devient impossible de

l'emporter sur lui" (DCC, p. 262). This text is anti-sacrificial because it renounces sacrifice: it refuses to differentiate between the doubles, to end human life in order to resolve the crisis. Girard believes that any reading that does not see this point is a misreading; for him, the real mother puts her own life in jeopardy to save that of the baby. In renouncing the child, she makes herself vulnerable to accusation. It is not, however, necessary to see that the mother may be killed in the conflict of doubles in order to perceive the deadliness of the mimetic crisis. Like the plague, mimetic desire causes the end of all life, the literal end of "generation." Girard insists throughout on the correspondence between the story and the fact: he believes that these myths have their basis in historical truth, no matter how it is obscured, and that the founding murders actually occurred. In the case of the Judgement of Solomon, this leads him to state that child sacrifice must have been a frequent practice among the Hebrews. We can see why he insists on a corresponding experience when we arrive at his discussion of the Gospels: for Girard, it becomes imperative that Jesus be both a man and fully innocent, that he correspond exactly to what is told to us by these texts. Unfortunately, his insistence on the reality of child sacrifice, on the revealed process of mimetic violence, and his emphasis on the conflict of doubles and the sacrifice of one of the two women, lead him to overlook the anti-sacrificial effect of love. The point of the Judgement of Solomon is both that the mimetic crisis leads to death (not necessarily that of one of the doubles) and that the love of the mother is greater than her desire to defeat the rival. Although he does state that the mother's love is so great that she will sacrifice herself for her son, his emphasis is on the conflict of doubles and the absence of love in the other woman; this misleading emphasis is consistent throughout the book.

20. The desiring subject "se voit en position d'expulsé; c'est lui qui occupe le lieu de la victime, non pas par refus de la violence, non pas au sens où l'occupe celui qui parle dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament, mais parce qu'il la désire" (DCC, p. 408).

21. Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Tr. and ed. James Strachey, et. al. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), Vol. 14, p. 88. Cited as SE.

22. "On Narcissism," p. 94.

23. "On Narcissism," p. 89. Freud's theory allows women two possible escapes from narcissism: "Even for narcissistic women, whose attitude towards men remains cool, there is a road which leads to complete object-love. In the child which they bear, a

part of their own body confronts them like an extraneous object, to which, starting out from their narcissism, they can then give complete object-love. There are other women, again, who do not have to wait for a child in order to take the step in development from (secondary) narcissism to object-love. Before puberty they feel masculine and develop some way along masculine lines; after this trend has been cut on their reaching female maturity, they still retain the capacity of longing for a masculine ideal -- an ideal which is in fact a survival of the boyish nature that they themselves once possessed." "On Narcissism," pp. 89-90.

24. Girard, "Interdividual Psychology," tr. Jane Nicholson, Denver Quarterly 14 (1979-80), p.12.

25. "Interdividual Psychology," p. 9. According to Girard, man "is subject to intense desires" because "...he desires being, something he lacks and which some other person seems to possess. The subject thus looks to that other person to inform him of what he should desire in order to acquire that being. If the model, who is apparently already endowed with superior being, desires some object, that object must surely be capable of conferring an even greater plenitude of being" (VS, p. 146).

26. "Interdividual Psychology," p.7. Toute valeur d'objet croît en proportion de la résistance que rencontre son acquisition. Et c'est aussi la valeur du modèle qui grandit. L'un ne va pas sans l'autre. Même si le modèle ne jouit pas au départ d'un prestige particulier, même si le sujet est d'abord étranger à tout ce que recouvrira bientôt le terme de prestige -- praestigia: fantasmagories, sortilèges -- tout cela va sortir de la rivalité elle-même" (DCC, p. 319).

27. This is a transliteration of the passage as it appears in French.

28. The False Florimell is an excellent example of the coquette who is well taught in the "strategies" of desire.

29. This contention of Girard's has a great deal in common with Goldberg's discussion of exchanged narratives and the role of the desiring "hearer," particularly in his reading of the Temple of Venus episode.

30. For Girard, the identification of "scandal" with hell and Satan confirms the association of the latter with the mimetic crisis (DCC, p. 184). Girard states that "ce n'est pas par hasard, non plus, si de tous les défauts de Satan, l'envie et la jalousie sont le plus en évidence. On pourrait dire que Satan incarne le désir mimétique si ce désir n'était pas, par

excellence, désincarnation. C'est lui qui vide tous les êtres, toutes les choses, et tous les textes, de leur contenu. Le Bouc émissaire, (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1985), p. 245. Cited as BE.

31. Girard refers both to the injunction against corrupting children by infecting them with desire, and to Salome, who is drawn into the web of her mother's desire. Salome is made the vehicle of Heriodade's ambition when she is told to dance in order to obtain John the Baptist's head (BE, p.215). His insistence on the innocence of children is evident in his description of the initiation of mimetic desire as well, in which he describes the double-bind as a gift from the father to the son. The father encourages the child to imitate him, but rejects him when the child's imitation seems to threaten the father's possession of his objects. Thus, the father acts as a "skandalon" to his child. In all cases, Girard's theory emphasizes the absolute innocence of the child. The reason for this becomes clear when we see the role played in conversion by the "child-like" reading of the Gospels.

32. Cf. DCC, pp. 443-5, where Girard describes Jesus as the "pierre d'achoppement," the stumbling block that lies in the path of the sacrificial mechanism. According to Girard, idolatry is founded upon the disearded and unrecognized "stone" of the sacrificial victim. Christ is this stone made visible. In BE, p. 174, he states that "Jésus est constamment rapproché, et se rapproche lui-même, de tous les boucs émissaires de l'Ancien Testament, de tous ces prophètes assassinés ou persécutés.... Qu'il soit désigné par d'autres ou qu'il se désigne lui-même, son rôle de victime méconnue en tant qu'innocente inspire la désignation. Il est la pierre rejetée par les bâtisseurs qui deviendra la pierre de faîte. Il est aussi la pierre de scandale, celle qui fait tomber même les plus sages, car toujours ambiguë, facile à confondre avec les dieux à l'ancienne mode."

33. Girard, as far as I can discover, only mentions the possibility of the self as skandalon once. The self is a skandalon insofar as he is "alienated" from his brother. One would presumably accomplish this alienation by being a model-obstacle, that is by inciting and blocking the desires of that "brother." The concept can be taken to ridiculous extremes: if the "object" of the brother's desires is oneself, as one is written into a cultural text that designates one's own person as desirable, to refuse to be a skandalon, to "turn the other cheek," would be to allow oneself to be possessed, raped, or killed. A certain amount of detachment can be preserved if the "scandal" is emotional; if the object-obstacle becomes the focus of violence, however, the situation is entirely different. Girard does not discuss the role of the object as obstacle, except in the case of Freud and his perception of the "narcissistic" woman. As we shall see, Spenser does consider

the woman both as obstacle and as sacrificial victim.

34. Girard states that, "au fond, c'est toujours le même orgueil chez tous les hommes; ils ne veulent pas reconnaître qu'ils se valent tous sous le rapport du meurtre fondateur et que leur participation, différente peut-être par ses modalités extérieures, est toujours, en dernière analyse, à peu près équivalente" (DCC, p. 271).

35. For Girard, "la violence est esclavage; elle impose aux hommes une vision fausse non seulement de la divinité mais de toutes choses" (DCC, p. 221).

36. Girard accuses the modern reader of a sacrificial approach to the texts. Such an approach is similar to the "romantic" readings he describes earlier in his work. For example, a "romantic" reading of the Paolo and Francesca episode in Dante's Inferno tries to find excuses for the relegation of this "loving" couple to hell. Such readers privilege desire, believing it sanctifies those who experience it, and excuses them from adherence to such "catholic" shibboleths as monogamy. According to Girard, these readers do not perceive what the "romanesque" text is trying to reveal, which is the true nature of desire. This couple's desire is both mimetic and self-centred; they "fall in love" through the agency of a text, and Galehalt becomes their pander. Girard states that this instances Dante's rejection of desire. However, his reading does not take into account the nature of desire as it appears in the rest of The Divine Comedy. Dante does not entirely reject mediated desire, since he comes to love Beatrice through the agency of courtly love. His love for Beatrice eventually leads him to love God. Without her mediation, as well as that of Virgil, Dante would never have been able to see truly. DBB, pp. 1-3. Cf. George D. Economou, "Introduction," in Pursuit of Perfection, eds. Joan M. Ferrante and George D. Economou, (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1975), pp. 12-13.

37. Ruth El Saffar discusses Girard's theory in relation to Frances Yates's "pessimistic gnosis." According to El Saffar, Girard's theory reveals a "despair regarding the notion of human development or human progress. Utopia belongs to another time, to another place. Such a view, as with Girard's anthropology of beginnings and ends, and Caldéron's theology, takes its stance apart from the here and now, and is therefore, in its essence, however good its intentions, life-denying." "Unbinding the Doubles: Reflections on Love and Culture in the Work of René Girard," Denver Quarterly 18 (1983-84), p. 11. El Saffar makes the point that Girard overlooks those works that describe the role of desire in the abandonment of cultural restrictions, such as the later works of both Cervantes and Shakespeare.

38. Moi's contention is that Girard's theory falls apart when we consider that the first model for the child's imitation is the mother, rather than the father, and thus feminine, rather than masculine, desire would be normative. "The Missing Mother: The Oedipal Rivalries of René Girard," Diacritics 12 (1982), p. 21. El Saffar states that the removal of the mother as the primary focus and concern in the Oedipal triangle is important because "it undercuts all pretentions of value that desire might otherwise confer upon the object toward which it feels attraction," "Unbinding the Doubles," p.11. However, removing the focus from the mother in the Oedipal triangle tends to draw our attention away from the role she plays both in the conflict itself, and as an object with real, rather than illusory, value. Sarah Kofman also discusses the theories of Girard and Freud in relation to feminine desire, and states that Girard's theory of the coquette, as well as Freud's description of the "truest type" of femininity fail to account for feminine self-sufficiency. Girard's view is that all desire has its "foundation in mimeticism, in the original mimetic rivalry. The implication is that self-sufficiency is necessarily deceitful, that it could only be part of a strategy of desire: it would only be a question of convincing others of our self-sufficiency in order to be able to believe it ourselves." "The Narcissistic Woman," Diacritics 10 (1980), p. 42. Thus, for Kofman, both Freud and Girard ignore the actual detachment or self-sufficiency of the woman in attempting to write her into their own texts of desire.

39. Moi, "The Missing Mother," p. 23.

40. Annette Kolodny discusses the gender of the reader in relation to interpretation. The "reading" of a given text depends on the parts of the text privileged by the reader. Thus, the masculine reader, in her view, reads differently from the feminine reader. This concept is especially interesting in light of the story she cites, which describes men and women searching for evidence in different locations. "A Map for Rereading: Or, Gender and the Interpretation of Literary Texts," New Literary History 30 (1976). Diana de Armas Wilson's discussion of Cervantes' last work describes the exclusive male discourse, which views much of the androgynous narrator's tale as "not very relevant." "Cervantes' Labors of Persiles: Working (in) the in-between," in Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 150-181.

41. Cf. Harry Berger, "Spenserian Dynamics," Studies in English Literature 8 (1968), pp. 5-6.

II. The Crisis of Desire

Desire in Books III and IV of The Faerie Queene is mainly viewed as erotic. Book III is informed by Britomart's search for a lover; many of the figures in the two books do battle for the sake of a lady, and the central myth of Book III is that of Venus and Adonis. Furthermore, the Garden of Adonis contains the mons veneris, and the emphasis in the Garden is on love and generation. Cupid seems to animate the whole of Book III. From his first appearance in the main body in the narrative, in the Castle Joyeous where he delights in kindling lascivious fires in the lords and ladies at their "looser" sports, to the "sacred flame" he arouses in Britomart, to his final appearance in Busirane's Masque, Cupid appears responsible both for true love and "brutish" lust. He "causes" the physical, emotional, and social turmoil that afflicts the figures in the narrative.

If we look closely, however, the first appearance of Cupid does not coincide with the first instance of desire. Prior to this, at the inception of the book, Arthur and Guyon have continued their wanderings in spite of Alma's offer of extended hospitality: "they might not be allured,/From seeking praise, and deeds of armes abrode"(III,i,1).

> Long so they trauelled through wastefull wayes,
> Where daungers dwelt, and perils most did wonne,
> To hunt for glorie and renowmed praise...
> (III,i,3)

Guyon and Arthur wander through Faeryland relieving the oppressed, and righting wrong (3). Although the result of their quest may be laudable, the impetus for it is the desire for praise and honour. They encounter Britomart, whom Spenser clearly describes as "he."

> They spide a knight, that towards pricked faire,
> And him beside an aged Squire there rode,
> That seem'd to couch vnder his shield three-square,
> As if that age bad him that burden spare,
> And yield it those, that stouter could it wield:
> He them espying, gan himselfe prepare,
> And on his arme addresse his goodly shield
> That bore a Lion passant in a golden field.
> (i,4)

Guyon closes with "him" and is soundly defeated. "Dishonored"(7), and "Full of disdainefull wrath, he fierce vprose,/For to revenge that foule reprochfull shame"(9).

A variety of interpretations have been given to this episode. Temperance must fall before Chastity, since Chastity is stronger; Guyon's understanding of or interaction with the world cannot comprehend the necessary love that leads to generation. Temperance rejects Eros, for, as we see in the Bower of Bliss, passion both paralyzes and unmans. To be temperate is to be master of one's own fortunes, and passion submits those fortunes to an "other." In Book III, the introduction of Eros carries man beyond his individual boundaries into a world that jeopardizes those boundaries in sexual union. According to John Bean, "Eros is the universal

binding force that proceeds from God and calls individuals beyond themselves to participate in God's providential design."[1]

In the overall "purpose" of the book, many of these statements will hold true. This episode, however, reveals little evidence of providential design, or, for that matter, of the effects of Eros. Not until Britomart has knocked Guyon from his horse do we discover that her quest is motivated by love, and Cupid is not mentioned at this point. Since Britomart's sex is concealed, the conflict cannot be in any way related to the promptings of Eros. The conflict between the knights seems relatively meaningless and misleading. Britomart is ambiguously represented, and Spenser reveals only to the reader that he is in fact she.[2] He adds that Guyon's "dishonour" would be greater if he knew Britomart's true sex. The Palmer dissuades Guyon from further battle by encouraging him to think the defeat was someone else's fault.

> By such good meanes he him discounselled,
> From prosecuting his reuenging rage;
> And eke the Prince like treaty handeled,
> His wrathfull will with reason to asswage,
> And laid the blame, not to his carriage,
> But to his starting steed, that swaru'd asyde,
> And to the ill purueyance of his page,
> That had his furnitures not firmely tyde:
> So is his angry courage fairely pacifyde.
> (i,11)

The "reconcilement" created between "goodly temperance, and affection chaste" is based on untruth.

This episode acts as an "introduction" to the rest of Books III and IV. It contains the first instances of

misrepresentation and misidentification, as well as the first occurrence of conflict. The difference between this episode and preceding ones is that, while conflicts in Book II tend to be clearly honourable, this conflict is without purpose. Moreover, Spenser deliberately confuses both the reader and Guyon with his description. The use of "he" to designate Britomart leads the reader to believe that she is a man. The use of "he" to describe Glauce confuses the two, and impairs the reader's ability to differentiate easily between them.

It is the desire for honour that spurs the knights into conflict. The narrator describes

> ...those antique times...
> When not for malice and contentious crimes,
> But all for praise, and proofe of manly might,
> The martiall brood accustomed to fight:
> Then honour was the meed of victorie,
> And yet the vanquished had no despight:
> Let later age that noble vse enuie,
> Vile rancour to avoid, and cruell surquedrie.
> (i,13)

Rivalry is the result of mimetic desire, that is, the competition over an object in order to establish identity. According to the chivalric code, honour is a necessary and prized possession of the true knight. His behaviour and perception are dictated by the code through which he seeks his identity. When Guyon is defeated by Britomart, his identity is threatened.[3] Only by ignoring the truth can he retrieve his self possession.

The chivalric code, existing in those "antique times," acts as a "text" of desire within which knights seek an

identity. The texts of knighthood and chivalrous behaviour form a larger structure for identity. The desire for honour is a desire mimetically acquired through the condition of knighthood. The search for identity is the desire for a "form," for a definition of the self. This definition, relatively stable in Books I and II, is called into question in Book III, in the passages relating the conflict between Guyon and Britomart. The successive redefinitions of Britomart from canto i to canto iii, as well as her misrepresentations,[4] illustrate both the spuriousness of stable identity, and the extent to which identity is defined in relation to others.[5] Many figures are identified by their relationships: Narcissus is Cephisus' foolish child, Amoret is "Venus' mayd,"[6] Scudamour is "Cupid's man," Cupid is "Venus' dearling dove." Britomart dons Angela's armour, and assumes the "martial maid," and Artegall wears "Achilles arms." The Squire of Dames is defined solely by his relationship to women.

The chivalric code is one of several texts of desire that operate to shape identity and perception in these two books. The courtly love tradition and Petrarchan poetics also act to influence the experience of desire and the perception of the other. The courtly "text" offers a particularly clear instance of mimetic desire within a literary mold: It privileges the lover, giving him an identity within the circle of those who, like him, adore the lady. He is radically transformed, relying on the perfect lady for self definition.[7] Thus, the system of

courtly love is fundamentally a system for articulating the differences between men, one which depends on the perception of the woman and her reactions for its successful operation. She becomes the object in the mimetic triangle.[8]

The extent to which mimetic desire shapes the action of the two books becomes evident immediately upon the reconciliation of Guyon and Britomart. Florimell is often viewed allegorically as the Beauty which sparks heroic love in noble minds and lust in the hearts of those who are under the control of the baser passions, and the chase after her is often seen to manifest the heroic motives of Arthur and Guyon. If we look closely, however, we see that the chase only begins upon the appearance of the "griesly" forester. The knights gaze after Florimell as she flees, astonished at her beauty. The chase is initiated only when they see the forester in pursuit.

> Which outrage when those gentle knights did see,
> Full of great enuie and fell gealosy,
> They stayd not to auise, who first should bee,
> But all spurd after fast, as they mote fly,
> To reskew her from shamefull villany.
> The Prince and Guyon equally byliue
> Her self pursewd, in hope to win thereby
> Most goodly meede, the fairest Dame aliue.
> (III.i.18)

Although the pursuit of both Florimell and the forester may be inspired by a desire to "right" wrong, it also contains elements of mimetic rivalry. The chase does not take place until the forester, "breathing out beastly lust," rushes past after Florimell. Thus, we may say that the desire for Florimell is mimetically acquired, even though the knights'

interpretation of desire is different from that of the forester. Furthermore, while Guyon and Arthur, as knights, pursue Florimell, Timias, likewise moved by "proud enuy, and indignant ire" pursues the forester, leaving ladies' love to his Lord (III.iv.47). Britomart, "whose constant mind,/ Would not so lightly follow beauties chace,/ Ne reckt of Ladies Loue" continues on her way (III.i.19). The direction that each pursuer takes is dictated by the text within which he operates. Britomart, as a female knight, is of course not moved to follow Florimell. Instead, she enters into battle to rescue Redcrosse. Thus, although the episode may conform superficially with the exigencies of the chivalric code and its inherent privilege of honour, the episode also acts to reveal the nature of the chivalric "text."

The first episode of Book III, from the departure of Arthur and Guyon from the House of Alma, is set in the terms of chivalry. These terms cannot, however, accommodate the subsequent action. Britomart, as a female knight, escapes the definition of knight which commands him to use his "armes" for ladies' sake. In addition, the dispersion of the band of "friends" in different directions demonstrates the extent to which the aims of all are informed by mimetic desire. Thus, while the inception of the episode leads the reader to expect one kind of result, the actual results are far different, and serve to alert him to the confusion and misrepresentation inherent in the text. While the narrator may state that

Britomart does not pursue Florimell because she is not to be so lightly moved by "beauties chace," the more obvious reason, that she does not pursue Florimell as prize because she is a woman, is left unsaid. Beauty, in the form of woman, may indeed arouse love in the noble soul, but only if that soul belongs to a man.

The disparity between the expectations of the text and the definition of the figures is reinforced in the Castle Joyeous episode. Britomart comes upon six knights besetting Redcrosse in the field, like "dastard Curres," because he will not abjure his "love." According to the law of the Castle, however, the knights must compete with any knight who comes that way, to prove the supremacy of their "Lady faire"

> Whose soueraine beautie hath no liuing pere,
> Thereto so bounteous and so debonaire,
> That neuer any mote with her compaire.
> She hath ordaind this law, which we approue,
> That euery knight, which doth this way repaire,
> In case he haue no Ladie, nor no loue,
> Shall doe vnto her seruice neuer to remoue.
>
> But if he haue a Ladie or a Loue,
> Then must he her forgoe with foule defame,
> Or else by dint of sword approue,
> That she is fairer, then our fairest Dame,
> As did this knight, before ye hither came.
> Perdie (said Britomart) the choise is hard:
> But what reward had he, that ouercame?
> He should aduanced be to high regard,
> (Said they) and haue our Ladie's loue for his reward.
> (III.i.26-27)

The object here -- Malecasta -- is dictated by the structure of desire. The six knights at the Castle Joyeous are defined by their roles in the text of courtly love.[9] They enact courtly love for her sake, and at her command. She "ordains" the law.

Thus, all the conflict taking place in the plain before the Castle arises out of the need to prove one object superior to another, and to prove one set of knights more worthy than the next. The competing codes of honour are also in evidence, since Redcrosse owes loyalty to his love, and the knights are bound to serve Malecasta.

Whether he wins or loses, Redcrosse will still be bound to Malecasta. The inescapability of the "text," with its single designated object, the most bounteous and fair Malecasta, offers the first instance of imprisoning desire in Book III. Britomart, however, escapes the definition of knight that is required to participate in the text. She substitutes for Redcrosse, although she has no "Lady" but a "loue," and wins the heart of Malecasta for her pains.

Within the Castle Joyeous, a second text of desire is displayed, the mythic text of the love of Venus for Adonis, and his subsequent metamorphosis into a flower. The myth, which has Venus enclose Adonis because of her fear for his life, excuses the Castle's own confining definition of desire. Within the structure of the Castle, the lords and ladies may frolic day and night, while "Cupid still emongst them kindled lustfull fires" (III.i.39). Malecasta, in fact, provides us with a parodic version of Venus in the Garden of Adonis, who watches over the lovers there. As Hamilton points out, Malecasta enacts Venus's wooing of Adonis by attempting to seduce Britomart.[10]

The tapestry provides a definition of the relationship between Venus and Adonis that is exclusionary. It is removed and protected from the daily course of life, as are the lovers in the Castle. It is also a version of their love that excludes the role of generation, that is, it tells only a part of the story. The Garden of Adonis contains this story along with the role played by both the lovers in the continuation of generation. Thus, the version given here is a falsification or misreading of the story which involves a reduction of the text. As William V. Nestrick points out, "if Spenser merely needed a myth of seduction and voyeurism, he could have used the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus myth outright. By twisting the Venus and Adonis story into the Salmacis and Hermaphroditus myth, he shows a perversion of love through a perversion of myth."[11] Malecasta's reduction of the text provides stability within desire, enabling the inhabitants of the Castle to experience desire without endangering their identities.

If Malecasta's text is a falsification of the story of Venus and Adonis, it encounters a similar falsification in the person of Britomart. The combination of the courtly code and the story of Venus, which allows at once for the adoration of the Lady and for the Lady as wooer, excludes the possibility of the lady knight. Britomart participates in the deception, however, because she is unwilling to reveal her true sex, and sends messages which Malecasta is bound to misinterpret. Partly through her own protective colouring, and partly through the

definition itself, Malecasta is encouraged to fall in love with Britomart.

The first episode of Book III heralds the start of a procession of inconsistencies and misunderstandings. While the figures enact the texts of desire, the narrative itself disrupts and fragments the stories of each of the figures. The chaotic structure incorporates, for the first time, a randomness that can seem purposeless and capricious. The randomness of the narrative is often ascribed to the romance structure, which is deemed necessary for the presentation of "lovers deare debates." The inclusion of the "false archer" at once excuses the disruptive narrative and provides a rationale for the duplicity and misunderstandings that take place. With Cupid's introduction, or even prior to it, comes the loss of stable identity.[12] The "perplexities" of Books III and IV arise from the blurred distinctions between figures and definitions, and the misperceptions that occur, frequently because of misrepresentation.[13] In Book III, we enter a world in which perception is less explicitly objective. Figures are influenced in what they see by who they are. Truth is no longer something that exists as an exterior reality.

Statements in the narrative lead us to make distinctions: distinctions between lust, false love, and sacred flame, between Palladine and Argante, between Cambel and Triamond. Frequently, however, we have difficulty making these distinctions. Spenser ambiguously uses "he" to describe the

participants in a conflict. Moreover, in the beginning of Book III, Guyon and Redcrosse are "mistakenly" substituted for one another. Several "substitutive mistakes" occur in Book IV, as Goldberg points out.[14] Besides the episodes in which one figure's name is replaced momentarily with another's, many of the episodes involve substitutions of one kind or another. False Florimell replaces the real one, and goes unrecognized. Venus and Diana discover Belphoebe and Amoret instead of Cupid. For a short time, Florimell replaces Gloriana as the object of Arthur's quest. Triamond replaces Telamond, who never appears, and Triamond, Diamond, and Priamond substitute for one another in the battle for Canacee. The tournament for her hand itself is held to replace the violent fighting that is going on between her lovers, and to resolve the question of her marriage. In the cave of Lust, the old hag replaces Aemylia, just as Lust appeared in Amyas's place. And Timias chases the forester instead of Florimell, replaces Arthur with Belphoebe, and Belphoebe, in turn, finds Timias instead of the wounded beast she had been pursuing.

All these substitutions and "mistakes" occur in situations in which desire has been manifested. The objects or subjects of violence and desire are replaced with different ones. This suggests that there are fewer differences between the figures than the text itself leads us to believe. For example, while Britomart and Radigund are morally differentiated, the descriptions of the two women are quite similar. Petrarchan

metaphors are used to describe both, both are compared to wild beasts, both run together with "greedy rage"(V.vii.27-34). The word "saluage" is used to describe both Artegall and Radigund, and they are similarly compared to wild beasts. Many combatants are compared to wild animals of different sorts, and women are often described as deer or doves, chased by hunters or "saluage beasts."[15]

Even in non-conflict situations, descriptions of different figures have striking similarities. Amoret, Belphoebe and Florimell all resemble one another. "A fairer wight did neuer Sunne behold" (III.v.6) than Florimell, who is the "bountiest virgin," and with whom none may compare in "steadfast chastitie" (8). Belphoebe, "whom in perfect loue, and spotlesse fame/Of chastitie, none liuing may compaire"(III.v.54) is also beautiful. Amoret, "Of grace and beautie noble Paragone" is to be "th'ensample of true loue alone,/And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione"(III.vi.52). While the three figures may be said to "unfold" different aspects of Britomart, or of Venus, or to represent different aspects of love (chastity, love and beauty), the perception of them, at least, is remarkably similar, and does not really differentiate between them.

The descriptions of lust, false love, and love are also similar. All cause the same effects in the subject. The self "burns" with love, is made melancholy when love is not returned, suffers the same fire in the entrails. Although Britomart and Malecasta may be characterized as good or bad,

chaste or wanton, in desire, at least, they are the same.[16] As Berger says, "At III.iii.1 Spenser distinguishes between noble and base love, but at the same time, in the cantos surrounding this distinction, he describes Britomart's 'sacred fire' for Artegall in terms which make it identical to the elemental affections 'that move in brutish minds'."[17]

Books III and IV are structured by mimetic desire. That is, they describe the pursuit of stable identity within the texts of desire, texts which, while they provide a form or set of precepts which can shape or structure identity, also preclude accurate perception, and lead to "undifferentiation." Although the text makes distinctions between true and false love, between Florimell and False Florimell, these distinctions tend to be in "name" only, and are blurred in the actual perception of the figures and experience of the conflict. The text undermines its own categorizations.

Allegorical exigencies require the reader to transform Florimell into "Beauty"; it is she that arouses "heroic love." At III.i.16, Florimell is described as an ill-omened star:

> Still as she fled, her eye she backward threw,
> As fearing euill, that pursewd her fast;
> And her faire yellow locks behind her flew,
> Loosely disperst with puffe of euery blast:
> All as a blazing starre doth farre outcast
> His hearie beames, and flaming lockes dispred,
> At sight whereof the people stand aghast:
> But the sage wisard telles, as he has red,
> That it importunes death and dolefull drerihed.

Florimell's first appearance as a star describes both the astonishment that Arthur and Guyon feel upon seeing her and the

nature of desire that she can inspire. If she attracts men to her because of her beauty, the desire they feel for her is mimetic and destructive.[18] At first a star of evil omen, Florimell, like Amoret, becomes a "Lodestarre," the object that guides the desiring subject. She guides Arthur in his wandering through the forest; when night falls, and he can no longer see her, his "boat" is without a "Pilot." Thus, within the text of desire, the object becomes the focus of the desiring subject; without it, he or she is lost. Britomart, unable to find Artegall, finds herself tossed on a "sea" of grief.

> Loue my lewd Pilot hath a restlesse mind
> And fortune Boteswaine no assurance knowes,
> But saile withouten starres gainst tide and wind:
> How can they other do, sith both are bold and blind?
> (III.iv.9)

For Britomart, however, it is Cupid himself who is the guide to her wanderings. She is explicitly spurred by desire in her search for Artegall. For Arthur, Florimell is the guide: as Beauty, she is the "Lodestarre." He experiences all of the tempestuous upheaval that Britomart experiences; he is equally lost without the object to guide him.

In Books III and IV, the woman frequently appears as the object in the mimetic triangle. She is at once "Lodestarre of all chaste affection" and "goodly pray," beloved, thrall and commodity. Florimell, like a battle, is a "goodly meede" to be won, possession of whom confers honour on the winner. She is the first of many women who are represented as commodities and of whom Hellenore is the most obviously absurd. Hellenore is

kept imprisoned by her husband, who hoards her as if she were gold. He imprisons himself at the same time, as Satyrane and Paridell point out (III.ix.3-8). Her status as commodity is further reinforced when she goes to live with the satyrs, who handle her as "commune good." Goldberg points to Scudamour's view of Amoret as commodity to suggest the nature of desire in The Temple of Venus episode.[19] Her value is increased by the difficulty he has in acquiring her. Yet, while she is an object to be acquired, she is also his "patronesse," and he takes her hand as a pledge of faith.

Thus, while the reader may view the woman as the beauty which inspires heroic love, this view is modified by the treatment of her as a commodity and a thrall. While beauty may be made in the image of God and able to reflect the beauty of the soul, its effect is neutralized by the relativization that is engendered by mimetic desire. In "antiquity," truth was the measure of beauty, and chastity was "blameless" and unassailable:

> But antique age yet in the infancie
> Of time, did liue then like an innocent,
> In simple truth and blamelesse chastitie,
> Ne then of guile had made experiment,
> But voide of vile and treacherous intent,
> Held vertue for it selfe in soueraine awe:
> Then loyall loue had royall regiment,
> And each vnto his lust did make a lawe,
> From all forbidden things his liking to withdraw.
> (IV.viii.30)

During this time, the lion and the lamb consorted together without bloodshed. Then there was peace, and "true" love, and

an absence of the conflict and disruption that desire inflicts. The "beast" and its "prey" could abide together.

> Then beautie, which was made to represent
> The great Creatours owne resemblance bright,
> Vnto abuse of lawlesse lust was lent,
> And made the baite of bestiall delight:
> Then faire grew foule, and foule grew faire in sight,
> And that which wont to vanquish God and man,
> Was made the vassall of the victors might;
> Then did her glorious flowre wex dead and wan,
> Despisd and troden downe of all that ouerran.
> (IV.viii.32)

While Amoret may be one of the few "plants preseru'd through heauenly ayd" (33), the fact remains that it is the "use" of beauty that defaces it, and causes it to decay. Beauty is made the "vassal of the victors might" and is no longer an outward measure of "true" love.

Florimell and Amoret become objects in the mimetic triangle, polarizing onto themselves the desires of many men. The fact that they, like the False Florimell and Hellenore, are considered "vassals" or "thralls" indicates the degree to which they are appropriated by the texts of desire which designate the possession of such objects as necessary to "honour." While there may be intrinsic differences between Florimell and False Florimell, these differences are realized only in part by the knights who desire them.

Amoret's and Florimell's fear of the knights that pursue them has been attributed by critics to their inability to distinguish between good and bad knights. Amoret cannot differentiate between Scudamour's "true" love and Busirane's "false" love. Florimell flees indiscriminately from the

forester, Arthur and Guyon, the witch and her son, the Hyena, and the Fisher. She does not recognize Arthur's "goodness," nor the fact that he wants to succour her. Instead, she flees from him as from a "saluage beast," for which she is equally a prey. She recognizes only the danger that desire poses to her.[20] Yet Arthur, like the others, regards her as a goodly "pray" or "meede"; he, like them, is inspired by mimetic desire. Therefore, we may perhaps conclude that, if Florimell cannot perceive any difference between them, they are, in their desiring condition at least, indistinguishable.

The lack of differentiation perceived by Florimell, and inherent in the ambiguous use of "he" to describe figures in conflict, and the comparison of desiring knights to beasts of prey, points to the loss of identity in the sacrificial crisis. While the knights may seek identity within the text of chivalry, the text requires them to do battle to establish that identity, and within the conflict, as the participants are consumed with rage, identity is lost. This fact is particularly evident in Book IV, in which the round of competition for an object, followed by competition to prove which object is desirable, is intensified. One conflict is substituted for another as the knights meet and clash in different combinations. Paridell and Blandamour substitute for each other in these clashes, each hoping to see the other discomfitted. When Blandamour actually succeeds in winning False Florimell from Sir Ferraugh, Paridell's "hart with secret enuie gan to

swell,/And inly grudge at him, that he had sped so well"(IV.ii.7).

When Ate discovers Paridell's desire, she finds "fit opportunity/To stirre vp strife"(11) and encourages him to fight Blandamour for the prize. The erstwhile companions turn on each other. Ate and Duessa urge them to

> ...fight for honour of their loue,
> And rather die then Ladies cause release.
> With which vaine termes so much they did them moue,
> That both resolu'd the last extremities to proue.(19)

The two false knights would fight to the death to establish their "rights" to the lady. The Squire of Dames attempts to calm them, blaming the "ladies" for not acting "t'appease their deadly hate"(20), and introduces the tournament for the cestus of Florimell. The renewed challenge from the exterior offers them a chance to "saue" their lady's honour, and "win more glory" than they can against each other. They "pledge" their faith to each other, and abate the "flames of malice", promising "battell strong to wage/Gainst all those knights, as their professed fone,/That chaleng'd ought in Florimell, saue they alone" (28).Paridell and Blandamour, wanton lovers and faithless friends, are defined in conflict alone.

Their story is followed by the story of Cambell and Triamond, in which the object is again mimetically defined. Cambell holds the tournament to decide who shall have the hand of his sister Canacee. She, like Amoret and Florimell, is beloved of many men, and much bloodshed has already taken place

over the issue of her hand (IV.ii.37). The tournament is to substitute for this violence and finally resolve the dispute over the object. Cambell will battle with three stout knights, chosen from amongst the troop of lovers, "And of them all the victour should his sister take"(38).

Triamond, Diamond, and Priamond engage themselves in the conflict. When the first brother dies, he infuses himself into the next one to fight; Cambell, for his part, is protected by his sister's magic ring, which renews him whenever he is mortally wounded. The issue is posited in such a way as to infinitely defer a decision, since neither will give way. Canacee presides over the fight, placed high where she is in clear view of the fighters. The situation is resolved by Cambina, who, unable to pacify the fighters with words, strikes them with a magic wand, which "astonishes" them enough to interrupt the fighting(IV.iii.48). She follows with "Nepenthe,"

> ...a drinck of souerayne grace,
> Deuized by the Gods, for to asswage
> Harts grief, and bitter gall away to chace,
> Which stirs vp anguish and contentious rage:
> In stead thereof sweet peace and quiet age
> It doth establish in the troubled mynd.
> Few men, but such as sober are and sage,
> Are by the Gods to drinck thereof assynd;
> But such as drinck, eternall happiness do fynd.(43)

The drink banishes the rage from their troubled minds and replaces it with peace. Canacee, seeing the accord, descends from her lofty chair," and the four pledge friendship, "in perfect loue, deuoide of hatefull strife,/Allide with bands of mutuall couplement"(52). The deadly triad is replaced with two

pairs. One set of bonds is replaced with another, and identity is re-stabilized within inclusive friendship. The text of knightly competition is replaced by that of knightly accord, as dictated by Cambina. Now Cambell and Triamond become "texts" for each other: as Goldberg points out, Cambell and Triamond tell each other's stories, and defer to each other's identity.

After the resolution, however, the knights and their ladies are replaced into the cycle of competition. The tournament over the False Florimell provides a further opportunity for conflict, and the four become part of a long list of people proceeding towards it. Thus, in spite of the fact that the conflict is resolved in friendship, and the knights find new identities in friendship, this does not prevent their entry into renewed conflict. While they make a new law within the group, the knightly accord which gives them identity in their relationship to each other does not preclude the need for identity in conflict. Unlike Paridell and Blandamour, however, their identities are not defined solely in conflict; the friendship of Paridell and Blandamour collapses when there is no exterior conflict against which they can unite. The tournament and beauty contest for the sake of "Florimell" attempts to decide the issue; when outward measures are ignored, and False Florimell is awarded Florimell's cestus (which she and most of the other women present are unable to clasp around their waists), the ability of the conflict to resolve anything is undermined. Britomart, the most able of the

knights, does not want Florimell and takes Amoret in her stead. Triamond and Cambell prefer their ladies' love. Artegall has left the grounds filled with anger at his defeat by Britomart and inability to gain False Florimell. The judges are left with no one to award her to. Even her own choice does not resolve the conflict, since the knights refuse to accept the fact that someone else possesses her. The conflict for the "fairest" object and the "manliest" knight does not provide any final resolution, but simply gives further opportunity for dissention and upheaval.

The proliferation of violence and conflict illustrates the contagiousness of desire. Corflambo provides the most cogent example of this: the flames that burn in the hearts and on the armour of others burn in his eyes.

> This mightie man...
> Of an huge Geauntesse whylome was bred;
> And by his strength rule to himselfe did gaine
> Of many Nations into thraldome led,
> And mightie kingdomes of his force adred;
> Whom yet he conquer'd not by bloudie fight,
> Ne hostes of men with banners brode dispred,
> But by the powre of his infectious sight,
> With which he killed all, that came within his might.
>
> Ne was he euer vanquished afore,
> But euer vanquisht all, with whom he fought;
> Ne was there man so strong, but he downe bore,
> Ne woman yet so faire, but he her brought
> Vnto his bay, and captiued her thought.
> For most of strength and beautie his desire
> Was spoyle to make, and wast them vnto nought,
> By casting secret flakes of lustfull fire
> From his false eyes, into their harts and parts entire. (IV.viii.47-48)

Corflambo brings men and women into "thraldome" through desire, which wastes and binds them. The power of sight is the agent of contagion by which desire is sown. Corflambo, as the source of "infection," becomes a paradigm for both the process and effect of mimetic desire. By communicating desire, he imprisons those he sees. The words "thrall" or "thraldome" occur frequently in conjunction with desire[21]; to desire is to be "subjected."

As Hamilton points out, Corflambo's contagious and flaming eyes are similar to Argante's, whose "firie eyes with furious sparkes did stare,/And with blasphemous bannes high God in peeces tare"(III.vii.39). The Hyena, Lust, Argante and Corflambo act as "monstrous doubles," extreme examples of desire that must be destroyed, since they pose a danger to the human community. Between them, they enact the cycle of consumption and substitution that is mimetic desire. Corflambo's contagiousness is one aspect of the cycle. Argante and Ollyphaunt image the extremes of male and female desire which respects no bounds; Argante's incestuous relationship with her brother is added to her unending consumption of young men, whom she imprisons and defiles. Even this is insufficient: she "suffred beasts her body to deflowre:/So whot she burned in that lustfull fyre,/Yet all that might not slake her sensuall desyre" (III.vii.49). The only one who can "that Monster match in fight" is Palladine, "that is so chaste a wight" (vii.52). Palladine and Argante form two ends of the continuum of female desire: one is the extreme of chastity while the other is the

extreme of devouring lust. Yet the Squire of Dames, who has been rescued from Argante's clutches by Sir Satyrane, is as "subject" to desire as she is. As his name intimates, his identity is derived entirely from his relationship to women; his quest is a never-ending search to find enough chaste women to off-set his previous record. Both of these attempts, the first to succeed and the second to fail, are instigated by his beloved. He accept substitute objects as a matter of course.

The Hyena, as another agent of lust, enacts the attempt to possess and consume the object. He is a precursor of Busirane's willingness to kill Amoret if he cannot have her. The Hyena also accepts substitute forms of the goal and devours Florimell's horse since he cannot devour Florimell herself. The fact that he is a beast, and does not discriminate between woman and beast recalls the many instances in which knights are compared to beasts of prey and the object of their hunt is compared to a helpless dove or deer.

Lust adds rape to consumption, and combines both Argante and the Hyena. Amoret and Aemylia are imprisoned within his dark cave, saved only by the continual substitution of the old hag. His entire existence is sustained by devouring female flesh; he is indifferent, however, to the exact identity of the object. According to Roche, "this Lust is an external quality, more specifically, rape, and the episode is an exemplum of the dangers of unprotected beauty." He notes that the figure is "clearly emblematic of the male genitalia."[22]

Indeed, Lust is described as a "wilde and saluage man,/Yet was no man, but onely like in shape" (IV.vii.5).

The iconography of Lust associates him with the wild man and the figure of Lust, according to Hamilton.[23] For William Oram, however, "Lust is made bisexual because it embodies all sexual desires, male or female; it becomes a demonic parallel to the bisexual Venus of canto x."[24] Oram points to the "wide deepe poke, downe hanging low" as evidence of the bisexuality of Lust. The poke, or bag, symbolizes the female genitalia. The wildness of Lust is a characteristic not limited to male figures: Radigund, Britomart and other figures are described as bears and tigers when they are doing battle. In this situation, his physical characteristics, while describing the allegorical figure of Lust, also serve to remind the reader of the ambiguous nature of desire. He is primarily male, since he is assaulting female figures, but his female characteristics also point to the lust that may or may not be contained within them. His assault figures both the assault of male desire, and the assault of desire upon the identity of the subject.

The poke and the nose describe both the attempt to enter into the identity of the other and the attempt to assimilate it. The ambivalent oscillation between these two impulses generate both consuming love and consuming hate; they are different versions of the attempt to "possess."

Belphoebe, like Palladine, is the only one who can defeat Lust, since she is perfectly chaste. While Timias can wound

him, only Belphoebe can actually kill him. Belphoebe does not differentiate between the different degrees or kinds of desire: to her, all desire is one. Therefore, she "reads" Timias's compassion for Amoret as a kind of lust. Like Florimell, she does not discriminate between those who show evidence of desire.

The "monstrous doubles" that form extremes of consumption (both they and others are "consumed" by desire) act to reflect the flames that burn in the hearts and entrails of the figures in the text.[25] Paridell has flames depicted on his shield, and he, like Scudamour and Britomart, burns with desire. The greediness of the "monstrous" figures is a bodying forth of the "greedy desire" displayed by almost every figure that enters into conflict. The incitement to conflict is often caused by envy rather than purely by love. The words "greedie desire" and "envious rage" occur frequently in conflict and hunt situations from the beginning of Book III. According to Berger, "Eros as desire is a metaphor transferred from the area of human consciousness and used to suggest the imperfection or lack of fulfillment which keeps things straining towards the future."[26] It is the lack of perfection, the sense of loss of intact identity, which impels the subject towards the other. The subject is the excluded victim, greedy and envious.

Berger lists a number of figures in The Faerie Queene who display the characteristics of the "have-not." "Malbecco, Busirane, Ate, Slander, Radigund, Envy, Detraction, the Blatant

Beast, Mutabilitie, and the speaker in several poems" all exhibit jealousy and envy.[27] Malbecco becomes "Gealosie" incarnate. Ate and Sclaunder are envious as well, but rather than attempting to gain their own desires, they attempt to destroy the happiness of others. They attack both the identities and loves of other figures, trying to poison any perceived completeness. They thrive on "contentious ire."

The state or condition of the have-not is not limited to these figures: many, if not all, of the desiring subjects in these two books display "greedie rage" or envy at some point. If the frustration inherent in desire is imbedded in the experience of exclusion from the perceived paradise of the other, then Britomart, Timias, Paridell, Blandamour, Malecasta, Arthur, Guyon, and Proteus are all possessed by the "hatefull hellish Snake" characteristic of unrequited love. The "greed" or rage displayed in small part within them is figured forth in the consumed and consuming images of Argante, Lust, Corflambo and Busirane.

The close relationship between love, "greedie" rage, envy, and "despight" arises out of the lack of stable identity inherent in the nature of desire. The subject sees himself as excluded from the paradise of the achieved object; he has not found his identity within the text of desire. Whether stability has been lost as a result of desire, or whether it is not yet gained, the desiring lover is in a state of flux, of violent oscillations of emotion. Paridell is extremely susceptible to

these oscillations: Ate incites him to violence by attacking his sense of identity, encouraging him to believe that others possess the objects that are rightly his. His exclusion from Malbecco's dwelling has a similar effect. The gates, firmly closed against him, prevent him from achieving the desired shelter. In both cases, a perceived obstacle threatens his sense of identity, subjecting him to "storms" of emotion. The obstacle is a rival for that identity who must be overcome at all costs.

The obstacle is the element which is perceived as "excluding" the subject from the intact paradise of his desires. The encounter with the obstacle fuels the flames of desire, and incites violence. Physically, The Faerie Queene images the obstacle in the form of barriers and gates. The concentration of these images in cantos ix through xii of Book III suggests their importance in the overall structure of desire.

The first incident of the kind occurs when Satyrane, the Squire of Dames and Paridell attempt to seek shelter in Malbecco's Castle following Satyrane's capture of the Hyena, and the rescue and tale of the Squire of Dames. In III.viii.52, they knock at the door of the Castle and are refused entrance. In III.ix.3, Malbecco, who suspects his wife and hoards her within "yron bands" and "brasen walls," imprisons himself within the text of his desire. Because of the threat that other men pose to his security, he refuses hospitality to

the knights. His refusal enrages the knights; they assault the gates and are unsuccessful.

The first exclusion (vii.52) is followed by the story of Malbecco and Hellenore penned within the walls; this is followed by a more "threatful" demand for admittance. A second denial prefaces the storm that blows up suddenly and forces the knights to retire to a swine shed near the gate. The desire of the knights to enter is increased by the knowledge of Malbecco's resistance to their entry. The storm that blows up may be likened to the storm of emotion that afflicts all of the excluded desiring subjects in Book III, including Britomart just prior to her encounter with Marinell. It occurs only after the refusal.

Soon afterward, another knight is compelled to seek shelter.

> Like as the rest, late entrance deare besought;
> But like so as the rest he prayd for nought,
> For flatly he of entrance was refusd,
> Sorely thereat he was displeasd, and thought
> How to auenge himselfe so sore abusd,
> And euermore the Carle of curtesie accusd.
>
> But to auoyde th'intollerable stowre,
> He was compeld to seeke some refuge neare,
> And to that shed, to shrowd him from the showre,
> He came, which full of guests he found whyleare,
> So as he was not let to enter there:
> Whereat he gan to wex exceeding wroth,
> And swore, that he would lodge with them yfere,
> Or them dislodge, all were they liefe or loth..:
> (12-13)

None of the occupants of the swine shed will let "him" in, though all wish "him" to cease boasting. Paridell issues out

> ...like as a boistrous wind,
> Which in th'earthes hollow caves hath long bin hid,
> And shut vp fast within her prisons blind,
> Makes the huge element against her kind
> To moue, and tremble as it were agast,
> Vntill that it an issew forth may find;
> Then forth it breakes, and with his furious blast
> Confounds both land and seas, and skyes doth ouercast. (15)

Paridell "vents" his rage on Britomart, and she defeats him. Satyrane pacifies their "ire" with "faire treatie", and they turn against the "Castles Lord." The desire, fuelled by exclusion, is to be turned against the gates, which they will burn "with vnquenchable fire." Malbecco, seeing their intention, lets them in, and mollifies them with lies about servants.

Paridell then lays further siege to Hellenore's heart. According to Berger, "Paridell's incendiary art is a warfare aimed as much against the object of desire as against the husband. His 'deedes of arms' consist of 'continuall battery' aimed at breaching the fort (x.10)."[28] The story of Troy, recited by Paridell, contains further instances of the breaching of walls. Helen and Paris are safely penned within the walls of the city. The Greeks assault from the outside. The city is burned down, as Britomart and the other knights had threatened to do to the walls of Malbecco's castle.[29]

The series of exclusions, accompanied by flames, and the whetting of desire, forms a comprehensive illustration of the effects of desire on the figures. Malbecco is a prisoner of his desire, while Paridell is a prisoner of his reading of the

story of Troy. He, like Britomart, traces his descent from Troy, but Paridell is linked directly to Paris, who likewise discovers his identity in desire, and to whom Venus awards Helen as a prize. The taking of this particular prize engenders long years of bloodshed (III.ix.34-35). Paridell reads in this episode a carte blanche to seek after ladies' love: he sees himself as another Paris. Although he recounts the stories of bloodshed for Helen's sake, what he emphasizes is the value of the much-desired Helen. Britomart's reading emphasizes the founding of Britain and recognizes the needless bloodshed; she recounts a long history, finally fruitful, of desire and violence.

One further instance of exclusion follows: Britomart comes upon Scudamour, who is languishing outside the gates of the House of Busirane. He is unable to pass through the gates because of the wall of fire that the enchanter has placed there. Instead of being caught in a thunderstorm, Scudamour is caught in the storm of his own emotions. Britomart divides the fire and passes through it. Scudamour

> ...likewise gan assay,
> With greedy will, and enuious desire,
> And bad the stubborn flames to yield him way:
> But cruell Mulciber would not obay
> His threatfull pride, but did the more augment
> His mighty rage, and with imperious sway
> Him forst (maulgre) his fierceness to relent,
> And backe retire, all scorcht and pitifully brent.
> (xi.26)

Scudamour's failure causes him to dissolve into grief; the

combination of sorrow and madness in "the burning torment" cause him to beat his head on the ground in utter frustration.

The disintegration of the excluded subject, and the extreme desire or "burning" passion that he feels, are linked to the violence of the conflict over identity. Spenser repeatedly demonstrates the association between the two, particularly in cantos vii. to xii of Book III, where the metamorphic effect of the loss of identity in desire is coupled with the violence that occurs in the attempt to gain the object as prize. Proteus changes shape many times in order to win Florimell; Paridell draws the association between woman as prize and war; the tapestries in the House of Busirane contain images of the wars fought in the name of love, and the effect of desire on the subjects of "love's cruel law." The association of desire, greed, and envy, discussed earlier, demonstrate the extent to which desire is the result of an exclusion from the text of identity, a text perceived as possessed by the other or the rival.

The tapestries at the House of Busirane picture forth an interpretation of desire which reads it as "metamorphic." That is, it sees the effects of desire as destructive to the self; the self must possess the other, or die. The gods in the tapestries change their shapes with willing randomness to accommodate themselves to the identities of their beloveds, whether they be swans, cows, or reluctant nymphs (III.xi.29-

46). Cupid, the "victor of the gods," is described as if he were a Titan. The tapestries encapsulate "all Cupids warres"—

> And cruell battels, which he whilome fought
> Gainst all the Gods, to make his empire great;
> Besides the huge massacres, which he wrought
> On mighty kings and kesars, into thraldome brought.
> (III.xi.29)

Cupid's wars, as depicted here, destroy both order and identity. In the conflict between the gods, he is the victor and agent for the proliferation of desire. Differentiation is lost as war and desire become one.

> Kings Queenes, Lords Ladies, Knights and Damzels gent
> Were heap'd together with the vulgar sort,
> And mingled with the raskall rablement,
> Without respect of person or of port,
> To shew Dan Cupids powre and great effort...
> (III.xi.46)

The tapestries portray, wrought in "rich metall, as they liuing were:/A thousand monstrous formes.../Such as false loue doth oft vpon him weare,/For loue in thousand monstrous formes doth oft appeare"(xi.51;emphasis mine). The "thousand monstrous formes" are the new identities in desire of the subjected lovers, the forms of desire itself, and Cupid. It may, in fact, imply that the desiring subject is rewritten as desire. That is, in Girard's terms, desire becomes the subject: the human subject is lost. The versions of desire presented here are the opposite of generative. The walls are hung with the "warlike spoiles" and "prayes" of captured "Conquerors and Captaines strong," whose weapons have been broken, and laurels trodden into dust "with fury insolent,/To shew the victors might and

mercilesse intent"(xi.52). Those who subject themselves to desire have "wrought their owne decayes."

Desire, or at least this reading of it, leads to death. All who are caught in its net lose their shape and are reconstituted as one of the "thousand monstrous formes." They become impotent players in the larger text of desire, which writes their roles for them. There is no life, although the figures are "as liuing." The halls echo, and any life is simulated. Rivers of blood flow through the tapestries, and life is poured out for the sake of desire.

The extremes of lust posited elsewhere by Spenser are examples of the metamorphosis of identity caused by desire. Argante, Busirane, Lust, Corflambo, and others are examples of identity as created by desire: the self is defined solely in its state of eternal hunger for the separate and inaccessible other. Consumption never satisfies, and no possession is ever absolute enough to bring about the desired stability. The "monstrous doubles" are figures for the self as rewritten by desire. Glauce's attempts to return Britomart to her senses after she falls in love with Artegall fail because, in Britomart, "no powre/Nor guidance of her selfe in her did dwell"(iii.49). Fortune and love, the "lewd boteman" become her twin blind guides. Desire has rewritten her; Britomart becomes "entire affection."

Metamorphosis, Ovid's end result of desire, is in fact a present condition of desire in Spenser. That is, the extremes

of lust and melting love are inherent in the first term of desire. The desiring subject has already undergone a kind of metamorphosis in the loss of stable identity. Britomart herself becomes "entire affection," and the proximity of the stories of Myrrha, Biblis, Pasiphae, and Narcissus to her own suggest the degree to which metamorphosis is possible. Similarly, both Amoret and Florimell, fleeing from lust in one shape or another, are compared to metamorphic figures. Florimell, pursued by the Hyena, is compared to Myrrha and Daphne:

> Not halfe so fast the wicked Myrrha fled
> From dread of her reuenging fathers hond:
> Nor halfe so fast to saue her maidenhed,
> Fled fearefull Daphne on th'Ægean strond,
> As Florimell fled from that Monster yond...
> (III.vii.26)

Amoret, pursued by Lust,

> ...makes her feare a spur to hast her flight:
> More swift than Myrrh' or Daphne in her race,
> Or any of the Thracian Nimphes in saluage chase.
> (IV.vii.22)

Myrrha and Daphne, extremes of lust and chastity, are both pursued. The Thracian nymphs, on the other hand, are the pursuers: they rend Orpheus limb from limb, literally shattering his identity. All of these women, innocent or guilty, are turned into trees, and the tree is probably the most extended metaphor associated with Britomart in cantos ii and iii of Book III.[30]

The fear of metamorphosis is inherent in the experience of desire, since the self disintegrates in the attempt to gain entry to the other through the vehicle of the text. In the

process of attempting to gain identity through the text, the self actually loses identity. Thus, the monstrous doubles of desire, which figure the "monster" as the agent of desire and the threat to the self, are instead representations of the state of the self in desire. Britomart's boat, tossed upon the sea, images the violent oscillations of emotion experienced by the desiring subject (III.iv.12).

The turbulence of desire is vented on the rival, as we have seen. The knights compete for the same objects and the same identities; within the competition, differentiation disappears. The rival becomes a model-obstacle which prevents the self's accession to the text of desire through possession of the object. In his defeat, Malbecco is transformed into "Gealosie," losing all former identity because of his loss. Britomart similarly sees Marinell as a model-obstacle, blocking her way. While she had been consumed with "tempestuous" grief, her grief is converted to rage upon the sight of Marinell. She assaults and defeats him. He becomes the sacrifice to her desire:

> Like as the sacred Oxe, that carelesse stands,
> With gilden hornes, and flowry girlonds crownd,
> Proud of his dying honour and deare bands,
> Whiles th'altars fume with frankincense arownd,
> All suddenly with mortall stroke astownd,
> Doth groueling fall, and with his streaming gore
> Distaines the pillours, and the holy grownd,
> And the faire flowres, that decked him afore;
> So fell proud Marinell vpon the pretious shore.
> (17)

The instability of Britomart's identity, is resolved by the conversion of desire into vengeance. Marinell, a clear and

present obstacle to her purpose, becomes the sacrificial victim. In "sacrificing" him, Britomart regains the sense of form and direction that had previously been lost.[31]

Conflict renews the sense of form lost in desire by providing the desiring subject with the opportunity to break through the barrier that stands between him and his object. The subject sees himself as the victim, assailed by rage and envy, excluded from the orbit of the object who would bestow on him the stable identity that he desires. The woman as prize and thrall within the text of desire is a primary indicator of the subject's identity. If the woman contains the text that excludes the desiring subject, then she acts at once as object and model-obstacle, and stands in danger of becoming the sacrificial victim. She is the scapegoat for the torment and chaos afflicting the lovers who desire her.[32]

The House of Busirane episode illustrates the place in the sacrificial crisis of the object as sacrificial victim. Scudamour, the desiring subject, languishes outside the gate, unable to enter because of the fierce wall of fire. Busirane, inside, busily tortures Amoret to gain entry to her heart. His obstacle is her love for Scudamour. Here, the metaphoric "yron bands" and "brasen walls" that imprison Hellenore become real: Amoret's "small wast" is "girt round with yron bands"—and she is attached by them to a "brasen" pillour (III.xii.30). Busirane, as Hieatt points out, is associated with Busiris, renowned for his inhospitality and his sacrifice of strangers.

He, like Argante and Corflambo, represents an extreme of devouring and violent desire.[33]

Busirane attempts to remove Amoret's love by working his charms upon her. She is led forth in the Masque with her heart divided by a dart and laid, bleeding, in a silver basin. The attempt to gain access to her heart takes the form of physical assault. Because Amoret will not redefine herself to include Busirane as her lover, he works his tortures upon her.

The meaning of this episode in the context of desire in Books III and IV is subject to much dispute.[34] The Masque is often seen as a representation of female or male sexual fantasy.[35] Edwin Greenlaw sees the Masque as a version of the Grail story, "a ritual in honor of a god."[36] Whether the Masque is a representation of the "vengeance of male sexuality on the chastely reticent female"[37] or of Amoret's fear of that vengeance, it is still a theatrical presentation created by Busirane, one which carries Amoret with it as its prize. She is dragged unwillingly, with fainting feet, and with her blood pouring out into the silver basin. According to Kenneth Gross, the figure "converts theatrical display into an unholy rite of living sacrifice or necromancy, a parodic mass."[38] If Cupid is the only "victor" in the House of Busirane, then Amoret is the sacrifice made to his power. He rides in the Masque, delighting in her sufferings, just as he delights in his defeat of the gods in the tapestries. Whether the tortures are a result of

her own fears, or of Scudamour's or Busirane's over-lustfulness, Amoret remains a prisoner of desire.

Within the walls of the House of Busirane, the religion of love reveres Cupid. If, as Fowler notes, Paridell and Hellenore celebrate "a parodic sacrament, with liturgy drawn from Ovid,"[39] then the progress at the House of Busirane is more like a ritual of sacrifice. Busirane would rather kill Amoret than lose her; if he cannot win her will, then no one will have her. She is both object and victim.

The idolatry inherent in this episode, then, makes of Cupid a supreme god, and of the woman a sacrifice. All are subjected unto Cupid's law. Yet this cruel law is largely a result of man's self-creations. It is the texts of desire that determine the results. Berger and Quilligan both emphasize the role of literary production in the representation of desire at the House of Busirane.[40] According to Quilligan, "Busyrane's instrument of torture is his lyric pen."[41] Amoret is "penned" within the House; her imprisonment in desire is a result of the verses written by Busirane with her blood. Thus, she, like Scudamour, is the prisoner of a text. Scudamour and Busirane are both excluded subjects: the inhospitability of Busirane yields to the "inhospitability" of Amoret, who will not give Busirane her love. Britomart, unlike Scudamour, is able to enter into the House of Busirane. Although she fears that "we a God inuade," she raises the shield before her face and the flames divide around her. Unlike Scudamour, she is not subject

to greedy rage or envious desire, because she does not seek to possess Amoret for herself. The flames at the gate do not burn her because they are not echoed within her. Britomart acts to liberate Amoret and Scudamour from their imprisonment in the texts of desire. By making Busirane reverse his "verses," she is able to free Amoret, and restrain Busirane instead. The dart falls from Amoret's heart and she is restored to "perfit hole." As she had been divided before by the assault upon her will, now she is released from the texts that had confined her. The texts in fact vanish: the walls of the House are bare, and the fire that had guarded the gate has gone out. In the 1590 ending of The Faerie Queene, Amoret joins Scudamour outside the walls, and they melt together to form the image of the Hermaphrodite, still as "senceless stockes." Britomart watches them, half "enuying their bless." She, having rescued Amoret from the House of Busirane, is excluded from the union. According to Gross, for Britomart, the hermaphrodite "means not possession but lack and desire, a happiness that fate denies her, a merging of sexual identities to which her own cross-dressing is at best an uneasy stepping stone."[42] The reoccurrence of envy here signals us that the desire for the intact paradise is not conquered, but restated. When, in Book IV, the hermaphrodite becomes the self-containing statue of Venus, we see that the ambition of desire is to become similarly self-contained, to obtain a state that "needeth other none."

The combination of idolatry and envy with the fragmentation and alienation of the desiring subject, signals the extent to which desire is a product of texts and the objects of desire are influenced by the self-creating imagination. In the 1596 Faerie Queene, Britomart frees Amoret from her imprisonment in male poetics, only to find that Scudamour has lost the faith, and vanished. Scudamour's disappearance makes way for his jealousy of Britomart and fear that Amoret is unfaithful to him. Amoret is replaced within a different kind of text, in which she is at once sacred victim, and model-obstacle, the bestower of the intact paradise of his desires. The desire of the subject for identity within the text through possession of the other becomes the desire for intact narcissism.

Endnotes to Chapter II

1. John C. Bean, "Making the Daemonic Personal: Britomart and Love's Assault," Modern Language Quarterly 40 (1979), p. 242.

2. Lesley W. Brill discusses this aspect of Book III in "Battles That Need Not Be Fought," English Language Review 5 (1975), pp. 198-211.

3. The power of Acrasia offers a similar threat and accounts for Guyon's fierce destruction of the Bower.

4. The first definition occurs in canto i. In the conflict with Guyon she is represented as and understood to be a male knight. Outside the Castle Joyeous, she enters into the definition of male knighthood stated by the six knights, even though she denies part of their definition when she says "Love haue I sure...but Lady none." Within the Castle, she is ambiguously male and beautiful, and attracts the desire of Malecasta. We know she is a female, as we do after the battle with Guyon, but the figures with whom she interacts do not know the truth. To Redcrosse, she represents herself as Artegall's enemy, and as a woman who has learnt the lore of arms since she was taken "from Nourse's pap," which, unless she was just taken from the breast, is untrue. The statement could be intended metaphorically, meaning nurse's care, which, since we see Glauce caring for her charge in the nest in canto iii, would be truer. Yet, since Glauce is still nominally with her, the care has not ceased. She is next represented as a sickened helpless lover, then disguises herself to meet with Merlin. Finally, she is a "destined" bride, and she dons Angela's armour as a "martial mayd."

5. According to Goldberg, identity is derived from the structures of discourse, that is in the interaction with other selves, or groups of selves. He describes the condition of friendship in Book IV, and the telling of stories not one's own, as illustrations of the relativity of identity. Cambell and Triamond, friends at last, tell each other's stories, deferring to the other's identity. The voice of the other dictates identity and the desire of the other compels the story. Endlesse Worke, p. 8.

6. The ambiguity of "mayd" is interesting: although "mayd" means "maid," it may also mean "made." Therefore, Amoret is "made" by Venus, as she is reared in the Garden of Adonis, just as Belphoebe is "made" by her association with Diana. Britomart is "made" martial by the acquisition of Angela's armour.

7. Bloch in particular sees courtly love as evidently mimetic. For Bloch, "the fact that these precepts of courtly love were subsequently so easily propagated shows how well they served the new requirements of a class. They helped it to become aware of itself. To love in a different way from the generality of men must inevitably make one feel different from them." M. Bloch, Feudal Society, trans. L.A. Manyon, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961; rpt. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968, 7th ed.), cited in In Pursuit of Perfection, pp. 14-15.

8. According to Patricia Parker, Narcissus "is the patron saint of courtly love if only because all dialectics of subject and object depend upon some kind of projection, a relation in which a subject is literally 'subjected' to an object or end." Inescapable Romance, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press), p. 90. The projection is that of an idealized self, which the lady contains, and which the lover wishes to attain through his discipline in loving her. This has several problems. In describing the lady as an idol, the fact of her humanity is lost to the lover (subject). Courtly love, by insisting on present perfection, does not allow for the fully rounded development of Christian love. An awareness of the lady's imperfections destroys the lover's vision as well as his identity as a knight. Her perfection ratifies him. Cf. In Pursuit of Perfection, p. 57. The privilege of passion is established in the courtly love texts. The relationship between lover and lady is triangular, since the lover shapes his behaviour and his perception in accordance with the courtly code. The code is implacable in its delineation of the knight. It is the lady herself who has the power to accept or reject his actions; her inclinations are often unfathomable, and notoriously capricious. Therefore, the lover has no way of knowing whether his actions are correct or not, no way of knowing whether he has been accepted. Thus, the lady is at once a model-obstacle and an object.

9. Cf. Alastair Fowler, "Six Knights at the Castle Joyeous," Studies in Philology 56 (1959), pp. 583-99. Fowler describes each of the six knights as personifying a different stage in the sexual courtship. According to Fowler, Britomart is wounded by Gardante because she is particularly susceptible to the lust of the eyes.

10. Cf. Hamilton's note to III.i.34-38 in his edition of The Faerie Queene, I (London and New York: Longman, 1977).

11. "Spenser and the Renaissance Mythology of Love," Literary Monographs, Vol. 6, (Madison, Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1975), p. 52.

12. According to Sean Kane, "in Book III, Spenser begins to write about the complexity that is shut out by the individualistic ethical codes of his earlier heroes. In particular, he admits into his narrative the very principles that most codes are designed to resist: time, change, randomness, variety." Sean Kane, "Spenserian Ecology," English Literary History 50 (1983), p. 461. To Kane's list I would add the principle of confusion, which is caused by the ambiguity of meaning and representation, and which afflicts both reader and figures.

13. Kathleen Williams states that Book III "is a book of perplexities, in which the incomprehension of the characters and the inscrutability of the conditions in which they live combine to express the paradoxical quality of our apprehensions of each other, ourselves, and the world around us." World of Glass, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966), p. 80.

14. Endlesse Worke, p. 59.

15. We can divide the animal allusions into two very general categories: the "desiring subject" or knight in battle is compared with a beast of prey, such as a bear, a lion, or a bull, while the object of desire is likened to the prey itself.

16. In fact, both Britomart and Malecasta are versions of Venus. Britomart, as we discover in III.i.8, has seen the image of her lover in "Venus looking glas," and a number of critics find in her a representation of the Venus armata.

17. Harry Berger, jr. "The Faerie Queene, Book III," p. 405. Berger states that "though the poet hints, in neo-Platonic fashion, that there are two different kinds of love, the evidence of chaotic force given in the opening cantos makes us wonder." "Spenser's Gardens of Adonis: Force and Form in the Renaissance Imagination," University of Toronto Quarterly 30 (1960-61), p. 133.

18. The "sage wisard" that "reads" or interprets the appearance of the star recalls Merlin's interpretation of Britomart's love. At this point in the narrative, the indications of desire and the texts that accompany desire are quite ambiguous. Therefore, the disastrous omen Florimell presents can be linked to both the death and disruption caused by desire, and the metamorphosis Britomart fears.

19. "Money is on Scudamour's mind and is reflected in what he sees: the text of Venus hanging by 'golden ribbands' and written in 'golden letters' ([IV].x.8.5,7). It is also reflected in how he sees: he passes over the bridge, hastening lest Delay 'steal' his time, 'the threasure of mans day' (14.8), 'beholding all the way/The goodly workes, and stores of rich assay' (15.4-5), envying the lovers emparadised in each other's arms." Endlesse Worke, p. 133.

20. Belphoebe has also been accused of not being able to recognize Timias's behaviour in rescuing Amoret from Lust as compassion.

21. Artegall, Clorinda and Radigund are all described as "thralls" of different kinds. The "mighty kings and kesars" in the tapestries of the House of Busirane are similarly "captiued" and brought into "thraldome" (III.xi.29). Florimell is made Proteus's "thrall."

22. The Kindly Flame, p. 137 and note 49.

23. Cf. Hamilton's notes to IV.vii.6.

24. William Oram, "Elizabethan Fact and Spenserian Fiction," Spenser Studies IV, pp. 33-47.

25. These figures are "monstrous doubles" in only one sense of the term, in that they enact the extremes of desire. That is, they are bestial and incestuous, and threaten to upset the order of the community. They do not become sacred, however. Spenser uses the "monstrous" images in different ways to illustrate the whole process and dangers of the accommodation of the self to desire.

26. "The Spenserian Dynamics," Studies in English Literature 8 (1968), p. 11. Berger refers in particular to the Hymnes of Love and Colin Clout. He adds that "psychologically, eros is always felt at first as an affliction, a pain-giving force which disturbs equilibrium and fills the soul with violent longing and frustration." p. 12.

27. "The Aging Boy: Paradise and Parricide in Spenser's Shepheardes Calendar," In Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance, ed. Maynard Mack and George deForest Lord, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), p. 26. For Berger, the "condition of the have-not is depicted as a self-willed submission to Tantalean bitterness and pain in response to loss, deprivation, and the inability to appease the "infinite desyre" of eros."

28. Berger, "The Discarding of Malbecco: Conspicuous Allusion and Cultural Exhaustion in The Faerie Queene III, xi-xii." Studies in Philology 66 (1969), p. 144.

29. The relationship between the Hellenore-Malbecco-Paridell triangle and the Helen-Paris-Menelaeus triangle is an interesting one. In spite of the fact that Hellenore and Paridell recall Helen and Paris, the structural relationships reverse the pairings. Hellenore and Malbecco are penned safely within the walls of the Castle, while Paris assaults, with flames, from the outside. Paridell resorts to devious and secret means to steal her away, and it is Malbecco's Castle that is left in flames.

30. See III.ii.31, in which Glauce describes Britomart's seclusion: "...ne doest spred/Abroad thy fresh youthes faire flowre, but lose/ Both leafe and fruit, both too vntimely shed..."; Britomart describes herself as a "leafe falne from the tree"(ii.39); her love is described as "her first engraffed paine;/Whose root and stalke so bitter yet did tast,/That but the fruit more sweetnesse did containe..."(ii.17); Glauce describes it as a "deep engraffed ill"(iii.18); Merlin describes the "hard begin" as necessary "For so must all things excellent begin,/And eke enrooted deepe must be that Tree,/Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin,/Till they to heauens hight forth stretched bee"(iii.22). The narrator makes a more debatable allusion to the progeny of Britomart and Artegall, "Most famous fruits of matrimoniall bowre,/Which through the earth haue spred their liuing prayse"(iii.3), which anticipates Merlin's later statement.

31. Unlike the mythic texts which Girard describes, Spenser does not abandon the "sacrificial victim." Marinell is not made sacred, but is reincorporated into a different community. The effects of her attack upon him are made evident.

32. Berger states that Mirabella is a "typical projection of the Petrarchan lover's impatience, a scapegoat for his lust." "A Secret Discipline," in Form and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser, ed. William Nelson, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1961), p. 57.

33. He is the murderer of Osiris. Typhon or Busiris "is identified with fiery, scorching barrenness; flames shoot from his mouth and eyes. He was born from Earth, to avenge the rebellious giants after their defeat by the celestial gods. He is associated with their violence and with their blood which sank into earth and returns as wine." Chaucer Spenser Milton (Montreal and London: Queens-McGill Univ. Press, 1984), p. 139. Roche also notes the association, and states that "Egypt is said to have lacked the rains that bless its fields, when Thrasius approached Busiris, and showed that Jove could be

propitiated by the outpoured blood of a stranger. To him said Busiris, 'Thou shalt be Jove's first victim, and as a stranger give water unto Egypt.'" Kindly Flame, p. 82.The flames that shoot from Typhon's eyes can be associated with the fiery eyes of Corflambo in Book IV.

34. A wide variety of interpretations attempt to account for Busirane's imprisonment of Amoret and his tortures of her. Roche, among others, sees the Masque as an "objectification" of Amoret's own fears of sexuality. According to Roche, "the House is...an objectification of her fears but only insofar as she partakes of the universal malady represented by Busyrane and his House." Kindly Flame, p.116. Others, notably Hieatt, see the House of Busirane as a result of Scudamour's attempts to practise "maistrye" upon Amoret: his over-lustful approach denies her freedom. A.K. Hieatt, "Scudamour's Practice of Maistrye upon Amoret," Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A.C. Hamilton, (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1972), p. 199. Maureen Quilligan also sees the "scene" as a "scrutiny of female sexual fear." Milton's Spenser, (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983), p. 197. Quilligan states that Spenser derives most of the "fantasies" from the Roman de la Rose, and that he thus images "a legitimate female fear of sexuality, of the sort less easily dismissed in the first vision of Florimell pursued by the forester." pp. 197-98. According to Maurice Evans, Amoret "is the embodiment of the procreative sexual instinct in woman, and in rescuing her, Britomart is rescuing something within herself in danger of being perverted, and demonstrating the obligation of all women to meet the same challenge." Spenser's Anatomy of Heroism (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), p. 156. According to Evans, "Scudamore...personifies the stirring of physical desire in man or woman, and marks in Britomart the fact that the sexual nature is now awake, and that she is old enough to feel Cupid's darts. His lament for Amoret shut away and tortured by Busyrane is Britomart's own dawning realization of the physical instinct which is imprisoned within herself and in need of release." If, however, his lament is Britomart's own realization of her sexual need, this would deny the sexual tortures she has undergone at the inception of her love in canto iii. as well as the lesson learned from Merlin, about the "hard begin that meets thee in the dore." If we see the tortures as being Amoret's own fault, then we succumb to the Petrarchan scapegoating process, which blames the woman for her coyness. Prior to the House of Busirane episode, we have little evidence for Amoret's fear of sexuality or marriage. Judith Dundas states that "one thing that Psyche would not have taught Amoret is to fear marriage, especially as she herself is now happily married and has a daughter called Pleasure, who was Amoret's playmate." "A Response to Professor Thomas Roche's Paper," Kalamazoo - 1983, Proceedings of the Special Sessions at the 18th International Congress on Medieval Studies, ed.

Francis G. Greco, (Clarion: Clarion Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1983),p. 148. In fact, aside from the single phrase "fantasies in wauering wemens wits," which is accompanied by "paines in love" and "punishments in hell," we have no evidence whatever prior to Book IV that Amoret is afraid of sexuality. Two statements in Book IV are used to substantiate the interpretation that sees the Masque as an "objectification" of Amoret's fears. The first is in IV.1.3, which describes the Masque as a wedding masque into which Amoret is incorporated, and thus carried away. The second is her reluctance to leave the Temple of Venus, and the shrinking from Scudamour that she displays at this time. Yet all the maidens in the Temple are terrorized by his shield, and in fact Scudamour's treatment of Amoret is a denial of her freedom. If Britomart's role is to liberate Amoret from the House of Busirane, then Scudamour is the one who has taken her captive in the first place. According to Alpers, "critics who treat this stanza (4.1.3) as an explanation of Amoret's torture speak of erotic fearfulness and distress -- terms that are appropriate to the House of Busyrane. But Spenser's emphasis here is on all that is suggested by the phrase 'ill of friends bestedded.' Amoret's abduction is due to some failure in friendship, the ties that unite all good men and women to each other, and if there is any inadequacy of erotic feeling, it lies in the (presumably male) heedlessness that allows Amoret to be carried away. It is perfectly appropriate for a masque to conclude by incorporating the person honored into itself. Spenser's concern here is that the men can accept something sinister 'by way of sport' and as a way of paying joyful honor to a lady." The Poetry of The Faerie Queene, pp. 110-11.

35. See Quilligan, Milton's Spenser, p. 198, and Berger, "Busirane and the War between the Sexes," English Language Review, 1 (1971), p.108.

36. "Britomart at the House of Busyrane," Studies in Philology 26 (1929), p. 119.

37. Roche, The Kindly Flame, p. 76.

38. Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm and Magic, (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985),p. 162. According to Gross, "the doubtfull narrator suggests that we may read the masque as pathological projection, analytical psychomachia, or vision of damnation. Each of these alternatives...has its own autonomous logic, and yet each seems to inhere strangely or to stand as a possible metaphor for the others. The eschatalogical absoluteness of the last alternative may also suggest a kind of teleology in the list." pp. 165-66.

39. Alastair Fowler, "Six Knights," p. 585.

40. According to Berger, "the presence and influence of poets indicate the extent to which the experience of false love is a self-generated product of male fantasy." "Busirane," p. 106. Quilligan also relates the role of poetic influence in this depiction of desire, tying the depiction of Amoret to the Petrarchan concept of the "cruel" lady. "Words and Sex," Allegorica 2 (1977), p.211.

41. Quilligan, Milton's Spenser, p. 198.

42. Spenserian Poetics, p. 172.

III. The Wounded Mind

The desire for the other is, as stated in the last chapter, a desire for stable identity. The subject seeks a form within one of the texts of desire, a form which he perceives as arising out of the possession of the object. The object, whether vassal, beloved, thrall or commodity, bestows, under the aegis of the text, stable identity upon the subject. That is, the object is perceived by the subject as enabled to provide him with "intact narcissism."

Books III and IV figure the identity of the other as perfect and enclosed. The subject desires to be admitted into this entity or, conversely, wishes to contain it within himself. The object or other becomes the "intact paradise" from which the subject is excluded. The "intact paradise" is the intact narcissism of the other, the stable identity which the object is believed to possess perfectly within the boundaries of the text. Possession of the object confers the textual ratification that the subject desires. Mimetic conflict arises from the belief that the rival stands in the way of the subject in obtaining that paradise. Where there is no rival, however, the object, often the woman, acts as the determining factor in

the admission of the subject into the text. As the courtly love tradition shows, the ability to judge the subject's conformity with the text rests with the object. Thus, in this case, the perceived intact narcissism is invested in the other within the text, rather than in the rival alone.

Girard's concept of intact narcissism has much in common with the "paradise principle" posited by Berger, which sees the desire of the subject as the pursuit of that perfect and undisturbed happiness which belongs to an other, whether it pertains to a way of life, a woman or a condition.[1] The "have-not," or excluded subject, is in a condition of desiring loss, and oscillates between consuming love and consuming hate. "This longing for what is unattainably beyond and for what has been irretrievably lost furrows the have-not's spirit with parallel competing impulses --to recreate, worship, replace, disparage, oppress, violate, devour, and destroy the loved and hated other."[2] For Berger, in the Calendar, the "object of desire appears as a prey, a spoils, a "goodly scope"....In this context the position of the object is assigned most often, and most significantly, to woman."[3] The woman appears as the possessor of that paradise to which the man aspires; by possessing her, he will possess it.

Berger isolates several episodes in Book VI which illustrate the manner in which the woman embodies the desired paradise; each episode describes both an image of the woman and the way in which she is desired. "Each is centered on a female

figure who adumbrates the source or object of desire, the cause or effect of a certain mode of imagination. Each figure, that is, embodies claims upon the male psyche that seem to be imposed by some outside force, some otherness working in or through the form of woman."[4] Mirabella appears as the cruel and scornful mistress, attracting and despising male desires. Serena, laid upon the altar by the cannibals who cannot decide whether to devour her or sacrifice her to the gods, is the dismembered and assimilated woman, destroyed by desire. Pastorella is the separate other who embodies the peace and tranquility of the pastoral retreat; for Berger, Mirabella "projects the germinal form of frustration, Serena and her cannibals the germinal form of desire, Pastorella and her swains the germinal form of poetic recreation."[5]

Berger's thesis describes the different poetic attitudes towards women, and the kinds of desire that they prescribe. "Each of these episodes constitutes the evocation of an ideal... community, completely unified and controlled by the mind, and each is a self-contained environment, a circle focused on its conventional center."[6] The ideal community described here is the perceived "paradise" constituted in the woman and desired by the man. It is the intact narcissism of the other.

As Berger implies, the manner of desire and the object desired are both dictated by a kind of cultural text. That is, the languishing lovers and the ravenous cannibals structure

their desire according to a text, which effects how they perceive the other. An inability to gain paradise is almost guaranteed by the attitude of the lover and the nature of the goal. The subject who constitutes his desire in Mirabella transforms himself into the victim, assured of endless desire and endless frustration. He places himself in the double-bind. Mirabella becomes the coquette, thriving on the frustration of others while encouraging their desires. In Serena, the object of desire becomes the adored victim, an object whose power is to be assimilated through cannibalism, or sacrificed to the gods.[7] In Pastorella, the other is the source of enclosing love, the pastoral location of grace. In all these cases, the other is figured as the separate, enclosed perfection desired by the subject.

The textual constitution of the other as "intact paradise" necessarily involves a misperception or projection on the part of the desiring subject, as in the case of the texts of courtly love which idealize the Lady, and which are designed to privilege those who participate in them. Thus, between the subject and the object lies a mirror which reflects both self and other, and makes clear and true perception difficult, since perception relies on the text through which it is filtered.

Throughout the first sequences of Book III, the relationship between the self, the other, and the mirror which lies between them is highly ambiguous. We first hear of the inception of Britomart's love in III.i, in which we are told

that she has seen her lover in Venus' glass.[8] The meaning of this glass is not determined by any associations in the immediate story, although iconographically it has both positive and negative connotations, ranging from vanity to prudence and self-knowledge.

In III.ii, the glass gives way to Merlin's "glassie globe," which has the ability to foretell the future, warning of external threats to the "kingdom." The globe also has a variety of associations: Panofsky suggests that it is "one of the most variable quantities in iconographical equations," with the frequent meaning of "most perfect form"; the fact that it is made of glass connotes its fragility and thus the vanity of worldly things.[9] Britomart, enclosed within the walls of her father's closet, daily attended by Glauce in her "nest," views herself in the mirror. Knowing that she must one day be wed, she asks the mirror for a vision of her future lover.

> It vertue had to shew in perfect sight,
> What euer thing was in the world contaynd,
> Betwixt the lowest earth and heauens hight,
> So that it too the looker appertaynd;
> (III.ii.19; emphasis mine)

The "vertue" of the mirror, demonstrated here and in following descriptions, shows the inherent ambiguities of the relationship between the subject and object of perception. The glass shows "in perfect sight" anything the world contains, as long as it pertains to the seer. Whether Spenser means that the image in the mirror is perfect and thus true, that the viewer's sight must be perfect, or that the glass perfects the thing

seen is unclear. The next stanza provides the reader with further associations, which seem intended to add to his understanding of the mirror's power.

> Who wonders not, that reades so wondrous worke?
> But who does wonder, that has red the Towre,
> Wherein th'Ægyptian Phao long did lurke
> From all men's vew, that none might her discoure,
> Yet she might all men vew out of her bowre?
> Great Ptolomae it for his leman's sake
> Ybuilded it of glasse, by Magicke powre,
> And also it impregnable did make.
> Yet when his loue was false, he with a peaze it brake. (III.ii.20)

According to the text, we will not wonder about the power of Merlin's mirror once we have read the story of the glass "Towre" in which Phao "lurked." The additional explanation does not add anything to our understanding of Merlin's great power, demonstrated in his ability to predict the future. Instead, it acts to provide us with a paradigm about the role of perception in the relationship between subject and object. As Corflambo demonstrates in Book IV, desire is communicated through perception.[10] His flaming eyes spark fires in the hearts of others. Thus Phao is at once a source of desire, and an object of it. Ptolemy builds the tower to protect her from discovery, or, in other words, to keep her safe from the desires of other men. At the same time, she may communicate desire as she looks out from her vantage point. She is the subject, and, as Lauren Silberman points out, the object of perception.[11] She is perfected and enclosed within the glass tower which Ptolomae makes impregnable.

A similar ambiguity arises in the last line of the stanza; the tower only shatters when Ptolemy's love is false: the glass shatters either because Phao has been untrue and can no longer be contained within it, or because the love he had for her was "false" love, as Spenser describes in the House of Busirane episode. In either case, it is the loss of "love" that causes the glass to break.

The story of Phao's prison becomes a text within which we read both the power of Merlin's "glassie globe," and the desire of Britomart for Artegall engendered by the globe. The lover's attempt to enclose Phao within a perfect glass, which is at once a mirror and a globe, images both the inception of desire and the perception of the other as intact paradise. It is not surprising, then, that the text and the perception interact once again in Britomart's first sight of her beloved. Britomart, enclosed within the walls of her father's closet, daily attended by Glauce in her "nest," views herself in the mirror.

> Her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine;
> Tho her auizing of the vertues rare,
> Which thereof spoken were, she gan againe
> Her to bethinke of, that mote to her selfe pertaine.
> (III.ii.22)

The ambiguity here is that Britomart is either exercising her vanity in regarding herself in the mirror, which echoes some of the overtones of the earlier Venus' glass, or, her efforts at "perfect" sight are fruitless as long as she looks at herself.[12]

Britomart asks the mirror for a sight of her future husband.

> Eftsoones there was presented to her eye
> A comely knight, all arm'd in complete wize,
> Through whose bright ventayle lifted vp on hye
> His manly face, that did his foes agrize,
> And friends to termes of gentle truce entize,
> Lookt foorth as Phoebus face out of the east,
> Betwixt the shadie mountaines doth arize;
> Portly his personage, and much increast
> Through his Heroicke grace, and honorable gest.
>
> His crest was couered with a couchant Hound,
> And all his armor seemd of antique mould,
> But wondrous massie, and assurd sound,
> And round about yfretted all with gold,
> In which there written was with cyphers old,
> Achilles armes, which Artegall did win.
> And on his shield enueloped seuenfold
> He bore a crowned litle Ermilin,
> That deckt the azure field with her faire pouldred skin. (III.ii.24-25)

The perfected image of Artegall in Achilles' arms, wrought in gold, bears little resemblance to the Artegall we meet in Book IV.iv.39, who bears the cypher "saluagesse sans finesse" on his arms. There, his disguise as the salvage man prevents Britomart from recognizing him. The "cyphers" name him; the image is "written in her heart"(ii.29), and becomes the text which initiates her desire. The relevance of texts to Britomart's relationship with the image in the mirror can also be seen in Glauce's reference to the use of "cyphers" or magic to divine Artegall's whereabouts.

Artegall is inscribed on Britomart's heart, breaking the "intact narcissism" that has previously been hers. She does not understand the image that she has seen, for she has no previous knowledge of desire, being innocent and "free from blame of

sinfull blot." The idealized vision of Artegall becomes the "intact paradise" necessary to the repossession of her identity.

Britomart experiences desire as an internal wasting. She sees herself as "subjected to loues cruell law," by the "misfortune" that led her to swallow "vnwares the hidden hooke with baite." Girard's concept of the "scandalisée" aptly describes the inception of desire in Britomart. In innocence, she has used the mirror and been led, unaware, into desire's trap.

The description of Britomart's relationship with the mirror in her father's closet is the most complete and searching illustration of the inception of desire in The Faerie Queene. While Britomart does not imitate her desire from anyone else, the ambiguous nature of the mirror encompasses both the breaking of intact paradise and the longing for it. In this state of desire, the enclosed, perfected beloved resembles a phantasm. Britomart's fear is that she may resemble "Cephisus' foolish child," who fell in love with his own reflection. She has no hope because her beloved is not a man, "nor other liuing wight.../But th'only shade and semblant of a knight,/Whose shape and person yet I neuer saw" (III.ii.38).

But wicked fortune mine, though mind be good,
Can haue no end, nor hope of my desire,
But feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food,
And like a shadowe wexe, whiles with entire
Affection, I doe languish and expire.
I fonder, then Cephisus foolish child,
Who hauing vewed in a fountaine shere
His face, was with the loue thereof beguild;
I fonder loue a shade, the bodie farre exild.
(ii.44)

The comparison between Britomart and Narcissus draws our attention to the degree to which the self is implicated in the vision of the beloved. Narcissus' grief occurs only when he discovers that his beloved is not another and is therefore wholly inaccessible. Mesmerized by the vision of himself, he languishes and dies. In essence, he is subjected by himself. Similarly, Britomart's grief results from the perception of a shade or shadow, whose "bodie" is "farre exild." It may also result from too great a proximity between this vision and herself, for it exists in her mind, with no corresponding outer reality. Her father's mirror, created by Merlin to convey only that which pertains to the self, elicits images which form a strange combination of inside and outside, self and other. Britomart loves "the semblant pleasing most her mind"(ii.40).[13]

The "monstrousness" of Britomart's desire, her subjection to fortune and to love's "cruell law," and the ambiguous constitution of the other form a complex illustration of the nature and effect of desire. The inception of her love in the "myrrhour" (III.ii.Arg.) points to the nearness of her desire to that of Myrrha, and other incestuous women.[14] The paradoxical definition of desire expressed in these stanzas

describes "monstrous" or transforming desire as a force which propels the subject toward the other while simultaneously denying her access to him. Britomart makes a "Monster" of her mind (ii.40). The "monstrous double" described by Girard is the present and potential condition of Britomart's mind, and declares her proximity to the loss of identity in metamorphosis such as is experienced by Myrrha and Daphne.

Artegall, constituted within the perfect mirror, becomes the "intact paradise from which Britomart is excluded. While Merlin ratifies her choice and her vision by telling her that Artegall is worthy of her love, her vision of him is as yet largely a result of the self-creating imagination. She, like Narcissus, loves a projection of the self, and feeds "on shadowes" while she dies "for food" (III.ii.44). The "self-consuming" pain is linked to the "self-pleasing" thoughts with which she entertains herself.

> But Britomart kept on her former course,
> Ne euer dofte her armes, but all the way
> Grew pensiue through that amorous discourse,
> By which the Redcrosse knight did earst display
> Her louers shape, and cheualrous aray;
> A thousand thoughts she fashioned in her mind,
> And in her feigning fancie did pourtray
> Him such, as fittest she for loue could find,
> Wise, warlike, personable, curteous, and kind.
>
> With such self-pleasing thoughts her wound she fed,
> And thought so to beguile her grieuous smart;
> But so her smart was much more grieuous bred,
> And the deepe wound more deepe engord her hart,
> That nought but death her dolour mote depart.
> (III.iv.5-6)

Britomart "fashions" her lover to fit her love, and thus feeds

her "wound." The "thousand thoughts" with which she thinks to "beguile" her "smart" act instead to make it worse.

The shadows which entice Britomart are the fantasies that alternately beguile and haunt, please and torment. Arthur's grief over the loss of the object, Florimell, is similar: he is like a ship whose "Lodestarre" is suddenly "couered with cloudes" (III.iv.53). A "thousand fancies bet his idle brain/With their light wings, the sights of semblants vaine" (iv.54;emphasis mine). The "semblants vaine" recall the "perfect sight", and "pleasing semblants," as well as the "vaine" effort of Britomart in III.ii. in viewing herself in the mirror. Arthur wishes

> ...that Lady faire might bee
> His Faery Queene, for whom he did complaine:
> Or that his Faery Queene were such, as shee:
> And euer hastie Night he blamed bitterly.
> (III.iv.54)

Instead of rest, Arthur finds sorrow. Night is blamed for interfering with his pursuit of Florimell, and is associated with hell and "horrour hideous." Night is "the root and nurse of bitter cares" to an "heauy hart." The "dreadfull visions, in which aliue/The drearie image of sad death appeares" replace the vision of the beloved, and "men of happinesse depriue" (iv.57). Night harbours evil, "Foule horror, and eke hellish dreriment.... And all that lewdnesse loue, doe hate the light to see" iv.58).[15] Night is associated with deception, light and day with truth and the praise of God.

Arthur's pursuit of Florimell leads him to this troubled space of hellish visions and loss of direction. His wish to equate Florimell and Gloriana, to substitute one for the other, or exchange their identities, is a precursor of the actual substitution of objects that takes place with False Florimell. The "beloved" is, at this point, a "phantasm," not a true other. It is a "pleasing semblant" that has no outer reality, but is largely a creation of the subject's own mind. Arthur describes Night as the obstacle to his happiness, yet it is the darkened condition of his own mind that is the actual "obstacle." It is described in terms that resemble the condition of Girard's subject of desire, who lives in the shadows and is unable to see.

The power of desire to subject and transform its "captiues" is closely linked with both the violence of desire and the creation of the phantasm. The "thousand fancies" which haunt the subject and disrupt sleep (III.ii.29;III.iv.54), as well as the mind of Scudamour, which is troubled by Care and is busy through the night with "unquiet thoughts" and bad dreams,[16] are more moderate versions of the "confusd rout" of "maladies" following after Amoret in Busirane's masque, who are as countless and as varied "as there be phantasies/In wauering wemens wits, that none can tell,/Or paines in loue, or punishments in hell" (xii.26).

The "thousand fancies" and "dreadfull visions" that afflict the minds of Britomart and Arthur are, of course, a

traditional condition of the lover. The grief experienced by all of the lovers is also normal. However, the association between "semblants pleasing," fancies, maladies, "paines in hell," and entertaining shadows indicates a connection between the creation of desire in the minds of the most heroic lovers and those about whom Spenser apologizes for including in his tale. The condition of the mind in all the lovers is differentiated only by degree.

What Britomart and Arthur toy with in their minds are less obvious, but equally potent, forms of the "idol," "eye-doll"[17], or eidolon, of which False Florimell is an embodiment.[18] The eidolon, as Roche and Nohrnberg have pointed out[19], is associated with the myth of Helen and its variants, in which an image of Helen is created to replace the real one. In one version, Roche states, the eidolon travels to Troy with Paris. In another, Paris travels alone. In either case, the ensuing war is futile, since Paris does not possess Helen. Spenser, from canto vii of III onwards, provides a number of versions of the myth of Helen: the "sojourn" of Florimell in Proteus's "protection," the creation of False Florimell, and, as discussed above, the inversion of the burning of Troy at Malbecco's castle, as well as several instances in Books IV and V, all play with and expand on aspects of this myth, which is the archetypal instance of the woman as a prize that confers honour on the victor of love's wars. The fact that Helen can be replaced by the eidolon indicates the extent to which the

subject's vision of the other is based upon the self-creating imagination, rather than upon any significant quality in the woman herself.

The False Florimell is created by the witch to "heal" her son's "decayd" mind; while the Churl's love has been inspired by the real Florimell, his "wounded mind" responds with madness and fragmentation to the loss of the object. The witch's action in providing him with the False Florimell is a literalization of Glauce's response in assuring Britomart that if she loves a "shadow" of a knight, his body must exist somewhere, and may perhaps be obtained.

The False Florimell is constructed from the literalized metaphors of the Petrarchan tradition, with "purest snow in massie mould congeald," "tempred with fine Mercury,/And virgin wex, that neuer yet was seald" (III.viii.6). Golden wire and burning lamps become hair and eyes, and, "in the stead/Of life, she put a Spright to rule the carkasse dead" (viii.7). The "spright" is associated with the "Prince of Darknesse" (viii.8) and knows well how to imitate women's "guile." The male spirit animates the artificial body, and the "counterfeit" is "so liuely and so like, that many it mistook" (viii.5).

The Churl is adequately deceived. False Florimell is at once coy and seductive, encouraging him while keeping him at a distance. She

> Coyly rebutted his embracement light,
> Yet still with gentle countenance retained,
> Enough to hold a foole in vaine delight:
> Him long she so with shadowes entertained,
> As her Creatresse had in charge to her ordained.
> (III.viii.10;emphasis mine)

Created by a female to please a male, and animated by a male spirit, the False Florimell is a "semblant pleasing," and "Idole faire." She is the epitome of the self-created object. Passed from hand to hand, she is taken from Braggadocchio by a "stranger" knight, who thinks she is the "fairest Florimell." She encourages him in this illusion, and "so made him thinke himselfe in heauen, that was in hell" (viii.19). Thus, the "eidolon" is associated with the "thousand fancies," the "paines in love and punishments in hell," and the role of the text of desire in creating its own object.

The creation of the "self-pleasing" semblant is akin to the idolatry that creates the idol to be worshipped. False Florimell is called the "Idole faire"; the story of Stesichorus's blindness associated with the writing of the two versions of the story of Helen provides an insight into the idolatry Spenser describes. Stesichorus is struck blind for slandering Helen by saying that she accompanied Paris to Troy. His punishment is lifted when he rewrites the story, replacing Helen with the eidolon.[20] Blindness is associated with idolatry, in that he who makes idols for himself does so because he cannot see the truth: he dwells among the "shadows." Thus, those who worship the False Florimell are ignorant of the truth, just as Narcissus is ignorant of his own reflection.[21]

In idolatry, man creates his own gods, in order to worship them.[22] This is precisely the case in the constitution of the other as intact paradise. If the subject's desires are directed at the "semblant pleasing" most his mind, then the desire that is produced bears more resemblance to idolatry than it does to love. The woman as intact paradise becomes the woman as idol; she is at once worshipped and desired. According to Gross, "man's making of gods for himself is not at all far from his making a god of himself, something that may limit or destroy as well as exalt the human subject."[23] Thus the desire for the intact paradise also intimates a desire for divinity: to be included within paradise is to be made divine by the text.

A number of the figures who display desire in Books III and IV are clearly associated with this tendency. Argante, a Geauntesse, is a "daughter of the Titans which did make/Warre against heauen, and heaped hils on hight,/To scale the skyes, and put Ioue from his right" (III.vii.47).[24] Her mother is Earth. Corflambo is likewise bred of "an huge Geauntesse" (IV.viii.47), and he takes kingdoms into thrall by the power of his desire. Lust's mother is unknown, although Spenser speculates that he may be bred of "Earth" or of beasts (IV.vii.7). Britomart draws a comparison between herself and the Titans upon seeing the flames that bar the entrance to the House of Busirane: "What monstrous enmity prouoke we heare,/Foolhardy as th'Earthes children, the which made/Battell against the Gods? so we a God inuade" (III.xi.22). Berger

associates Malbecco with the "Tartarean victims -- Tityus, Tantalus, Ixion....though with a crucial difference: pagans were victims of the gods, punished and deprived for aspiring to divine fulfillment and arousing divine phthonos; Malbecco's torments are not only self-inflicted but ultimately self-pleasing."[25] Malbecco is pursued by "griefe, and despight, and gealosie, and scorne" (III.x.55). His "long anguish, and selfe-murdring thought" are imaged by the rock that threatens to fall on him, but never does. He, like Scudamour, is afflicted by doubts and suspicions.

Of all the figures of desire, however, Cupid himself bears the most resemblance to a Titan, since he wishes to be a "victor of the gods." Cupid's "warres" against the gods are depicted in the tapestries; the golden idol of the "wanton boy" bears the legend "vnto the victor of the gods this be." He becomes a text through which desire is "read," one which images desire as an assault upon the gods. He is both the created idol of desire, and a metaphor for the desire for divinity. Thus, the "thousand fancies" and "self-consuming paine" that afflict the lover are coupled with the desire for divinity that images the other as intact paradise.[26]

The lover desires to be included in the intact paradise of the other. He creates an idol to adore, and then prays to this idol for his wishes. The response of the mind to desire is like Pygmalion's creation of and desire for Galatea, whom Venus finally awakens. The eventual result of this love is the birth

of Myrrha and her love for her father, Cinyras, as well as the birth of Adonis. Thus, the desire for the intact paradise is coupled at the outset with the dangers of idolatry and metamorphosis.

The woman as intact paradise becomes the model-obstacle to the subject's desires. In the simplest sense, her existence as model-obstacle is posited by her right to judge the subject's conformity with the text, as does the lady of the courtly love tradition. In another sense, however, the woman is the model-obstacle precisely because she is posited as desirable while being able to admit only one man to her "paradise." That is, while Florimell, Amoret, Belphoebe, Britomart, and other women in the text are all to be admired and desired, they are pledged to love only one. Florimell and Amoret are particularly subject to the attentions of unwanted suitors, who vie for their possession. Thus the woman becomes the source of the "intact identity" desired by the subject. The subject perceives her as perfect and enclosed. The tendency to convert desire for the enclosed object into adoration is evident in the religious awe accorded Florimell, Belphoebe, and Britomart. The witch and her son are dazed by Florimell's beauty, and the witch is "astonisht at her heauenly hew"

> And doubted her to deeme an earthly wight,
> But or some Goddesse, or of Dianes crew,
> And thought her to adore with humble spright,
> T'adore thing so diuine as beauty, were but right.
> (III.vii.11)

While Florimell and Amoret universally arouse desires and are unable to quell them, Britomart and Belphoebe at once cause desire and repel it. The first time she reveals her face, Britomart is likened to a rose with thorns.

> ...full of amiable grace,
> And manly terrour mixed therewithall,
> That as the one stird vp affections bace,
> So th'other did mens rash desires apall,
> And hold them backe, that would in errour fall;
> As he, that hath espide a vermeill Rose,
> To which sharpe thornes and breres the way forstall,
> Dare not for dread his hardy hand expose,
> But wishing it far off, his idle wish doth lose.
> (III.i.46)

Thus, Britomart becomes both a model, in that she encourages them to desire her, and an obstacle, in that her demeanour depresses any such pretensions.[27]

Similarly, when she reveals herself at the Castle of Malbecco, her companions are astonished.

> Which whenas they behold, they smitten were
> With great amazement of so wondrous sight.
> And each on other, and they all on her
> Stood gazing, as if sudden great affright
> Had them surprised. At last auizing right,
> Her goodly personage and glorious hew,
> Which they so much mistooke, they tooke delight
> In their first errour, and yet still anew
> With wonder of her beauty fed their hungry vew.
>
> Yet note their hungry vew be satisfide,
> But seeing still the more desir'd to see,
> And euer firmely fixed did abide
> In contemplation of divinitie...
> (III.ix.23-24)

The hungry view of the beholders cannot have enough of the sight of Britomart, who at once arouses their desire and refuses it. Thus, they contemplate her as if she were a "divinity." She is compared to Minerva, who is "late

returned/From slaughter of the Giaunts conquered" (ix.22)[28] Artegall is similarly overcome upon perceiving Britomart's beauty: his arm becomes powerless to assail her, and his sword drops to the ground.

> ...as if the steele had sence,
> And felt some ruth, or sence his hand did lacke,
> Or both of them did thinke, obedience
> To doe to so diuine a beauties excellence.
>
> And he himselfe long gazing thereupon,
> At last fell humbly downe upon his knee,
> And of his wonder made religion,
> Weening some heauenly goddesse he did see
> Or else vnweeting, what it else might bee;
> (IV.vi.21-22)

Artegall, like the others, does not at first understand what he sees, and is prepared to worship the "divine" beauty that stands before him.

Timias is similarly unable to discern whether Belphoebe is "Angell, or Goddesse" (III.v.35). Belphoebe is a source of frustration, since she invites love, but cannot be approached. She desires "no seruice" (III.v.36). Like Britomart, she is described as a rose, and she contains all the virtues of womanhood. Timias is at a loss: to love her would be disloyal, yet he cannot hate her either. Nor can he see that his service is of any value, to one "whom the heauens do serue and sew" (III.v.47).

The relationship between Timias and Belphoebe illustrates the interaction between the text of desire and the perception of the other as intact paradise. Timias accords Belphoebe a religious veneration that invests his identity in her approval.

When he is rejected by her for his rescue of Amoret, he loses his identity, and becomes a wild man, unrecognizable even by Arthur. The only word Timias has left to him is "Belphoebe," which he inscribes on every tree. Spenser's source for this episode is of course Ariosto: Orlando discovers the loss of Angelica to Medoro when he finds their names inscribed on the trees. According to Margaret Ferguson, "one of the inscriptions, written in Arabic, is indeed what brings Orlando the knowledge of betrayal that his consciousness cannot sustain."[29] While Ariosto demonstrates the effect of this text of desire on the excluded subject, which is to fragment Orlando and drive him to madness, Spenser uses it differently. Timias, the excluded subject, himself inscribes Belphoebe's name on the trees. It is not her attachment to any "other" or rival that causes his despair, but rather her exclusion of him.

Goldberg states that it is Belphoebe's perception of Timias that causes his decay: "In her eyes, Timias's behavior instances lust, and what she sees produces what occurs; Timias becomes the image of Lust, retrospectively a justification of her perception but also a result of it."[30] Her perception of him defines him; his willing metamorphosis deprives him of his identity. Whether or not Timias is actually an image of lust, or lusts after Amoret, it is his own grief at Belphoebe's rejection that causes his transformation. He is deprived of all language except her name.[31]

While Belphoebe's extreme chastity excludes the other according to her own text, both she and Timias read all desire as lust. Timias reads his love for her as an insult; he disguises his love, just as Britomart masks her "wounded mind," and Belphoebe is unable to recognize the nature of his attachment to her, or the nature of the aid he extends to Amoret. The nature of the double-bind in which she places Timias is akin to the Squire of Dames' lady, who punishes him for his success.

The admission of the beloved into the intact paradise of the other implies the breaking of the circle. That is, the walls that exclude the subject are broken down. The significance of this act is reflected in the alternation between open and closed, chaste and unchaste, in many of the episodes in Books III and IV. The Squire of Dames ability to seduce ladies, and his inability to find enough ladies to refuse him illustrates this ambiguity, which is the desire for the lady to be at once wanton and chaste, coy and seductive, contradictory behaviour in which the False Florimell is quite practiced.

The alternation between open and closed, inclusion and exclusion, argues the extent to which the identity of the lover is based upon exclusive acceptance into the intact paradise of the other. Peter Stallybrass, in his discussion of the role of women in the social order, states that the accusations of both

wantonness and coyness articulate a concern with both her accessibility and her intactness.

> Like the members of the male elite, the class aspirant has an interest in preserving social closure, since without it there would be nothing to aspire to. But, at the same time, that closure must be sufficiently flexible to incorporate him. His conceptualization of woman will as a result be radically unstable: she will be perceived as oscillating between the enclosed body (the purity of the elite to which he aspires) and the open body (or else how could he attain her?), between being "too coy" and "too common."[32]

The "class aspirant" described by Stallybrass has much in common with the "subject" of mimetic desire, since both seek access to the stable identity contained within a defined sphere. If this stable identity is invested in woman, then the woman must be open enough to admit the lover, but closed so as not to pose any threat to the stability of the social order. Thus, Cambina's ability to rule "her thoughts with goodly gouernement,/For dread of blame and honours blemishment" and make a law "vnto her lookes" (IV.ii.36) is opposed to Corflambo's infectious glances, which kindle desire in all those who see him. Likewise, Amoret's fear of being thought wanton is justified when we see the accusations being levelled against her. Ate can kindle doubts in Scudamour's mind about her loyalty to him, and Sclaunder takes pleasure in defaming her virtue. Spenser's warning about "misreading" her actions in "conuersing" with Arthur is apt when we consider that speech and chastity are associated; Florimell's silence when she is at last confronted with Marinell stems from a fear of being

thought too "loose."[33] According to Stallybrass, "silence, the closed mouth, is made a sign of chastity. And silence and chastity are, in turn, homologous to woman's enclosure within the house."[34]

Stallybrass's statements apply well to the image of the enclosed woman as well as that of the woman as prize. Hellenore's escape from Malbecco's imprisoning desire, and her enjoyment of the openness of sexual life with the Satyr's corroborate the male fear. The destruction of the castle at Paridell's instigation indicate the collapse of identity in the loss of the other. The order which had been preserved by her enforced seclusion is transformed into chaotic wandering.

Much of the commentary on chastity has to do with this principle: Satyrane and Paridell's remarks on the futility of imprisoning women to preserve chastity (III.ix.6-8), Malbecco's equation of Hellenore with his hoarded gold, and even Vulcan's creation of the cestus to keep Venus chaste all argue both the necessity and the futility of enclosing women.[35]

The cestus is used both as a measure of chastity and a means of keeping women chaste. Like the glass tower in which Phao is enclosed, it "breaks" if the love is false. It is brought forward at the Tournament for False Florimell as a prize worthy of being won. Satyrane bears "the precious relicke in an arke/Of gold, that bad eyes might it not prophane" (IV.iv.15).

> The same aloft he hong in open vew,
> To be the prize of beautie and of might;
> The which eftsoones discouered, to it drew
> The eyes of all, allur'd with close delight,
> And hearts quite robbed with so glorious sight,
> That all men threw out vowes and wishes vaine.
> Thrise happie Ladie, and thrise happie knight,
> Them seemd that could so goodly riches gaine,
> So worthy of the perill, worthy of the paine.
> (IV.iv.16)

The cestus has been created by Vulcan for his wife, Venus, "for her loues first hire," in order to "bind lasciuious desire" (IV.v.4). The girdle is supposed to give "the vertue of chaste loue,/And wiuehood true, to all that did it beare." If an unchaste woman should try to wear it, it will "loose, or else a sunder teare." Yet Venus wears it only when she "vsd to liue in wiuely sort;/But layd aside, when so she vsd her looser sport" (IV.v.3).

The difficulty with using the cestus as a measure is that when the Ladies compete to see who is the fairest, Florimell wins, since the "forged things do fairest shew" (IV.v.15). She is awarded the cestus, but she cannot close it around her waist. The other ladies also try it, but only Amoret can wear it. The Squire of Dames comments on the shame to which all have been put by the unchastity of the ladies: "Vngirt vnblest," he says. Furthermore, although the cestus only fits Amoret, False Florimell snatches it from her and ties it around her own waist.

Like False Florimell, the cestus is a "forged thing," since it is forged by Vulcan to keep his wife chaste. False Florimell is the "Idole faire" which, like the cestus, attracts

all men's desires. The cestus is a relic borne in a sacred ark, and acts as the tangible measure of the intact paradise. The indicator of the preservation of the intact paradise, and the self-creation of that paradise finally coincide.

The cestus alternates between open and closed and is linked with the "phantasie," particularly as it is represented by the "hellish snake" of jealousy, since men are jealous if they perceive their objects as "open." The state of the desiring subject's wounded mind is akin to the "fantasies in wauering wemens wits, or paines in loue, or punishments in hell." Thus, the envious or greedy state of the excluded victim is the same state which fosters the "semblants pleasing" to the mind, and the one which creates the tapestries in the House of Busirane, in which the "rich metall lurked priuily"

> ...Yet here, and there, and euery where vnwares
> It shewd it selfe, and shone vnwillingly;
> Like a discolourd Snake, whose hidden snares
> Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht
> backe declares. (III.xi.28)

This same snake is the one that lurks potentially in the mind of every lover.[36] It is the one that Redcrosse appeases in Britomart when he gives her hope of Artegall's worth with "pleasing words," which "are like to Magick art,/That doth the charmed Snake in slomber lay" (III.ii.15).

The snake also appears in positive images: two snakes are intertwined around Cambina's rod in the symbol of peace and health (IV.iii.42). Another snake, holding its tail in its mouth, twines around the legs of the statue of Venus (IV.x.40).

In these instances, the snake becomes the image for the mind healed in reconciliation, and in containment within the intact paradise. Cambina's rod initiates the banishment of strife and contention from the minds of the combatants. The statue of Venus represents the perfected union of man and woman in the hermaphrodite.

The alternately open and closed cestus is a literalization of the "snake" of jealousy, as well as the snake which closes itself around the hermaphrodite's legs. It acts to indicate the "sacred" body of the chaste woman, who can confer the intact paradise on the desiring subject. Yet, while Amoret is the only one who can fasten it around her waist, Scudamour is rarely free from his cares and doubts as to her chastity. He describes her as a "sacred pledge" which has been "defiled with foule villainie" (IV.vi.8). Britomart, perceived by Scudamour as the knight who has breached Amoret's chastity, is viewed as the model-obstacle to his desire. Thus, the "fantasies" and cares of the subject arise from his "reading" of desire rather than from the actual chastity of the object.

The "intact paradise" of the lover's desire is given the fullest literary shape in the Temple of Venus. In this episode, all the elements of the literary and psychological structure for desire are presented: Scudamour, Cupid's man, reads his way into desire and seizes the prize. His "purchase" of Amoret places her in the position of prize; his purpose throughout is

to "winne honour" and to "purchase [him] some place amongst the best" (IV.10.4).

The Temple is located on an Island, defended by a castle, and by twenty knights whose role is to protect "that Castels ancient rights" (7). In the plain before it hangs the "shield of loue"; the inscription "Blessed be the man that well can vse his bliss:/Whose euer be the shield, faire Amoret be his" (8) is embossed on the pillar in golden letters.The phrasing is reminiscent of the 1590 ending of The Faerie Queene, in which Britomart, witnessing the hermaphroditic reunion of Scudamour and Amoret, stands "enuying" their "blesse." Maureen Quilligan points out that "Blesser, in French, is to wound; such wounding...is bliss."[37] The combination of "bliss" and "bless" conveys the wounding of the mind by the text of desire that figures the other as intact paradise. To enter into paradise or bliss is to be "blessed." To desire entry is to be wounded. The cryptic phrasing of "vngirt, vnblest" also serves to associate the alternation of the open and closed other with the idolatrous desire of the subject. The inscription is the impetus for Scudamour's assault on the knights and his subsequent entry into the Temple: it is blatantly the text that forms his desire.

Scudamour makes his way past Doubt, Delay, and Daunger, three of the participants in Busirane's Masque, who guard the gates. Within this "second paradise," he finds the lovers, paired, walking blissfully in the ordered garden, speaking only

of and to each other. He begins "their endlesse happinesse enuye,/That being free from feare and gealosye,/Might frankely there their lques desire possesse" (28).[38]

Love, Hate and Concord stand at the entrance to the Temple, forming a picture of discordia concors.[39] Concord, the mother of this pair by different fathers, is also the mother of Peace and Friendship, who are born of heavenly seed. Through the production of the latter pair, Concord also acquires heavenly characteristics, which accounts for her ability to lend "happinesse," along with strength and wealth, to subdue strife, war and anger, and to make friends of foes (IV.x.34). She, like her twin sons, is almost sacred, and assumes some of Venus's powers. Her hands are "blessed," and she stands between the brothers, forever intervening in the conflict. Neither properly human nor divine, Concord occupies a curious in-between at the entrance to the enclosed space of the Temple.

If the space around the Temple is filled with lovers, speaking only of each other, the Temple itself is filled with alienated supplicants, who bring precious gifts to lay upon the altars and gain the favour of the deity. The Temple is filled with the fumes of burning frankincense, and a hundred altars flame "with their sacrifices fire." The steam from the fires carries the lovers vows to heaven (IV.x.37-38).

The Temple is a place of sacrifice, of unfulfilled desire, and of sacred prizes. The idol, the Goddesse self, stands upon an altar, and combines male and female in her perfect

stillness. She is covered with a veil, and a snake, "head and tail fast combyned," twines about her feet (IV.x.40). She, or it, is both "syre and mother" and "needeth other none" (41), and she images the perfect union of man and woman.

Venus is represented as partly statue and partly the "Goddesse selfe." "In shape and beautie," the idol exceeds all others, "which the heathen adore," even that made by Phidias, with which that "wretched Greeke...did fall in love" (IV.x.40).[40] The altars on which sacrifices are made to her, the frankincense that burns in her Temple, and the prayers that are made to her all suggest that she is viewed as the "Great God of men" (47). The reference to the "sacrilege" done by robbing the "Church" reinforces this view.

Although Venus's role in the world may be, through love, to maintain the stars in their places and foster generation, her transmutation from Goddesse to idol to Great God suggests the degree of idolatry inherent in this representation of her. If she has been "created" from the elements Spenser describes, then she is a product of man. Yet the pleas made at her feet emphasize the ambiguity of the worship. We cannot know whether the lovers differentiate between the idol in front of them, and the true nature of the God or Goddesse. While in the House of Busirane, we see Cupid assault his mother and wage war on the rest of the pantheon, in the Temple of Venus, there is no mention of other gods. Venus, and her son Cupid who holds sway in the "kingdome of loue," are the only ones mentioned.

In creating the statue of Venus, investing it with all the powers, and then worshipping it, man has indeed created a god in order to make a god of himself. If the desire for the intact paradise or perfect narcissism is the desire to be enclosed, then Venus, as idol, contains herself perfectly, and "needeth other none."[41] Combining both male and female, she has no desire. The snake which holds its tail in its mouth, and twines itself around her feet enacts the perfect closure which she represents. According to Berger, the devotees of Venus "project, see, and worship only what they want, namely, their own commitment to courtship as the totality of life."[42]

Venus is seen as responsible for the desire experienced by the lovers: it is she who draws the beasts away from their food and makes them rage because of the kindly fire.[43] Yet, as we have seen with Scudamour, it is the lovers' own definition of desire that causes them the pain, and which can be seen as caused by the sight of other pairs, as when Scudamour begins to envy the lovers in the "second paradise," and Britomart envies the hermaphroditic image presented by Scudamour and Amoret in the 1590 ending of The Faerie Queene.

The desire which is initiated in the text outside the "intact paradise" of Venus's Isle progresses through the envy of the pairs of lovers, and ends with the perception of Amoret within the circle of women at the Idol's feet. Scudamour, like the birds which sing in the gilded cages, is imprisoned by the text of desire, and calls to Venus for relief.

The circle of damsels personify various aspects of the ideal feminine, including modesty, silence, and chastity. Amoret sits in Womanhood's lap within the circle. Using the shield of love, which has Cupid emblazoned upon it, Scudamour breaks into the heart of the circle and claims his "beloved."[44] He sees her as a sacred object, belonging to the Temple: "sacrilege me seem'd the Church to rob." Possession of her indicates his admission to the intact paradise of his desire. Holding her hand, and paying no heed to her protests, he leads her out of the Temple.

Amoret, in fact, becomes a sacrificial victim. She is at once the embodiment of enclosed "intact paradise" replaced, in innocence, within the text of desire, and the model-obstacle which resists the assault upon its identity. Scudamour sees himself as Orpheus, taking his beloved out of hell. Admission into the intact paradise should indeed banish the "paines of love" and "punishments in hell" which previously assaulted him. Yet Amoret is imprisoned, not free. Neither she nor Scudamour has "ioyed day" since they met. She is the "glorious spoyle of beautie," and at this point she, like the eidolon, vanishes completely from the text.

The disappearance of Amoret can be equated with the disappearance of the woman as intact paradise. The "premature" closure represented by the closing of the snake, which is the desire for the intact paradise, is lost. Amoret is a sacrifice to that desire, made sacred by the investment in her of both

perfect love and chastity. Scudamour's desire for her is a kind of idolatry. Scudamour, rather than lend his ear to her protests, prefers to be a "victor in love's wars."

In a vision of desire which constitutes itself in an excluded subject, and created idols, there seems to be no real possibility for happiness. The text of desire, which defines itself in terms of mimetic rivalry, imprison its subjects in the "religion" of love. From the Castle Joyeous to the House of Busirane, the "law of love" is depicted as cruel and exclusive. The beloved is viewed as an intact paradise which becomes an "Idole faire." The terms of desire described by Spenser in the House of Busirane and the Temple of Venus allow for complete subjugation of both self and object: Scudamour is subjected to the force of Venus, while Amoret becomes the sacrifice made to the Goddess. In Girardian terms, she is the one who may reorder the community by becoming sacred. While the vision of desire held by any individual figure may alternate between a loss of identity on the part of the subject and on the part of the object, both participants in fact lose their "humanity" in the dehumanizing cycle of desire.

The imprisoning of the subject in the self-creating texts of desire allows no room for the "text" of the other. That is, the subject is unable to perceive the other within the blinding text of desire, substituting for the other an eidolon of his own making. Britomart learns to accommodate her text to the other: her vision of a pleasing semblant encounters the other

in the "salvage man," and the man replaces the idol when he is named. The divisive force of desire gives way before inclusive compassion as the texts of desire are redefined in terms of love.

Notes to Chapter III

1. Berger sees the "longing for paradise as the psychological basis of the pastoral retreat from life." He states that it is "expressed in disappointed as well as unrealistic expectations. The assertion of ignorance, frustration, irreversible decline, general corruption, and any other pains or evils, as the normal way of life, is traced by Spenser to too fixed an attachment to an unattainable state -- an attachment in which the idyllic (what could be) is set up as a model of the ideal (what should be) or the actual (what is). "The Aging Boy," pp. 27-28. Cited from "Mode and Diction in The Shepheardes Calendar," Modern Philology 67 (1969), p. 143. Berger sees this principle at work in The Shepheardes Calendar, and does not apply it directly to Spenser's other works. Intimations of it appear in several other essays, however; in "A Secret Discipline," he describes the psychology of the "have-not," particularly in relation to the Blatant Beast, who "embodies the social expression of the malice produced by despair and self-hatred -- the despair of the have-not who hungers after the good of others, who sees himself deprived of place and function, totally dependent on the world outside him, stripped of any 'daily beauty in his life'." In Form and Convention in the Poetry of Edmund Spenser, ed. William Nelson, (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1961), p. 42.

2. "The Aging Boy," p. 26.

3. "Orpheus, Pan, and the Poetics of Misogyny," English Literary History 50, (1983), p. 43.

4. "A Secret Discipline," p. 1.

5. "A Secret Discipline," pp. 50-51.

6. "A Secret Discipline," p. 50.

7. As Girard has shown, the two impulses are closely related. In both cases, the victim is perceived as having some power or uncontrolled violence which, through the sacrifice and consumption of the victim, is at once rejected and reincorporated into the community. Berger states of the Serena episode that "the female body becomes the source of all value,

the object of all desires," "A Secret Discipline," p. 55. Thus, the female body is at once the sacrificial victim and the source of determining identity for the "community."

8. As Grabe demonstrates, the meanings of the glass are widely varied, associated with both vanity and beauty, love and desire, and a wide variety of positive and negative attributes. The Mutable Glass, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982).

9. Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology, (1939; rpt. New York: Icon, 1972), pp. 160-2.

10. As Alastair Fowler suggests, the name of one of Malecasta's knights is Gardante because he signifies erotic looking. The fact that Britomart is wounded by him signifies her susceptibility to lust of the eyes. "Six Knights at the Castle Joyeous." Cesare Ripa represents the inception of love by a young beauty who holds a mirror in one hand and a torch in the other. The legend reads: "C'est ainsi que l'Amour s'allume dans le coeur." Iconologie, tr. Jean Beaudoin (Paris, 1644), Renaissance and the Gods Series, no.29, (New York and London: Garland, 1976), p. 133. Thus the combination of the beauty, the torch and the mirror acts as a kind of burning glass to ignite desire in the heart of the beholder.

11. Lauren Silberman, "Singing Unsung Heroines," in Rewriting the Renaissance, eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986).

12. According to Lauren Silberman, "as long as Britomart sees her own face in the looking glass, its magic is vain: it does not work. She cannot be content to be the objective observer with no prior interest in what she sees; that is what is truly vain." "Singing Unsung Heroines," p. 263.

13. Kenneth Gross also notes the importance of the first image of the mirror in our understanding of this episode. He points, in particular, to the combination of the "iconographic types" of Vanitas, "whose mirror shows only the self and its illusions, with that of a Prudentia, whose glass reflects the truth of present and past." Prudence is in fact prudent because she knows herself, a characteristic that Narcissus lacks, and which is the reason why he does not immediately recognize himself in the fountain's sheer surface (the prophesy received by his mother states that Narcissus shall live only as long as he does not know himself). Britomart is placed ambivalently between these extremes. Gross states that "at least, insofar as the source of the apparition at this point is a mirror, we should take seriously the generative relation of Artegall's image to Britomart's act of looking, if only to wonder whether the wound that the vision of him gives to her narcissism is not

a further reflection of that narcissism." Spenserian Poetics, p. 147. Angus Fletcher also discusses the iconographical relevance of the image of the mirror. Prophetic Moment, n.67, pp. 110-11.

14. Even in the context of Renaissance vagaries, the spelling of "myrrhour" is unusual. The only other place in which Spenser uses this particular spelling is in the January Eclogue of the Shepheardes Calendar. This variant does not appear in the OED, although a near relative, myrrhor, does appear. Abraham Fraunce uses this variation in The Countesse of Pembroke's Iuychurch, in which he describes "Myrrha...a myrrhor/Of most monstrous lust, was late transformed to a myrrh-tree." Renaissance and the Gods Series, no. 1[illegible], (New York and London: Garland, 1976), p. 43.

15. Girard's discussion of the effects of the "scandal" on the subject use the terms "shadows" and "light" to describe the difference between living in misrecognition of the nature of desire, and knowing the truth. There is a strong association in Spenser between shadows and desire: it is first drawn at the Castle Joyeous, when the knightly personifications of aspects of courtly love are described. To Britomart, "they all but shadowes been" (III.i.45).

16. After Ate has made Scudamour doubt Amoret's faithfulness, he has difficulty sleeping. Even when he finally achieves sleep, "his dayly feare/His ydle braine gan busily molest,/And made him dreame those two disloyall were" (IV.v.43). According to Goldberg, "Scudamour meets in Care a paradigmatic embodiment of desire, his own desire as well as the absorbing thought of his fellow travelers in disquietude. Care -- shaggy, ragged and blind; busy at his forge of "unquiet thoughts, that carefull minds invade" (v.35.9) -- is a composite figure, an amalgam of desire, a palimpsest; he anticipates the form of greedy Lust, but is as blind as Cupid and at his forge replays Vulcan, the archetypal cuckolded husband, as well." Endlesse Worke, pp.106-7.

17. Gross, Spenserian Poetics, p. 173.

18. According to Kenneth Gross, "Arthur....pursuing the materialized form of his dream image, is always in danger of falling into a preemptive idolatry of substitute forms of the goal." p.149. As we have already stated, many of the figures in this poem pursue one goal and arrive at another: Belphoebe finds Timias instead of the wounded beast; Venus and Diana find the twins Amoret and Belphoebe instead of Cupid.

19. Roche, The Kindly Flame, p. 152-3. James Nohrnberg, The Analogy of The Faerie Queene, pp. 223-24. Roche cites Frank J. Groten, jr., "The Tradition of the Helen Legend in Greek

Literature," unpublished Princeton Ph.D. dissertation, 1955.

20. See Roche, pp. 152-3 and Nohrnberg, pp. 223-4.

21. Calvin R. Edwards discusses the neoplatonic applications of the relationship between Narcissus and his reflection, and states that he falls in love with his reflection because he is ignorant of the true nature of beauty; he loves shadows instead of seeking the truth of the soul. Cf. "The Narcissus Myth in Spenser's Poetry," Studies in Philology 74 (1977).

22. As described above, the process of idol-making is different prior to the revelation: in Violence and the Sacred, Girard states that the making of a god occurs after the murder of the rival. The victim first assumes the responsibility for the violence and is then made sacred. The worship of the model is slightly different, since in this case the subject sees himself as the excluded victim.

23. Spenserian Poetics, p. 39.

24. Her sire is Typhoeus, "who mad through merth,/And drunke with bloud of men, slaine by his might,/Through incest, her of his owne mother Earth/Whilome begot" (III.vii.47).

25. "Malbecco," p. 146.

26. Both idolatry and the desire for divinity are associated by Girard with mimetic desire and the power of Satan, the skandalon.

27. The image of the rose surrounded by thorns and briars is perhaps a common one for the inviting yet unapproachable woman. Spenser associates the thorns with the perils of lust: while Britomart's thorns deter unwanted suitors, others pursue the object in spite of impediments. The Forester pursues Florimell, pushing his "tyreling jade..../Through thicke and thin, both ouer banke and bush/In hope her to attaine by hooke or crooke,/That from his gorie sides the bloud did gush" (III.i.17). Arthur and Guyon also pursue her through "thick and thin" (III.iv.46), as does the Hyena (III.vii.23). Malbecco, on the other hand, flees the satyrs' dwelling, trying to leave his grief at the loss of wife and money behind him: "Ne banck nor bush could stay him, when he sped/His nimble feet, as treading still on thorne" (III.x.55). In the Masque, the thorns are joined with both the assaultive nature of desire, and the fear of "shadows" we see with Arthur and Britomart: Doubt treads carefully, for fear of stepping on thorns, while Daunger threatens to kill or entrap enemies and friends alike, and Feare shrinks from shadows (III.xii.10-12). In IV.vii, Spenser compiles all of the allusions to obstacles in flight. Amoret, flies "full fast" and "farre afore him goes,/Ne feeles the

thornes and thickets pricke her tender toes" (IV.vii.21).

> Nor hedge, nor ditch, nor hill nor dale she staies,
> But ouerleapes them all, like Robucke light,
> And through the thickest makes her nighest waies...
> (IV.vii.22)

When Timias confronts Lust, Lust and uses Amoret as a shield, so that she receives the blows. All the participants in this text of desire are endangered and wounded. Belphoebe alone remains immune.

28. Britomart's removal of her armour in IV.i.13-14 has a similar effect. She is compared to Bellona on this occasion.

29. Margaret Ferguson, Trials of Desire, p. 130.

30. Goldberg, Endlesse Worke, p. 49.

31. Timias's "double bind" is comically rehearsed in the earlier tale of the Squire of Dames. He has put life and death into the hands of his beloved, whom he loves and serves (III.vii.53). His "quest" is to "do seruice vnto gentle Dames" for a full year, and, at the end of that time, to "bring their names/And pledges; as the spoiles of all [his] victorious games" (III.vii.54). He succeeds all too well, gaining favours and pledges from three hundred ladies. His beloved banishes him for his success, until such time as he can find three hundred women who will refuse him.

32. Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," in Rewriting the Renaissance, eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press), p.134. According to Stallybrass, "within the literary discourse, class aspiration can be displaced onto the enchanted grounds of romance, where considerations of status are transformed into considerations of sexual success. In the form of desire, this success is the always-deferred moment of final incorporation; in the form of attainment, it is, paradoxically, the imminent threat of loss inscribed within the unstable conceptualization of woman as simultaneously enclosed and open, the passive conferrer of status, and, in the act of union with the aspirant, the active transgressor of status boundaries." pp. 134-5.

33. Goldberg points to the variety of meanings of "conversation," the root of which is "living together." Endlesse Worke, p.61, n.7.

34. p. 127. According to Stallybrass, "the surveillance of women concentrated upon three specific areas: the mouth, chastity, the threshold of the house. These three areas were frequently collapsed into each other. The connection between speaking and wantonness was common to legal discourse and

conduct books. A man who was accused of slandering a woman by calling her "whore" might defend himself by claiming that he meant "whore of her tonge" not "whore of her body." (citing Ralph Houlbrooke, Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation, 1520-1570 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), 80.), p. 126.

35.The emphasis on woman as the object enclosed and intact paradise is somewhat misleading, for of course men are not the only ones who love. Spenser pays a great deal of attention to the woman who loves actively. In fact, he may be said to be rewriting the place for women within the romance. While the original impulse in desire may be to imprison the other, Britomart's final action towards Artegall is to "release" or "liberate" him. This is strongly opposed to other attempts to imprison or confine the beloved. The Radigund episode is highly interesting for a variety of reasons, not least of which is Artegall's recurring worship of the other (wonder made religion) and the transformation of Britomart into a "goddess" by the people whom she has just freed.

In Girardian terms, Britomart and Radigund engage in a conflict of doubles, but instead of Radigund being transformed into the sacred victim, Britomart becomes the goddess, and disappears from the text. The fears of domination by woman are dealt with by making her into a goddess. The usual treatment of this episode tends to emphasize the narrator's comments on the role of women in society, and the evil of purchasing "licentious libertie." This statement is in direct contradiction to the "partiall" praise at the beginning of Book III, as well as the role of Isis in relationship to Osiris in the vision at the Temple. Thus, while the Radigund episode tends to be pivotal in any argument arguing for or against Spenser's "feminism", such as it may be, and Britomart has been said to be retiring from the text to fulfill her sexual destiny, what we see is a return to the supreme goddess, with Isis replacing Venus. The feminine is once again worshipped as external, and repressed as subsidiary, after the interlude of female knights. The ambiguous and uncontainable feminine is excluded from interpretation.

36. According to Harry Berger, the image of the snake, which lurks in Malbecco's wounded mind, "will reappear as a metaphor applied to the stuff of Busirane's tapestries (xi.28) and, in amplified form, as the wounded dragon supporting Cupid in the gold statue of the first room (xi.48). As both these contexts suggest, the mind wounded first by desire then by jealousy and/or envy, provides a backdrop and basic support to the basic condition embodied as Busirane's house." "The Discarding of Malbecco," p. 148. Iris Tillman Hill links Scudamour's "greedy will" to Arthur and Guyon's "great enuie and fell gealosy," and states that they "have their source in that 'Hateful hellish Snake'" which is jealousy. "Britomart and 'Be Bold, Be Not Too

Bold'," English Literary History 38 (1971),p.181. According to Hill, the snake is the "antipode to the heavenly "sacred fire" which brings love, great deeds and praise." I do not agree with her hard distinction between "sacred fire" and the snake, for, while the results are different, both are manifestations of the desire for intact paradise. C.S. Lewis would disagree with Berger's assessment of the dragon as a version of the snake, since he sees the dragon as the guardian of chastity, and suggests that the blinding of the dragon's eyes symbolizes its inability to do so in this context. Spenser's Images of Life, (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 22-24. There are a number of snakes in The Faerie Queene, from the asp that kills Cleopatra in I.v.50, and the spawn of Error in I.i.22, to the snakes in the mouth of the Blatant Beast in VI.xii.8. The crocodile that appears in Britomart's dream at the Temple of Isis may perhaps be seen as another version of the snake.

37. Milton's Spenser, p. 207.

38. This statement echoes a similar one in the Garden of Adonis. In fact, the description of the Temple of Venus has many points of correspondence with the Garden of Adonis, particularly in its enclosedness, its plenty, and in the gate by which people "wend in and out." In the Garden of Adonis, Genius lets the babes wend in and out freely; in the Temple of Venus, the way is guarded, and only the boldest, or the most guileful, can go in. In the Garden of Adonis, "...sweet loue gentle fits emongst them throwes,/Without fel? rancor, or fond gealosie;/Franckly each paramour his leman knowes,/Each bird his mate, ne any does enuie/Their goodly meriment, and gay felicitie" (III.vi.41). In the Garden, Venus's is the only sorrow, for she pities the creatures their eventual death. Here Adonis is "Eterne in mutabilitie." In the Temple, however, the lovers who are present are already dead. Venus has no pity for the lovers who plead their cases before her. Scudamour "enuyes" the bliss of the lovers he sees. In the Garden, "the ioyous birdes make their pastime/Emongst the shadie leaues, their sweet abodes,/And their true loues without suspition tell abrode" (III.vi.42). In the Temple, the birds are caged, and cry to Venus to "coole their kindly rages" (IV.x.45). In the Garden, Cupid must leave aside his wounding arrows before he can enter, and those who inhabit it enjoy perfect felicity. In the Temple, the younger brothers of Cupid flit around the shoulders of the idol, while Cupid is busy in the kingdom of love.

39. Love and Hate are "begotten by two fathers of one mother" and have "contrarie natures" (IV.x.32). Hate is the elder of the brothers, although Love is stronger. Concord is also the mother of a pair of twins, Peace and Friendship, who are born of heavenly seed. In Girardian terms, the one mother with two or three partners indicates the lack of differentiation

inherent in mimetic desire. The threatened conflict between Love and Hate, while symbolically explicit of the balance of similarity and difference, or as Berger puts it, the differing stages of adaptation to the Other in the progress of desire, also contains mythic elements of the founding murder. While Hate threatens to destroy, Love threatens to "mayster." In both, the figure contains the potential to "overcome" the other, either by destruction or assimilation. The twins, Peace and Friendship, are also interesting in the Girardian context: in the "primitive" experience, twins are either dangerous to the community because double and anomalous, or they are revered, set apart as a good omen, for the same reasons. In either case, their status is due to their potential for mimetic conflict.

40. The image of the workman falling in love with his own creation echoes Pygmalion's love for Galatea.

41. According to Goldberg, "As an amalgam of opposites, Venus is represented as containing what would be in human terms the contradictions of fulfillment and dissatisfaction. Only she -- unlike the lovers in the Temple -- fails to experience the oppositions as divisive. Her hermaphroditism signifies a genuine power, for unlike the solitary lover or the paired lovers, she "needeth other none" (41.9). Compelling all others to the disabling desire for another, Venus is the image of a self-containment that is not so driven. The system of desire that she instigates -- and "nature" is the field of operation where she works her arts -- is one in which she has no part. The idol at the center of the Temple embodies a coincidentia oppositorum in "the Goddesse selfe" that is unavailable to humans except in the form of fantasy and desire. Venus, as the embodiment and shape of overmastering desire, puts the individual, the self out of play at the same time as she creates the self as the instrument of desire." Endlesse Worke, p. 92. Goldberg's description of the desire experienced in the Temple has much in common with Girard's concept of the effects of mimetic desire, in which any true self vanishes and is replaced by the self defined in desire.

42. Berger, "Two Spenserian Retrospects," p. 10. According to Kenneth Gross, "the idol may be the emphatic lie taken for truth, but it is also the truth that has collapsed into a lie, the urgent, mythopoeic cipher converted into a vacant myth. The idol may be the originally secular or profane image invested with an almost sacred trust. It can also be the sacred hierophantic image reduced to mechanism, a mystery become a temporal institution subject to the rule of a selfish priesthood." p. 27. I believe that this is the case in the Temple of Venus. The lie taken for truth describes the creation of the False Florimell.

43. One of the distinctions between Book III and Book IV is that in Book III Cupid is made responsible for the disorder and pain experienced by the lovers, and his statue is the subject of idolatrous worship and the cause of metamorphosis. In Book IV, it is the hermaphroditic Venus who is responsible.

44. Scudamour's action here resembles Busirane's attempt to "carve" his way into Amoret's heart.

IV. Reading and Desire

Chapters Two and Three examined the relationship between the texts of desire and the psychology of the desiring subject. Versions of texts are adopted by the desiring subject in order to cope with the disintegrating effects of desire's wounds: the subject views himself as an excluded victim whose admission into the "intact paradise" is denied by the rival or by the woman as model-obstacle. The woman becomes model-obstacle when she is constituted within the texts of desire. Contradictory demands -- that she be both closed and open -- ensure the lack of satisfactory access to the intact paradise. The perception of the beloved as intact paradise is coupled with a tendency to convert desire into idolatry.

The texts of desire alternate with the desire of or for the text, as Goldberg points out.[1] The "frustrations of reading," caused by narrative disruption, ambiguity, and the disappearance of figures, are linked with the frustrations of the figures themselves,[2] the frustration of Scudamour outside the House of Busirane and the frustrations of all those who do not gain the favours of the False Florimell. The False Florimell, as self-consciously manufactured as any literary

creation, uses "forged guile" to enter into their minds, and inspire their desires.

The double-bind in which the characters all too frequently find themselves may figure the reader's double-bind. Britomart is confronted with the text "Be bold, be bold," written everywhere over the doorway. She cannot "construe it/By any ridling skill, or commune wit" (III.xi.54). This text is opposed to another, "Be not too bold," written on another door, to which she bends "her earnest mind," and is yet unable to discern what it 'intends.' The contradictory commands defy her ability to understand them with the skill she possesses; she is obliged to wait patiently, duly armed, for further developments. The injunctions, placed as they are over different doors, may signify the different paths she will follow, and texts to which she will be exposed, depending on which injunction she obeys. Similarly, the reader's reaction to the text depends entirely on which elements he privileges.

The reader's double-bind results from the ambiguous nature of the text. As we stated previously, Spenser's "mistakes," such as the exchange of Triamond for Telamond, the sudden and momentary appearance of Palladine, and the disappearance of Amoret, as well as the unclear use of "he" and "she," form a barrier to coherent interpretation. Critical insistence on "a place for everything and everything in its place" finds a serious stumbling block in these textual inconsistencies. As Goldberg points out, the attempt to explain these occurrences

often becomes the need to "explain [them] away."[3] Furthermore, contradictions between narrative discriminations, such as the one at III.iii.1, which distinguishes between sacred flame and base lust, and the actual experiences of figures within the text, constitute an almost insurmountable double-bind. The reader, made to share the frustrations of the figures in the text, is pointed toward a textual statement which is undermined by textual events.

If the reader is meant to imitate the text, in the mimetic principle implied by Spenser's wish to "fashion a gentleman," then we wonder what, at least in these two books, he is meant to imitate. Belphoebe and Amoret are held up as "ensamples" of chastity and true love, but they are mutually exclusive. According to John Bean, they demonstrate that "healthy human love is an integration of the yielding passion of Amoret and the personal intactness of Belphoebe, a paradox of the simultaneously lost and retained self."[4] Other patterns include Florimell, if we consider Florimell, Amoret, and Belphoebe as the three graces, with Britomart infolding them as the Venus Armata.[5] This, however, provides us with an "ensample" of love, rather than chastity. The injunctions to the ladies in Book III ask them to take Belphoebe as "ensample" and imitate the flower of "faire" chastity. The only place where the "ensamples" meet and cohere is in the reader's mind.[6]

There is no single principle of virtue or narration within which the reader can frame what he learns. As source-hunters have discovered, no single "authority" can be said to inform The Faerie Queene. Many texts are at work here, and the influence of outside sources is ambiguously stated. Spenser's ambition may be to "pvergo" Tasso and Ariosto, yet other sources remain unmentioned or are simply implied. Goldberg demonstrates the ambivalence of Spenser's relation to Chaucer's The Squire's Tale, for example, which Spenser intends to complete.[7] Similarly, no single framework for desire can be said to operate within the text: the chivalric code, courtly love, Petrarchan adoration all form part of the series of texts that compete with and undermine each other. The literal texts that appear (such as those in the House of Busirane, and the one on the pillar from which Cupid's shield is suspended) act to further complicate the intricate relationship between reader and text.

Even the gender of the reader is in question. While Spenser invokes the Queen as the ideal reader, and promises to mirror her virtue in the persons of Belphoebe and Gloriana, Britomart becomes a third term for the "Queen of love, and Prince of peace" (IV.Pr.4).[8] The seemingly innocuous preface to the story of Hellenore and Paridell (a story which contains different "readings" of the fall of Troy) addresses an ambiguously constituted reader. First, Spenser addresses both knights and ladies (III.ix.1); the "soueraigne light" is

usually attributed to Elizabeth, or to surpassing female virtue[9]; then, he enjoins the "Lordings" to listen, if they want to know why Satyrane and Paridell have been excluded from Malbecco's Castle (ix.3).

The role of the story of Hellenore and Paridell in the book as a whole is equally ambiguous. The poet states that sometimes "good by paragone/Of euill, may more notably be rad,/As white seemes fairer, matcht with black attone" (ix.2). He fears, however, that this "odious argument my rimes should shend" (ix.1) (whether the "vnworthy blames" emanate from the reader or the text is unclear).[10] Will the story disfigure his "rimes" or bring the reader to confusion? Hellenore with her "loose incontinence doth blend/The shyning glory of your soueraigne light" (ix.1). Does Spenser mean that Hellenore's evil example mixes with true chastity and pollutes the virtue he is attempting to display, or that she "blinds" or hides the "soueraigne light," confusing the understanding of his reader?[11] He questions the reading that will be given, not only to this episode, but also to his poem. He also questions the reaction of the reader; he doesn't wish the episode to offend the reader's "goodly patience," or to alienate him or her.[12] Thus, the ambiguous gender of the reader interacts with the ambiguous nature of the text.

Spenser's concern for the reader, for interpretation of the text as well as within the text, is manifested at many points in the two books.[13] The ambiguous gender of the reader

brings to our attention the diversity of possible interpretations and the need for care in reading. The distinctions between "right reading" and wrong reading, as well as between "good" and "bad" poets, made by A. Leigh DeNeef, may replace earlier distinctions between good and bad Cupids, or good and bad Venuses.[14] The emphasis is thrown onto the manufacturers of texts, who are both readers and writers. Thus, Books III and IV not only introduce the randomness of desire and its effects on both perception and interaction between desiring subjects, with its inherent confusion and loss of objectivity, they also attach the same qualities to the acts of reading and writing.

DeNeef discusses Spenser's concern for both bad reading and bad writing as these are represented by Archimago, the Blatant Beast, and others.[15] The threat of the "false speaker" to the poem as a whole, and to the figures within it, lies both in the wilful and envious misinterpreter and in the reader who is so completely subjected to a single text that he cannot see anything that lies beyond it. DeNeef points to Ate as "the first and most threatening false speaker of Book IV" because she sees the "moniments of times forepast" but only recognizes in them the "sad effects of discord sway" (IV.i.21).[16] She and Slander effect a "perversion of language" which distorts the texts, preventing a true reading of them.[17] Ate's misreadings engender Scudamour's, causing his misrecognition of Britomart. Therefore, misreading is as contagious as desire. Spenser's

awareness of the possibility of misreading engenders the repeated injunctions to the reader, which amount to a kind of defense of his poem coupled with the poem itself.[18] By doing so, he incorporates the potential for misreading into the poem.

The inclusion of misreading into the text, paired with the ambiguity of the poem and the endless variety of possible meanings, allows Spenser to create, at least in these two books, a text which allows for the possibility of misreading and assaults upon the text, as well as for positive readings, and yet makes the reader aware that no reading is complete.[19] According to Ferguson, "Renaissance authors pay little attention to protecting the intentionality of individuals or texts from the dangers of subjective interpretation."[20] What Spenser does, however, is to make the reader aware of that subjectivity. He "defends" the text by incorporating the variety of interpretations into it. He denies the "authority" of the text by making it vulnerable, just as he denies Proteus, the "author of Florimell's troubles," the "authority" to imprison her.[21] This differentiates him from the poet who insists on the authority of his work as a constant and unchangeable "reading." Goldberg's belief that both the text and its author are produced by the "other" provides us with an awareness of the interaction between desire and text, yet Spenser's defense of his story, however tentative, attaches the responsibility for production to the author himself.[22]

Much of the uncertainty of interpretation in these two books arises from the uncertain gender of the reader. As with the preface to the story of Hellenore and Paridell, Spenser tends to alternate between the male and female reader.[23] The role of the male and female readers in interpretation becomes particularly apparent in these two books, as sex-specific texts of desire are undermined. Spenser addresses to the "Lordings" (III.ix.3) the story of the exclusion of Paridell and Satyrane from Malbecco's Castle. The apology for Hellenore seems to be directed at the Ladies. Different parts of the stories are flagged for different readers.

Maureen Quilligan suggests that the distinction between the male and the female reader is also made in the Letter to Raleigh: "'virtuous and gentle' distinguish male and females values, for imbedded within the notion of 'gentle' as a marker purely of social rank is a feminine Christian quality opposed to but also complementary to 'virtue,' which, deriving from vir, virtus, has its roots in the classical notions of manly valor."[24] If both male and female readers are implied in the poem, then its ambiguous nature becomes relevant to the accommodation of male and female within the text. While the male reader may view the images of containment as threatening, and the images in the House of Busirane as instances of "wemen's wavering wit," the female reader may well view the containment as generative, and the images in the House as actively destructive. The inclusion of the female reader

accounts for the radical change in the use of maternal images. Acrasia, in Book II, as Montrose points out, presents a threat to the male. Venus, in Book III, is no threat at all. She is viewed from a generative perspective: the containment of the Garden of Adonis does not constrain, but rather liberates, since the babes wend in and out freely.

The relation of the prominence of the female reader to the need for defense, particularly in the Proem to Book IV, suggests that Spenser is creating and interweaving two discourses. These are implied in the phrase "louer's deare debates." Spenser describes both the male poetics of desire, and the female poetics of generation, and exposes each to the other. Quilligan states that, in the proem to Book IV, what Spenser does is "to dismiss a male reader, select a paradigmatic female one, and then reconstitute the canceled full-gendered readership... within the 'androgynous' queen."[25] Thus, the loss of Amoret in the wedding masque, because she was "ill of friends bestedded," implies the different readings of the text given by male and female, as well as the distance created between the two because of this.

Britomart, the "fairest knight," brings our attention to the disparities between these two discourses because she cannot be fully accommodated within either of them. As a woman-knight, she is not moved to pursue "beauty," even though, as Arthur says, "Ill weares he armes, that nill them vse for Ladies sake" (III.v.11). She does not fit within the definition of lover's

roles, given at the Castle Joyeous, for she has a love, "but Lady none" (III.i.28). The knights ask her to "read" them her love, within the text of their making, but their text cannot admit her, by her own definition. Similarly, Paridell and Satyrane, admiring Britomart's beauty and chivalry, wish to "know, who she mote bee" (III.ix.24). Britomart, because of her sex, acts to redefine the language of love within the text.

Although at first Britomart believes herself to be imprisoned within "love's cruell law" (III.ii.38), Merlin's redefinition of her vision of Artegall liberates Britomart from the constraints of the Petrarchan definition of love as well as the Petrarchan vision of women.[26] The ambiguity of her position as woman-knight prior to this "re-reading" makes her, and the text, difficult to fathom. The differences in her appearances prior to Merlin's redefinition and after it are striking. The encounter with Guyon, with its futile violence and the reconciliation based on misinformation, Britomart's entry into the Castle Joyeous, in spite of its stated definition, her subsequent encounter with the confused Malecasta, whose misrecognition of Britomart's true sex is encouraged by Britomart's behaviour, and her presentation of herself to Redcrosse as Artegall's enemy, seem both ambiguous and pointless. All contribute to an uncertain and undefined text of desire, one which participates in all the conventions and yet neither ratifies nor dismisses them. Only after meeting Merlin, and having her true situation "read" by him does Britomart

become able to focus on her goal.[27] Glauce "reads" Britomart's destiny to Merlin, even though she cannot "read" the cause "aright" (III.iii.16). Merlin asks "what needs this colourable word, To cloke the cause (iii.19), and redefines Britomart's vision as caused by the "streight course of heauenly destiny" (iii.24). Once Britomart is released from the constraints of "love's cruell law" by redefining her role, she becomes focused, and the text begins to cohere. Her encounter with Marinell, which moves from the self-pitying language and helplessness of Petrarchan adoration to purposefulness, brings to our attention the effects of language on the experience of desire. "Words fearen babes," states Britomart, and this is precisely what Marinell does fear (III.iv.15).

Marinell's original text is equally proscriptive; it is also a text of desire in that it fears desire. For Marinell, desire means death, and, to avoid it, he confines himself to a small space, hoarding his "jewels." While the text may be of another's making, the imprisonment is his own. The source of the text is Proteus, who, like Merlin, is a prophet and can "tell" destinies. Proteus predicts that Merlin will encounter difficulties with a woman: "A virgin strange and stout should him dismay or kill" (iv.25). Cymoent interprets this text to mean that Marinell will suffer through love for a woman, "For she of womans force did feare nó harme;/So weening to haue arm'd him, she did quite disarme" (iv.27). Yet both

interpretations of this text are correct, though one facilitates the other.

> So tickle are the termes of mortall state,
> And full of subtile sophismes, which do play
> With double senses, and with false debate,
> T'approue the vnknowen purpose of eternall fate.
> (iv.28)

Timias' interpretation of Belphoebe is also proscriptive. Because he cannot decide on a proper course of action, he cannot reveal to her the nature of his wound, since he believes that to do so would be 'disloyal.' According to DeNeef, "whatever else Belphoebe and Timias may represent in the poem, Spenser's focus here is on the Cupidean heart-wound that is unspoken, misread, and unread. Because Timias reads his heart as wounded, he presumes that allowing Belphoebe to read it would be to accuse her of cruelty."[28] Thus, it is Timias' own reading of desire which keeps him ill. Because Timias does not tell her the truth about the nature of his wound, she is unable to recognize it. Nor is she equipped to do so, since she is as imprisoned within her own text as Timias. As he recovers from the first wound, which, like Marinell's, enables the second, he paradoxically sickens: "Still as his wound did gather, and grow hole,/So still his hart woxe sore, and health decayd:/Madnesse to saue a part and lose the whole" (v.43).

Florimell's act of redefinition also produces a text. When finally imprisoned by Proteus, she resists his assault on her "will" by redefining her beloved. Their interaction takes the form of a dialogue of responses: first he woos her "with

flattering words" and offers "faire gifts t'allure her sight," and she refuses (III.viii.38).

> Sometimes he boasted, that a God he hight:
> But she a mortall creature loued best:
> Then he would make himselfe a mortall wight;
> But then she said she lou'd none but a Faerie knight.
>
> Then like a Faerie knight himselfe he drest.
> (viii.39-40)

She never names Marinell, but uses the ambiguity of his parentage to create a double-bind for Proteus. Her preference for "eternall thraldome" over "loss of chastitie or chaunge of loue" wins her "sweet hymnes" and Spenser's "rymes" to "aduance [her] goodly chastitee" (viii.42-3).

Florimell's use of ambiguous language, and her imprisonment for preference of Marinell, act to exclude Proteus. Her text remains open to interpretation, yet she refuses to ratify any of these. Her "misidentification" of Marinell is one of a series of misrepresentations and misrecognitions which result from the ambiguity of texts. Britomart's definition of herself as Artegall's enemy causes Redcrosse to praise him. Her appearance as a knight enables Ate to create the fiction of her union with Amoret. False Florimell is hard to "read" and is mistaken for the real one. Artegall represents himself as "saluagesse sans finesse, shewing secret wit" (IV.iv.39), and thus allows the conflict with Britomart to occur by refusing to reveal his real name. Britomart refuses to reveal her real sex to Amoret, causing Amoret to fear her "wounded mind." Slander wilfully misrecognizes the

"conversation" between Arthur and Amoret, and uses this to assault her (IV.viii.29). In part, these texts are used to resist the effects of desire[29]: Britomart misrepresents herself so as to avoid revealing her wounded mind, and Florimell refuses to identify Marinell for the same reason.

These partial texts, particularly those produced by Ate and Slander, have much in common with the "partial praise" that excludes women from the roll of warriors. According to Silberman, "the complex pun, that men 'in their proper prayse too partiall bee,' suggests that the improper partiality that leads men to disregard women produces only incomplete, partial praise of themselves."[30] The partial praise is a result of envy; as in the case of the texts of Ate and Slander, the partial texts are the result of exclusion. This dissection of discourse prevents mutual understanding. When the opposite movement is in practice, inclusion results. If, as Silberman states, an "important part of Spenser's interest in chronicling the legend of Britomart and developing an anatomy of love in Book III is to restore wholeness to men and to language,"[31] then true identification and recognition lead to the positive redefinition of language, inclusion and reconciliation.[32]

When Britomart fights for her right to Amoret (IV.i.10-11), and defeats the "younker," the custom of the place requires that only those who have ladies may be admitted. Under these conditions, the young man will be excluded from the castle. Britomart plays with her role as "fairest knight" by

using the language to her advantage. She first requires the "Seneschall" to grant her right to Amoret. When this is yielded, she "claim'd that to her self, as Ladies det,/He as a Knight might iustly be admitted" (i.12). She then reveals that she is a woman. On this occasion, she uses language, and the texts of desire, to include both Amoret and the knight. When the Knights and Ladies see her, they have difficulty understanding who she is. The interpretations they give to her are varied:

> Such when those Knights and Ladies all about
> Beheld her, all were with amazement smit,
> And euery one gan grow in secret dout
> Of this and that, according to each wit:
> Some thought that some enchantment faygned it;
> Some, that Bellona in that warlike wise
> To them appear'd, with shield and armour fit;
> Some, that it was a maske of strange disguise:
> So diuersely each one did sundrie doubts deuise.
>
> But that young Knight, which through her gentle deed
> Was to that goodly fellowship restor'd,
> Ten thousand thankes did yeeld her for her meed,
> And doubly ouercommen, her ador'd:
> So did they all their former strife accord;
> And eke fayre Amoret now freed from feare,
> More franke affection did to her afford,
> And to her bed, which she was wont forbeare,
> Now freely drew, and found right safe assurance theare. (i.14-15)

Britomart's act of redefinition astounds the knights and ladies, who don't know how to interpret her. But the Knight adores her, for her inclusion of him, and Britomart and Amoret are finally able to display their affection for each other, and to discuss their "loues." Similarly, it is the naming of Artegall, and the revealing of Britomart's face that enable the two to recognize and love each other (IV.vi.19-33).

These instances of misrecognition and partial texts, and redefinition which completes and includes, articulate the importance of reading within the two books. Although many figures "read," Scudamour and Britomart are perhaps the most prominent of the readers, and both read to obtain Amoret. Scudamour's reading at the Temple of Venus is initiated by the text on the pillar. When his reading is complete, and when he has listened to the 'plaints' of the lovers, and their praises of each other, he takes Amoret's hand and leads her from the Temple. A number of critics have compared him with Orpheus, whose love disappears as he is leading her out of hell, because Scudamour, like Orpheus, looks back. Indeed, Scudamour's tale is a "retrospect," the history of his courtship.[33] His lack of faith has been blamed for his loss, since he doubted Amoret's loyalty.

Another perspective on this episode arises when we consider how enclosed is Scudamour's interpretation. He gives to Britomart his "reading" of the Temple of Venus, which is concluded by the taking of the prize. When he finishes the story, he and Amoret have vanished from the text. Although the story tells the beginning of their love, and does not include their reunion -- even though she is present on the field a short time before -- the complete interpretation he presents involves a kind of closure. While he may find it hard to "read" the goddess, he has no doubt at all about Amoret, and does not heed her protests when he leads her out. He imposes his text --

Cupid's shield -- on those he finds there, in order to remove her.

Britomart's readings, on the other hand, are almost always accompanied by a measure of bewilderment. She does not understand the totality of what she sees, and is not able to form a final interpretation of it. When she enters the House of Busirane, she is repeatedly astonished and confused by what she sees: the statue of Cupid and the bright tapestries daze her, and she stares upon them with "greedy eyes" (III.xi.53). She cannot decipher the texts written over the doors, or determine what they mean. She forces Busirane to "rewrite" his words, to "reuerse" his charms:

> Full dreadfull things out of that balefull booke
> He red, and measur'd many a sad verse,
> That horror gan the virgins hart to perse,
> And her faire locks vp stared stiffe on end,
> Hearing him those same bloudy lines reherse;
> And all the while he red, she did extend
> Her sword high ouer him, if ought he did offend.
> (III.xii.36)

The redefinition of language enacted here breaks the chains that imprison Amoret, and restore her to "perfit hole."

According to DeNeef, Amoret's imprisonment is caused by her own misreading of Cupid: the only danger posed by either Cupid or his 'deadly' dart is the interpretive one of how they are beheld."[34] When Britomart changes the poetics that imprison Amoret, the dart falls forth, and she is restored. The divided woman here anticipates the implied divided man in the echo of Orpheus in Scudamour at the Temple, since Orpheus is also dismembered by desire. Amoret also echoes the divided text,

since her state depends upon who possesses her. In the Garden of Adonis, she is "th'ensample of true loue alone,/And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione" (III.vi.52). In the Temple of Venus, she is a "recluse virgin," "Venus mayd" (IV.x.54). There, she is contained in the circle of womanhood's attributes. Lust may seize on her, and carry her off to his cave to be devoured. Timias sees her as a pitiable woman to be rescued, as does Arthur. Busirane sees her as the one who refuses to include him, and thus attempts to rive her in two, a literal version of Petrarchan dismemberment. Slander's words have a similar power to "wound" the soul, and she attempts to steal the "crowne of [her] good name" (IV.viii.25). Only with Britomart is she "perfect hole."

Goldberg draws a parallel between the nature of the text and Amoret's restored condition. "The book remains always in 'the middest' ('a Poet thrusteth into the middest'), and the text occupies an interstice, an interim ('a-while'); like Amoret, it is 'perfect hole.'"[35] In many senses, Amoret stands in for the text, or at least for the element in the text that the reader pursues. If, as DeNeef points out, Amoret continually substitutes for Amor, then she becomes the principle of the text that both animates and inspires the reader.[36] Like Cupid, she is subject to a variety of interpretations, over which she has no control. She wanders through the poem randomly, and finally vanishes altogether. The conjunction of the representation of the cruel Cupid on

Scudamour's shield with the "ensample of true loue alone" creates a seeming victory of the reductive interpretation over the real meaning. At this point, both vanish, since the text is complete.[37]

The act of reading is, in a sense, the production of a "partial" text, since it involves the selection of aspects of the whole by an interested party. Spenser calls the attention of the reader to the aspects of the story most relevant to him or her, depending upon whether the reader is male or female, when he discusses both Hellenore's wantonness, and Paridell's defacing of knighthood. Paridell "reads" the story of Troy to produce himself, and Britomart's reading produces Britain. Both readings may co-exist, though one is more confining than the other. As Berger notes, Paridell "condemns" himself to repeat Paris by his reading of his genealogy.[38] According to Gross, "blindly to assert the absolute authority of any one memory, name, or myth is to court idolatry; Spenser's strong desire to avoid any such false identifications may suggest that there is an ironic demystifying intent behind the continual interweaving, shewing, and fragmentation of genealogies."[39] The "fragmentation" of genealogies, such as that produced by Paridell, is coupled with the ambiguity of parentage, such as Artegall's lack of knowledge of his true parents, in a way that undermines the possibility of stable origins and final endings.

The pursuit of a single "text," whether it be genealogy, text of desire, or myth, is the pursuit of intact paradise, the

desire for a single, unchanging framework within which to order experience. The cost of its production is the loss of the "free play" of interpretation. According to Berger, "the poem is nominally about chastity, and we become aware, as we read, that a similar problem confronts both heroine and poet. Both must impose some form on the welter of experience flowing in them and around them."[40] The "welter of experience" described by Berger is the force of desire; the form imposed becomes a kind of protection against or coping mechanism for the experience. Yet if this form becomes too rigid, it acts to imprison the subject. Thus, the need for Britomart, as for the reader, is to find a mean between the randomness of Amoret and the rigidity of Belphoebe.

The form, for Britomart, is provided by Merlin. He "tells" her destiny, giving the desire she experiences a role in history. The history he recites is filled with violence and political instability, although the final result is the virgin queen. He promises Artegall to Britomart, as well as the child, "his image dead," and states that Artegall will be killed in battle. His discourse is incomplete: after the revelation that their union will, at length, result in Elizabeth, Merlin states: "And yet the end is not" (III.iii.50).[41] In spite of the violence, and the death of Artegall that is forecast, the two women are made happy by his discourse:

> Then when them selues they well instructed had
> Of all that needed them to be inquird,
> They both conceiuing hope of comfort glad,
> With lighter hearts vnto their home retird;
> Where they in secret counsell close conspird,
> How to effect so hard an enterprize,
> And to possesse the purpose they desird:
> Now this, now that twixt them they did deuise,
> And diuerse plots did frame, to maske in strange disguise. (III.iii.51;emphasis mine)

While Merlin gives the larger text of Britain's history, the two women "conceiue hope of comfort glad" on the basis of their immediate interest, which is the possession of Artegall. They take from the text what they need. Thus, their reading, while enabling the later developments, is reductive, just as Cymoent's reading of Proteus' prophesy is reductive and enables the wound that causes him to love. Their reading provides them with a framework within which they can focus on their purpose. Unlike Cymoent's reading, however, this version of the text does not imprison its readers, but allows them to continue their search.

The desire for perfection, for closed experience and final meaning becomes the reader's desire to make all the pieces fit. The nature of reading, as described above, does not, however, encompass all the pieces. As Ferguson states, the purpose of mastery of any text is to enable the reader to do what is best for his own soul.[42] Any reading is reductive in the sense that some of the pieces must be left out. It is the desire for perfection, for a "perfect" text or "perfect hole," that is finally frustrated by the text itself. The constant revision of

images reminds us that no one version can be complete; to 'fixate' a version or reading is to create idols. If the text, as Goldberg states, is in the "middest," then it is without beginning and without end. The idol at the Temple of Venus, who "needeth other none," whose feet are enclosed by the snake who grasps his tail in his mouth, signifies closure. Here, the beginning of Scudamour's story both replaces and becomes the end. Yet this reading gives way to the "endlesse worke" of the story of Marinell and Florimell, the "perfection" of which Spenser defers to "another place."

Spenser's work is anti-apocalyptic because it denies closure. It is neither of beginning nor end, but of the way through the middle. Roche and Goldberg both remark that the substitution of Triamond for Telamond is significant. For Roche, Telamond means "perfect world" (from telos and mundus).[43] Goldberg believes it to mean end: the final line of Book IV, in which Spenser leaves the story of Marinell and Florimell to be perfected elsewhere, "indicates that narrative structure in The Faerie Queene is not closed and complete, but instead describes a kind of loop, moving here from 'perfect' to 'to be perfected,' from closure ('tela' derives from telos, end) to openness, from the world ('-mond') to 'another place.'"[44] Thus, these two interpretations would indicate that the replacement of Telamond by Triamond constitutes the loss of the perfect world, the deferral of perfection to "another place." Michael Leslie adds a third possibility, which is "the

Greek telamon, meaning the belt or baldric supporting a shield."[45] Telamond is replaced by the cestus, or belt. The loss of Telamond articulates the resistance of the text to closure. Amoret, who is the only one who can close the belt around her waist, is not awarded the "relic" of chastity. Chastity, as defined by the cestus, becomes an imposition from the outside, a cult of a presumed dead Florimell, which accepts in her place the idol False Florimell, and has nothing to do with the actual integrity of any figure or meaning in the text. By removing Telamond from the text and substituting the cestus, Spenser emphasizes the dangers inherent in the act interpretation.

The loss of the perfect world becomes the loss of the perfect text. Spenser's "mistakes" may in fact be a deliberate marring of the text to prevent closure, a kind of protection against "the random, reductive pressures of a fixating intelligence, whether heretical or orthodox,"[46] a subtle method of defense. The ambiguous use of personal pronouns becomes a reminder of the sliding together of different texts, in which it is difficult to make complete distinctions between readings.

The gender of the reader becomes important because the text resists the marginalization of the feminine. Throughout Books III and IV, the feminine is at the heart of the discourse, whether as a reader, or as the meaning of the text which the male desiring subject seeks, as in the case of Amoret. If we consider Amoret as an analogue for the text,

because both are "perfect hole," then the gender of the text is feminine. Amoret replaces Cupid, the female "ensample of true loue alone/And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione" replacing a male image of desire, though both are "made" by Venus. Venus is at the centre of both books,[47] and the centre of the Garden of Adonis becomes a mons veneris,[48] an image for the female body. The frustration of the male reader, or any reader who demands closure, is generated by the same principles described by Peter Stallybrass. The reader demands that the text be at once open, to admit him, and closed, to finally resolve the frustrations of desire. As the cestus refuses to remain closed around any waist but Amoret's, and she is awarded to Britomart, the knights retrieve the cestus from her possession since she is inaccessible, even though the efforts False Florimell must make, as a male image of the female, to tie it around her waist are extraordinary. It will not "fit."

Belphoebe, who imposes meaning, alternates with Amoret, who is imposed upon. Belphoebe rewrites Timias, while Amoret wanders through the text, seized upon by one desiring subject after another. The injunction Spenser repeatedly makes to the reader is to read with compassion: only with compassion and love do the elements of the text cohere, and meaning not escape us. Spenser responds to the criticism of his "louer's deare debates" by stating that

> Such ones ill judge of loue, that cannot loue,
> Ne in their frosen hearts feele kindly flame:
> For thy they ought not thing vnknowen reproue,
> Ne naturall affection faultlesse blame,
> For fault of few that haue abusd the same.
> (IV.Pr.2)

Those who criticize him do not know love. In fact, they cannot read with love, since they attack "louer's deare debates." These readers, who weld "kingdomes causes, and affaires of state" have little to do with the nature of Spenser's text.[49] "To such therefore I do not sing at all," states Spenser (IV.Pr.4). Whether he means that he does not direct his narrative to them, or whether they cannot hear him sing because they do not know love is doubtful.

Instead, Spenser reconstitutes an androgynous Queene, and asks

> Which that she may better deigne to heare,
> Do thou dread infant, Venus dearling doue,
> From her high spirit chase imperious feare,
> And vse of awfull Maiestie remoue:
> In sted thereof with drops of melting loue,
> Deawd with ambrosiall kisses, by thee gotten
> From thy sweete smyling mother from aboue,
> Sprinckle her heart, and haughtie courage soften,
> That she may hearke to loue, and reade this lesson often.
> (IV.Pr.5)

The Queen is enjoined to read with love, so that she may "better...heare." Similarly, Spenser accuses Cupid of cruelty, in heaping further trials upon the heroines, and says of Amoret's story that "pittie is to heare the perils, which she tride" (IV.vii.2). He pities Florimell for the length of time for which she has been left "languishing in payne" (IV.xi.1), because of the other stories that have intervened.

The role of compassion in resolving the alienation of discourses is evident in both the history of Belphoebe and Timias, and in that of Florimell and Marinell. Belpheobe replaces the "stoicke censour" of the Proem, since she refuses to hear Timias, rejecting him for his perceived "lightness." Her stern looks ("awfull maiestie") have so daunted the "vnhappy boy" as to rob him of language. The agent of reconciliation is the jewel in the shape of a divided heart, recalling Amoret's heart at the House of Busirane, also divided by language, also bound by a golden chain (IV.viii.6). The turtle dove leads Belphoebe back to Timias by staying just out of her reach, so she cannot grasp the jewel too soon.

> And euer when she nigh approcht, the Doue
> Would flit a litle forward, and then stay,
> Till she drew neare, and then againe remoue;
> So tempting her still to pursue the pray,
> And still from her escaping soft away:
> (IV.viii.11)

Belphoebe does not recognize Timias, because he has become deformed. "She knew him not, but pittied much his case,/And wisht it were in her to doe him any grace" (viii.12). Timias speaks "no word, whereby she might aread/What mister wight he was, or what he ment" (viii.13). Finally, she asks if it is in her power to redress his wrongs, and he tells her that although "heauen" is the "first author" of his "languishment,/Enuying" his happiness, it is Belphoebe that has done him wrong, by "misdeeming" him (viii.15-17). Thus, by compassion, Belphoebe is enabled to read Timias correctly, and receive him back. In fact, it is her compassion that allows him to tell his story.

Marinell's love for Florimell is aroused by his compassion for her, initiated by her story. Although he originally despises all women, particularly since it was a woman who had wounded him, her plight moves him to pity, "so feelingly her case she did complaine,/That ruth it moued in the rocky stone" (IV.xii.5). She names him, and thus he knows that her text is directed at him. "His stubborne heart, that neuer felt misfare/Was toucht with soft remorse and pitty rare" (xii.15). Cymoent, moved to pity by his "sickness," pleads with him to divulge the cause: "Now with faire speches, now with threatnings sterne,/If ought lay hidden in his grieued thought,/It to reueale" (xii.24). Marinell refuses to tell her, so Apollo is called in, and he reads the cause as love (xii.25). Cymoent fears "that same fatall read" less because she believes the one he loves to be a nymph rather than a mortal creature. Proteus's prophesy, we presume, meant a human woman. Marinell names Florimell, which text Cymoent carries to Neptune, who asks her to "read therefore who it is, which this hath wrought" (xii.30).

> To whom she answerd, Then it is by name
> Proteus, that hath ordayn'd my sonne to die;
> For that a waift, the which by fortune came
> Vpon your seas, he claym'd as propertie:
> And yet nor his, nor his in equitie,
> But yours the waift by high prerogatiue.
> Therefore I humbly craue your Maiestie,
> It to repleiue, and my sonne repriue:
> So shall you by one gift saue all vs three aliue.
> (xii.31)

Florimell, who has been the thrall of Proteus because of her refusal to define her love and thus admit him, becomes a part of an exchange of texts and redefinition of love. Through compassion, love's cruel law becomes literal law. Proteus is enjoined to release her, because he dares not refuse the written text, which he reads "with inward loathfulnesse," not wishing to restore the pledge.

The interchange of texts and compassion is concentrated in the last stanzas of Book IV. The creation of a new text within which Florimell is restored to freedom by the play on her status as pledge or commodity reverses the earlier imprisonment of this definition. Compassion, like desire, is contagious, as we can see. The text quickly touches on a variety of hearers, all of whom act to redress the wrong.

Spenser, therefore, asks us to read with compassion. [50] If we read with love, the text coheres, and resolves itself in the liberation of prisoners. As in the rereading that takes place at the House of Busirane, the contagious rewriting of Florimell's situation restores both her and Marinell. In this private space, away from the gods and goddesses of the Marriage, there is no idolatry, though Marinell adores Florimell, and she fears to be thought light. Spenser leaves the story to "another place" to be perfected. Thus, the "freeplay of interpretation" is allowed to continue.[51] The reader is party to the effects of reading with love, but is not

satisfied by a final ending. The result is the continuing work of the poem.

The dissolving of the Venus of the Temple, the idol which shows the perfected union of man and woman, into the "Venus of the fomy sea" accompanies a process by which language is reformed to accommodate the subject, rather than the reverse. The meeting of Florimell and Marinell describes the joining in the text of male and female perspectives, both exposed to the reader's view, rather than the single and divisive perspective of fear or desire.

Compassion, like desire, causes a wound: it causes the loss of "intact" self. Belphoebe is moved by compassion on both occasions when she "succours" Timias; she heals him twice, but the second healing returns his mind to wholeness. Prior to her relenting, he has had but one word. When she agrees to listen to his story, his language is restored. Although it may be "madnesse" to lose the part and save the whole in the physical healing which causes the desire, Timias's literal madness reduces the whole of language to the single name, the reductive text of his lost love. In Florimell's case, the name of the beloved in the text of her story makes Marinell realize that the text is meant for him. He is the cause of her misfortune, since he has refused to love. When his compassion is aroused, the two texts are finally allowed to merge.

The reader becomes a desiring subject simply by reading the text. By offering "ensamples" for the reader to imitate and

to desire, by promising and deferring perfection, the text both initiates and frustrates the desire of the reader. The text becomes a model-obstacle for the reader if the reader desires the "intact paradise" of perfect closure. This is a pleasure that the text denies.[52] If the reader approaches the text as a model-obstacle, then he or she is destined to experience a double-bind. If the reader approaches the text from within one of the "texts of desire" incorporated into the narrative, whether it be Petrarchan or chivalric, then he or she is destined to be frustrated, since no single principle or perspective will obtain the ordering of the text. The sexually and textually ambiguous Britomart operates at once as desiring subject, object, and model-obstacle, preventing the freezing of the text into any of these perspectives. The text continually escapes the bounds of any form imposed upon it. The only place where the disparate parts of the text may cohere is in the reader's mind.

Judith Dundas states that "the first prerequisite, for a Spenserian critic...is the ability to respond as a child, for then there <u>are</u> no problems of interpretation."[53] Girard says that, in order to know the truth of the Gospels, we must read like children, non-sacrificially, for Christ asks us to become children, to refrain from succumbing to the "scandal" as well as from spreading it. Spenser associates the snake of jealousy (which Girard associates with Satan as skandalon) with Malbecco's "Tantalean" punishment, with "enuious" desire and

"greedie" rage. However, the alternation between the closed and open snake in Books III and IV, between Malbecco's envy at exclusion and the perfect reconciliation of Cambell and Triamond, who speak only in the words of the other, as well as the closed icon of Venus, who "needeth other none" and never speaks at all, shows the dangers of the polarities of frustration and idolatry. Girard's insistence that we read non-sacrificially, that we "read like children," is an impossible injunction for a reader already shaped by mimetic desire, since to be subject to mimetic desire is to read blindly and, automatically, to sacrifice the parts of the text that would undermine that "reading."

Spenser makes it impossible for us to read sacrificially. Any attempt to impose a single form upon the text is frustrated; morever, his text contains the cultural "texts" that are used to form identity and influence both interpretation and perception. He combines them in such a way that each undermines the other, demonstrating the limitations of such texts. He also demonstrates to us the nature of interpretation, and that any interpretation, in one way or another, involves a reduction of the whole, and becomes a "partiall" text. Therefore, all interpretations must be subject to constant "re-vision." By educating the reader in frustration, causing him to look at the texts which inform his "reading," Spenser reforms the process by which he reads. Spenser leaves the narrative deliberately incomplete and

"unperfited." Like the Garden of Adonis, with its two gates, changing perspective, and Adonis, the "Father of all formes" who is "eterne in mutabilitie," the text changes as it proceeds, and locates itself "in the middest," between beginning and end. What Spenser asks of us is to read with compassion. He asks us to make the text whole by refusing the desire of the "Stoicke censours" to sacrifice the role of love in history (IV.Pr.3). By reading with love, we can "heare" the whole.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. For Goldberg, the "place of narration" corresponds with the "place where those in the text enter into the locus of desire." The desire for another generates the fragmentation of identity. What the characters discover, "by discovering desire, is that the very desire with which they constitute themselves is their undoing. What they desire is another, and it is precisely because they lack others that they come to experience that lack as an impairment to themselves. But, more urgently, they also discover that having others also robs the self of the illusion of sufficiency. Either way, desire disables any notion of the self as entity. Furthermore, this discovery, which is a repeated event in the text, nonetheless remains a discovery about the text as well. For the text is about the coincidences of the moving paradoxes of desire with the principles of narration, storytelling and reading. To follow the course of desire is then to unravel further what it means that the place of narration coincides with the place of desire." Endlesse Worke, p. 83.

2. Goldberg, p. xi. Javitch refers to the frustrations of readers of the Orlando Furioso, and states that part of Ariosto's purpose is to educate the reader in desire. Ferguson also draws our attention to the relationship between the desire of the readers of the text and that of the narrator, as well as the desire of readers within the text. Orlando's reading of the text inscribed on the trees inspires a kind of madness, and "as Ariosto diagnoses it, Orlando's madness is an extreme version which infects us all: the disease of unfulfilled desire. Desire, which Ariosto, like Cervantes, links to our unlimited capacity for fiction-making, is inevitably disappointed by the realities of our condition as mortals in a world of social and material limits." According to Ferguson, "Ariosto and Tasso are both thematically concerned with the relations between fragmented texts, fragmented objects like lances and trees, and fragmented human beings whose spirits are sundered from their bodies or whose rational faculties are divorced from their passions." The Trials of Desire, pp. 132-33, 130.

3. Endlesse Worke, p. xi. Strict allegorical interpretation occasionally falls into this trap. For example, the Garden of Adonis is often treated as a garden of platonic forms, in which Venus (as mater and therefore material) unites with the "Father of all forms." The problem is that "Adonis is passive, Venus

active. It requires an effort of will to overturn mythic logic and see Venus not as mater, materia, but as the principle of form. Several scholars, notably Josephine Waters Bennet and, more recently, Roche and Cheney, have been reluctant to do so. But Spenser's break with traditional ways of describing creation is only a part of a larger strategy which lies behind Book III as a whole. The male principle and the female do not perform their customary roles in this book. Because Spenser wishes to examine the process of generation in all its aspects -- natural..., social..., and historical..., he moves femininity from the subsidiary position it normally occupies both in everyday thinking and in the psychomachia of the knightly quest to a position of dominance." Humphrey Tonkins, "Spenser's Garden of Adonis and Britomart's Quest," Proceedings of the Modern Language Association 88 (1973), p. 412.

4. Bean, "Making the Daimonic Personal," Modern Language Quarterly 40 (1979), p. 239.

5. David Burchmore, "The Unfolding of Britomart," p. 13.

6. According to Alpers, "the only way in which we can understand the relation between the various episodes in [Book IV] is to perceive that each concerns some kind of strife or painfulness in human love, out of which harmony emerges, or which breaks down into discord. The coherence of Book IV is based not on terms found within the poem -- not even in generalizing stanzas about jealousy (4.6.1) or the three kinds of love (4.9.1-2) -- but on the activity of the reader's mind as he responds to and interprets the parts of the poem." The Poetry of The Faerie Queene, p. 124.

7. Endlesse Worke, p. 32ff. Goldberg discusses Spenser's desire to tell "another's story" in relation to the problem of friendship (p. 73ff). The desire to hear a story (the desire of the Other) is linked to the desire to tell a story (the desire for the Other), yet the story told is not one's own. This is particularly evident in the case of Cambell and Triamond, who advance the other's virtues, and never speak of themselves, and the lovers in the Temple, who speak only of love and of each other. The narrator is similarly constrained; Scudamour produces the story of his desire for Amoret at Britomart's command. In this way, both identity and narration are imprisoned in the desire of an Other. For Goldberg, the icon of Venus represents the perfect Other, who commands the stories and yet is unaffected by them. Goldberg encapsulates this interweaving of texts and desires in which, finally, neither is located or produced by the self by saying that "the fiction that the text creates to make the request that the reader accept the text is that the one who rewards is the one who produces the text: the self-reflexive circle of the other includes the text" (p. 127).

8. Endlesse Worke, p. 127.

9. Cf. III.Pr.1 and 5, in which the "Soueraigne" contains chastity perfectly, and Cynthia's light is superior to that of all the other stars, and III.v.44, which refers to Belphoebe's "soueraigne bounty."

10. The word "shend" has a variety of implications for this passage: according to the OED, "shend" can mean "to put to shame or confusion," to disgrace, to revile, to destroy or ruin, to disfigure, corrupt or infect.

11. The OED provides a variety of definitions for this word, including "to mix", and "blind" or confuse the moral judgement. The implications of the term in conjunction with the opposite colours used in the following stanza imply that both senses may be meant.

12. We can see an interesting parallel between Spenser's fear of offending the reader and "blinding" him or polluting the virtue, and the interaction between Stesichorus and Helen. At first Stesichorus writes of Helen as unchaste, and she blinds him. The punishment is lifted when he rewrites the story.

13. This belies Goldberg's assertion that the narrator's address to the reader in IV.viii.29, in which he states that it is "virtually unprecedented." "Never before have these been addressed as readers, and it has been behavior or ideas, not the reading of the text, that has been called into question before." Endlesse Worke, p. 60. In the address to the reader in III.ix.1-3, Spenser explicitly questions the "reading" of this episode, and the effect it will have on his presentation of chastity in the rest of the Book.

14. Cf. C.S. Lewis, "The False Cupid," in Spenser's Images of Life, (Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 18-35.

15. According to DeNeef, "the Blatant Beast may...be a deliberately posited false reader in order to challenge the true reader to engage actively in carrying the fictional ideals out in real life," "Who Now Doth Follow the Blatant Beast: Spenser's Self-Effacing Fictions," Renaissance Papers - 1978, p. 17. See also Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor, p. 140.

16. DeNeef, Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor, p. 119.

17. Fletcher refers to Errour's "cole black bloud" as sustaining a "hellish obscurity which can only be called 'inky' and which the poet identifies as a perversion of language." The Prophetic Moment, p. 61.

18. DeNeef refers to this element in the minor poems as well, in which "Spenser's desire to announce himself as a Sidneyan Right Poet is inseparable from his need to defend himself against a variety of wrong, or false, poets. Rightly to proclaim is made to depend upon the ability to disclaim, and praise of right speaking requires the blame of wrong speaking. As a result, Spenser traps himself in a defensive paradox: the more he tries to affirm his own voice, the more he is committed to giving voice to the very false poets he wishes to silence." Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor, p. 91.

19. Goldberg describes this aspect of the text as "writerly": "The readerly text offers its reader the word as a product, an object; the name as a thing, an object of communication. The writerly text defers, demands the 'endlesse worke' of play, the discovery of and the dissolving of differences into deferred identity and unity. The readerly text is single, solid, the author's work; the writerly text is infinite, replete, broken, empty, arbitrary, structured and deconstructed in its reading, which is its rewriting, produced by reader and author at once....It plays upon a void; it occupies the place of loss -- where Britomart's wound is extended to Amoret, where Amoret is 'perfect hole.' This is the space of the text." Endlesse Worke, p.11. The "negation" of the text, the emptying out of the text at the end of each book described by Goldberg, may engender the frustration necessary for both the generation of further writing and further reading. In Girard's terms, the text may be called a "coquette," since it plays with the frustrated desire of the reader in order to keep that desire attached to itself. The text may also be called a model-obstacle, since it encourages the reader to search for meaning and frustrates that search at the same time.

20. Trials of Desire, p. 158. She adds that "The reader is not only allowed but encouraged to master any secular (literary) authority in order to serve his true 'self-interest,' which for Sidney, as for Erasmus and Agrippa, is the state of his soul."

21. Cf. Daniel M. Murtaugh, "The Garden and the Sea: The Topography of The Faerie Queene, III," English Literary History 40 (1973), p. 330. A.B. Giamatti points to Proteus as both vates and poet" and reminds us of the "tradition of Proteus as magus and sinister manipulator of words." "Proteus Unbound," In Exile and Change, (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1984), p. 130. Cf. also Gross, pp. 23-24.

22. Ferguson points to the "orator who insists that he "followeth the steps of his master" as the "ultimate narcissistic defense of author against reader. The defense consists of an irony which denies us the pleasure of deconstructing the text because it has already been deconstructed." Trials of Desire, p. 153. DeNeef's belief that

the Blatant Beast destroys the poem intimates much the same thing. If the Beast destroys both poet and poem, then there is little left for the reader to "deconstruct." The reader's task would then be to "reconstruct" the poem and protect it from slander. Spenser's defense acts to call together the different discourses, and bring to our attention the possibilities of conscious interpretation.

23. Goldberg notes the same phenomenon in the Proem to Book IV, in which the reference to Burleigh collapses into the reference to the Queen.

24. Milton's Spenser, p. 181. Louis Adrian Montrose discusses the different effect of the texts on readers of different sexes in reference to II.xii. "To write as a male reader, identifying unselfconsciously with Guyon's position, with Guyon's gaze, leads to a misrecognition of the gender-specific character of the self-fashioning process figured in Guyon's violent repression of his own sexual arousal. What is being fashioned here is not merely a civilized self but a male subject, whose self-defining violence is enacted against an objectified other who is specifically female. This female other is represented as threatening the male subject with more than sexual enthrallment: the climactic image of the bare bosomed witch cradling the slumbering youth in her lap makes it evident that she is also threatening him with maternal engulfment." "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text," In Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986), p. 329.

25. Milton's Spenser, p. 201.

26. According to Silberman, "Petrarchan poetry, which is based on the hierarchy of male poet and female love object, represents the quintessence of partial praise: it parts men and women and it enshrines male subjectivity in a specious transcendence. The Petrarchan poet writes of a mistress who is unattainable so that his own perpetual longing provides subject matter for his poetry and the occasion for his assuming the vocation of poet. As the woman's active participation in the love relationship is denied, she is removed to the margins of the lyric, allowing the poet ample scope for expatiating on his own ability to make the absent beloved present in his verse. Britomart, who takes a very active role in a loving relationship, is an anti-Petrarchan heroine. Her warmth and vulnerability expose the essential sterility and self-absorption of Petrarchan love-sickness. And her uncertainty, as she falls in love with Artegall having seen nothing more than his image, about whether her love is true and destined to be fulfilled or whether it is a perverse and cruel delusion, shows up the too-pat Petrarchan strategy of making the poet's own

mental state the primary, objective reality." "Singing Unsung Heroines," p. 260.

27. According to Quilligan, "had she remained trapped by the Petrarchan terms of disease, she would have continued to be a passive sufferer under a spell, enchanted into paralysis by a diction which allowed no room for action. With Merlin's revision of the rhetoric Britomart is able to act. She ceases to be comic, and becomes heroic." "Words and Sex," p. 201.

28. Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor, p. 165.

29. Goldberg states that by asking that he be called the "Saluage Knight," rather than by his real name, Artegall resists desire, since his name is all that Britomart has of him. Endlesse Worke, p. 102.

30. "Singing Unsung Heroines," p. 260.

31. "Singing Unsung Heroines," p. 384 n.3.

32. Spenser's condemnation of "partial" texts is linked with a desire to hear the stories of woman warriors:

> If they be dead, then woe is me therefore:
> But if they sleepe, O let them soone awake:
> For all too long I burne with enuy sore,
> To heare the warlike feates, which Homere spake
> Of bold Penthesilee, which made a lake
> Of Greekish bloud so oft in Troian plaine;
> But when I read, how stout Debora strake
> Proud Sisera, and how Camill' hath slaine
> The huge Orsilochus, I swell with great disdaine.
> (III.iv.2)

As Hamilton points out, Britomart's chastity is made explicit at this point (The Faerie Queene, n. to III.iv,3).

33. Cf. Berger, "Two Spenserian Retrospects."

34. Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor, p. 170.

35. Endlesse Worke, p. 29.

36. DeNeef believes that "Book III is shaped by the poetic quest for an errant Cupid; its narrative encourages us to expect that by its end Cupid will have been found. But neither Venus in Canto vi nor Spenser in Canto xii can locate him. Failing to find Amor, both questors discover Amoret. And yet, of course, Amoret is the only Amor that could be found, for Cupid was never anything more -- nor less -- than the infinitive option to love. Only when bodied forth in actual

loving -- in varieties of amoretti -- does Cupid have any tangible existence." Spenser and the Motives of Metaphor, p. 173.

37. According to Gross, "ending is not so much united with origins as made to occupy a curiously negative space, the extremely shadowy status of the original event itself being reinforced by Spenser's comparing Scudamour's successful theft of Amoret from the Temple of Venus to Orpheus' failed recovery of Eurydice from Hades (IV.x.58)." Spenserian Poetics, p. 173. We may also wish to recall Britomart's words at III.i.25: "For soone as maistrie comes, sweet loue anone/Taketh his nimble wings, and soone away is gone."

38. Cf. "The Discarding of Malbecco," p. 138.

39. Gross, p. 93.

40. "Force and Form in the Gardens of Adonis," p. 134.

41. According to Berger, "the moniment he presents to Britomart is first rounded to a panacea, then rendered endlesse, or unperfited -- like the conclusions to the Amoretti and Epithalamion and all the books of The Faerie Queene." "The Structure of Merlin's Chronicle," Studies in English Literature 9 (1969), p. 51.

42. Cf. fn. 20.

43. The Kindly Flame, pp. 16-17.

44. Endlesse Worke, p. 6.

45. Michael Leslie, Spenser's Fierce Warres and Faithfull Loves, (Cambridge and Totowa, N.J.: D.S. Brewer, Barnes and Noble, 1983), pp. 176-77.

46. Gross uses this statement in conjunction with his discussion of the Garden of Adonis: "By the intricate web of revisions, erasions, allusions, and ironies such as I have been analyzing [the silence of art, theories of Plato, the triviality of gardens of Adonis], the Garden and its poet also protect themselves against the random, reductive pressures of a fixating intelligence, whether heretical or orthodox. It shows us an image of erotic and religious mystery which tries to ward off slander, sentimentality, and sacrilegious rationalization (much as Venus hides the 'Father of all formes' from both the phallic violence of the boar and from the 'skill' of envious Stygian gods)." (p. 204). His statement can be applied equally well to the whole of Books III and IV.

47. MacCaffrey associates Venus and the number six (in her discussion of Book VI) with "perfection and completeness....In addition, like all the other even numbers six is "empty in the center" and feminine -- a biological and geometrical analogy which is certainly consistent with a book presided over by a female deity, and in which the major symbol is the hollow-centered circle of perfection." Spenser's Allegory, pp. 351-2.

48. Michael Baybak, Paul Delany and A.K. Hieatt, "Placement 'in the middest'," in Essential Articles for the Study of Edmund Spenser, ed. A.C. Hamilton, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1972).

49. Diana de Armas Wilson points to similar criticisms within the Labors of Persiles: "Cervantes's experimental last romance seems to have surmised its future misreadings by exposing its own story-telling hero to the continual carpings of all the males in the audience, who regard great portions of his narrative as 'not very relevant'....Both Periandro's lengthy discourse and the Persiles that encloses it beg for noncanonical readings: both are working 'in the in-between' in order to mute differences and mediate polarities. Cervantes's androgynous heroes begin their multiple labours by confronting a barbaric all-male culture whose economy, based on exchange of such fungible goods as gold and women, answers that culture's very real fears of sterility." "Cervantes's Labors of Persiles: Working (in) the in-between," in Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1986), p. 170.

50. Gross describes the act of reading with love in relation to Augustine's On Christian Doctrine: "Augustine's book splits the act of reading along the axis of love. True reading uses words to minister to the ends of spiritual truth and Grace, especially the teaching of caritas -- the rule localized in that text which tells man to love his neighbour but which is also the ontological essence of divinity. Such a use of signs is indeed itself a manifestation of caritas....Augustine contrasts it to the reading ensnared in the idolatrous cupiditas, which enjoys instead of uses words that should by rights point to higher things more worthy of love." Spenserian Poetics, p. 65.

51. I use William Sessions phraseology. "Is Closure Possible? Spenser's Venus and the Deconstructionists," in Spenser at Kalamazoo - 1984, Proceedings of the Spenser Sessions at the 19th International Congress on Medieval Studies, ed. Francis G. Greco, (Clarion: Clarion Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1984).

52. Richard Neuse states of Book VI that it is "full of loose ends and inconsistencies, so that little is finally fixed and everything seems potentially subject to further vision and

revision." "Book VI as Conclusion to The Faerie Queene," in Essential Articles, p. 366. Berger, referring to the dissolving of the vision of the graces on Mount Acidale, states that "poetry, having triumphed, must dissolve its triumph again and again to show that it is still engaged in the ongoing process of life where experience is not yet ordered." "A Secret Discipline," p. 74. Both of these statements apply equally well to the process at work in Books III and IV, although I would add that the dissolving of poetic vision is necessary to the avoidance of idolatry. Gross argues that "order itself -- or the will to order, stability, division, equality, closure -- may indeed be more effectively catastrophic than whatever is named by idealized myths of unbounded change, decay, entropy, or chaos." Spenserian Poetics, p. 235. Thus, the "will to order," to complete and perfect poetic vision, the desire for the perfect closure of the intact paradise, is as susceptible to idolatry as any of the metaphoric icons of the text. Spenser makes us aware that any text is a "partiall" text.

53. She prefaces this remark by stating that "as critics, we may invent more problems than we solve." She refers in particular to a variety of interpretations of the House of Busirane episode, in which Amoret is blamed, implicitly or explicitly, for the experience, which is said to be a result of her own fears of sexuality, a punishment for her treatment of lovers, or a result of Scudamour's "too lustful" approach to her. Earlier in the discussion, which is a response to Thomas Roche's paper, "Britomart at Busyrane's Again, or, Brideshead Revisited," she states that "It often occurs to me that we may be inventing a problem of interpretation where none exists. Suppose this story were told to children simply as a story, it would be quite comprehensible as a fairy tale. The abduction of a bride on her wedding day is, after all, widespread as a folk tale; I will leave it to social scientists to say why. Of course, in reading Spenser we cannot be content with story as story -- it goes without saying -- but it may be salutary to return to something like the child's point of view and see Busyrane as a kind of Bluebeard who locks up the women he captures and kills them when he is tired of them. Certain elements of the story then fall into place." "A Response to Professor Thomas Roche's Paper," in Spenser at Kalamazoo, Proceedings of the Special Sessions at the 18th International Congress on Medieval Studies, ed. Francis G. Greco. (Clarion: Clarion Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1983), pp. 148, 145-46.

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