

“[W]RITTEN WITH TEARES IN HARTS CLOSE BLEEDING BOOK”:
WOUNDS, SKEPTICISM, AND THE INTERIOR OF THE BODY IN EARLY
MODERN ROMANCE

by

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Caravaggio's "The Incredulity of Saint Thomas," c.1602

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iii
Frontispiece	v
List of Illustrations	vii
Abstract	viii
Epigraph	x
The Argument	1
Chapter One	9
“[H]eavy wounded-harts”: Liminal Wounds in Edmund Spenser’s <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Book III	
1. “With bloud deformed”: The Chiasmus of Cantos IV and V	13
2. “[A] thousand charmes”: Torture and Sacrifice in Cantos XI and XII	24
Chapter Two	46
“Remediless Wounds”: Sir Philip Sidney’s <i>New Arcadia</i> and the Heroic Body in Crisis	
1. The “wound that wondrously did bleed”: The Romance’s Two Bodies	50
2. “[U]naffected languishing”: The Death of the Hero	59
Works Cited	76

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Caravaggio—"The Incredulity of Saint Thomas"

Frontispiece

ABSTRACT

Written with Teares studies two romances—Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and Sir Philip Sidney’s *The New Arcadia*—and begins with a simple hypothesis: that Spenser’s and Sidney’s elaboration on wounds demonstrate a deep skepticism about the status of the Early Modern body and its relationship to an individual’s interiority (as subjectivity).

The first chapter treats Book Three of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, and considers the confusion that surrounds Spenser’s representation of physical and metaphorical wounds. This confusion often accompanies a crossing of erotic love with physical violence, and Spenser’s characters struggle to differentiate between physical and metaphorical wounds. This exercise in reading wounds, I argue, is necessarily an exercise in demonstrating the problems of interpreting the body as a marker of the self. As such, Spenser’s characters, in Book Three, learn to see wounds not necessarily as a marker of the soul, but as the physical space where the body’s inside and outside mix and become adulterated, rendering each as indistinguishable from the other. The first chapter argues that this combination of insides and outsides suggests Spenser’s uncertainty about the nature and value of inwardness, an uncertainty that translates, with Sidney, over to the Renaissance battlefield, to the aesthetic representation of aristocratic bodies and aristocratic virtues.

The second chapter—the key synecdoche of the project—studies Sir Philip Sidney’s *The New Arcadia* and contends that Sidney’s anxieties about the body manifest when his heroes sustain wounds. Sidney, however, is more sensitive to the political and social

implications of wounds than Spenser, and, thus, his treatment of them in *The New Arcadia* links with his testing and transformation of Tudor Humanist assumptions about the heroic body and its aesthetic, moral, and erotic functions. Ultimately, I suggest that *The New Arcadia* sublimates heroic action to heroic suffering, expressed through emotional and physical wounds on and in the body. Sidney's heroes and heroines do not succeed; rather, they languish under the weight of emotional torment and physical pain, learning to appreciate the figurative, spiritual values of pain rather than the practical rewards of martial victory.

Happy ye leaues when as those lilly hands,
which hold my life in their dead doing might
shall handle you and hold in loues soft bands,
lyke captiues trembling at the victors sight.
And happy lines, on which with starry light,
those laming eyes will deigne sometimes to look
and reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,
written with teares in harts close bleeding book.
And happy rymes bath'd in the sacred brooke,
of *Helicon* whence she deriued is,
when ye behold that Angels blessed looke,
my soules long lacked foode, my heauens blis.
Leaues, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone
whom if ye please, I care for other none.

—Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti* 1

The Argument

Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my fingers in the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.

—John 20:25, ESV

Our skepticism is a function of our now illimitable desire.

—Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge*¹

Around 1602, Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio attempted to compress the growing religious skepticism circulating the continent into a single painting. The result was a searching, shocking work later titled, “The Incredulity of Saint Thomas” (Illustration 1). On the left side of the painting stands Jesus; his skin is pale—sepulchrally so—and his body is poised like a statue, though his build is slight, delicate, almost feminine. His neck is slightly bent, downward looking, and the deep shadow on his countenance allows us only to recognize its features but not determine the emotion animating them. With his right hand, he is pulling back his mantle like a theatrical curtain, baring his breast and wound for visual and tactile inspection by the disciples who stand to his right. Much of the painting’s energy, however, is concentrated in Jesus’ left hand, for Jesus’ left hand has seized Thomas’ right with a virile power. It seems, perhaps, that Jesus might be forcing Thomas’ finger deeper into his wound, though the expression on Thomas’ face is not one of exasperation. Thomas, as the title suggests, is incredulous, incapable of accepting the divine interiority that Jesus’ body and wound demonstrate. Like Caravaggio, the writers examined in this thesis attempt to express and apprehend inwardness materially, by pointing, I argue, to the physical bridge between the inside and the outside of the body: the wound.

¹ Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge In Seven Plays of Shakespeare*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

To explain how wounds allowed Early Modern authors to express inwardness, this thesis will explore a form of psychology, but not the type of materialist psychology dramatized by Ben Jonson.² I want to show in this thesis how the wounded body renders such material readings impossible for the Early Modern body, how literary elaboration on wounds in the Early Modern period created a division between body and mind, between self and observer, that cannot be reconciled in such physical terms. In Caravaggio's "The Incredulity of Saint Thomas," we glimpse both the effort to express the body as a site of inwardness and the elusiveness of that self, the way it seems always to be receding both from the matter in which it takes form and the medium in which it is expressed. Thomas, for example, cannot know the inwardness of the anatomized corpse, no matter how deep or forcefully his finger penetrates. Rather, his body movement aspires to the mysterious inwardness which only living but breached flesh can point: uncertainty. And this uncertainty, shown here as religious skepticism caused by one's inability to apprehend another's divinity, serves well as a focus around which to begin this thesis, for Thomas' demeanor, and the painting as a whole, dramatizes the growing anxiety over the status of the body—defined roughly, for Thomas, as the body's ability to represent divinity—as well as the manner in which wounds contributed to and compounded this anxiety. As in this painting, this thesis shows how the skepticism of religious doubt comes to be imbricated with a growing Early Modern skepticism of the body, a skepticism centered on wounds and the subjective psychology wounds undermine. Both of the writers we will look at in this thesis explore the mysteries of combining a material search for psychological inwardness with a revision of the prevailing social discourses surrounding wounds. In a series of two

² Jonson, Katherine Maus remarks, "Conceives a materialist psychology to entail a complete availability of self to observers." Katherine Maus, *Ben Jonson and the Roman Frame of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pg. 26

close readings, of Book Three of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and of Sir Philip Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)*, I argue that Spenser's and Sidney's elaborations on wounds reveal a deep uncertainty about the status of the body, an uncertainty that disrupts the process of reading inwardness materially and, subsequently, undermines and rewrites the social conventions surrounding wounds.

This thesis, then, begins with a suspicion—that the pervasive religious anxieties circulating England at the end of the sixteenth century influenced the romances of Spenser and Sidney—and an intuition—that the manner in which Spenser and Sidney elected to compress this anxiety was through Christianity's already-established icon of doubt, the wound. My focus, here, however, is not with the wounds of Christ, but with two other discourses of wounds that Early Modern religious skepticism influenced: wounds of war and the metaphorical love-wound. I want to show in this thesis what consequences resulted when the anxiety surrounding Christ's wounds gave way to a new psychology of the self, to a rewriting of the outward and inward Early Modern body. Like Christ's wounds, which became in Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements a tense place where spirituality (inwardness) and orthodoxy were often at odds, war wounds and love wounds compounded this tension by exposing a physical as well as an emotional ambiguity. In both Spenser's and Sidney's romances, real wounds often get misconstrued as metaphorical and vice versa. The reason for this misinterpretation, as Caravaggio showed, is the inability of the observer to physically apprehend what is on the inside of the wounded body. The result of this inability, however, was that wounds, in the Early Modern period, no longer marked martial effort or zealous sacrifice but the potential threats to the integrity and continuity of the body and self.

I take as my point of entry into this discourse of wounds a work by Elaine Scarry titled *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, a work that, I propose, offers a more satisfying model for how one's material body exposes and conceals inwardness than Jonson's. The act of reading a body, especially a body in pain, for Scarry, is always an act of doubt, an act that both enforces and challenges subjectivity. In the introduction to *The Body in Pain*, she explains:

When one speaks about "one's own physical pain" and about "another person's psychical pain," one might almost appear to be speaking about two wholly distinct orders of events. For the person whose pain it is, it is "effortlessly" grasped (that is, even with the most heroic effort it cannot *not* be grasped); while for the person outside the sufferer's body, what is "effortless" is *not* grasping it (it is easy to remain wholly unaware of its existence; even with effort, one may remain in doubt about its existence or may retain the astonishing freedom of denying its existence; and, finally if with the best effort of sustained attention one successfully apprehends it, the aversiveness of the "it" one apprehends will only be a shadowy fraction of the actual "it" So, for the person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is that "having pain" may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is to "have certainty," while for the person it is so elusive that "hearing about pain" may exist as the primary model of what it is "to have doubt." Thus pain comes unsharably into our midst as at once that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed.³

As in Caravaggio's "Incredulity," here Scarry constructs a paradigm by which a wound, the origin of a pain, represents both certainty (inwardness) and uncertainty (an inability to grasp that inwardness). For the Jesus of Caravaggio's painting, the wound provided a material sign for divine interiority, though neither Thomas' mind nor his body, his searching forefinger, could apprehend it. In fact, for Thomas, the wound reinforces uncertainty despite its presumed efficacy of eliminating this doubt, such that the experience of the wound, as Scarry says, is "unsharable." The religious implications of Jesus' wounds in Caravaggio's painting only compound this paradigm that is pervasive in all instances of wounding, in the emotional as well as material cases. Though Scarry constructs her paradigm for the material witnessing

³Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). pg. 4

of wounds, in this thesis, I propose that the same model may be applied to characters suffering from metaphorical wounds. Especially in the romances of Spenser and Sidney, the confusion of real and metaphorical wounds (or, as I will say, of the mind and the body) compounds the inability of the observer to grasp another's pain and register how that pain influences the mind. Scarry's paradigm, then, does not adequately express the problems inherent in incurring and observing wounds, despite its providing an apt model for the experience of pain. Not only does it fail to account for emotional or spiritual pain, but also it casts the experience of pain as preeminently self-confirming for the victim, as indicative of an inwardness that none but the victim can grasp. We will find that Spenser's and Sidney's sensitivity to wounds in both contexts (to incurring and observing) makes the prospect of self-confirmation remote at best. Rather, one experiences pain as, for Spenser, a subordination of subjectivity to the cause of the wound, and, for Sidney, as pathologically dividing, as a potential threat to the self-confirmed body and mind. The inability of wounds to represent anything self-confirming allows Spenser and Sidney a way to investigate and alter the idea of the body and the self.

Book Three of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* represents perhaps the longest and most labyrinthine contemplation of the wound of love. Spenser's epic romance, also, details the most elaborate representation of Scarry's paradigm, as Spenser's hypersensitivity to the matters of reading inwardness are exacerbated by his treatment of the love-wound as erotic, enervating, and destructive. In his magical Faerie Land, Spenser fashions a narrative that demonstrates the dangers of absorption precisely as it works to absorb readers, and Spenser stages absorption, primarily to erotic love, as an inward wound that gradually but potently destroys one's subjectivity. The myriad instances of misreading real and metaphorical wounds contributes to the romance's centripetal pull, illustrating, paradoxically,

how the quest to seize one's inwardness materially can often result in the transmission of a wound. Sometimes the transmitted wound is physical and other times it is emotional, and the two close readings I offer of book three—of Timias' love for Belpheobe and of Busyrane's submission of Amoret—trace the development of these transmissions and show how Spenser, ultimately, is investigating wounds in order to recreate inwardness. Spenser renders the efficacy of the wounds as progressive, as leading from destruction to reconstruction. In the first chapter, then, I argue that Spenser's treatment of wounds, their origins and their fates, as inherently ambiguous reveals his desire to define chastity as both a physical and spiritual virtue. The complex artistry by which he depicts the dangerous consequences of misinterpreting real and metaphorical wounds dramatizes the dangers of failing to recognize the physical and spiritual applications of chastity. By reimagining inwardness as a combination of the physical and spiritual, Book Three of *The Faerie Queene* prepares the revision of heroism manifest in Sidney's *The New Arcadia*, and my first chapter offers a reading of Spenser's epic that reveals its complicity in Sidney's *avante garde* design.

Sir Philip Sidney, in the revised *Arcadia*, incorporates Spenser's anxiety over wounds of love and wounds of war in an effort to redesign heroism, though Sidney's interest, unlike Spenser's, is not to demonstrate the destruction of inwardness that results from wounds but the ability of both inward and outward wounds to physically sully the aristocratic, heroic body. The chapter on Sidney thus is more concerned with war wounds than love wounds, and, as such, begins with a biographical reading of Sidney's own death and the odd elegy "Astrophel" that Spenser wrote upon Sidney's death. My proposal about Sidney's historical death and Spenser's elegy is that Sidney succumbed, in his real life, to the same type of grotesque and disfiguring wound that *The New Arcadia*, in its revision of heroics, both fears and resists. The wounds Sidney probes in *The New Arcadia*, by turns, are grotesque and

beautiful, aesthetic markers traditionally used to distinguish common from aristocratic wounded bodies. Where Sidney's *The Old Arcadia* maintains this distinction, *The New Arcadia* offers aristocratic bodies grotesque and dangerously septic wounds in order to demystify the traditional Greek ethos of war. In this way, *The New Arcadia* provides a more realistic image of the Early Modern battlefield, demonstrating Sidney's anxiety about the heroic body by showing that aristocratic and heroic bodies putrefy as rapidly and repulsively as common, un-heroic bodies. So it was to prove for Sidney himself, whose revision of heroism in *The New Arcadia* (c.1581) anticipates his own pitiable demise five years later. It is no wonder, then, that Sidney's revision attempts to re-conceive heroism, or that Sidney elected to dramatize this re-conception in a manner similar to Spenser's, by focusing on the ways in which wounds inhibit the victim's subjectivity and pose a hermeneutic crisis for the observer. The hermeneutic crises of reading wounded bodies culminates in a narrative of *The New Arcadia* that successfully marries Spenser's spiritually and physically chaste love to the martial prowess traditionally associated with heroics: the narrative of Argalus and Parthenia. Sidney's treatment of Argalus and Parthenia's dead bodies stresses the figurative value of suffering over the practical, political consequences of death and, in this way, demonstrate how Sidney was attempting to relocate the heroic body away from its political value and toward a spiritual and aesthetic value. Sidney, ultimately, was anxious about how his mutilated body would be interpreted, though, by proposing, as he does in the revised narrative, that the aesthetic aspects of wounds may reflect the nobility and heroism of both the wounded and the observer, he attempted to fashion a heroic discourse in which his aristocratic body certainly would participate.

Both these arguments—of Spenser's re-conception of reading inwardness and Sidney's of the heroic body—I think, are in dialogue, and sometimes in explicit

disagreement, with a presupposition that structures much current work on the Renaissance.⁴ Where New-historicism has tended to emphasize the individual as a victim of the power that circulates throughout culture, I propose in this thesis that the wounded body provided Early Modern authors with a locus in which that patrician power was both concentrated and undermined. This work ultimately is about how bodies are destroyed and how, in destruction, the wounded self re-fashioned the discourses of Early Modern interiority (as subjectivity) and heroism. What I concentrate on here is a literary mode of self-fashioning that has real implications, one that turns inward as much as outward and that focuses attention on wounding and destruction as urgent but also quotidian occasions for demarcating the Early Modern body and self. For Spenser, the harboring of these aristocratic energies allows him to illuminate the pervasive anxiety about reading bodies and selves in the period, while Sidney contains this energy in order to subvert and recreate the conventional aristocratic disposition toward heroic and common bodies. Their containment and resistance of authoritarian power into a single image—the wound—I believe, anticipates Hamlet’s “that within which passeth show,” for the inward pathology that wounds create cannot be contained or conveyed by the material from which those wounds originate. I want to show in this thesis how the roots of this modern insurrection found a voice in the epics of Spenser and Sidney and the destruction of the material body that those epics depict.

⁴ Searching the MLA bibliography, 1990-present, for “Early Modern” and “Self” yields 257 entries, while “Early Modern” and “Body” comes in a close second with 255. Combining the two terms and adding a third category—“Drama”—returns 231 results. This simple exercise substantiates my sense that most recent work on the body and the self in the Early Modern period has centered on drama.

Chapter I

“[H]eavy-wounded harts”:

Liminal Wounds in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, Book Three

Othello: By heaven, I’ll know thy thoughts.

Iago: You cannot, if my heart were in your hand

(Othello, III.iii.162-3)

Since the mid 1980s, and the publication of Francis Barker’s *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (1984), Gail Kern Pastor’s *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (1993), the status of the self—defined roughly as self-reflexive human consciousness, aware of its agency—along with that self’s historical fashioning in Early Modern texts, has been questioned and investigated.⁵ Barker and Pastor argue that the idea of subjectivity emerges with early capitalism and its chief practitioners, the bourgeois. Such studies led to a material distinction, between the “public” and the “private” or the body and the self. Katherine Maus’ brilliant study of theatrical inwardness, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (1995), however, redirected the object of these studies, focusing not on the existence or emergence of an Early Modern self, but on the way that inwardness was defined and talked about in Early Modern texts.⁶ Where Maus situates inwardness on the stage, I look to the romantic epic; where Maus focuses on ways that religious, political and legal discourses created the vocabulary of inwardness, I seek out a compressed example of materiality—the wound—and show how its elucidation in Early Modern romance not only reveals the creation of a vocabulary of inwardness but does so by

⁵ Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (Methuen and Company, 1984); Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Cornell University Press, 1993)

⁶ Katherine Maus, *Inwardness and Theatre in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

rejecting the conventional mechanisms by which inwardness (in Maus' estimation) was read: materially and socially.

Work on Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* in this new-historicist vein has been meager—and this despite the prodigious amount of material on Early Modern bodies and selves. This paucity might best be expressed as a paucity for Book Three of the epic, for, chronologically, Stephen Greenblatt, David Lee Miller, and Michael Schoenfeldt have all explored material self-fashioning in Book Two of *The Faerie Queene*.⁷ Greenblatt, Miller, and Schoenfeldt set up similar paradigms for reading the body and the self, each assuming that knowing the body is not just gaining information about the corporeal machine the self inhabits but actually learning something about that self. Greenblatt, Miller, and Schoenfeldt approach this uncovering of the self materially and historically, employing either a Freudian framework that locates inwardness in genital eroticism or a Bakhtinian one that locates inwardness in physiological consumption. These focused paradigms—like the one I offer here—get appropriated and revolutionized by Jonathan Goldberg's *Endless Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse*, a work in which Goldberg reopens interpretations of *The Faerie Queene* endlessly, arguing that the romance “relentlessly[...] den[ies] closure” by “undoing” those fixed distinctions and identities (i.e. Greenblatt's and Miller's eroticism and Schoenfeldt's eroticism) by which we secure our sense of a “body” and a “self.”⁸ In three essays that read various episodes of Book Four of *The Faerie Queene*—on narrative, thematic desire, and relation of Spenser's epic to other Elizabethan discourses—Goldberg traces the

⁷ Greenblatt, Stephen, “To Fashion a Gentleman: Spenser and the Destruction of the Bower of Bliss,” in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp.157-92; Miller, David Lee, *The Poem's Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 “Faerie Queene”* (Princeton University Press, 1988); Schoenfeldt, Michael, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 40-73.

⁸ Goldberg, Jonathan, *Endless Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse*. Baltimore—London. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981. pp. 21-22

development of what he calls the “autonomous destructiveness” (pg. 62) of the text, the poem’s absorbing, baleful lure that at once resists closure (by refusing to conclude) and fails to convey language that can be grasped immediately as reality. To write and read, in Goldberg’s model, is not to encounter reality or truth, but to lose oneself in the language of the other, to be in a liminal space where story telling and story hearing are indistinguishable.

The liminal will become important as we begin to explore how wounds disrupt material readings of inwardness in Book Three of *The Faerie Queene*. Wounds do represent a material liminality; they sit at the threshold between the body and the self and, in this way, suggest that they might be indicators of interiority, or transitioning toward interiority. In fact, in *The Faerie Queene*, wounds often function in this transitional way, leading from the physical (a real wound) to the metaphorical or spiritual (an inward, love-wound), though they do not point to a solidified historical self or to an interminable receding of meaning. Rather, the wounds that Edmund Spenser probes in Book Three of *The Faerie Queene* sit somewhere in between the discourses of secured knowledge (wounds as marking interiority) and deconstruction (wounds as projecting an unsolvable, unknowable interiority), and Spenser’s treatment of wounds at both the physical and metaphysical thresholds of reading and knowledge simultaneously reveals Goldberg’s endlessness of meaning and Greenblatt’s, Miller’s, and Schoenfeldt’s suspicion that the self might, in fact, be read through material and action. This liminality, then, provides a way by which the self might be redefined, as existing somewhere between the inapprehensible and the material. Not only do wounds represent a material marker of this liminal space, but also they focus undue attention onto the body in lieu of the self. *The Faerie Queene* stages this misreading of wounds as either physical or emotional as potentially calamitous, and, thus, I argue, attempts to fashion inwardness as neither physical nor spiritual, but as an indecipherable combination of the two. The most

pervasive, and persuasive, way that Spenser achieves this redefinition of the self is through his representations of chastity in Book Three. This chapter uses Spenser's elaboration on wounds as way to trace the development of chastity in Book Three, showing how the middle cantos (iv and v) dramatize the consequences of misconstruing wounds and how the later cantos (xi and xii) intensify these consequences and render right reading as neither a focus on the body or the soul nor the body as an indicator of the soul but on a combination of the two that exists just beyond the reach of language. The wounds represented in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* open, like Goldberg's paradigm, the poem endlessly by projecting an inwardness that cannot be grasped by the observer or the self, though this opening allows Spenser to recreate the self as uncertain, as pathological, as a subject searching tirelessly to balance the physical with the spiritual.

1. “With bloud deformed”: The Chiasmus of Cantos iv and v

Spenser’s verse usually demonstrates an impressive knowledge of conventional medicine, though often this emphasis on unguents and anesthetics contrasts a character’s materiality with his or her inwardness, rendering the self as something unconnected to the body. When, for example, Belphoebe treats Timias’ “cruell wound” in canto five of Book Three, she does so methodically and conventionally, but without any awareness of his inward condition:

The soueraigne weede betwixt two marbles plaine
She powdered small, and did in peeces bruze,
And then atweene her lilly handes twaine,
Into his wound the iuyce thereof did scruze,
And round about, as she could well it vze,
The flesh therewith she suppld and did steepe,
T’abate all spasme, and soke the swelling bruze,
And after hauing searcht the intuse deepe,
She with her scarfe did bind the wound from cold to keep.
(III.v.33)⁹

Belphoebe’s course of treatment is remarkably in line with the prevailing attitudes about how wounds should be dealt with. She begins by seeking healing herbs—“*tobacco*,” “*panachaea*,” and “*polygon*” (36)—then cleaning Timias’ wound and using her scarf to slow the bleeding and protect the wound from the elements. The stanza’s medical concerns stage one of *The Faerie Queene*’s inadequate forms of reading wounds: as a sign of a material problem. Neither in this stanza nor in the other stanzas that detail Timias’ wounding does Belphoebe attempt to read Timias’ inwardness, to register his wound as indicative of anything on the inside of his body. Her concern, even, a few stanzas later when Timias’ condition worsens, is topical,

⁹ Edmund Spenser: *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Longman, 1977). All citations of *The Faerie Queene* are to this edition.

only concerned with the physical nature of his wound: “Which seeing [Timias’ wound] faire *Belphoebe* gan to feare, / Least that his wound were inly well not healed, / or that the wicked steel empoyned were” (49). Belphoebe’s concern that Timias wound “were inly well not healed,” however, suggests that she is not altogether incapable of reading inwardness. Her suspicion echoes a conventional Renaissance belief about the fate of wounds; some wounds, Renaissance physicians believed, were fated to putrefy and such wounds could not be healed easily, if at all.¹⁰ Other types of wounds would begin to show signs of healing only to reappear and become infected. Sir Philip Sidney died of such a wound—succumbing to the sepsis of a war wound some weeks after the initial wounding—and Spenser certainly knew this. His poetry, consequently, expresses the anxiety and uncertainty that Renaissance physicians often associated with physical wounds, the same anxiety that Belphoebe shows here. Her suspicion that Timias’ wound might not have healed “inly well,” suggests that wounds, like the body, also have an inward secret and an inward agency that cannot be redirected or subdued by any antidote. Her medical shrewdness, only a few stanzas earlier a masterpiece of diligence and control, becomes ineffectual, for something on the inside of Timias’ body, something beyond Belphoebe’s perceptual knowledge, is putrefying.

Indeed, Timias’ physical wound has given way to a metaphorical problem, a problem that even Belphoebe’s suspicion of the physical wound’s interiority cannot account for. Belphoebe’s suspicion of the inwardness of Timias’ wound is a topical, medical concern, only indicative of the body and self by recognizing that the wound, too, has a body and a self. Timias’ wound is a metonym, a condensed model for the larger dilemma confronting

¹⁰ The best delineation of this suspicion comes from the French physician Ambroise Paré’s, “The Apologie and Treatise of Ambroise Paré, translated out of the Latin and compared with the French by Thomas Johnson” (1634). Paré’s “Apologie” records a number of conversations with King Charles IX in which the French king questions the doctor over why such mass numbers of French troops die weeks after being wounded by harquebuse and musket shots.

his body (his physical pain) and his self (his love for Belphoebe). Like most of Spenser's characters, Timias recovers from the wound on his thigh; his physical recovery, however, belies an inward pathology, a pathology that his body, and the wound on his thigh, can only adumbrate:

O foolish Physick, and vnfruitfull paine,
That heales vp one and makes another wound:
She his hurt thigh to him recur'd againe,
But hurt his hart, the which before was sound,
Through an vnwary dart, which did rebound
From her faire eyes and gracious countenance.
What bootes it him from death to be vnbound,
To be captiued in endlesse duraunce
Of sorrow and despaire without aleggeaunce?
(III.v.42)

Belphoebe's treatment of Timias' wound was obviously successful—in purely medical terms—and the poet begins this stanza by lamenting the fact that such successful antidotes do not also exist for metaphorical illnesses. This lamentation soon gives way to a theory of love and love-wounds ubiquitous in *The Faerie Queene* and in the iconographies of love from which *The Faerie Queene* draws: love as originating in vision. Belphoebe has wounded Timias through an “vnwary dart, which did rebound / From her faire eyes and gracious countenance.” Here, as elsewhere in Book Three, the love-wound is conveyed as misdirected, misconstrued vision, the failure of one to recognize the difference between the inside and outside of the body. Despite Belphoebe's supreme medical knowledge, her ability to read Timias' body correctly, she both is unaware of the inward pathology the physical wound has caused and unwitting of her complicity in this transmission. This inattentiveness comes at Timias' expense; she is not capable of registering Timias' wound as anything other than a physical wound. And so, some stanzas later, she is puzzled when Timias' vigor does not return despite the auspicious look of his thigh wound. Her worry that Timias' wound “were inly well not healed” not only reveals her suspicion that wounds have an inwardness,

but also that she is entirely incapable of reading that inwardness, or Timias', correctly. Timias' physical wound, as much as his inward wound, occupies a liminal space between reality and metaphor, at once connecting his body to his interiority and rendering that connection inscrutable to others.

Belphoebe's impotence to recognize and cure Timias' inward wound demonstrates the failure of conventional medicine to account for the inside of the human body, for the ever-growing consciousness that would, with Hamlet, redirect the object of literary studies to the liminal, to the space between body and self, action and belief. And Timias' physical wound envelops all senses of liminality: it is physically at the threshold of the body and self and indicative of a transition from the body to the self. This transition is not easily perceived, as Caravaggio dramatized in "The Incredulity." The material body does not convey inwardness, especially the wounded body. Rather, the wounded body obfuscates inwardness, focusing attention on the physical lesion rather than the inward complex the lesion creates. Here, Belphoebe is the victim of this physicality, failing to recognize that the wound's inwardness might bespeak a larger transition within Timias' body. She mistakes, in effect, Timias' metaphorical wound for a real wound, despite having correctly read his initial injury. What she does not understand is that wounds do not simply project materiality; they mark a subjective experience that is inscrutable to observers. One cannot know, as Elaine Scarry has posited, how the self experiences pain. Perhaps Belphoebe knows this, and thus focuses on what she can apprehend, Timias' body. Yet, once the physical wound has given way to an inward wound, any type of material treatment becomes ineffectual, for, the poet tell us, no "sweet Cordial[...] can restore / A loue-sick hart" (v.50).

Marinell's misfortune in canto four, like Timias', offers another example of the consequences of misreading wounds, though the fault in misinterpretation is not entirely his.

Early in Marinell's life, his mother—the sea nymph, Cymoent—sought out a prophecy from Proteus, who tells her that “of a woman [Marinell] should haue much ill, / A virgin strange and stout him should dismay, or kill” (25). Cymoent cannot conceive of a female physically wounding her son, and so she mistakes Proteus' prophecy as metaphorical rather than literal. To protect Marinell from this ill she suggests a literal defense—physical chastity—and Marinell consequently forswears women altogether. When Cymoent receives word that Marinell has been physically and mortally wounded by a woman, she collapses into a crisis of hermeneutic uncertainty:

This was that woman, this that deadly wound,
 That *Proteus* prophecide should him dismay,
 The which his mother vainely did expound,
 To be hart-wounding loue, which should assay
 To bring her sonne vnto his last decay.
 So tickle be the termes of mortall state,
 And full of subtile sophisms, which do play
 With double senses, and with false debate,
 T'approoue the vnknown purpose of eternall fate.
 (III.iv.28)

Like Spenser's angst over the limitations of conventional medicine in v.42, Cymoent's interpretive angst here offers a condensed example of the chagrin that accompanies many of Spenser's “too bold” characters. Language, like wounds, does not have a singular meaning, but is full of “subtle sophisms” that “play / with double sense” to delude the hearer. It occupies the same liminal, transitory space between the actual and metaphorical, and here Spenser casts the consequences of misinterpreting language potentially as calamitous as misreading wounds. This type of linguistic misreading, as Marinell's wounding suggests, can be fatal, not only because confusing a real wound for a metaphorical wound might cause physical harm, but also because a “too bold” reduction leads to an ignorant defense. Marinell forswears women (iv.26), for example, because he and his mother misconstrue Proteus' prophecy; they misinterpret the potential wound as metaphorical rather than real.

Like Belphoebe, who can only read the physicality of Timias' wound, Marinell and Cymoent are only capable of conceiving wounds metaphorically.

The disjunction between Marinell and Cymoent's conception of wounds as metaphorical and their proffering of a material defense (physical chastity) provides the first example of Spenser's depiction of the dangers of not reading chastity as both a physical and a spiritual virtue. This danger is attendant on the misconstruing of wounds. When Belphoebe focuses too intently on the physicality of Timias' wound, she fails to recognize the spiritual victory of his wound: his conquest over the Foster, an image of lechery and lasciviousness. Ironically, Timias' physical victory over eroticism creates eroticism within the knight, such that Timias, too, fails to recognize the spiritual and physical aspects of chastity. He believes that his victory over the Foster demonstrates his mastery of the virtue, though he finds quite the opposite: that his victory over the Foster causes him to become the victim of the Foster's eroticism. Similarly, Marinell believes that his forswearing of women will protect him from the metaphorical wound of love, yet, at the hands of a disillusioned and angered Britomart, he incurs a physical wound. Both situations—Timias' physical conquest over the erotic love that infects him inwardly and Marinell's misconception of a physical wound as metaphorical—reveal how characters both misread wounds and incur wounds that, at once, project as real and metaphorical. For Timias, this dual projection is rather straightforward: his thigh wound marks the provenance of his love for Belphoebe; Belphoebe, however, cannot read the wound as such. Timias has a physical wound on his thigh and a metaphorical wound in his heart. The connection between them is real but unknowable to both Timias and the maid who treats him.

The wound that Marinell receives from Britomart similarly marks his misconception of the prophesied wound; its provenance, however, is metaphorical rather than physical, for

it is borne out of Britomart's love for Artegall. When Britomart realizes that the man she sees on the strand is not Artegall but a potential foe, her desire fuels her rage and conflates the physical with the metaphorical:

Her former sorrow into suddain wraith,
Both coosen passions of distroubled spright,
Conuerting, forth she beates the dustie path;
Love and despight attonce her courage kindled hath.
(III.iv.12)

Many details of this passage suggest love's physicality, its outwardness rather than inwardness. By calling both sorrow and wraith "coosen passions of distroubled spright," Spenser draws attention to the conflation of anger and sorrow, though, here, he ultimately emphasizes the importance of Britomart's violent "spright" rather than her inward suffering. And this overcoming of inward sorrow with outward violence affects Marinell's outward health and his mother's inward stability. It is an ironic crossing over of passions, for Britomart's association of love with violence appears to justify Cymoent's concerns even as it undermines them. Britomart's love, indeed, harms Marinell, just not in the way Cymoent or Marinell conceived it would. Again, as with Belpheobe's misreading of Timias' wound, the failure of both Marinell and Britomart to read wounds correctly deludes and disillusion; each misconstrue one type of wounding for another. And though Britomart is not attempting, as Cymoent and Marinell are, to read a wound, she nevertheless conflates the distinction between body and self. Her pairing of inward passion with outward violence reveals her reliance on the physical, her understanding of chastity as a virtue that requires physical restraint. Ironically, this is Marinell's understanding of the virtue as well.

The chiasmus that leads from Britomart's inner sorrow to Cymoent's subsequent chagrin connects—both spatially in the narrative and cognitively in the minds of the characters—these contrasting discourses of confusing body and self and expressing an

inward love with physical violence. At center of this x, at the space where Britomart's violence causes Marinell's calamity, is a wound, a physical representation of an inward, psychological condition. This wound, as with Timias', is liminal in all senses of the word. It represents mediation between the outward and the inward, the physical and the emotional, that neither Marinell nor Britomart can read. And it effects a transition, though a transition in reverse from Timias'. Where Timias' wound moves from the physical lesion on his thigh to an inward lesion in his heart, Marinell's wound moves from a perceived metaphorical wound to a real wound. Again, at the center of this larger narrative x, are wounds, wounds revealing their liminality and inscrutability precisely as they transition from the outward to the inward, the inward to the outward. But the characters of Spenser's romance cannot recognize wounds as such pivotal mediations between the inward and the outward, the emotional and physical, and so the narrative flows on with a seeming chiasmic balance belied by the character's confusion over how seamlessly the real replaces the metaphorical, how desire creates violence and violence desire.

Spenser stages the consequences of these multiple confusions as a hermeneutic impasse, demonstrating how the ease with which characters conflate desire and action, how real and metaphorical wounds transition, poses a problem to reading inwardness. Spenser's representation of the effects of wounds on the body, in fact, opposes Elaine Scarry's paradigm in *The Body in Pain*, who proposed that pain is the primary mode by which the self has certainty and by which the observer has doubt. The latter, that observing pain causes skepticism, might hold in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, as Belphoebe's suspicion that Timias' wound "were inly well not healed" suggests. The former, however, certainly is incorrect. The wounds of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, especially the wounds of Timias and Marinell, result in a loss of subjectivity for the wounded. And, in the case of Timias, the final manifestation

of a physical wound as metaphorical only poses a deeper hermeneutic issue, for these wounds cannot be healed, or read, materially. Rather, physical wounds (the type Scarry refers to) adumbrate an inwardness that neither the wounded self or the observer can apprehend, partly because they are liminal, transitioning to other wounds, and partly because they draw undue attention on the material body.

Shortly after Belphoebe discovers the wounded Timias, for example, Spenser shifts to her point-of-view, a subtle narrative manipulation that both emphasizes how wounds destroy subjectivity and dramatizes the problems inherent in reading wounds:

Shortly she came, wheras that woefull Squire
With blood deformed, lay in a deadly swownd:
In whose fair eyes, like lamps of quenched fire,
The Christall humour stood congealed rownd;
His locks, like faded leaues fallen to the grownd,
Knotted with blood, in bouches rudely ran,
And his sweet lips, on which before that stownd
The bud of youth to blossome faire began,
Spoild of their rosie red, were woxen pale and wan.
(III.v.29)

Spenser's use of the blazon stages the hermeneutic dilemma of reading wounded bodies. When Belphoebe confronts Timias' body, her first perceptions render the death process as beautiful, as, in other words, only topical. The inside of Timias' body—revealed in the passage as “a deadly swownd”—again, is beyond Belphoebe's reach, though she does not make a pretense that she can read his material body as a marker of inwardness. She focuses on what she can see—his lips, his eyes, his hair, his countenance—and relates how each convey a loss of blood, a loss of subjectivity. Timias, here, has no inwardness; he is no conscious subject aware of his agency. Rather, Spenser depicts his agency, what material use his body has left, as Belphoebe's and the narrator's. His value is as an artistic construct, no longer as a squire or a lover.

The rendering of the dying body as beautiful is essential to Sir Philip Sidney's reconstruction of the heroic body in *The New Arcadia*; here, however, Spenser appropriates the Petrarchan blazon as a means to dehumanize Timias, to stage the process of reading wounded bodies as entirely material. Indeed, nothing about Timias' deformed body indicates inwardness or the passion that he will soon succumb to; in fact, all of the passion that his physical descriptions evoke are transmitted over to Belphoebe, who, despite her modesty and single-mindedness, feels a mixture of "soft passion" and "sterne horror" when she looks on Timias' body (v.30). Belphoebe's passion and horror lead to pity, "the point of [which] perced through her tender hart" (v.30), though she is able, in the following stanza, to recover her medical skills and kneel to see

[...] if life
 Yet in his frozen members did remaine
 And feeling by his pulses beating rife,
 That the weake soule her seat did yet retaine,
 She cast to comfort him with busie paine:
 His double folded necke she reard vpright,
 And rubd his temples, and each trembling vaine;
 His mayled haberieon she did vndight,
 And from his head his heauy burganet did light.
 (III.v.31)

This return to physicality, especially considering Belphoebe's brief experience of passion, dramatizes in miniature the ways in which wounds confront both victims and observers in *The Faerie Queene*. Timias' experience of the physical wound, and its transition into a metaphorical wound, has left him in an intermediary stage, a stage that requires an observer. Without subjectivity yet still alive, Timias' body, as much as his self, exists somewhere between the real and the metaphorical. When he awakes from this "deadly swownd," it is no wonder that a metaphorical wound now plagues his body; his single-minded desire—to slay the Fosters—has been complicated by his submission to the eroticism that the Fosters embody. The wound on his body cannot tell this story, not through spilt blood or lacerated

skin. But such images can elicit passion from an observer, causing them to experience a similar loss of subjectivity, albeit a mitigated one. Belphoebe experiences this loss of subjectivity as she renders Timias' dying body aesthetically, though she is able to recover from her aesthetic absorption because, we find out later, she has an advantage: she is the foster daughter of Diana, not the "goodly mayd" that she is described as in v.34. She, in other words, is also liminal, like the wound she treats, having been born to an unconscious Chrysothea, birthed "withouten pain" and conceived "withouten pleasure" (vi.23). Her birth at the center—literally, the center—of Book Three moreover marks her position as a liminal figure, and her diligent yet detached care of Timias' body reveals what John Quitsland calls "a simplicity surrounding a mystery," a mystery that is her "inhabiting of the boundary that usually separates divine and human natures."¹¹ The physical and metaphorical wounds of Book Three of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* also inhabit this mysterious space, and, as such, these wounds resist classification (as either physical or metaphorical) precisely as they tempt observers to classify them. The consequences of this misreading, shown here as the seamless transmission of physical to metaphorical pain or vice versa, culminate in Book Three's final two cantos. There, Belphoebe's twin sister, Amoret, becomes the victim of a powerful magician, a magician who is not interested in the transitions between physical and metaphorical wounds but on harboring and intensifying the painful, blurry, liminal space at the center of the x. The scenes that follow are as disturbing as any Spenser would ever compose, and so it is no wonder that they also constitute his most complete meditation of the effects of wounds on the body and the self.

¹¹ John Quitsland, *Spenser's Supreme Fiction: Platonic Philosophy and 'The Faerie Queene.'* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) pg. 139

2. “A thousand charmes”: Torture and Sacrifice in Cantos xi and xii

Perhaps nowhere else in the Spenserian canon do the problems of reading the self materially come under as much weight as they do in the final two cantos of Book Three, the two cantos in which the physically-minded Britomart enters into a space that cannot be described as either physical or metaphorical. Indeed, most readers of Book Three’s final cantos stress Busyrane’s elaborate schematization of the physical violence inherent in sexual desire, interpreting Busyrane’s enterprise as merely an intensification of the physical and emotional elision that led Britomart to wound Marinell. But whereas Britomart’s desire and Marinell’s wound, as well as Timias’ wound and Belpheobe’s desire, exist in transition, as moving from the physical to metaphorical or vice versa, the House of Busyrane does not contain this frenetic mobility, despite its manifold transformation of a metaphorical emotion (love) into a violent, physical reality. The chiasmus constructed in Book Three’s middle cantos testifies to how easily one might misread the body for the self or the self for the body. Book Three’s final episode, however, hesitates on the elision of the body and the self, indeed, intensifying the silent space that lives between the real and the metaphorical in order to cast the process of reading body and self as inherently confused and ambiguous. And the task of reading substance out of Busyrane’s shadows is not merely Britomart’s, who faces a number of dangerous, absorbing tapestries in Busyrane’s home, but the critic’s as well. I hope that approaching the drama that unfolds in Book Three’s final two cantos with a eye on this silent, liminal space can help us obtain a fresh perspective, one that does not register the body as a marker for inwardness or inwardness as a marker for the body.

Many readings of the House of Busyrane, however, have unfortunately taken this misstep, attempting to read the violence that is played out on Amoret's body (her wound) as a marker of some deficiency or fault within her. Focusing on Amoret's culpability appears to be a misreading of Busyrane's enterprise, which is to subdue his victims both physically and mentally and dislocate his victim's subjectivity or agency in the artwork of his household. Nevertheless, readers have often focused on Amoret's wound as evidence for a shortcoming and the ascription of this fault has been as varied as the critics. A.C. Hamilton, for one, argues that Amoret possess an "inhibition that prevents her" from uniting "freely and pleasurably in sexual relations," and that this inhibition is a "latent lesbianism or homosexuality."¹² Thomas Roche holds a similar, though subtler opinion. To him, Busyrane's abduction of Amoret is more mental than physical, and, thus, "The House of Busyrane—at least on one level—is Amoret's mental attitude toward love and marriage."¹³ He goes on to claim that what Amoret fears is the physical union with Scudamore that their marriage will entail and that Busyrane intensifies and literalizes these fears. Ultimately, he says, Busyrane "is the image of love distorted in [Amoret's] mind, distorted by lascivious anticipation or horrified withdrawal. He becomes the denial of the unity of body and soul in true love."¹⁴ In both Hamilton's and Roche's estimation, Amoret's sexual objectification in Busyrane's home is a product of her inability to accept the physicality of love. Both find the inordinate stress on the physical effects of Busyrane's magic, as well as Busyrane's translation of the metaphorical love-wound to a real wound, as evidence for their positions.

Other readers have been more chary, and sought out less direct ways to condemn Amoret for a fault. A. Kent Hiatt, for instance, places the blame on Scudamour rather than

¹² A. C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in 'The Faerie Queene.'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961) pg. 49

¹³ Thomas Roche P., "The Challenge to Chastity: Britomart at the House of Busyrane." *PMLA* LXXVI, September 1961, 340-44, at 341

¹⁴ Roche, 341

Amoret, arguing that it is “Scudamour who forces her into this position by his own practice of an aggressive mastery in the Chaucerian sense. He does not understand the love that depends on mutual freedom and concord.”¹⁵ Heatt goes on to suggest, after some sleuthing for evidence in Book Four of *The Faerie Queene*, that the “events in and around the House of Busyrane are an elegant transition to the Book of Friendship, because precisely the element of friendship, in a Renaissance sense, is what Scudamour and Amoret’s marriage lacks and what Britomart allegorically supplies.”¹⁶ That this lack of amorous friendship, Heatt suggests, ultimately is what compelled Spenser to resist the hermaphrodite in the poem’s 1596 revision. The most persuasive reading of the Busyrane episode, however, is Harry Berger’s essay on violence and gender, as Berger resists, where Hamilton, Roche, and Heatt do not, considering Busyrane as an element of Amoret’s psyche or as a delusional manifestation of Amoret’s behavior to which she becomes the victim. Rather, Berger considers Busyrane as someone intrinsically different from Amoret, inhabiting a psychological and physical environment as foreign to her as Malecasta’s environment is to Britomart. Berger envisions the episodes as a twisted form of courtship in which Busyrane is “the male imagination trying busily (because unsuccessfully) to dominate and possess a woman’s will by art, by magic, by sensory illusions and threats—by all the instruments of culture except the normal means of persuasion.”¹⁷ In these terms, it is no wonder that Busyrane physically gives Amoret the wound of love; he is the product of a gross miscalculation about the nature of love and its effects on the soul and the body. His authorial manipulation and containment of Amoret demonstrates a cathexis similar to Petrarchan desire, but one reversed, intensified, and literalized.

¹⁵ A. Kent Heatt, “Scudamour's Practice of Maistrye upon Amoret.” *PMLA* 77:4 Sept., 1962: 509-10, at 509

¹⁶ Heatt, 509

¹⁷ Berger, Harry Jr., “Busirane and the War Between the Sexes: An Interpretation of *The Faerie Queene* III.xi-xii,” *ELR* 1 (1971): 99-121, at 101

Berger's position offers a helpful reading among a throng of critics concerned with Amoret's guilt, for Berger relocates the tenor of the episode upon Busyrane's magic, Busyrane's inhabiting of the liminal. In this way, Berger avoids reading Amoret's wound as an indication of some culpability and, thus, also avoids reading the body as an indicator of an inward condition. I would like to offer a similar reading of the Busyrane episode to Berger's, a reading that innovates Berger's model by providing his sense of Busyrane's backwards Petrarchanism a physical, conventional medium: torture. I do not intend, however, to focus attention on the physicality of Busyrane's torture of Amoret; rather, in the pages that follow, I hope to show how Busyrane's physical submission of Amoret and the wound that this torture creates stresses the blurring of the physical and metaphorical that occurs throughout Book Three's final episode. Reading Amoret as a victim of torture, I will show, offers one of the more inscrutable images of the poem, inscrutable because liminal, because existing at the boundaries between reality and illusion. Not only will such a reading demonstrate the manifold problems of reading inwardness materially in Book Three, but also it will demonstrate how Spenser's need to connect wounds as a physical reality to wounds as a metaphor for a spiritual experience—as Amoret's wound from Busyrane does—accompanies his desire to redefine inwardness as a combination of the physical and the spiritual. Amoret's wound, its origin and its fate, mediate this redefining of the self, for, like all things in Busyrane's home, her wound exists somewhere between the real and the metaphorical, affecting her body and mind in inexorable, mysterious ways.

The idea of Busyrane as torturer is not too far from the text; in fact, the text seems to push this reading. Busyrane has Amoret locked up “by strong charmes” to a brass pillar. She is the penultimate spectacle in the Masque of Cupid, in which, bleeding and without a heart, she is pushed “forward still with torture,” the “two grysie villeins[...] euermore

encreas[ing] her consuming paine” (xii.19, 21). Earlier Scudamour tells Britomart that Busyrane

tormenteth [Amoret] most terribly
And by day and night afflicts with mortall paine
Because to yield him loue she doth deny,
Once to me yold, not to be yold againe :
But yet by torture he would her constraime
Loue to conveiuie in her disdainfull brest ;
(III.xi. 17)

The details of the stanza stress Amoret’s silent resistance despite her objectification in Busyrane’s masquerade. Objectification (usually mediated through wounding) has the ability to rob one of all agency and subjectivity, but here, at least in Scudamour’s estimation, Amoret still retains some mode of resisting Busyrane’s advances, despite her impressive loss of blood and vitality (xii. 21). She is clearly forced into this bondage, as even the report of her abduction from Book Four suggests.¹⁸

Whether or not Amoret is able to resist Busyrane in any sense is a matter of debate, but her positioning as an object of Busyrane’s backwards Petrarchanism, as the tortured beloved rather than lover, seems to be textually accurate. The question of her culpability, however, is one that her objectification does not immediately answer. In fact, her position as a tortured object would seem to stress her culpability. Torture, like other wounds, entails an odd displacement; the torturer must, if he or she is to be successful, somehow reassign the responsibility of the act onto the tortured. In other words, only by convincing the tortured that they are the cause of their pain can the torturer obtain what he or she desires. This displacement of guilt appears, according to Elaine Scarry, to be an attempt on the part of the torturer to substantiate his or her motivations. In her book, *The Body in Pain*, Scarry examines the torture process at length, arguing primarily that attempts to instill a rationalist

¹⁸ Amoret, Spenser reports in the Fourth Book of *The Faerie Queene*, was abducted by Busyrane on her wedding day. It may be significant that Busyrane abducted Amoret by staging the Masque of Cupid.

intent (for Busyrane, sexual desire) into the act of purposeful wounding is a misinterpretation of the power dynamics at play, what she calls “the fraudulent assertion of power.”¹⁹ “The question” or interrogation, she says, “whatever its content, is an act of wounding; the answer, whatever its content, a scream.”²⁰ But the myriad displacements that torture causes do not end there; they extend to a dissonance between body and voice that Scarry terms, “the vehicle of self-betrayal”:

The torturer experiences his own body and voice as opposites; the prisoner experiences his own body and voice as opposites; the prisoner’s experience of the two is an inversion of the torturer’s. Hence there are four sets of oppositions. The pain is hugely present to the prisoner and absent to the torturer; the question is, within the political fiction, hugely significant to the torturer and insignificant to the prisoner; for the prisoner, the body and its pain are overwhelmingly present and voice, world, and self are absent; for the torturer, voice, world, and self are overwhelmingly present and body and pain are absent. These multiple sets of oppositions at every moment announce and magnify the distance between torturer and prisoner and thereby dramatize the former’s power, for power in its fraudulent as in its legitimate forms is always based on distance from the body.²¹

The consequence of these inversions is the substantiation of the torturer’s world at the expense of the victim’s world. Scarry explains further:

Attributing motive to the torturer and betrayal to the tortured is a way of validating the torturer and eclipsing the pain of the tortured. When we say that a prisoner has confessed or betrayed we acknowledge his or her pain only as an attribute of the torturer’s power and his or her own weakness.²²

Torture, at its most basic, Scarry suggests, is an act of wounding that at once validates the power of the torturer and renders the pain of the tortured insignificant. Indeed, Busyrane’s enterprise relies on Amoret’s objectification and subsequent dehumanization, on the ascription of what she signifies to be something other than what she is. Scarry’s axiom in the passages above—that a human confronted with a wounded or tortured body will transfer

¹⁹ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) pg. 45

²⁰ Scarry, 45

²¹ Scarry, 46

²² Scarry, 49

the meaning of that body onto an abstract concept like guilt or innocence, cowardice or heroism—is precisely what gives Busyrane’s home its artistic life. In Busyrane’s home, there is a violent dissonance between body and voice, and not just Amoret’s body and voice, but Busyrane’s as well. Neither speaks prior to Britomart’s confrontation with Busyrane, and their reticence reveals this division of body and voice. The context that Busyrane provides for Amoret’s wounding, his voice so to speak, is played out on the walls of Busyrane’s “vtmost rowme,” in which tapestries depict the sundry stories of Zeus’ erotic metamorphoses.

It does not take much effort to see Zeus’ philandering as an analogue for the torture scene: his rapes entail a transmission of power—from human to God, or victim to torturer; they substantiate Zeus’ world at the expense of his lover’s, and often in a way—as in the case of Semele—that is more painful than pleasurable; and, perhaps most importantly, they emphasize and literalize the dissonance between body and voice that torture creates. Not only does Zeus transform himself into another body in order to consummate his desires, he does so by distancing himself from the body and voice he previously inhabited. His victims know only the pain or pleasure in their bodies and not the cosmic drama that unfolds around them. The prime object of these sexual interactions, then, is the sublimation of voice or self, or the distancing of the body from the voice or self, to the pleasure or pain that the sexual act causes. Perhaps the best example of this sublimation and distancing occurs in Busyrane’s representation of Leda, certainly a classical analogue for Amoret:

Then was [Zeus] turned into a snowy Swan,
To win faire *Leda* to his louely trade :
O wonderous skill, and sweet wit of the man,
That her in daffadillies sleeping made,
From scorching heat her daintie limbes to shade :
While the proud Bird ruffing his fethers wyde,
And brushing his faire brest, did her inuade ;
She slept, yet twixt her eyelids closely spyde,

How towards her he rusht, and smiled at his pryde.
(III.xi.32)

Zeus' masculine spectacle is all in vain; the "ruffing [of] his fethers" and the "brushing [of] his faire brest" go unnoticed, for Leda is unconscious. Her voice is conspicuously absent from the scene though her body is the principal subject. The alexandrine subtly mirrors this dissonance, as the comma breaks Zeus' body and the object of his transformation ("How towards her he rusht") from his self and subjectivity ("and smiled at his pryde"). The rhythm of the alexandrine, too, is broken, as standard scansion would have the reader pausing on "rusht," a down beat rather than a stressed syllable. Something about this scene is clearly disconnected, and not just the fact that Zeus "inuade[s]" a sleeping Leda. The more sinister and psychologically taxing disconnection is that he does so without regard to Leda's voice or self; in fact, the passage only offers her agency from a distance. Leda appears to be the voyeur of her own sexual encounter, "her eyelids closely" spying the pageant that she herself is part of. Her body is so objectified in this scene that Spenser displaces her agency outside of her body. But from this objectified distance she sees, what else?—the body of a god cupidinously and rapaciously satiating himself inside her, substantiating his world at the expense of hers.

Returning to the critical question of Amoret's culpability, it would appear that the critics who stress Amoret's guilt and weakness over her strength and capacity for resistance would fit neatly into Scarry's paradigm of torture; such critics, too, would simply read Busyrane's tapestries as further dramatizations of Amoret's faults. Reading capitulation to torture as a sort of "self-betrayal," they argue, reveals a weakness in the victim as it validates what the torturer does. Busyrane's reason for wounding Amoret, however, is not the production of a voice of "self-betrayal" but of a magnifying of his world in spite of Amoret's. Nevertheless, Hamilton's, Roche's, and Hieatt's readings have relied on the fact

that Amoret deserves this plight and that Busyrane is either—as in Heatt’s estimation—a production of Amoret’s embattled psyche or—in Hamilton’s and Roche’s—an emissary of some romantic justice that is endemic to the genre. Such readings, however, do not fully compensate for the breadth of the body/voice dissonance that Scarry sees as central to torture. They misread this process primarily because they focus on Busyrane’s object (Amoret) rather than Spenser’s (Britomart’s interpretation of Amoret’s plight). The way Spenser presents the events of Busyrane’s house causes even a third distancing of body from voice, as Britomart must reflect on and try to interpret the images in front of her. Britomart, like the displaced Leda, is a voyeur, spying upon a perverted actualization of her own sexual desires. The tapestries in the “vtmost rowme” both foreground the torture occurring within as well as offer Britomart sexually charged depictions of what might have been in store for her earlier in the Castle Joyous and what may be in store for her later in her quest.

Though Scarry’s paradigm of torture does not extend textually to Britomart’s vision in Busyrane’s house, it may provide a way to explain why Britomart ultimately is able to resist and defeat Busyrane despite her misinterpretation of his artwork. As a torturer, Busyrane depends on misinterpretation, as he himself must re-cathect the meaning of Amoret’s mutilated body into the odd concepts of his desires. The key to Britomart’s success, however, is precisely what Busyrane’s objectification of Amoret—and his subsequent creation of his art—seeks to destroy: action. Britomart does not immediately or instinctively resist this objectification; she, like the reader, is often not able to untangle the oblique allegory or see beyond the provocative silent shadows that pervade Busyrane’s home. She comes very close, for instance, to playing Busyrane’s interpretive game when she happens upon the Statue of Cupid:

Blindfold he was, and in his cruell fist
A mortall bow and arrows keene did hold,

With which he shot at randon, when him list,
 Some headed with sad lead, some with pure gold ;
 (Ah man beware, how thou those darts behold)
 A wounded Dragon vnder him did ly,
 Whose hideous tayle his left foot did enfold,
 And with a shaft was shot through either eye,
 That no man forth might draw, ne no man remedye.
 (III.xi. 48)

While most of Busyrane's artwork mirrors Amoret's actual torture, Cupid's statue provides the best example of the mutilation, for Cupid here is a mythological analogue for Busyrane.

The statue emphasizes love's violence as well as its ambivalence and randomness; it even dramatizes the dissonance between body and voice / vision that Scarry has suggested.

Cupid is blind, or, as Scarry would say, his focus is on "voice, world, and self" rather than on the body of his victim. With his leaden and gilden arrows, he seeks to validate his power at the expense of his victims, who, upon wounding, also incur a sort of blindness, though theirs is a physical blindness, one that focuses attention to the body rather than away from it.

It is significant, of course, that Spenser presents this example of the metaphorical love-wound in a way that is both physically violent as well as everlasting, incurable. Part of the statue's abstruseness is that it combines love and violence in visually physical terms. This physicality—the disturbing image of Cupid's arrows protruding from the eyes of the Dragon—demands interpretation, as does the proposal in xi.51 that such violence inflicts man through "thousand monstrous formes" (xi.51). Spenser's parenthetical caveat—"(Ah man beware, how thou those darts behold)"—moreover, acknowledges love's inscrutability, especially love that is staged in such physically and metaphorically violent ways. And this staging of the real and the metaphorical in close quarters is what causes Britomart to waver, to fixate upon Busyrane's artistic excess and consider its hollow phosphorescence:

That wondrous sight faire *Britomart* amazed,
 Ne seeing could her wonder satisfie,
 But euermore and more vpon it gazed,

The whiles the passing brightnes her fraile senses dazd.
(III.xi. 49)

Indeed, tantamount to Busyrane's torturous enterprise is the necessity of that torture to demand reflection. The image of Amoret bleeding and without a heart in the Masque of Cupid is about as abstruse an image as Spenser would ever create, abstruse because it stages the dissonance—and physical distance—of one's body from one's self. Britomart's experience in front of Busyrane's art is merely a concentrated but diminished recasting of this interpretive dilemma, and, like the tortured Amoret, her desire to fill the inviting silence with her own knowledge, her own readings, almost results in a betrayal of her quest. Britomart's insatiable desire even has the effect of a physical wound, for, as the loss of blood decreases subjectivity, so does Britomart's gaze upon the statues, gilden altars, and tapestries enervate her senses: "The whiles the passing brightnes her fraile senses dazd." But Britomart has an advantage that other characters lack; when she finds that she cannot understand the images before her, she is "no whit thereby discouraged / From prosecuting of her first intent" (xi. 50). She does not wait to be fully absorbed, fully tortured.

Proposing that Cupid's statue provides an analogue for Busyrane and his violent magic acknowledges some of Busyrane's important characteristics: it enforces how powerfully Busyrane envisions the wound of love, as both coercive and objectifying; it emphasizes his reliance on the misinterpretation of art, and, subsequently, on the effects of love-wounds; and, finally, it demonstrates how powerfully the metaphorical and the aesthetic are yoked with the physical and the violent in his household. Each of these helps create the ineluctable and interminable sense of voiceless suffering that pervades his home, a suffering that may be rooted in an auxiliary practice to torture: human sacrifice. Sacrifice, however, was not very prevalent in Elizabethan England, though Spenser's awareness to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation makes it likely that he would have some knowledge

of the practice. In any event, Spenser certainly would have read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *The Heroïdes*, the two Ovidian works in which Ovid tells the story of Busiris, Busyrane's namesake.²³ Though many classical analogues are stated for Busyrane in the text—Cupid only one among them—his namesake, Busiris, is never mentioned, though Busiris' story teems with parallels and echoes to Busyrane's that, I believe, make the prospect of Amoret's culpability a remote possibility at best.²⁴

Busyrane's likeness to his namesake certainly offers a compelling set of interpretive possibilities, for Busiris is involved in a similar practice of substantiating his world at the expense of his victim's. The merely verbal connection between the Busiris and Busyrane appears, at first, to emphasize the threat that Busyrane poses to the world at large and the arbitrariness with which he selects his victims and conducts his mutilations. Not Zeus, who required lust to precipitate his rapes, or Cupid, whose arrows may bring about pure, requited love, Busiris is purely sinister and destructive. And the efficacy of Busiris' practice—placating the gods whom he believed had stricken Egypt with famine—requires that his victims be strangers, somehow alien and other to his self and his desires. If the allusion is intended, then the randomness of the situation certainly enforces Amoret's innocence, for unchaste or otherwise impure victims would not make an adequate sacrifice. As Ovid explains in the *Metamorphoses*, Busiris "defiled his temples with strangers blood."²⁵ Even, the soothsayer that instructed Busiris to placate the gods through sacrifice suggested that Busiris slay foreigners. Such a practice of offering innocent strangers to the gods was not at all uncommon. In fact, the efficacy of the horrid practice insisted that the sacrificial victim be

²³ Arthur Golding, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*. ed. Madeline Forey (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). See *Metamorphoses*, Book 9 180ff., and *Heroïdes* Book 9, 69ff.

²⁴ According to Ovid, Busiris' sacrificed foreigners in an attempt to satisfy the gods, whom he believed had stricken Egypt with famine and disease.

²⁵ *Metamorphoses*, 9:180ff

other from those who performed the sacrifice, as Amoret is clearly other from Busyrane. The question of effective sacrifice, however, as René Girard explains in *Violence and the Sacred*, is not entirely bound up with otherness or innocence, but on the relationship between the victim and the desired results. Busiris' sacrifices, at least in Ovid, are not effective in ridding Egypt of famine and disease because Busiris focuses too heavily on the act of sacrifice rather than on its intended purpose: placating the gods. Busiris, like Busyrane, takes pleasure in the pursuit and mutilation of his victims; he even, as Ovid relates the story, slays the prophet who advised him to sacrifice strangers in the first place.

Busiris' emphasis on the practice of wounding and murdering his victims rather than on the presumed efficacy of his actions contributes to the cultural imbalance that his actions try to suppress. For example, according to Girard, sacrifice provides a way for a community to respond to an escalating violence or anarchy, to, as he says

[...] polarize the community's aggressive impulses and redirect them toward victims that may be actual or figurative, animate or inanimate, but that are always incapable of propagating further vengeance.²⁶

Girard's estimation of the efficacy of sacrifice depends on the sacrifice having a natural purpose, as, ostensibly, Busiris' does. But Busyrane's hesitance to kill Amoret suggests that the reason for this arbitrary mutilation has no natural purpose, especially not the object of destroying violence. Busyrane rather propagates violence, using the vitality offered him by Amoret to create his "strange characters," those violent, artistic shadows that momentarily enervate Britomart. Busyrane's interest, in other words, is in perpetuating violence and the sick cycle of adulterous love much like Busiris is interested in slaying and mutilating foreigners. Neither man is much concerned with the objects of his practice, causing,

²⁶ René Girard. *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977) pg. 18

according to Girard, a “sacrificial crisis” akin to the interpretive crisis caused by wounds. A sacrificial crisis, Girard explains, occurs when

[...] the disappearance of the sacrificial rites coincides with the disappearance of the difference between impure violence and purifying violence. When this difference has been effaced, cultural purification is no longer possible, and impure, contagious, reciprocal violence spreads throughout the community.²⁷

Busyrane re-imagines this impure sacrificial process by offering violence a singular medium, one as unavoidable as it is powerful: eros. In fact, in Busyrane’s home, eros and violence are not merely constituent parts of a greater process; they are synonymous, perpetually and irrecoverable made so during the production of a perverse sacrificial rite: the Masque of Cupid. Busyrane’s tapestries embody this coercive and destructive elision of love and war, eros and suffering, “heap[ing] together with vulgar sort, / [...] Without respect of person or of port” (XI. 46) images of mutilated and suffering woman, all objects of some arbitrary fusion of torture and sacrifice of which they are entirely unaware.

Amoret’s position as both tortured and as an impure sacrificial victim (though one not yet realized) relies on the mysteriousness of the origins of her wound. Indeed, Spenser never says how Amoret sustained her wound; there is even a sort of mysteriousness over whom Amoret received her wound from. When Britomart sees Amoret for the first time in the Masque of Cupid, Amoret is described as being “Clad by strong charmes out of eternall night,” and led by “two grysie villeins, th’one *Despight* / The other cleped *Cruelty* by name” (xii.19). Busyrane is no where to be seen, though Amoret is bleeding from

[...] a wide wound therin (O ruefull sight)
Entrenched deepe with knife accursed keene,
Yet freshly bleeding forth her fainting spright,
(The worke of cruell hand) was to be seene,
That dyde in sanguine red her skin all snowy cleene.
(III.xii.19)

²⁷ Girard, 18

Ostensibly, “Entrenched deepe with knife accursed keene” suggests that Amoret's wound was caused by a knife, though as with many objects in Busyrane's home, the knife's description belies its reality. It is “accursed keene” both bearing a curse and fated to death, both sharp and smartly made. The knife, like Amoret and her wound, is in a liminal position, somewhere between the real and the metaphorical, somehow capable of piercing the body but not capable of destroying it. Indeed, the wound the knife creates gives way to a sacrificial ceremony that, in a literal context like Timias', would surely result in death:

At that wide orifice her trembling hart
Was drawne forth, and in siluer basin layd,
Quite through transfixed with a deadly dart,
And in her bloud yet steeming fresh embayd :
And those two villeins, which her steps vpstayd,
When her weake feete could scarcely her sustaine,
And fading vitall powers gan to fade,
Her forward still with torture did constraine,
And euermore encreased her consuming paine.
(III.xii. 20)

But Amoret does not die, despite having “a deadly” arrow transfixed through her heart, a heart that, furthermore, is no longer attached to her body. Here Amoret waits and suffers, at the penultimate moment of sacrifice and in the ultimate moment of torture. She is like the knife that wounds her, somewhere between the real and the metaphorical, not entirely alive though not quite yet dead.

With its staging of this powerful, torturous blurring of the fate and effects of wounds, the Masque of Cupid intensifies Girard's understanding of “impure sacrifice,” for the Masque seeks to promote a violence that is always on the cusp of total destruction (sacrifice) but never entirely actualizing its sacrificial purpose. It does not attempt any form of cultural purification in the conventional sense; rather, it imagines this blurred violence as a sort of perverse edification, a manner in which to awaken the swooned hearts of Faery Land to a darker conception of love. But the whole production ultimately emphasizes its

evanescence, its reliance on the magical, the aesthetic, and the metaphorical rather than the real. For, if Busyrane was to kill Amoret, he would have failed to bend her will to him. What he elects to do instead is to reverse the ethic of Petrarchan courtship and physically apprehend Amoret's heart, hoping that her soul will follow. Busyrane's inability to kill Amoret—his desire to interminably propagate violence—ironically, is what also prevents Britomart from being able to kill Busyrane, and, by extension, to heal Amoret's wound. This sort of violence, martial violence, as Girard notes above, only begets more violence. And violence, as Britomart learns when she is granted entrance into the inner room, is no way to destroy the metaphorical or the spiritual. It is also impotent to destroy wounds, for, as we will see, the only thing that may heal Amoret's wound is a treatment as symbolic as the wound itself.

Latent throughout this entire discussion of the effects of wounds on the body and self in Spenser has been the implication that a secret, complex relationship exists between wound and weapon. Some forty years after the publication of the first edition of *The Faerie Queene*, Francis Bacon would offer an answer to the relationship between wounds and their origin in his *Sylva Sylvarum*. There, Bacon writes that, "It is constantly received and avouched that the anointing of the weapon that maketh the wound will heal the wound itself."²⁸ He then goes on to list, in rather impressive fashion, a number of ointments that should be used with each type of weapon, animal bite, human wounding, and other methods of laceration.

The concept that healing might occur from a distance or from something not physical, that the fate of the wound does not rely on correct handling or the perfect salve, is well documented in Isabel Bellemy's *Radiant Healing*, a compendium of personal accounts in which wounds and other illnesses were healed without medicine or medical procedures. In

²⁸ Francis Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England*. (University of California Press, 2007) pg. 136

addition to discussing Bacon, Bellemy discusses the writings of one of Bacon's contemporaries, Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665), with whom the practice of anointing the weapon was actualized. According to Bellemy, Digby "was known for his work in distant healing, and spoke of a cure involving a cloth stained with the blood of the wounded person."²⁹ Digby's belief was that anointing the weapon with the blood of the victim would somehow bring about a cure of the wound that the weapon had caused. Digby's treatment, most likely a response or reaction to Bacon's medical proposals, is a fitting model for Busyrane's house, for it acknowledges both the mysteriousness of Early Modern wounds as well as the belief that healing wounds would require a linking of both the literal and figurative, the real and the metaphorical. Again, Elaine Scarry imagines this linking of weapon and body in terms suited for torture, though, to her, the mysterious bridge between weapon and body might be able to reverse—or just make mutual—the experience of torture between torturer and victim. A weapon, she says, that exists

[...] at the external boundary of the body begins to externalize, objectify, and make sharable what is originally an interior and un-sharable experience. Both weapon (whether actual or imagined) and wound (whether actual or imagined) may be used associatively to express pain. To some extent the inner working of the two metaphors, as well as the perceptual complications that attend their use, overlap because the second (bodily damage) sometimes occurs as a version of the first.³⁰

In Busyrane's magical home, the relationship between the wound and the weapon is one that connects the torturer to the victim and that might, perhaps, have the effect of awakening the torturer to the victim's pain. The cure, as well, must include both the weapon and the wound, must ford the boundary between the literal and figurative.

Scarry's suggestion that the physicality and visibility of an externalized weapon might construct a medium by which pain is mutually transmitted from torturer to victim and victim

²⁹ Isabel Bellemy *et al.* *Radiant Healing: The Many Paths to Personal Harmony and Planetary Wholeness* (Joshua Books, 2004) pg. 17

³⁰ Scarry, 17

to torturer informs—and, I hope, solves—the two remaining dilemmas about Amoret wound that confront readers at the end of Book Three: what is the origin and fate of Amoret’s wound, and, what, if any, is the effect of this reciprocal violence? Not surprisingly, the answers to these two questions are intertwined, though, answering the first will lead to more satisfying answer of the second, for determining what Amoret’s wound is will help us see how that wound creates a bond between Busyrane and Amoret.

Reading Britomart’s witnessing of Amoret’s torture in the house of Busyrane under Scarry’s model immediately draws attention to the inadequacy of any physical weapon, *per se*, to be the cause of Amoret’s wound. If a wound is to “make sharable” what is otherwise an un-sharable experience, then it must be comprised of elements indicative of both torturer and victim. And this, finally, is what Spenser decides: he stages Amoret’s wound as a bridge between her version of the love and the version of love to which Busyrane aspires to. Entering the inner sanctum of Busyrane’s home, Britomart no longer sees the figures and shadows from the Masque of Cupid. They no longer exist. Rather, she sees what was real about the spectacle: Amoret’s heart-less, mutilated body, and Spenser’ disturbing dramatization of courtship:

And her before the vile Enchaunter sate,
 Figuring straunge characters of his art,
 With liuing bloud he those characters wrate,
 Dreadfully dropping from her dying hart,
 Seeming transfixed with a cruell dart,
 And all perforce to make her him to loue.
 Ah who can loue the worker of her smart ?
 A thousand charmes he formerly did proue ;
 Yet thousand charmes could not her stedfast heart remoue.
 (III.xii. 31)

If Spenser’s verse demonstrates a precocious understanding of Bacon’s wound care, then none of these weapons, the “accursed keene” knife from the Masque or the “deadly dart” (here, the “cruell dart”) or the “murderous knife” (xii. 32) that Busyrane uses to wound

Britomart, can be the cause of Amoret's wound. Again, the language of the passage suggests this reading. The "cruell dart" that transfixes Amoret's heart does so only "seemingly"; it also is offered an overtly figurative efficacy: "to make her him to loue." And with a force stronger than Busyrane's entrancing magic, Spenser directs attention away from the grotesque physicality of the scene (Busyrane is using Amoret's blood to create his art) and locates the origin of Amoret's wound in the old discourse: the love-wound. But hers is not self-created, as Britomart's is, and it does not move from physical illness to metaphorical pain, as Timias' does. It is the reverse, a wound of love inscribed upon her physical heart, yet powerless to penetrate the figurative space the heart creates: "yet thousand charmes could not her stedfast heart remoue." The purpose of Busyrane's torture is love; yet, the effect of his sacrifice is to mutilate that which denies him love. And the only weapon powerful enough to torture and mutilate, to bend one toward love and simultaneously punish them for not loving, is love itself. Every aspect of Busyrane's home encourages this duality, circulating images of love that are both momentarily satisfying yet ultimately destructive. Amoret is the victim of this duality, of a magical combination of the figurative and the literal, of the real and metaphorical. And it is this magic, a dark, relentless magic, which creates the wound in Amoret's side, a wound that beckons her heart outward into a strange space where the figurative and literal are entirely indistinguishable.

Britomart, too, cannot distinguish the figurative from the literal, and so she lunges at Busyrane with all her martial force, attempting to "maistere his might" (xi. 32). But Amoret holds her back, because she knows something about this magic that Britomart does not; she knows that it made her wound and, without it, her wound will never heal. Her strength momentarily revived, Amoret

Dernely vnto [Britomart] called to abstaine,
From doing him to dy. For else her paine

Should be remedillesse, sith none but hee,
Which wrought it, could the same recure againe.
(III.xii. 34)

The passage implies a string of connections that shortens the epistemological gap between the torturer and his tortured, a string of connections that belie the physicality of Busyrane's magic and locate the object of wound care in the mystical rather than the physical. As in Scarry's paradigm, Busyrane's weapon is merely an extension of his will and his self, forced upon Amoret in the form of a wound. But Amoret's physical wound, like Timias' and Britomart's metaphorical wounds, is a part of her will and her self, affecting her subjectivity (as she substantiates Busyrane's world) and offering her the greatest example of selfhood—pain. When she implores Britomart not to kill Busyrane, she acknowledges how powerfully his magic has affected her body. As Busyrane and his weapon are one, and that weapon and its wound are one, so too is Amoret and her wound one. If Busyrane is killed, the marker of his perverse love will remain upon her forever and the message that he has been trying to substantiate will live on. Thus, the cure to her wound deserves not revenge or reciprocal violence; both would merely compound the violent energies that created the wound. It needs an un-wounding, a re-reading, a reverse reading of the magic that made it. Only then will the energy that sought to substantiate itself, even create itself, off the mutilated and wounded body be returned back into the body from which it came. Britomart offers Amoret such a re-reading, subduing Busyrane and forcing him to reverse his charms. The experience as is edifying for her as any she has had in Book Three, for she learns that wounds make the body's integrity subject to figurative as well as literal readings and that curing wounds is much more difficult than giving them.

The wounds that Britomart encounters and incurs throughout Book Three emphasize the inability of wounds to participate in a single discourse. On the outside of the

body, the wound is just a physical marker for a spiritual dilemma occurring underneath; these physical wounds, even, are less powerful than the wound of desire that lives inside the body. No end of torture could cause the heart bent on love to love another, as both Britomart and Amoret know at end of Book Three. No end to torture, as well, could cure the wound of desire, as Maureen Quilligan has persuasively argued in her book, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading*. To Quilligan, Busyrane's reverse charms are powerless to heal "the wound of desire—which Britomart shares with Amoret."³¹ To defend this reading, Quilligan quotes from the *bermaphroditic* stanzas that were written-out of the 1596 edition of *The Faerie Queene*. There, after having subdued Busyrane and freed Amoret, Britomart watches the final magical transformation of Book Three. The importance of this union, Quilligan says, is not the creation of a lasting emblem of love but how Britomart sees this love, "halfe enuying their blesse," a half-line that Quilligan registers as confirmation that Britomart is not entirely cured of erotic desire (xii.45). Quilligan's suggestion about the impotence of Busyrane's reversed charms to cure the "the wound[s]" of desire that Britomart and Amoret share is correct, but not in the way that Quilligan imagines. Busyrane's reversed charms cannot heal the "wound of desire" within the hearts of Amoret and Britomart, because, as this chapter has proved, it did not create them. It does not have mastery over the figurative and literal aspects of those wounds, nor can it, for the magic of Busyrane's perverse love is neither real nor applicable in the chaste terms that Spenser imagines for Britomart. Busyrane's representation of the liminal—his house, his artwork, his gilden altars, and jeweled walls—all come undone, disappearing as he un-reads his curses. But as his violent yoking of reality and illusion disembodies, the violent dangers of love—perverse, erotic love—manifest within Britomart and Amoret. That Britomart "halfe enuy[s]

³¹ Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1983) pg. 193

their blesse,” certainly, suggests that she is not fully chaste, though it also demonstrates her relative distance from the total consummation that the *hermaphrodite* represents, her suspicion in the *hermaphrodite’s* oneness. Spenser, too, ultimately resists the *hermaphrodite*, electing to reanimate Amoret and Scudamour’s drama into Book Four. His decision to disassemble the *hermaphrodite*, as much as Britomart’s “halfe enuying” of the reductive union, suggests his understanding of love’s pathology, its participation in both the physical and the spiritual, and its inability to be contained or controlled in a single image. To keep the *hermaphrodite* would have been to stage a reductive and premature ending to his contemplation of the metaphorical wound of love, to offer an ending that focused attention on the body as a marker of the inwardness of love. But just as Busyrane’s magic was impotent to cure Amoret or Britomart’s love-wounds, so is the magical elision of Amoret and Scudamour powerless to represent the truth about these lover’s inward wounds. Thus, Book Three of *The Faerie Queene* ultimately stages the wound of desire as a source of uncertainty over inwardness, over its ability to be embodied either as an emblem of true love or as a marker of social class. Those are the wounds of Sir Philip Sidney’s *The New Arcadia*, the wounds to which we now turn our attention.

Chapter II

“Remediless Wounds”:

Sir Philip Sidney’s *New Arcadia* and the Heroic Body in Crisis

Most men of high birth are possessed with this madness, that they long after a reputation founded on bloodshed, and believe that there is no glory for them except that which is connected with the destruction of mankind.

—from *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*

To come to Sir Philip Sidney’s *New Arcadia* after such a long time in Spenser’s *Faerie Land* is to be struck by the simplicity of Sidney’s allegory, by the simplicity of Sidney’s heroic environment and the simple-seeming wounds it creates. Sidney’s understanding of the effects of wounds in and on the body is not as complicated or confused as Spenser’s—and, thus, in some ways, his understanding of wounds is more palatable. Unlike *The Faerie Queene* Sidney does not imagine the relationship between real wounds and metaphorical wounds as an inexorable, interminable exchange of psychological tensions; nor does he elaborate on wounds as physical markers of the problems inherent in reading inwardness materially. Rather, Sidney’s treatment of wounds in *The New Arcadia*, I argue, expresses his anxiety over the wounded body in terms suited for his martial romance: as a dramatization of the cultural anxieties about the status of the heroic body in the changing, frenetic world of Early Modern warfare. The effects of wounds on the body and self, in the 1580s, certainly inhabited a turbulent conversation, as some wounds marked martial heroism while others were indicative of political corruption. Sidney’s romance poses, like Spenser’s, a third application of wounds—as markers of love, or the inwardness of love. The treatment of

love as a wound, I propose, allowed Sidney a way to challenge the already established roles that wounds played in Early Modern aristocratic culture.

The most pervasive context of wounds that Sidney challenges in the revised *Arcadia* is the ability of a wound to mark martial prowess. As the epigram of this chapter suggests, glory and honor, the two Homeric qualities of a hero, were commonly thought of in the Early Modern period in such physical terms. Some fifteen years after the publication of *The New Arcadia*, Shakespeare codified this conventional heroism with Henry V, who famously anticipates the time when the survivor of Agincourt would “strip his sleeve and show his scars / and say, ‘these wounds I had on Crispin’s day’” (4.3.47-8). But Sidney is unable, in *The New Arcadia*, to imagine heroism in such simply, physically defined terms, and he registers wounds, as Spenser does, as external markers of an inward pathology. The revised *Arcadia’s* re-conception of heroics, then, centers on an antithetical balance between physical and spiritual values. Indeed, as Nancy Lindheim has suggested in her book *The Structures of Sidney’s Arcadia*, “[...] the revised version of the Arcadia,” creates “an antithesis between matter and spirit as [a way] to balance the physical and the spiritual.”³² And, like most readers of revised *Arcadia*, Lindheim looks to the new material of *The New Arcadia*—Amphialus’ rebellion in general and the tragedy of Argalus and Parthenia in particular—for evidence of this balancing. I wish, in the pages that follow, to extend Lindheim’s model and show how the inclusion of Amphialus’ rebellion rewrites *The Old Arcadia* by drawing attention to the ways in which wounds are powerless to mark martial heroics. The wounds of Sidney’s *New Arcadia*, much like the wounds of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, are represented as psychologically as well as medically dangerous, as potential threats to the continuity of the body and the self. And Sidney’s focus, as with Spenser’s, is finally not on how one

³² Lindheim, Nancy. *The Structures of Sidney’s Arcadia*. University of Toronto Press, 1982

experiences a wound, but on how an observer might see another's wound, on why reading the physically wounded body as a marker of an inward status—as Henry V exhorts his soldiers to—is an inadequate way to read inwardness. The revision of *The Old Arcadia* thus reveals the extension and sublimation of wounds as physical markers of heroism to wounds as self-conscious artistic constructions. In *The New Arcadia*, Sidney ultimately wishes to define the heroic, wounded body as beautiful, suggesting that wounds have an aesthetic dimension that may mirror the nobility of the victim. But not all the characters of *The New Arcadia* incur wounds that are as beautiful as they are deadly; those wounds are reserved for the Arcadians who sustain physical wounds in the pursuit of maintaining or obtaining virtuous, chaste love. In this way, Sidney fashions love as the preeminent virtue, and suffering or dying because of love, as preeminent criterion for heroism.

In order to fully understand these redefined heroics of Sidney's *New Arcadia*, we should first consider the circumstances surrounding Sidney's death. Sidney's death, I believe, provides a perfect context through which to read the dramatizations of the effects of the wounds on the body and self in *The New Arcadia*, for Sidney died from the sepsis of war wound in the Netherlands, succumbing to a grotesque and disfiguring wound that, certainly, would have projected as pathetic rather than heroic. Sidney's death, as well as his contemporaries' response to his death, reveals both the cultural anxiety over wounds and why Sidney needed, in *The New Arcadia*, to resist the traditional classifications of wounds. As such, I would like to evaluate the heroic crises that surrounded Sidney's own death and its literary reception by his contemporaries, principally Edmund Spenser's elegy "Astrophel." After having set the historical groundwork for Sidney's heroics, I will move to the two treatments of wounds inserted into *The New Arcadia*: Amphialus' rebellion in general and Argalus and Parthenia's tragic disfigurement in particular. From these four contexts, this

chapter will demonstrate how Sidney's prose romance ultimately sublimates the classical heroics of reading wounds as markers of martial conquest to heroic suffering.

1. The “wound that wondrously did bleed”: The Romance’s Two Bodies

It may be misleading to say that Sidney’s romance has only two bodies, for this division works in multiple ways. For one, his romance was written twice, once as *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (or *The Old Arcadia*), and the revised in 1580 as *The New Arcadia*. The insertion of Amphialus’ rebellion against Basilius extends the importance of the revision beyond the mere supplemental, as well as suggests another layer of bodies. Walter R. Davis, for example, in *A Map of Arcadia: Sidney’s Romance in Its Tradition*, traces a pattern in the scenes comprising the captivity episode and Amphialus’ rebellion in Book Three (more or less the content added in *Arcadia’s* revision), the actions outside Cecropia’s castle representing the “public world,” those inside, “the private.”³³ Although I am less concerned with the captivity of Pyrocles, Philoclea, and Pamela in Cecropia’s castle, I believe that Davis’ model of the public and private spaces of Amphialus’ rebellion is an apt division of the two bodies that occur within the revised *Arcadia*. The inclusion of Amphialus rebellion in *The New Arcadia*, complete with its disjunction between public suffering (war-wounds) and private suffering (love-wounds), allows Sidney a way to offer a more satisfying commentary on the effects of wounds. When the public and the private collide, as they do in the Argalus and Parthenia narrative, Sidney offers his greatest understanding of heroics: as a combination of virtuous action—fighting for love—and virtuous pain—suffering for love.

While the Argalus and Parthenia episode ultimately comprises Sidney’s greatest treatment of the way wounds influence the heroic body, Sidney’s own martial experience provides a similar point of entry, delineating, as it were, the same public and private spaces

³³ Davis, Walter R., *A Map of Arcadia: Sidney’s Romance in Its Tradition*. (Yale University Press, 1965).

that Davis recognizes in *The New Arcadia*. Despite the fact that Sidney died seven years before the publication of *The New Arcadia* (Mary Herbert published the first edition in 1593), his death was still resonant and influential upon Early Modern readings of the romance. In fact, Sidney's burial, and his posthumous reputation, was a masterpiece of Renaissance propaganda, intended, ironically, to solidify the image of Sidney as heroic, as, according to C.S. Lewis, "the aristocrat for whom the aristocratic ideal was really embodied."³⁴ Recent research, however, suggests that Sidney's favor in Elizabeth's court was more tenuous, and, that during his years as a courtier, he suffered many disgraces and disappointments. Whatever these disgraces and disappointments were, they did not affect his posthumous reception as one of the most virtuous and selfless English courtiers and soldiers in history. Thirty-five years after his death the story about his expeditions in the Netherlands was lingering. Fulke Greville, one of those both influenced by and propagating Sidney's virtuous, heroic image, in his *Life of Sidney*, reminisces on the death of his friend:

Being thirsty with excess of bleeding, he called for drink, which was presently brought him; but as he was putting the bottle to his mouth he saw a poor soldier carried along, who had eaten his last at the same feast, ghastly casting up his eyes at the bottle; which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his head before he drank, and delivered it to the poor man with these words: "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine."³⁵

Whether or not this anecdote is true remains a mystery, though its similarity to the death of Alexander the Great, told in Plutarch's *Lives*, suggests its origin in heroic precedence.

The connection with Alexander the Great extends beyond mere heroics to poetics, or poetic efficacy. Before leaving for the Netherlands, Sidney had written what was to become the Renaissance's most influential work of literary criticism, *The Defense of Poesy*.

³⁴ Lewis, C.S., "Golden." From *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*. Oxford University Press, 1954.

³⁵ Greville, Fulke. *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*. Oxford. Clarendon Press, 1907. pg. 77

There, after asserting that poetry is the mechanism by which man learns virtue, Sidney proposed that, “poetry is the companion of camps,” and that the soldier would never be displeased by “Orlando Furioso, or honest King Arthur.”³⁶ Implicit in Sidney’s exhortation for the soldier to read is the suggestion that poetry, by which he means all literature, can teach a soldier the classical values of heroism and virtue. In fact, as Katherine Duncan-Jones points out in her biography *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*, Sidney most likely “viewed active military service as an occasion for new and intensified study, not for action divorced from contemplation.”³⁷ Duncan-Jones goes on to point out that “it is likely that [...] Sidney was working on his verse paraphrases of the Psalms” while in the Netherlands and that the revised *Arcadia* had been left “behind with Fulke Greville.”³⁸ Duncan-Jones suspects, rather convincingly, that Sidney elected to postpone work on the *Arcadia* because he sensed what “would be a difficult and dangerous enterprise, requiring both patience and courage,”³⁹ and that the psalms were better suited for conveying this patience and readiness than the *Arcadia*.

The purpose of revising the *Arcadia* appears to be exactly what Duncan-Jones suggests: a re-working of the romance’s morality and virtue such as to offer it a greater poetic efficacy, a greater use to the soldier, and, more importantly, to the wounded. If Sidney’s decision to work on the Psalms while in the Netherlands, as Duncan-Jones suggests, can be evidence for his growing anxiety about war and need for solace, then it may follow that these martial anxieties were issues that had accompanied the poet from his knighting three years earlier (1583). If this is true, the years that Sidney was revising the *Arcadia* would have been the years that he was preparing for foreign battle; questions of wounds and the registering of wounds as either heroically defining or heroically sullyng would have certainly

³⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*. Van Dorsten, Jan, ed. (Oxford University Press, 1971). pg. 24

³⁷ Duncan-Jones, Katherine. *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991. pg. 276

³⁸ *Ibid*

³⁹ *Ibid*

been on Sidney's mind. The actual events of Sidney's death, as Duncan-Jones relates them, are much less heroic, much less selfless than Greville's reworked story. The actual events of Sidney's death also reveal, I think, the consummation of Sidney's anxieties over the status of the heroic body, ironically, almost prophetically, answering the questions about the heroic body that Sidney posed in *The Arcadia*.

The last months of Sidney's life were a disaster, according to Duncan-Jones. Sorting through Sidney's letters that were collected by Greville after his death, Duncan-Jones notes that prior to Sidney's wounding on September 22nd, 1586, his mother, Lady Mary Dudley, had died; he was bankrupt, having spent "money like water" recommending rewards for his soldiers; and he was also in an argument over military tactics with his uncle, Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester.⁴⁰ On the day of Sidney's wounding, in fact, Leicester had moved his regiment from Deventer, leaving Sidney and his soldiers to interdict a convoy that was bringing provisions to the besieged city of Zutphen. What followed was recounted in the diary of Thomas Digges, one of Sidney's soldiers:

In the morning of the 22nd of September fell a great and thick mist, that you might hardly discern a man ten paces off, at the breaking up whereof the enemies appeared so near our companies, having planted all their muskets and harquebuses, being 2000, and their pikes being a thousand, very strongly on the high way, as our men, specially the noblemen and gentlemen, as the Earl of Essex, the Lord Willoughby, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir William Russell, Sir John Norris, and the rest, in number seven or eight score, who were in troop together in the face of the enemy before our footmen, received the whole volley of the enemy's shot.⁴¹

One of those musket or harquebuse shots hit Sidney above the knee, shattering his thighbone. Amazingly, Sidney was able to remount his horse and make his way back to camp, where his wound was cleaned and dressed and his fractured thighbone set. "For the next twenty-five days," Duncan-Jones writes,

⁴⁰ Duncan-Jones, 293

⁴¹ Duncan-Jones, 294

Sidney lay at Arnhem in the house of a judge's widow, Mme Gruithuissens, having travelled there by barge along the River Issel. Despite his initial misgivings about the severity of the wound, Leicester was soon able to report hopefully on his nephew's progress. On 27 September he received an encouraging report from the surgeons; Sidney was sleeping quite well, and seemed to be recovering. By 2 October, the worst appeared to be over.⁴²

Sidney, however, was suffering from the same type of wound that Belpheobe suspected Timias of having, a wound that would not heal "inly well." By the sixteenth day after his wounding, the wound began to emit a noxious odor and the sutures had to be removed. A week later, on October 17th, 1586, Sidney was dead.

If Leicester's letters to Walsingham and others give a false sense of Sidney's seeming recovery in Arnhem, Sidney's own musings during the twenty-five day period tell more about the poet's psychology. It was in Arnhem that Sidney wrote his last verse—*La Cuisse Rompue*—a short lyric that burns with anxiety over his wounded body:

How long, O Lord, shall I forgotten be
What ever?
How long wilt thou thy hidden face from me
Dissever?
How long shall I consult with careful sprite
In anguish?
How long shall I with foes' triumphant might
Thus languish?
Behold me, Lord! Let to thy hearing creep
My crying:
Nay, give me eyes, and light, lest that I sleep
In dying.⁴³

Here Sidney corroborates Duncan-Jones' suspicion that the Netherlands, for Sidney, was a place of psychological illness and disillusion. But *La Cuisse* conveys not only the illness and despondency that one would expect a wounded soldier to feel; the poem reveals Sidney's desire to imagine his life and his death in terms different from the actual circumstances. The

⁴² Duncan-Jones, 296

⁴³ Sir Philip Sidney. *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*. ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones. (Oxford University Press, 2002)

fourth question in *La Cuisse* tells all: “How long shall I with foes’ triumphant might / Thus languish?” If Digges account of the skirmish outside Zutphen is correct, and most scholars believe it is, then Sidney here imagines that his death has occurred in a manner more heroic than is truth. Not only was the skirmish in which Sidney was wounded minor and inconclusive, but also no one would be able to identify the man who fatally wounded Sidney. Two conventional ways to gauge heroic action do not appear here, despite Sidney’s imagining that his languish inversely varies with his foe’s triumph. Sidney was not wounded, like Henry V’s soldiers, during a famous battle; he could not say, like Timias may after his battle with Fosters, that his opponent was formidable and that his wound was representative of either his capacity to suffer or his capacity to fight. Sidney, moreover, had been shot by either a musket or harquebuse, and gunshot wounds were generally considered morally suspect, hardly indicative of heroics.

Sidney’s aspirations for heroism were not to be, though the mythologizing and idealizing of Sidney’s heroic life and death began almost immediately. Nevertheless, some of Sidney’s contemporaries sensed or suspected that this death, and the wound that caused it, fell outside the normal bounds of martial heroism. Edmund Spenser’s elegy “Astrophel,” represents the best example of this uninflected response to Sidney’s death, for it offers Astrophel—Sidney’s altar-ego—a similarly grotesque and cureless wound, and it stages this death as futile. In the elegy, Spenser depicts Astrophel as a hunter who captures beasts and then wades into the pen to slaughter them. Astrophel is wounded when one of the animals fights back:

So as he rag’d emongst that beastly rout,
A cruell beast of most accursed brood:
Upon him turnd (despeyre makes cowards stout)
And with fell tooth accustomed to blood,
Launched his thigh with so mischieuous might,

That it both bone and muscles ryued quight.⁴⁴
(115-120)

Not surprisingly, Spenser imagines Astrophel's, and thus Sidney's, death in terms suited for Adonis, his wound a result of a tussle with a bore, his wound "so huge streames of blood thereout did flow." Despite the elegiac tone, Spenser does not glorify Astrophel's death; rather he degrades Astrophel's attacker by representing him as a beast, effectively moving the scene of Astrophel's death outside of the martial, outside of the heroic.

In addition to revealing the anti-heroics (or, perhaps, pathetic heroics) of Sidney's death, Spenser's elegy "Astrophel" acknowledges *The New Arcadia's* other body (the emotional), and it does so, quite intentionally, by staging Astrophel's death as a dilemma in heroic ascription. The scene of Astrophel's death is not much like Sidney's actual death, but the hyperbole of the situation appears designed to debunk the perceived heroics. No one is around to save or help Astrophel, who eventually dies from "a wound that wondrously did bleed." I suspect Spenser elected to offer Astrophel a magical wound, one without cure, to further the distance between his wound and the martial. The final image of Spenser's elegy completes the image of Sidney's death as entirely un-heroic. Having been found by some wandering shepherds, Astrophel is brought home to Stella, who sees her beloved

[...] in such plight
With crudled blood and flithie gore deformed:
That wont to be with flowers and gyrlonds dight,
And her deare fauours dearly well adorned
Her face, the fairest face that eye mote see,
She likewise did deforme like him to bee.
(151-156)

The image of Stella mutilating herself so as to mirror Astrophel's plight suggests what Spenser had staged elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*: the transmission of a physical wound to an

⁴⁴ Alexander Dunlap. *The Yale Edition of The Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989)

inward, metaphorical wound. But here Stella is not suffering from an erotic love-wound; she is not lustful or wishing to consummate her desires. She desires, rather, to know the pain of her beloved, to match his deformed and lifeless body in both feeling and look.

There is another, mutually reinforcing, context in which we can read this scene, as an allusion or reinterpretation of the Venus and Adonis myth. Not only is Spenser's Astrophel wounded because of his extreme passion for the hunt, but Stella responds to Astrophel's wound as Venus does to Adonis', by abusing her own body. In Golding's translation of *The Metamorphoses*, for example,

when [Venus] saw [Adonis] weltring in his Gore;
Downe jumping from the skies, at once she tore
Her haire and bosome: then her brest invades
With bitter blowes; and Destinie upbraids.⁴⁵

Comparing Sidney's death to Adonis', even bringing the myth up as an analogue, surely feels odd when one considers the contexts in which Spenser treats the myth in general and Adonis' wound in particular in Book Three of *The Faerie Queene*: as cosmic, erotic, and regenerative. None of these contexts would seem to work at all for Sidney's own death, though, it seems here, that Spenser had some purpose in sexualizing the death. Erotic relationships were often thought of in the Renaissance as counter-heroic: Aeneas has to leave Dido, for example, lest he fall victim to the enfeebling powers of love and abandon his heroic and foreordained quest. Whether or not Sidney himself fell victim to such power may have been answered in his sonnet sequence; and Spenser, in "Astrophel" certainly picks up on the languished lover's plight, showing how the details of Astrophel's wound, like Adonis', participate in some eroticism. For Spenser, this eroticism occurs as an odd voyeurism; after sufficiently wounding herself, Stella takes her sorrow to the extreme, vowing "To prove that

⁴⁵ Ovid, and Golding, Arthur. *The XV Books of P. Ovidius Naso entytuled Metamorphosis, translated oute of Latin into English meeter, by Arthur Golding Gentleman, a worke very pleasaunt and delectable*. London, 1567. X:120-123

death their hearts cannot divide / Which living were in love so firmly tied.” Lovers mutilating themselves in order to empathize with, or join in death, their beloveds is important to Sidney’s conceptions of heroic love and heroic suffering in *The New Arcadia*, and so, while Spenser’s elegy might represent the oddest and most oblique commentary on Sidney’s death, it certainly represents the most appropriate. It incorporates the two bodies of the romance—the physical and the emotional—and projects them in quintessentially pathetic terms, the terms that Sidney, in *The New Arcadia*, will attempt to recast as heroic.

Spenser’s elegy on Sidney’s death, indeed, is a rare example of how the death could be rendered pathetically rather than heroically, and it dramatizes in miniature what I propose occurs throughout the narrative of *The New Arcadia*: a movement from the traditionally heroic to the spiritual and the emotional. The majority of elegies that appeared on the wake of Sidney’s death sought to emblazon the poet for his martial exploits, his heroic demeanor, and his untimely end. These fictions, however, run counter to poet’s own life and his growing interest in the status of the heroic body, an interest or anxiety that I propose spurred the revision of *The Old Arcadia*. *The Arcadia* stops (it, alas, is never finished) with Amphialus’ rebellion, a rebellion which rends the political body of Arcadia and gives its best heroes, Argalus and Parthenia chief among them, wounds that do not mark heroics but rather demonstrate the grotesque disfigurement of having one’s body lacerated. Sidney certainly feared that his wounded body would be seen this way, and, so, in this face of this threat, he offers a new vision of the heroic body, a private vision, one in which the insignificance of the battle and the grotesqueness of the wound might be muted by the emotional and spiritual suffering that such wounds suggest.

2. “[U]naffected languishing”: The Death of the Hero

Sidney could not have known that he would die of such a wound or that his contemporaries would react to his death in the manner they did. His death does, however, give us a way to evaluate how he transforms the conventional assumptions about heroism and heroics in *The New Arcadia*. The mysteriousness of Sidney’s infection, the pathos of his demise, and the need of his contemporaries to record his death in a manner different from its reality, all suggest the growing anxiety in the Early Modern period about war wounds, especially war wounds caused by gun fire. Having inveighed against distinguishing life from art in *The Defense of Poesy*, perhaps Sidney needed to offer fictional images of a body that could relocate the conventional discourses of heroics. The fact that his life would actualize these anxieties about the heroic body is a matter of circumstance, though his succumbing to the sepsis of a pathetic wound certainly demonstrates the urgency of creating a new discourse, a discourse that offered suffering and pain a heroic dimension.

The revised *Arcadia* creates this new heroism by combining the two terms, or the two bodies, that Spenser’s elegy “Astrophel” holds in contrast: the militant and the emotional. Spenser’s elegy, especially in its allusivity to the myth of Venus and Adonis, stresses the emotional, pathetic aspect of wounding and even offers this wound a highly eroticized context. In *The New Arcadia*, however, Sidney recognized the inadequacy of expressing heroics in either militant (war) or emotional (suffering, martyrdom) terms and sought to create a paradigm of heroics that could include both. On the one hand, this combination allowed Sidney to provide an image of heroism that might mitigate the growing anxiety over the status of the wounded body, the ability of wounds and wounded bodies to reflect

heroics; on the other, it enabled him to offer heroics a context that heroics had previously, classically, been denied: love. With this in mind, we can begin to approach *The New Arcadia* as a work that does not construct a new heroic body *per se*, but a work that argues for the reconstruction of the heroic body as both militant and emotional, capable of destroying others and being destroyed itself. Sidney's revision of *Arcadia*, I propose, details the death of the hero, or the classical heroic body, both in its resistance to the conventional definitions of classical heroism and in its suggestion that death and suffering may be construed as essentially heroic.

Sidney dramatizes the death of the classical heroic body in one of the romance's earliest scenes, when Musidorus washes up on the shores of Arcadia and convinces the shepherds Strephon and Claius to help him search for his friend Pyrocles. While searching for Pyrocles, the group stumbles upon the wreckage from the princes' ship: "a ship, or rather the carcase of the ship, or rather some few bones of the carcass hulling there, part broken, part burned, part drowned" (I, 7.20-22).⁴⁶ The ship, however, is only one of many empty, disfigured containers in the area:

About [the ship] floated great store of very rich things, and many chests which might promise no less. Amidst the precious things were a number of dead bodies, which likewise did not only testify both elements' violence, but that the chief violence was grown of human inhumanity; for their bodies were full of grisly wounds, and their blood had as it were filled with wrinkles of the sea's visage, which, it seemed, the sea would not wash away, that it might witness it is not always his fault when we condemn his cruelty: in sum, a defeat where the conquered kept both field and spoil, a shipwrack without storm or ill-footing, and a waste of fire in the midst of water.
(I, 7.35-33)

The way Sidney prepares this scene of destruction has enormous consequences for the heroic body. The threat of the shipwreck's "human inhumanity" suggests that Pyrocles, one

⁴⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)*, ed. Victor Skretkovicz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). All citations are from this edition and will be indicated by book, page, and line number.

of the romance's heroes, might be an empty carcasses floating in the water. The bodies themselves have no defining characteristics except "grisly wounds." The destruction, moreover, has no context, no war, no conflict between parties. All of the normal circumstances by which one achieves heroism are unavailable. The passage even suggests a sort of economic deconstruction of the hero. For example, Musidorus and the shepherds cannot tell which treasures belonged to which bodies, and these treasures, as with bleeding bodies in general, are all intermixed by the fluid of the ocean, a personified spectator in this event that will not accept blame for the destruction: "it is not always his fault when we condemn his cruelty." There is, in this scene, a collapsing of all meaning and agency; the wounded bodies are capable only of signifying the paradoxical "human inhumanity," only capable of reinforcing the destructiveness of nature.

Musidorus and Pyrocles, the romance's primary heroes, avoid this reduction of bodies to unidentifiable objects in a shipwreck. By staging the scene as the possible fate of Pyrocles, however, Sidney prepares an environment of grotesque and arbitrary death capable of not merely threatening the heroic body but making it utterly indistinguishable from other bodies. This threat, the threat of a grotesque and unrecognizable death, Sidney suggests, is part of a general process of creating a heroics contrary to the convention. In book two, for example, Sidney explains how Musidorus and Pyrocles' upbringing as princes involved suffering. After running down an impressive list of classical pedagogical tools—training in rhetoric and oratory, study of famous "battles and fortifications," the conversion of these tales into "the knowledge of all the stories of worthy heroes, both to move them to do nobly and teach them how to do nobly"—Sidney figures the princes' tutelage as ultimately painful:

[...] their bodies exercised in all abilities of doing and suffering, and their minds acquainted by degrees with dangers; and in sum, all bent to the making up of princely minds, no servile fear used towards them, nor any other violent restraint, but still as

to princes, so that a habit of commanding was naturalized in them, and therefore farther from tyranny [...]

(II, 163.35-164.5)

At least at this point in the narrative, suffering appears to be rooted in the conventional discourse of heroics, the discourse in which it is either sublimated to a greater good—as it is for Pyrocles and Musidorus’ education as ideal princes—or transcended into an abstract concept like glory or honor. But the passage does not quite read with these prescriptive heroics. The education of Musidorus and Pyrocles, Sidney suggests, is part of larger design to acclimate them to the cruel and arbitrary nature of life and death dramatized in the romance’s opening scenes. If they are going to be effective leaders, then they must understand the grotesque and the painful, not consider themselves above or beyond it. It is an old trope—that the leader must understand the body of his people—but, in light of the destructive opening scene, the princes’ upbringing challenges the perceived notions of heroism. Here, the heroic body is not rent from the common body; both, as the opening scene demonstrates, are capable of being destroyed and made unrecognizable. The fact that neither Musidorus nor Pyrocles is among the shipwreck’s rubble maintains the distance of the aristocracy from mass destruction; the opening scene, then, only stages a potential threat to the princes’ bodies, a threat that their education, presumably, is preparing them for.

Both of these opening passages—of the shipwreck and of the princes’ tutelage—are passages from *The Old Arcadia* that Sidney includes in his revised version of the romance, primarily, I think, because these passages stage potential threats to the heroic body and yet keep those bodies relatively unbroken, unadulterated. Indeed, neither Musidorus nor Pyrocles has incurred the disfiguring, grotesque, “grisly wound[]” of the shipwreck. Wounds, as is the convention, should appear differently on the bodies of nobles than on the bodies of commoners, and Sidney stages this distinction as one of beautiful versus grotesque

wounds, heroic versus pathetic wounds. When commoners become subject to wounds, for example, as they do in the peasant rebellion of Book Two, Sidney wavers between treating the wounds as grotesque disfigurements of the body and as markers of justice:

Among the rebels there was a dapper fellow, a tailor by occupation, who, fetching his courage only from their going back, began to bow his knees, and very fencer-like to draw near to Zelmane; but (as he came within her distance) turning his word very nicely about his crown, Basilius with a side blow strake off his nose. He being a suitor to a seamster's daughter, and therefore not a little grieved for such a disgrace, stooped down because he had heard that if it were fresh put to, it would cleave on again—but as his hand was on the ground to bring his nose to his head, Zelmane with a blow sent his head to his nose.

(II, 281.21-26)

The passage wavers between risible affectation and downright pathetic idiocy. The comedy of the scene—a tailor attempting to engage the aristocrat Zelmane in a “fencer-like” duel—intensifies the division between the patrician and common bodies, heroic and the pathetic bodies. Even the man's profession—a tailor, one who sews holes together for a living—adds to the comedy. But this humor has a serious consequence; the affectation of the tailor's twirling sword belies his martial knowledge and his knowledge of physical wounds. When he loses his nose, for example, he attempts, rather idiotically, to reattach his nose to his face. At this point, the scene could have dissolved into pure hilarity; the poor tailor could have tried ineffectually to save face. But Sidney cuts off the comic blunderings before they become too piteous, returning attention to the heroic body, and its distance from the common body, by having Zelmane decapitate the tailor.

The division between the patrician and common bodies of Arcadia, staged here in the peasants' rebellion, is significant insofar as Sidney resists this division in Book Three of *The New Arcadia*. The peasants' rebellion, which is included in *The New Arcadia* despite being original material from *The Old Arcadia*, is precipitated by class distinctions and attendant on the convention that commoners have no access to heroic wounds or the heroic body. The

insertion of new rebellion—Amphialus’ rebellion—in Book Three of *The New Arcadia*, however, resists this distinction, inscribing a new discourse of heroics in the romance that occurs when aristocrats become the objects of common, grotesque, and disfiguring wounds. Amphialus’ rebellion, like the peasants’ rebellion, is a wound in the side of the state, but a wound that has the power to threaten the aristocratic body with the kind of grotesque dismemberment hinted at in the scene of the shipwreck and acted out on the tailor’s body in the riot.

The threat that Amphialus’ rebellion poses to the heroic body is noticeable from the outset of *The New Arcadia*. In Book One, Helen speaks of his youth in terms similar to those used to describe the education of Pyrocles and Musidorus: “Nothing was so hard but his valour overcame; which yet still he so guided with true virtue that although no man was in our parts spoken of but the for his manhood, yet, as therein he excelled himself” (I, 123.8-12). In preparing his rebellion, in fact, Amphialus assigns his soldiers positions based on the “the constitution of their bodies” (III, 327.26-7), such that his whole regiment exudes a heroic demeanor, a demeanor that, almost immediately, is destroyed:

And now the often-changing fortune began also to change the hue of the battles, for at the first, though it were terrible, yet terror was decked so bravely with rich furniture, gilt swords, shining armours, pleasant pencils, that the eye with delight had scarce leisure to be afraid; but now all universally defiled with dust, blood, broken armours, mangled bodies, took away the mask and set forth horror in his own horrible manner. But neither could danger be dreadful to Amphialus’ undismayable courage, nor yet seem ugly to him whose truly-affected mind did still paint it over with the beauty of Philoclea.

(III, 344.39-40, 345. 1-7)

The movement of the passage depicts the larger heroic structure of *The New Arcadia*. The passage begins by showing how the beauty of Amphialus’ regiment outweighs the terror of the situation. But the heroic beauty is transient, and steadily gives way to the horrific. What was originally a pretty picture becomes, ironically as Sidney stages it, “beautified with the

grisliness of wounds, the rising of dust, the hideous falls and groans of the dying” (III, 340.23-5). Certainly Sidney’s use of the verb “beautified” hints at his construction of suffering as heroically beautiful, but here the deconstruction of the conventional hero, and of war itself, is predominantly topical. The first indication, a few pages earlier, that the conflict is beginning to escape chivalric bounds is the plight of the horses that “lay dead under their dead masters whom unknightly wounds had unjustly punished for a faithful duty” (III, 340.28-30). Though it is most likely that the “unknightly wounds” belong the horses (for it was considered impolite and inhumane to wound a horse), the ambiguity of the pronoun “whom” makes it possible the “unknightly wounds” are also the soldiers’. Their plight, certainly, is “unknightly,” their beautiful heroic bodies grotesquely dismembered like the tailor in book two. This time, however, the scene is not humorous: “In one place lay disinherited heads, dispossessed of their natural seignories; in another whole bodies to see to, but that their hearts, wont to be bound over so close, were now with deadly violence opened” (III, 340.35-6). This scene, at least in its unambiguous depiction of battle as chaotic, arbitrary, and ugly, echoes the skirmish at Zutphen in which Sidney was wounded.

If offering panoramic pictures of the mass destruction of bodies is one way that Sidney details the death of traditional heroics, then he also provides more focused examples. Though none of the romance’s main heroes—Musidorus, Pyrocles, Amphialus—die, *The New Arcadia* has many characters whom Sidney described in terms not suited for commoners and, yet, who meet untimely ends. For example, in the vanguard of Basilius’ forces is a young Arcadian loyalist named Agenor. Agenor is, according to Sidney,

Of all that army the most beautiful, whose face as yet did not betray his sex with so much as show of manly hair; of a mind having no limits of hope nor knowing why to fear; full of jollity in conversation, and lately grown a lover.

(III, 339.21-24)

Perhaps enamored by his own beauty, Agenor is not wearing a helmet. Amphialus, noticing this weakness, immediately engages Agenor, though, upon noticing his beauty, attempts to lower his lance in order not to harm him. Amphialus' lance, however, shatters upwards into Agenor's face, a face that is "[...] far fitter for the combats of Venus giving not only a sudden, but a foul death, leaving scarcely any tokens of his former beauty" (III, 468). It is significant, I think, that Agenor's death is staged as an accident. Agenor's beauty is so striking that even Amphialus, the leader of a rapacious band of rebels, cannot imagine harming him. Agenor is a rare example of that commanding beauty so in vogue in the Renaissance, a beauty that Sidney most likely aspired to. The ugliness of Agenor's death, then, not only demonstrates the extent to which Amphialus' rebellion will stain this type of conventional beauty, but also it attacks the ability of the body to represent any type of beauty, excellence, or virtue.

The issues of representing beauty or virtue are intensified when Sidney's deconstruction of heroics moves inward, to the emotions and psychology of his characters. This movement inwards was one way that Sidney rejected conventional heroism, and so it is no wonder that he, like Spenser, elected to predicate his heroic story upon love. Sidney, also like Spenser, chose to depict love-wounds as capable of generating physical effects. When, for example, in Book One of *The New Arcadia*, Musidorus admonishes Pyrocles for loving Philoclea, Sidney describes the scene in overtly physical terms:

And herewith the deep wound of his love, being rubbed afresh with this new unkindness, began, as it were, to bleed again in such sort that he was unable to bear it any longer; but gushing out abundance of tears, and crossing his arms over his woeful heart, as if his tears had been out-flowing blood, his arms an overpressing burden, he sunk down to the ground.

(I, 138.10-14)

As with depictions of the love-wound in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the physicality of this scene suggests how potently the love-wound affects the physical and well as metaphorical body.

Pyrocles, here, offers his metaphorical anguish a material reality, comparing the consequences of his love for Philoclea as a metaphorical weakening and death, an outpouring of blood.

Pyrocles' understanding of metaphorical wounds producing a physical pain represents the most conventional way that love is yoked with pain in *The New Arcadia*. Sometimes, however, the opposite occurs: physical wounds lead to a metaphorical pain, generally love. When Helen sees Amphialus' wounds at the end of the revised *Arcadia*, for example, she reacts with the frightening passion that leads Stella and Venus to mutilate themselves in the presence of their dead lovers. The difference, though, is that Helen's love for Amphialus arises after, not before, Amphialus is wounded:

[...] and Helen, poor lady, with grievous expectation and languishing desire, carried her faint legs to the place where [Amphialus] lay, either not breathing, or in all appearance breathing nothing but death; in which piteous plight, when she saw him, thou sorrow had set before her mind the pitifullest conceit thereof that it could paint, yet the present sight went beyond all former apprehensions, so that beginning to kneel by the body, her sight ran from her service rather than abide such a sight, and she fell in a sound upon him as if she could not choose but die of his wounds.
(III, 444.8-11)

Earlier in Book Two, Pyrocles similarly admits that his love for Philoclea was primed by the death of Zelmane. Witnessing Zelmane's death, he says, "made my heart as apt to receive the wound, as the power of beauty with unresistible force to pierce" (II, 268.33-4). Both Pyrocles' and Helen's individual reactions to wounds might seem like ordinary human sympathy or pity, but we might recall Belphebe in *The Faerie Queene*, who, upon seeing Timias' wound, was filled with pity, "the point of [which] perced[...] her tender hart" (III.v.30). Sidney, too, wishes to figure ordinary sympathy and pity as possible generators of love, especially sympathy or pity elicited by witnessing another's wound. These two scenes—Helen's response to Amphialus' wound and Pyrocles' witnessing Zelmane's death—describe one way in which the love-wound might affect the heroic body: by distorting the

object of love. Both Helen and Pyrocles focus on wounds as the origin of their loves, drawing attention to the physicality of their love rather than the spiritual, neoplatonic terms Musidorus sets out for himself in Book One. “True love hath that excellent nature in it,” Musidorus tells Pyrocles, “that it doth transform the very essence of the lover into the thing loved, uniting and, as it were, incorporating it with a secret and inward working” (I, 71.33-5). In Musidorus’ neoplatonic terms, the “thing loved” would be the virtues of the beloved. But the provenances of Pyrocles’ and Helen’s love suggest that what is “loved” is not a person’s virtue, or self, or identity, but the very thing that challenges virtue, self, and identity: wounds. *The New Arcadia*, then, gives the conventional neoplatonic paradigm a new efficacy, a physical, even grotesque, efficacy. Not only is the physical wound a mirror for an inward pathology, but also it provokes a similarly destructive pathology in the observer. And often, in *The New Arcadia*, this pathology far exceeds the psychological anguish of love; it has real, political consequences. Helen, for example, who is “beloved of her people” and whom Sidney elsewhere describes as an excellent leader, falls prey to her passion for Amphialus, a passion that leads to the death of Amphialus’ friend Philoxenus and the abuse of her political power.

Helen’s abuse of power and its deadly consequences are not as powerful a critique of the heroic body as Sidney’s treatment of Amphialus’ erotic pathology, an erotic pathology that juxtaposes his position as the rebellion leader. The political grievances that Amphialus posits for his rebellion—his mother’s desire to overthrow Basilius—are not true causes of his intransigence. That would be his love for Philoclea. Amphialus’ passion for Philoclea upsets his single-minded pursuit of fame and glory, as it does when he hesitates, during one of the preliminary battles with the Arcadian forces, after an Arcadian knight mentions Philoclea’s name: “The name of Philoclea first stayed his sword” (III.342.15). *The New*

Arcadia often figures love as a potential threat to one's militancy. His paradox—the he must win his mother political dominance over the man (Basilius) whose daughter (Philoclea) he desires to court—demonstrates the extent to which even those who have the foremost claim to heroic virtue can be divided by the wound of love. But Sidney's staging of the paradox is more complex, for, once Cecropia apprehends Philoclea, Amphialus must continue to rebel, must continue to excel as a warrior, lest Philoclea be returned to Basilius and his opportunity to court her lost. The purpose of his heroics is in contrast to the classical model; rather than glory, honor, or, even, *Arcadia*, Amphialus wishes to win love, not as a spoil of war but as the primary goal.

The pathology of Amphialus' wounds, and the political paradox that they create, juxtapose the simply stated love of Argalus and Parthenia, the romance's preeminent heroic couple. In fact, the conflict of Amphialus' private passions (his love for Philoclea) and his public virtue (his political duty to his deceptive mother) are reconciled in Argalus and Parthenia, the only couple in *The New Arcadia* for whom heroic virtue and passion do not create a division of the self. But the conventional heroics of Argalus and Parthenia eventually give way to their deaths; they die because they are heroic. Their story, I propose, is the key synecdoche of Sidney's rewriting of heroism, and it begins, not surprisingly, with their description as heroes. Sidney extols Argalus and Parthenia from the beginning of *The New Arcadia*, offering each the ineffable, hyperbolic epithets traditionally associated with heroism. Kalander's steward, for example, when he first describes Argalus, puts him in the ranks with Pyrocles, Musidorus, and Amphialus:

[...] a gentleman in deed most rarely accomplished, excellently learned, but without all vain glory; friendly without factiousness; valiant, so as for my part I think the earth hath no man that hath done more heroical acts than he.

(I, 27.15-21)

Parthenia's description is similarly hyperbolic; she is "the perfect picture of womanly virtue and wifely faithfulness," and blazoned, by Sidney, upon entering the temple to marry

Argalus:

[...] her eyes themselves seemed a temple wherein love and beauty were married. Her lips though they were kept close with modest silence, yet with a pretty kind of natural swelling they seemed to invited the guests that looked on them; her cheeks[...] were like roses when their leaves are with a little breath stirred; her hair being laid at the full length down her back bare show as, if the vaward failed, yet that would conquer.

(I, 48.2-13)

A number of details important to Argalus and Parthenia's heroic fashioning precede this marriage. Argalus' loyalty to Parthenia, for example, after she is mutilated by Demagoras (I, 31.23ff) and Parthenia's subsequent refusal to burden him with her ugliness (I, 32.12ff) prove this couple's affections to be more selfless than any other couple in *The New Arcadia*. In fact, Kalanders' steward even wonders, "whether [Argalus] in doing or [Parthenia] in suffering showed greater constancy of affection" (I, 29.34-5). In Argalus and Parthenia, then, the two terms—doing and suffering—that previously separated heroics from pathetic acts are gendered and, yet, combined. Sidney represents the marriage of the virtuous man to the virtuous woman as a marriage of heroic poles, of action on the one hand and pain on the other; he, however, ultimately is unable to hold on to this model of virtue. When Argalus goes to join the Arcadian forces against Amphialus' rebels, Parthenia tells him, "Parthenia shall be in the battle of your fight: Parthenia shall smart in your pain, and your blood must be bled by Parthenia" (III, 373.9-10). Argalus does not know it, but Parthenia means this literally. She intends to "smart in [his] pain."

Both Argalus and Parthenia die at Amphialus' hands, and the progression of the deaths (Argalus then Parthenia) and the knight who kills them are important to the romance's destruction of heroic virtues. For one, when Amphialus' kills Argalus (his friend,

yet, paradoxically, also his enemy), he recognizes his own moral distance from the love that he desires with Philoclea. Argalus' death also manifests the threat that the rebellion poses to the heroic body in general. The fact, for instance, that Amphialus, a man self-divided by love-wounds, is able to kill *The New Arcadia's* preeminent image of heroics suggests the rebellion's anarchic dominance over Arcadia's heroic, political body. And the scene is made more powerful when one considers that Amphialus and Argalus are fighting against their wills. Sidney wonders, even, whether upon recognizing each other if Amphialus and Argalus would cease and

strike[...] a notable example of the wonderful effects of virtue, where the conqueror sought for friendship of the conquered, and the conquered would not pardon the conqueror, both indeed being of that mind to love each other for accepting but not for giving mercy, and neither affected to overlive a dishonour[...]

(III, 377.18-22)

But the heroes, paradoxically, are too heroic, or too driven by the heroic ideal. Argalus would register such virtue as a rejection of his oath to Basilius, and Amphialus, single-minded in his pursuit of loving Philoclea, must aid the rebellion in any way he can. Even Parthenia, who appears and begs Amphialus "In the power of love[...] to leave off this combat" (III, 377.5), cannot convince the knights to desist. The emotions that guide love and war are too powerful, for Parthenia as much as for Argalus and Amphialus. "But, sorrow," she says, "I hope thou art sharp enough to save my labour from other remedies. Argalus! Argalus, I will follow thee! I will follow thee!" (378.9-11). Argalus does not know it, but she is serious about her metaphor.

Parthenia's death completes the tragedy, but it, paradoxically, also offers Sidney an opportunity to resurrect the heroic body, albeit in different terms, that Argalus' death details. Parthenias' death, unlike Argalus', was futile and unnecessary, and Sidney treats this futility as complicit in the construction of heroic beauty. Like Argalus, Amphialus does not

recognize Parthenia until he has mortally wounded her, though his horror is overshadowed by Sidney's rapture at the scene's aesthetics:

Her beauty then, even in the despite of the passed sorrow or coming death, assuring all beholders that it was nothing short of perfection. For her exceeding fair eyes having with continual weeping gotten a little redness about them; her roundly sweetly swelling lips a little trembling, as though they kissed their neighbor death; in her cheeks the whiteness striving by little and little to get upon the rosiness of them; her neck, a neck indeed of alabaster, displaying the wound, which with most dainty blood laboured to drown his own beauties, so as here was a river of purest red, there an island of perfectest white, each giving luster to the other; with the sweet countenance, God knows, full of an unaffected languishing.

(III, 397.24-39)

Again, as with Timias' wounding in *The Faerie Queene*, Parthenia's death is blazoned, and, in this way, made beautiful. Her eyes report her sorrow at the death of Argalus while her lips, "roundly sweetly swelling lips," foretell her imminent death. Her countenance and her wound, most importantly, create a contrast of red and white, of fading pallor and her natural vivacity. And Sidney depicts this contrast between death and life as "each giving luster to the other," as each made more beautiful together than separate. It is an odd thought: that Parthenia at her death is more beautiful than she was in life. But, as with Timias' wounding in *The Faerie Queene*, the aesthetics of this scene depend on Parthenia's lack of subjectivity, her inability to register herself as beautiful. To Sidney, and to the narrator, her beauty begins to transcend the horror of the situation, but it is not a transcendence that she can know or willfully embrace. The threat remains that one will see the wounded body as grotesque and disfiguring rather than beautiful and ennobling.

Sensing, perhaps, the arguments that will arise by construing this death as heroically beautiful, Sidney offers Parthenia a defense:

[...] though these things to a grossly conceiving sense might seem disgraces, yet indeed were they but appareling beauty in a new fashion which, all-looked-upon through the spectacles of pity, did even increase the lines of her natural fairness.

(III, 397.24-9)

The details of this passage trace Sidney's model of deconstructing and resurrecting heroism. Up until now, wounds in *The New Arcadia* have been "disgraces" on and inside the body, "disgraces" that neither mark heroism nor show virtuous love. In fact, wounds prevent such virtues, confronting the body, on the one hand, with aesthetic disfigurement, and, on the other, with self-division. Richard McCoy reads these lines similarly in *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia*, likening Parthenia's to *Astrophel and Stella* sonnet thirty-four, in which Astrophel compares his diseased love for Stella to a beautiful picture: "Oft cruel fights well pictur'd-forth do please. / Art not asham'd to publish thy disease."⁴⁷ McCoy argues that Sidney designs Parthenia's death, like Astrophel's grief, "to elicit a more discerning response than horror or disgust," a response that he sees as the fascination over wounds and pain.⁴⁸ McCoy's argument, however, is difficult to construe, or, at least, difficult to defend in the text. Amphialus, for one, is horrified by Parthenia's dying body (III. 398). But this makes sense, when one considers that Amphialus is already self-divided, already unable to embody the heroic ethic of Argalus and Parthenia. He conceives Parthenia in the "gross[] conceiving sense" that Sidney fears primarily because he is already a victim a grotesque wound. He cannot suffer as she can, as a hero.

By the end of *The New Arcadia* heroism consists mostly of suffering and occurs through the same medium that gives life to conventional heroics: the wound. In this way, *The New Arcadia* re-imagines the effects of wounds on and inside the body, depicting the wounded body not as marker of heroism but as a potential threat to those heroics. In fact, throughout the revised narrative of *The Arcadia* only one character, Musidorus, remains free to act. The other heroes of the tale—Pyrocles, Philoclea, Pamela—are abducted by Cecropia

⁴⁷ Sir Philip Sidney. *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*. ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones. (Oxford University Press, 2002) pg. 32

⁴⁸ Richard McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia*. (Rutgers University Press, 1979). pg. 208

at the beginning of Book Three and spend the rest of the narrative as prisoners. Their heroism, perhaps like Amoret's in *The Faerie Queene*, consists of resistance and fortitude under imprisonment and torture. Their value as heroes depends on their performance as sufferers more so than their ability to contribute to the political narrative of the romance. Sidney's handling of the body, in each of these cases, stresses the body's figurative value over its physical acts, and his depictions of wounds attempt to relocate the heroic body away from its political dominance and martial dexterity and toward an aesthetic, spiritual value. But Sidney does not represent all of *Acradia's* characters as incurring or even capable of incurring the beautiful wounds of Parthenia. Her death, and its aestheticization, represents a possible response to the problem of reading physical wounds as indicative of inwardness, for the beauty of her outward languish marks the virtuous beauty of her inward love.

We end, then, where we began: with a question about whether or not one can interpret a wound as a physical marker of some transcendent inwardness, only to find, of course, that the only certainty we can have is an uncertainty. Both of the works I have explored in this thesis provide images and metaphors that convey the internal workings of the body; both of these romances are dominated by a lingering desire to make visible and meaningful what inwardness physical wounds might adumbrate. This is a desire, though under a different model of organization, which we still feel today. So many of us continue to fret about the relationship between bodies and selves, believing, perhaps foolishly, that the oblique bundle of desires and traumas, hopes and anxieties—all of those abstract emotions which, in aggregate, we call personality, identity—is tied to the material body in which we dwell. But bodies, like Argalus' and Parthenia's, will fail us. The wounds we receive will mark this failure, drawing attention to the urgency of confronting mortality as they physically bridge the inside and outside of the body.

What, then, is the nexus between body and self? Spenser and Sidney cannot say; neither man finishes his romance, and we will never know the fate that they imagined for the wounded body. Indeed, the fate of the wounded body, in the 1580s, was still a matter of much debate, one that fiction, as much as reality, could not answer.

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