

Amoret's Sacred Suffering: The Protestant Modification of Courtly Love in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

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MORE than sixty years ago, C. S. Lewis ascribed Amoret's suffering to the conventions of courtly love, presenting her as "simply love—begotten by heaven, raised to its natural perfection in the Garden and to its civil and spiritual perfections in the Temple, wrongly separated from marriage by the ideals of courtly gallantry, and at last restored to it by Chastity—as Spenser conceives chastity."¹ More than thirty years ago, when Earle B. Fowler studied "the influence of the general laws as well as of particular codes of love upon Spenser," he found that in terms of "the resultant physical or 'pathological' symptoms" of love, "Spenser has been definitely influenced by courtly ideals."² He argued that Spenser describes "the conventional recognition of love as a disease which attacks both mind and body" on the basis that Spenser includes Infirmary and Death in the Masque of Cupid.³ Yet, critics continue to ask how the convention of a suffering courtly lover helps the reader understand Amoret's role in *The Faerie Queene*, especially in the House of Busyrane. Is married chastity always a passive victim in a courtly culture? Why? Is Amoret an innocent victim or a courtly lover herself who is doomed to suffer? Although critics mostly agree that Amoret suffers because she lives in a courtly culture, they want to explore further how and why she feels pain in such a culture.

¹Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 344.

²Fowler, *Spenser and the System of Courtly Love* (New York: Phaeton Press, 1968), 46.

³*Ibid.*, 42 and 45.

Many critics blame Amoret herself for her suffering. John Rooks, for example, claims that "Having been wounded by Cupid, having fallen in love, Amoret is bound to suffer" because "the only expression of love that Busirane is prepared to acknowledge, or that Amoret can conceive of, is sexual pleasure."⁴ William C. Johnson even argues that "Busyrane is a result and cause of Amoret's own fears." He argues that Amoret has to suffer because she has to learn to "free [herself] . . . from the spell . . . of false love or infatuation, replacing romantic (idealized, unreal) love and passion with temperate affection, mutual respect, and married sexuality."⁵ This kind of argument, however, would mean that Amoret, at least temporarily, forgets the training she has "in true feminitee"⁶ and the lessons she receives on "the lore of loue, and goodly woman-head" (3.6.51). This would mean that allegorically in this episode, she plays a conventional courtly lady. What's more, if Amoret has to suffer because she has accepted Busyrane's definition of love, does she suffer in the Cave of Lust because she enjoys illicit sensual desire like Lust? These critics forget that before going to the fairy court with Scudamour, Amoret is already "th'ensample of true loue alone, / And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione, / To all fair Ladies" (3.6.52): they believe that Amoret needs to go through "an awkward and even dangerous period of coming to know Scudamour's masculinity, and her own."⁷ They are in effect arguing that Amoret is still learning to be chaste, that she does not stand for married chastity after all, at least not in Spenser's unfinished story.

Other critics believe that Amoret should not be blamed for her entanglement with the courtly culture and for her suffering. They examine various characters or traditions to find the source of Amoret's suffering. Sheila T. Cavanagh, for example, blames Scudamour for Amoret's suffering. She believes that "Scudamour's rhetoric . . . presents Amoret as a trophy rather than an object of love" and that he "remains culpable for transgressions which seem congruent with the enchanter's crimes." She

⁴Rooks, *Love's Courtly Ethic in "The Faerie Queene": From Garden to Wilderness*, University of Kansas Humanistic Studies 58 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 77 and 78.

⁵Johnson, "Spenser in the House of Busyrane: Transformations of Reality in *The Faerie Queene* III and *Amoretti*," *English Studies* 2 (1992): 116.

⁶Edmund Spenser, *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), 3.6.51. All subsequent quotations of Spenser's works are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text by line number. *The Faerie Queene* will be cited in the text by book, canto, and stanza.

⁷Benjamin G. Lockerd, Jr., *The Sacred Marriage: Psychic Integration in "The Faerie Queene"* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1987), 96.

even blames Venus for her “laughing complicity in the kidnapping of her adopted daughter and faithful virgin follower.”⁸ Lauren Silberman, for another example, blames a society that denies sexuality. She argues that “Amoret suffers spoliation because desire is misnamed” and “disfigured by a system of signs that repudiates bodily integrity.”⁹ However, Spenser never blames Scudamour for Amoret’s suffering, as Cavanagh readily admits: “the narrator works to elicit the audience’s sympathy for Scudamour, while vigorously denouncing the magician’s abduction of the virgin from the scene of her nuptials.”¹⁰ Neither, of course, does Spenser at any time repudiate sexual pleasure or desire within the boundary of marriage. On the contrary, as a Protestant, Spenser probably believes that “holy matrimonie . . . is an honorable estate, instituted of god in Paradise, in the time of man’s innocency, signifying unto us the misticall union that is betwixte Chryste and hys Church.”¹¹ It is improbable, then, that Spenser makes Amoret suffer because his society misnames or disfigures desire: Amoret’s desire is lawful because the object of her desire is her (future) husband, from whom “thousand charmes could not her steadfast heart remoue” (3.12.31).

A surer villain in the story of Amoret’s suffering is of course Busyrane. We then return to Lewis’s interpretation sixty years ago—that Busyrane, or the conventions of courtly love he represents, strips Amoret of her identity as married chastity, but then we are again stuck with our first question. If Amoret “[typifies] the faithful married woman” and, “like Belpheobe the virgin huntress, is totally pure in origin and nature . . . equal to her twin sister in status,”¹² why is Amoret always a passive victim and never seems to be able to fight back? In what sense does she represent “true feminitee” and “goodly womanhead”? Does Spenser mean to tell us that the Protestant ideal of married chastity is no match for the conventions of courtly love? Does she have to suffer simply because “[Busyrane’s demands] nevertheless exert pressure upon his prisoner because his initial demand for her rapt attention resembles similar

⁸ Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in “The Faerie Queene”* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 102 and 98.

⁹ Silberman, “The Hermaphrodite and the Metamorphosis of Spenserian Allegory,” in *Critical Essays on Edmund Spenser*, ed. Mihoko Suzuki, Critical Essays on British Literature (New York: G. K. Hall, 1996), 162.

¹⁰ Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes*, 101.

¹¹ *The First and Second Prayerbooks of King Edward the Sixth*, Everyman’s Library (London: J. M. Dent, 1910), 410.

¹² Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 127.

demands made by moral men?"¹³ Why does she have to face the pressure as married chastity?

To answer these questions, we first need to study the similarities and differences between Amoret's relationship to Scudamour and Amoret's relationship to Busyrane through our understanding of the Protestant ideal of married chastity and the conventions of courtly love. We also need to examine Amoret's suffering through our knowledge of the suffering that Protestants faced in the sixteenth century and how they looked at suffering. To understand why she has to suffer as married chastity and how she suffers, this article will analyze all the episodes in which she suffers—not only the House of Busyrane but also the Cave of Lust, the Temple of Venus, and the Cottage of Sclaunder. Only after an analysis of the different kinds of suffering Amoret experiences in different settings in chronological order can we understand what she is taught about suffering, why she has to suffer, and what the nature of her suffering is. This article will compare the representations of married chastity in these episodes to Protestant discussions about marriage by Martin Luther and John Calvin, the treatises on courtly love by Ovid and Andreas Capellanus, and other literary sources that focus on the theme of love and suffering, like *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Romance of the Rose*. Through this analysis, we will be able to better understand Amoret's suffering. Through this analysis, we may also find out to what degree Spenser truly honors married chastity as a virtue and what is the relation between Amoret's suffering and her identity as an ideal Protestant wife.

The sixteenth-century Protestants were very aware that they were giving marriage a new role in the society. On the one hand, they denied vehemently that it was one kind of sacrament. The Geneva Bible translates the word that describes marriage, "mystery," into "secret."¹⁴ Both Luther and Calvin are eager to define "mystery" as "metaphors and allegories" or "secret" rather than sacrament.¹⁵ Luther argues that those who define mystery as sacrament "have been betrayed by their

¹³ Dorothy Stephens, "Into Other Arms: Amoret's Evasion," *ELH* 58 (1991): 528.

¹⁴ *The Geneva Bible*, Facsimile edition, intro. Lloyd E. Berry (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), Eph. 5:28. All subsequent quotations of the Bible are from this edition and will be cited in the text by chapter and verse.

¹⁵ Luther, "Pagan Servitude of the Church," in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), 326; and Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols., *The Library of Christian Classics* 20–21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 2:1483 respectively. All subsequent quotations from Luther and Calvin will be cited in the text by volume and page number.

ignorance both of the facts and of the vocabulary," accusing them of "going simply by the sound of words" (327). Calvin even believes that when he argues against those who take marriage to be a sacrament, he "has partly pulled the lion's skin from these asses" (2:1484). They also treat marriage as a necessity and flout the vow of celibacy. Calvin calls it "insane boldness" and urges people not "to strive against the nature imparted by [God]" (2:1257). That is, they believe that sex is instituted by God as part of a marriage and that if it stays within the boundary of marriage, it is normal and legitimate. To them, sex is such an important element in marriage that Luther even once argued that a woman married to an impotent husband should be allowed to have a sexual relation with another man if she keeps it a secret (337). Calvin is not so radical, but he still ridicules the Catholic Church for barring its priests from getting married just because it believes that copulation is part of it (2:1483). He also angrily rebukes those who "dare . . . call marriage 'pollution'" (2:1257). The Protestants in the sixteenth century saw marriage and sex within the boundary of marriage as lawful and necessary but not as a sacrament. On the other hand, the sixteenth-century Protestants believed that marriage was sacred, even between non-believers (Luther, 326). They claim that "it is not alien to [God's] majesty to institute marriage [cf. Gen. 2:22]; that He declared it honorable among all men [Heb. 13:4]; and that Christ, our Lord, sanctified it by his presence, deigning to honor it with his first miracle [John 2:2, 6-11]" (Calvin, 2:1257). The sixteenth-century Protestants talk about both the necessity and sanctity of marriage and sex: they call marriage honorable without forgetting that sex is an important, even an essential, part of marriage.

Amoret, as a model for married chastity, learns the importance of sex in the Garden of Adonis, where Venus, "wheneuer that she will, / Possesseth [Adonis], and of his sweetness takes her fill" (3.6.46). There even Amoret's guardian, Psyche, "with [Cupid] playes" and "with him liues, and hath him borne a child, / *Pleasure*, that doth both gods and men aggrate" (3.6.50). It may be true that this Garden "is neither good nor bad" and that here "the Garden and generation in human beings . . . were perceived to operate animistically."¹⁶ It may be true, in other words, that Amoret may not have learned here that a sexual relation has to be limited within the boundary of marriage. But here she has at least learned that if she wants to have sexual pleasure with someone, she has to live with her lover "in stedfast loue" like her guardian (3.6.50). Her

¹⁶James W. Broaddus, *Spenser's Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of "The Faerie Queene"* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995), 70 and 71.

education, in short, provides her sufficient understanding about sex, and there is no reason that she will be frightened by sexual pleasure.

This pleasure is very different from the pleasure in the tradition of courtly love though. For example, in *The Romance of the Rose*, before the dreamer enters the Garden of Pleasure he has already been shown the vices caused by courtly love by the paintings on the wall of the garden—hate, cruelty, baseness, covetousness, avarice, envy, sorrow, old age, religious hypocrisy, and poverty. When the dreamer is in the garden, he also learns from a circle of dancers that if he wants to enjoy (sexual) pleasure, he has to act with joy, pleasance, courtesy, pleasant looks, beauty, simplicity, generosity of spirit, and good companionship as well as fair seeming, pride, baseness, shame, despair, and inconstancy.¹⁷ In other words, in the conventions of courtly love, sexual pleasure can be obtained only when the lover ignores some moral standard, while in the Garden of Adonis, sexual pleasure does not come with any dirty trick. What's more, while courtly lovers learn a specific set of behavioral codes in a specific courtly culture to obtain love, sexual or otherwise, Amoret accepts her education about sexual pleasure in a garden that is "literally and erotically the emblem of universal procreation" but "not the real world."¹⁸ In other words, while a courtly lover suffers according to a specific set of social codes, Amoret learns about suffering only indirectly through the threatening boar, which has "with his cruell tuske [Adonis] deadly cloyed" (3.6.48), and through Psyche, who "[Cupid] lately reconcyld, / After long troubles and vnmeet vpbrayes" (3.6.50). That is, at the early stage of her education, Amoret does not quite feel that sexual pleasure has to be obtained with specific behavioral codes or that it necessarily comes with suffering.

Amoret's education does not stop here, though. When Scudamour finds her in the Temple of Venus, she sits in the lap of Womanhood with a circle of allegorical figures that represent essential elements of a perfect woman: Shamefastnesse, Cherefulnessse, Modestie, Curtesie, Silence, and Obedience (4.10.44–51). Among them, only Curtesie is a figure who appears in the Garden of Pleasure in *The Romance of the Rose*. Neither is there in the circle any figure that suggests a misery or vice like the figures outside and in the Garden of Pleasure. This does not mean, though, that Amoret is still completely unaware of those mis-

¹⁷ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. and ed. Frances Horgan, *The World's Classics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5–9 and 9–16.

¹⁸ Helen Cheney Gilde, "'The Sweet Lodge of Love and Deare Delight': The Problem of Amoret," *Philological Quarterly* 50 (1971): 67.

eries and vices that love is associated with in the real world. She now is probably faintly aware that beyond the circle of perfect Womanhood, beyond the center of the Temple of Venus, there are Doubt, Delay, the Gate of good desert, Daunger, and Loue and Hate held together by Concord (4.10.11–43). Even if she is too well protected by the circle before she is taken by Scudamour, she probably faces Daunger, Doubt, and Delay when Scudamour takes her out of the Temple. The problem is: do these figures represent a courtly culture? Can this Garden of Venus be read as a literary descendent of the Garden of Pleasure in *The Romance of the Rose*? In a courtly culture, Daunger represents the jealousy of a husband or the public disgrace resulting from the revelation of a love affair, which, according to Capellanus, “does not help the lover’s worth, but brands his reputation with evil rumors and often causes him grief.”¹⁹ In Spenser’s version, however, Daunger “day and night did watch and duely ward, / From fearefull cowards, entrance to forstall, / And faint-heart-fooles” because “Vnworthy they of grace” are (4.10.17). Here in short, Daunger represents a force that discourages cowards from approaching Amoret and thus keeps her a virgin until Scudamour comes with the shield that proves him to be the legitimate lover, the one who fights twenty knights to win the shield with the inscription beside it: “Whose euer be the shield, fair Amoret be his” (4.10.8). That is, Daunger is described here as Amoret’s friend not her enemy.

Similarly, on Amoret’s way out of the Temple, Doubt and Delay are not as serious a threat as those in the conventions of courtly love. They are not even mentioned when Scudamour takes Amoret out. Even when Scudamour enters the Temple of Venus, Doubt immediately recognizes Scudamour’s legitimacy and “to [Scudamour] opened wide,” while Delay, “feigning full many a fond excuse to prate” (4.10.14), can’t attract Scudamour’s attention at all. Scudamour is threatened by Doubt only once, but his doubt here results from a religious concern, not courtly codes. Here he “[wades] in doubt” simply because “sacrilege [him] seem’d the Church to rob / And folly seem’d to leaue the thing vndonne / Which with so strong attempt I had began” (4.10.53). In short, Spenser’s description of the allegorical figures in the Temple indicates that Amoret’s education does not quite include the suffering in the tradition of courtly love.

¹⁹Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. John Jay Parry, Records of Western Civilization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 34. Amoret later does face public disgrace, but under Sclaunder rather than under Daunger.

The only factor that makes Scudamour and Amoret look like a pair of suffering courtly lovers, then, is Amoret's own fear. Critics often argue that since Amoret "often prayd, and often [Scudamour] besought, / Sometime with tender teares to let her goe, / Sometime with witching smyles" (4.10.56), she suffers here from the fear of building a sexual relationship with Scudamour. Some even argue that "Scudamour's abduction of Amoret closely matches Busyrane's abuse of the defenseless maiden"²⁰ because Scudamour wants to have a sexual union with her. They seem to suggest that Amoret, like those Catholics rebuked by Calvin, thinks of marriage—or sex—as "pollution" (2:1257). A closer observation of Amoret's suffering here and in the House of Busyrane shows how far apart the two kinds of suffering are. Here Amoret may be under "considerable pain and hardship,"²¹ but she is certainly not surrounded by Cruelty and Despight as in the House of Busyrane (3.12.19); nor is her breast cut open and heart placed in a basin by an evil magician (3.12.20–21). There is no indication that her "suffering" here is of the same degree or even of the same nature as her suffering in the House of Busyrane. More importantly, in the Temple, she explains clearly why she is afraid: she pleads with Scudamour not because she is afraid of sex but because she thinks "it was to Knight vnseemely shame, / Vpon a recluse Virgin to lay hold / That unto Venus seruices has sold" (4.10.54). In other words, here, like Scudamour, who is in doubt because "sacrilege me seem'd the Church to rob," Amoret is afraid that she is playing a part in committing the sacrilege because she has not recognized Scudamour as her rightful Lord yet. That's why Amoret is "with terror queld" right after she sees "*Cupid* with his killing bow" (4.10.55), a sign often worn by a courtly lover. That is, she is filled with fear only because she suspects Scudamour to be a conventional courtly lover whose love normally does not lead to marriage and the revelation of whose love may bring public disgrace. However, neither this misunderstanding nor her suffering here lasts long. She soon witnesses how "euermore vpon the Goddesses face / [Scudamour's] eye was fixt" (4.10.56), how Concord "did [Scudamour] also friend in [his] retrate" (57), and how "euermore [Scudamour's] shield did [him] defend / Against the storme of euerie dreadfull stour" from Daunger (58). She soon understands that he is a different kind of lover, and as Spenser has already revealed in book 3 to the readers, after Scudamour and Amoret leave the Temple, "To the

²⁰ Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes*, 96.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

Faery court she came" (6.52), willingly—she is not dragged there by Scudamour. In short, in the Temple, Scudamour and Amoret may have suffered a little like a pair of courtly lovers, but they suffer for a very different reason and for a much shorter time.

Why then, does Amoret have to suffer so much in the House of Busyrane if she is already prepared for a sexual relationship within the boundary of marriage, if Scudamour is not a courtly lover forcing himself on her, and if she has already accepted him as her rightful lord? In what sense is Busyrane's abduction similar to or different from Scudamour's fight to take Amoret away from the Temple? At first glance, the two episodes both contain sets of allegorical figures surrounding Amoret. In both, most figures are described in detail, and some of the figures in one episode look like the figures in the other. Examined more carefully, though, the figures in one episode still differ significantly from those in the other, especially figures of the inner circles. First, the circle of Womanhood is led by Womanhood, which "she exprest / By her sad semblant and demeanure wyse" (4.10.49), while the masque of Cupid is led by Ease, "a graue personage / . . . / With comely haueour and count'nance sage" (3.12.3). That is, the leaders of both have wisdom and a serious attitude. Womanhood is also similar to Desyre because both seem "of ryper yeares" (3.12.9; 4.10.49). However, they are all quite different not only in names: Womanhood appears to be sad/serious/grave because "stedfast still her eyes did fixed rest" (4.10.49), while Ease appears grave and sage because he needs to be "fit for tragicke Stage" (3.12.3). Ease, in other words, is acting sage and grave while Womanhood simply is. Likewise, while both Womanhood and Desyre seem older than their partners, Desyre is actually Fancy's son (3.12.9). In short, Desyre is not really more experienced and is not a teacher like Womanhood. Second, Shamefastnesse, who sits next to Womanhood, looks similar to Griefe and Displeasure in the masque of Cupid. Shamefastnesse "Ne euer durst her eyes from ground vpreare" (4.10.50), while Griefe marches "Downe hanging his dull head with heauy chere" (3.12.16) and Displeasure walks "hanging downe his heauy countenance" (3.12.18). Again, though, only Shamefastnesse has a good reason to do so. She looks down because "some blame of euill she did feare / That in her cheeks made roses oft appeare" (4.10.50), while Griefe and Displeasure have no apparent reasons for hanging their heads except that they are simply sorrowful and sad (3.12.16, 18).

Thirdly, Cherefulnessse, who sits opposite to Shamefastnesse in the circle of Womanhood, naturally looks like Pleasance in the masque

of Cupid. The former's eyes "like twinkling stars in euening cleare, / Were deckt with smyles, that all sad humors chaced" (4.10.50); the latter appears "chearefull fresh and full of ioyance glad, / As if no sorrow she ne felt ne drad" (3.12.18). However, Pleasance never "darted forth delights" as Cherefulnessse does (4.10.50). That is, although Pleasance is not touched by sorrow herself, she cannot chase sorrow away for others. What's more, Pleasance's pairing with Displeasure makes her one of "That euill matched paire" (3.12.18). Fourthly, Curtesie in the circle of Womanhood also looks surprisingly similar to Dissemblance in the masque of Cupid. Curtesie is "comely" and "vnto euery person knew her part" (4.10.51), while Dissemblance is "exceeding faire" and is "Courteous too all, and seeming debonaire" (3.12.14). With the more markedly similar descriptions of the two, however, Spenser also underlines the fact that Dissemblance's "deedes were forged, and her words false" (3.12.14). In other words, Curtesie represents true courtesy, while Dissemblance only pretends to be courteous: there is no truthfulness behind her courtesy. Lastly, on the opposite side of Curtesie sits Modestie, who is described in only one line: she is gentle (4.10.51), like Dissemblance in the masque of Cupid (3.12.14). Then again Modestie has truly a "gentle hart" (4.10.51), while Dissemblance's gentleness is "but painted, and purloynd" (3.12.14). With the contrast between the figures in the Temple and those in the House of Busyrane, Spenser accurately describes the nature of the House of Busyrane. Here appearances, behavior, or attitudes that represent perfect womanhood are perverted. Here those appearances, behavior, and attitudes are adopted either with no proper motivation behind them or with no truthfulness at all. That is, if the House of Busyrane represents the tradition of courtly love at all, as most critics presume,²² then Spenser is describing courtly love as "a perverted image of the art represented by the Temple of Venus."²³ As a student in the Temple, Amoret may feel comfortable behaving like a courtly lady but if she ever behaves like a courtly lady, she does so for the right reasons and with the right attitude. She has no reason not to understand the differences between the code of courtly love and perfect womanhood.

In addition, there are two other figures in the circle of Womanhood that share no resemblance with any figure in the masque of Cupid: Silence and Obedience. These two additional figures further remind

²² See Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 341 and 344; or Rooks, *Love's Courtly Ethic*, 79.

²³ Thomas P. Roche, Jr., *The Kindly Flame: A Study of the Third and Fourth Books of Spenser's "Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 117.

Amoret how Busyrane perverts married chastity and show the reader how Amoret is trained to be an ideal Christian wife rather than a courtly lady. The two figures are "Both gifts of God not gotten but from thence, / Both girlonds of his Saints against their foes offence" (4.10.51). They are, in short, attributes of an ideal Christian woman. Obedience is not unheard of in the conventions of courtly love, but in those conventions, as Capellanus shows us, it is the knight who has to be "obedient in all things to the commands of ladies" and "strive to practice gracefully and manfully any act or mannerism which he has noticed is pleasing to his beloved."²⁴ Both Ovid and Capellanus understand that the knight is a slave to the lady. The lover in *The Art of Love* pleads with his beloved to "take [him], who for long years would be your slave."²⁵ In *The Art of Courtly Love*, Capellanus points out that "The man who is in love is bound in a hard kind of slavery."²⁶ In contrast, Christians have long believed that the obedience of wives is a Christian virtue, as commanded in the Bible: "Wiues, submit your selues vnto your husbands, as vnto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Medieval women were certainly taught to obey their husbands. That is why even a woman as strong-willed as Margery Kempe, under an instruction from God, has to negotiate with and obey her husband when he wants her to break her vow of keeping fast on Fridays.²⁷ Protestants also believed that "GOD hath commanded that [the wife] should acknowledge the authoritie of the husband, and referre to him the honour of obedience . . . and that holy matrons did in former time decke themselues, not with gold and siluer, but in putting their whole hope in GOD, and in obeying their husbands, as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."²⁸ By placing Obedience in the circle of Womanhood, Spenser, like a proper Christian, acknowledges the propriety of a wife's obedience to her husband although else-

²⁴ Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, 81 and 152.

²⁵ Ovid, *The Art of Love*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1957), 17.

²⁶ Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, 190.

²⁷ Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford Brown Meech and Hope Emily Allen, The Early English Text Society, o.s., 212 (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 25.

²⁸ "The Homily on the State of Matrimony," *The Elizabethan Homilies (1623)*, STC 13675, 2 vols., Renaissance Electronic Texts, <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/ret/homilies/bk2hom18.html>, 2:18.1, lines 170–76. This quotation is from the sermon printed in 1623, a little late for Spenser to read. The precepts about the virtues of wives presented here are, however, commonsensical long before Spenser's time, and "The Homily on the State of Matrimony" was first printed between 1563 and 1571. In *The First and Second Prayerbooks of King Edward the Sixth*, for example, the priest predictably quotes Eph. 5 and 1 Pet. 3: 1–6 to teach the wives to be "subjecte to theyr owne husbandes," with "milde and quiete" spirit, as "Sara obeyed Abraham calling him lorde" (258).

where in the story, Spenser is not totally against the obedience of the knight to his lady—even Artegall woos Britomart with “meeke service” (4.6.40). Spenser draws the line at the moment of engagement, though: even before her marriage, Britomart agrees to “take [Artegall] for her Lord” at the moment when she “yielded her consent / To be his loue” (4.6.41). That is, as long as the codes of courtly love do not stand against Spenser’s Christian standard of an ideal wife, as long as the knight is not yet recognized as the rightful lover of the lady, Spenser allows courtly behavior. Once a courtly lady accepts a knight as her (future) husband, however, Spenser believes that she should behave like a Christian wife and be obedient to her knight.

Silence is an even more obviously Christian virtue for women; it is seldom treated as an attribute of a courtly lover. Capellanus actually urges the lover to develop the skill of speaking elegantly. He believes that “fluency of speech will incline to love the hearts of those who do not love, for an elaborate line of talk on the part of the lover usually sets love’s arrows a-flying and creates a presumption in favor of the excellent character of the speaker.”²⁹ He also shows in eight long dialogues how lovers of various social classes can win women of various social classes by using proper kinds of language. If silence is ever an element of courtly love, it can only refer to the kind of warning given by Pandarus to Troilus in *Troilus and Criseyde*, the warning that a lover should “nevere wreye” and should “holden secree swich an heigh matere.”³⁰ However, while the commandment that “thou shalt not be a revealer of love affairs”³¹ is again mainly a commandment given to the knight rather than to the lady in the tradition of courtly love, in Spenser’s description of love, Silence is exclusively an attribute of ideal womanhood. Here again Spenser follows a Christian tradition. In this tradition, obedience and silence are such a pair of inseparable virtues that preachers often choose the same biblical woman, Sara, as the model of both. In “The Homily on the State of Matrimony,” Sara is presented as a woman who “neuer once suffered her tongue to speake such wordes as the common manner of women is woont to doe in these dayes” when Abraham gives Lot, his nephew, the better land, and she “kept herselfe in silence in all things.” Christian preachers even encourage women to keep silent when they are beaten because they believe that “thereby is

²⁹ Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, 35.

³⁰ Geoffrey Chaucer, “Troilus and Criseyde,” in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., gen. ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987), 3.84 and 86.

³¹ Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, 82.

laid vp no small reward hereafter, & in this life time no small commendation to thee, if thou canst be quiet."³² In short, "linckt together neuer to dispart" (4.10.51), both Obedience and Silence are treated as Christian virtues required of a wife. No courtly lady is required to have the two virtues, and Amoret is markedly different from a courtly lady because of the two virtues. That's probably part of the reason why she "said no more" once she sees Scudamour's shield and recognizes him as her rightful lord, even though she is still afraid that Scudamour may be a conventional courtly lover because of Cupid's "killing bow" on the shield. That's probably why she, after recognizing Scudamour legitimacy, prays and beseeches him with only "tender teares" and "witching smyles," not verbal protest.³³ That's probably why she obeys him despite her fear.

In the episode of the Temple of Venus, in short, Spenser clearly acknowledges the similarities between the set of allegorical figures here and that in the House of Busyrane without forgetting to show how they are different. Spenser here shows how some behavior and demeanor of an ideal Christian wife may be seen in a courtly lady who has totally different motivations for following such behavioral codes and teaches how a Christian wife needs to cultivate additional virtues. In other words, to present married chastity, Spenser adopts some behavioral codes of a courtly lady and modifies them to fit the Christian standard and presents his readers an ideal Christian wife, Amoret, who may look like a courtly lady pursued by a courtly knight but backs up her courtly behavior with proper and truthful motivation and possesses additional virtues necessary for an ideal Christian wife. The question that began this article remains, though: why then is Amoret, an ideal Christian wife who should not be blamed for any courtly behavior, still imprisoned and tortured in the House of Busyrane? Is the courtly culture so strong that any Christian wife trying to act a little differently or to hold up a better standard of motivation or attitude for the same behavior will end up forgetting her identity? How and why exactly is Amoret tortured in the House of Busyrane after all?

In the second room of the House of Busyrane, Amoret suffers from "a wide wound therein . . . / Entrenched deepe with knife accursed keene"

³² "The Homily on the State of Matrimony," 2.18.1, lines 252–54, 274, and 299–300.

³³ Set apart from its context, the line here can also be interpreted to mean that Amoret prays and beseeches with words as well as with tears and smiles, but in stanza 55, the narrator already assures the reader that after Amoret sees Scudamour's shield, she "said no more."

(3.12.20), and "At that wide orifice her trembling hart / Was drawne forth, and in siluer basin layd, / Quite through transfixed with a deadly dart" (3.12.21). This image of a heart transfixed with a dart is of course a familiar one in the conventions of courtly love. For example, in *The Romance of the Rose*, "Love . . . loosed the arrow . . . so that it entered my eye and wounded my heart."³⁴ But it is usually the knight's heart that is pierced, not the lady's, and it is usually a sign of unrequited love, not fear of a sexual union. In addition, the images of the breast cut open and the heart pierced are not exclusively images in the conventions of courtly love. In the Christian tradition, for example, when Saint Cassianus's heart is pierced, "Christ, pitying this groaning man, / with torments torn and tired, / Commands his heart to break even then."³⁵ For another example, Saint Francis is motivated to do charitable works because "the passion of Jesu Christ was marvellously infixed in his heart."³⁶ Saint Clare is eager to "dispend amorously the time that God had lent her because "God of his grace had pierced her heart."³⁷ In both the Christian tradition and in the conventions of courtly love, to love means to have one's heart pierced by one's beloved. The problem is: Amoret is pierced neither by God nor by Scudamour; she is pierced by an enemy, not her beloved.

The image of Amoret's heart pierced by an enemy, then, links her exclusively to the Christian tradition where the image of a pierced heart also represent how lovers suffer to defend, rather than to explore, their love. Here the image expresses how the saints are willing to suffer for God or God for his saints to defend their love for each other. Here suffering is a sign of piety and moral strength. On the one hand, the image of a pierced heart reminds Christians of the Passion of Christ, whose heart is pierced by his enemy for love. The image is so sacred that in the beginning of the *Golden Legend*, Christ rebukes those who pervert this image: "Thou hast thy side and thy breast open in sign of vain glory, and I have mine opened with a spear."³⁸ On the other, numerous Chris-

³⁴ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Romance of the Rose*, 27.

³⁵ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, in *Reformation History Library*, version 2 (Albany: Ages Software, 1988), book 1, 867, CD-ROM.

³⁶ Jacobus de Voragine, comp. "The Life of S. Francis," in *The Golden Legend (Aurea Legenda)*, trans. William Caxton, *Medieval Sourcebook*, vol. 5, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume5.htm>.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, "The Life of S. Clare," vol. 6, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume6.htm>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, "The Passion of our Lord," vol. 1, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume1.htm>.

tian saints are said to follow Christ's example and suffer likewise. Peter of Milan, for example, "suffered patiently the cruelty of the tyrants" when "the cursed and cruel tyrant came again and smote him with his knife to the heart."³⁹ In this collection of saints' stories, Quiriacus also suffers under Julian the tyrant, who "commanded that he should be riven through his heart with a sword, and in this manner finished his life."⁴⁰ Saint Christine suffers even more like Christ: "she was smitten with one arrow in the side, and with another unto the heart, and she so smitten yielded up her soul unto God."⁴¹ Protestants continue to use this image. In *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe reminds his readers that a lot of saints "continued in patient suffering . . . when their very hearts' blood gushed out of their bodies." He also gives his readers an example, Saint Cassianus, whose torturers "stung, / And near the heart did stick."⁴² In the Christian tradition, then, a heart transfixed by a tyrant can be a sign of the saint's willingness to suffer patiently for his/her faith in and love to God, and apparently this image of a tyrant torturing a saint, rather than a beautiful woman leaving the knight in pain, fits better the image of Cupid torturing Amoret. Cupid in the second room is definitely a tyrant, who "man and beast with power imperious / Subdeweth to his kingdome tyrannous" (3.12.22). Amoret, then, is here more likely a saint suffering for her identity as an ideal Christian wife, as those saints suffer for their identity as Christ's lovers, than a courtly lady afraid of consummating a sexual relationship with her rightful lord.

What's more, when the heart of a courtly lover is wounded, he has to stay loyal simply because "he who shines with the light of one love can hardly think of embracing another woman"⁴³—his beloved may not even be his fiancée or wife, and his love may not last. In contrast, the pierced heart of a beloved in the Christian tradition is a sign of ultimate faithfulness on two levels. It signifies both an ideal Christian wife's lasting faithfulness to her husband or fiancé and the lasting love and willingness to suffer martyrdom for God because "the mysteries of Christ and the church" can be revealed "by the color of wedlock."⁴⁴ That is,

³⁹ Ibid., "The Life of S. Peter of Milan," vol. 3, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume3.htm>.

⁴⁰ Ibid., "The Life of S. Quiriacus," vol. 7, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume7.htm>.

⁴¹ Ibid., "The Life of S. Christine," vol. 4, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume4.htm>.

⁴² Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, book 1, 148 and 866.

⁴³ Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, 31.

⁴⁴ Henry Bullinger, *The Decades*, trans. H. I., The Parker Society, vol. 7 (Cambridge, 1899), 397.

keeping the vow of marital chastity, even when one's heart is pierced, is of religious significance in the Christian tradition because the faithfulness between husbands and wives signifies the faithfulness between God and the church. That's why the one who violates this marriage vow is "a breaker of a godly promise and God's holy truth."⁴⁵ Luther even extends this rule of faithfulness to engaged couples: he thinks that when "a man who has betrothed himself to a woman is no longer his own, and though he has had sexual relations with the second, he belongs to the first by the divine commandment" (334). In the Christian tradition, then, Amoret's pierced heart represents the tortures she goes through both to stay faithful to Scudamour and at the same time to keep her holy vow to God.

For Protestants specifically, faithfulness in marriage has one more layer of meaning: it means keeping "chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior" as well as accepting "marriage . . . , conjugal love, and cohabitation" if one has "not the gift of continency."⁴⁶ In other words, faithfulness *and* a sexual relationship between husbands and wives are for them two sides of a coin. Heinrich Bullinger, for example, quotes Paul and Paphnutius to argue that "children born in wedlock are holy or clean" and that "the lying of a man with his own wife is chastity."⁴⁷ In other words, protestants believe, once a couple is engaged to each other, any sexual relationship with someone beside the fiancé or fiancée is adultery, and once married, the sexual relationship between and only between the husband and wife is their duty if they want to be called chaste and faithful. Amoret's pierced heart, then, as a sign of her ultimate faithfulness, also shows that she is willing to have a sexual relationship with Scudamour and only with Scudamour.

However, Amoret does not live in a purely Protestant society: her wounded heart can easily be misinterpreted in a courtly culture although she is an ideal Protestant wife who is faithful to her (future) husband without any intention to deny him a sexual union. In a courtly culture, in contrast, her wounded heart can imply that she is not beyond the influence of love. It can be misread as a sign that she is willing to love and have a sexual union with anyone. That's why Busy-rane seizes her and draws characters with her blood. What's more,

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 406.

⁴⁶ "Westminster Larger Catechism," in *Christian Classics Ethereal Library* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1999), question 138. CD-ROM. Printed in the seventeenth century, this catechism was not read by Spenser, but it certainly represents what Protestants generally believed about marriage and chastity.

⁴⁷ Bullinger, *Decades*, 397 and 401.

Busyrane can easily misread her refusal to yield him her love and see her as a pretentious, proud courtly lady. Thus, he surrounds her with allegorical figures in Cupid's masque and imagines her supported by Cruelty and Despight (3.12.19) and surrounded by various features of courtly love.

However, these images are just "idle shews" and "false charmes" (3.12.29). The differences between the image of Amoret's suffering in the second and that in the third room reveal how her suffering is distorted by Busyrane's trick and therefore misread. That is, the differences further reveal how Amoret's saintly suffering is misread as the suffering of a courtly lady. First of all, in the third room of the House of Busyrane, Amoret is not free to walk as she seems to in the second room. Here she is a prisoner, "whose hands / Were bounden fast . . . / . . . / Vnto a brazen pillour" (3.12.31). That is, Amoret suffers in the House of Busyrane because "Busyrane insists that Amoret confine her thoughts and speech to his claustrophobic system of meanings."⁴⁸ That is not to say that Amoret yields herself to Busyrane's confinement, but that is how she is imprisoned in a courtly culture where she is always misread. In that culture, Amoret always seems to be a courtly lady, and her Womanhood can be misread as Ease or Desyre, her Shamefastnesse taken to be Displeasure or Griefe, her Cherefulnessse judged to be Pleasance, her Modestie and Curtesie mixed up with Dissemblance, and her Silence and Obedience totally ignored. In that culture, she is read as a character in the courtly masque and is not really free: her role as an ideal Protestant wife is unnoticed, and she is not recognized as herself.

Second, although in the second room, "her trembling hart / Was drawne forth, and in siluer basin layd, / Quite through transfixed with a deadly dart" (3.12.21), her heart is not openly displayed in the third room, and "her dying hart" only seems "transfixed with a cruell dart" (3.12.31) here. That is, Busyrane presents Amoret as the courtly lover in *The Romance of the Rose*, who, when his heart was pierced, "was seized with a chill which has often made [him] shiver," although "the point that pierced [him] drew no blood at all."⁴⁹ The lover in *The Romance of the Rose* even gets his relief by receiving another arrow called Fair Seeming, which "made a great wound in [his] heart" but also "brought relief."⁵⁰ Busyrane wants his audience to believe that Amoret's heart is

⁴⁸ Stephens, "Into Other Arms," 528.

⁴⁹ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Romance of the Rose*, 27.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

often trembling for love and is always open to the deadly dart of love from anyone. He does not know that the heart of a saint can be pierced by a tyrant but moved only by God's love. For that reason, Amoret's heart is really dying rather than trembling toward Cupid/Busyrane, since it is impossible for an ideal Protestant wife to "loue the worker of her smart" (3.12.31); her heart is not really trembling because the dart, though cruel, can never rest in her heart and because she does not really fear it. In short, as an ideal Protestant wife, Amoret is subject to suffering but certainly never trembles. Neither does she ever lose her heart to the torturer—she'd rather die.

Third, and above all, here in the third room Cupid is no longer a "winged God" (3.12.22): he is now plainly a "vile Enchanter," who tortures Amoret because he wants "to make her him to loue" (3.12.31). Accordingly, the masque that seems to be an idle entertainment for Cupid in the second room is revealed in the third room as Busyrane's magic/art aiming to change Amoret's faith. In the second room, the masque is grandiose; it looks mysterious, conjured up by the "straunge characters of his art." Its magical power leads the audience to believe that Amoret is the central lady of this courtly masque. In the third room, the evil enchantment of the courtly culture with its "thousand charmes could not [Amoret's] stedfast heart remoue" (3.12.31). Here she is the victim whose heart is dying in the midst of this courtly culture. Here her heart is not on display. If Busyrane could really get Amoret's heart displayed in a basin, he would probably find Scudamour's name written on it, just as Ignatius's torturers "found within the name of Jesus written with fair letters of gold" when they "opened his body and drew out his heart and cut it open."⁵¹

Amoret suffers in the House of Busyrane because she is not fooled by these courtly illusions created by the enchanter Busyrane. While Busyrane tries to "make her him to loue" by surrounding and defining her with courtly features, by writing enchanting letters with the blood of a heart wounded for the love of Scudamour (3.12.31), she "for [Scudamour's] dearest sake endured sore, / Sore trouble of an heinous enemy" (3.6.53). Scudamour and Busyrane may both take Amoret from her own place, but one meets Amoret in her nursery and learns her proper identity while the other places her in a courtly masque to which she does not belong: Amoret never has any doubt about whom she owes and holds her faith to.

⁵¹Jacobus de Voraigne, comp., "The Life of S. Ignatius," *Golden Legend*, vol. 3.

Amoret's faithfulness is again doubted when she suffers in the Cave of Lust. Critics generally believe that Amoret is snatched by Lust because she "is shown to be directed to action by the delight of the senses, or the needs of the flesh, rather than the dictates of her mind."⁵² True, she "Walkt through the wood, for pleasure, or for need" (4.7.4), but she never means to share her pleasure with Lust, just as she never has any pleasure from Busyrane. She "all the way was dead, / Whilest [Lust] in armes her bore" (4.7.9), just as she reveals to Busyrane only a "dying hart" (3.12.31). Only when she "felt / Her selfe downe soust, [did she wake] out of dread / Streight into grieffe, that her deare hart nigh swelt" (4.7.9). Amoret cannot even watch Lust "spredding ouer all the flore alone" or wait for him to "dight him selfe vnto his wonted sinne" (4.7.20). She "staid not the vtmost end thereof to try, / But . . . / Ran forth in hast with hideous outcry, / For horroure of his shamefull villany" (4.7.21). What's more, just as Amoret is placed as a puppet in Busyrane's courtly masque, the pomposity of which amazes and deludes even Britomart for a moment (3.12.27), Amoret is used "as a buckler" in the fight between Timias and Lust to break "The puissance of [Timias'] intended stroke" (4.7.26). Just as Busyrane hurts her by imprisoning her in and defining her through a courtly culture, Lust literally holds Amoret as part of him so that even Timias has to hurt her in order to fight Lust (4.7.27). Again, Amoret suffers probably because her willingness to enjoy pleasure within the boundary of her religious faith is misread—her willingness to fall in love and have a sexual relationship with Scudamour alone is again seen as lust. From Lust's perspective, it is a chance for him to present her as part of him. Even her twin sister Belpheobe misreads her as complicit in breaking the rule of faithfulness and "thought [Timias and Amoret] both haue thrild / With that selfe arrow, which the Carle had kild" (4.7.36). She does not notice that when Timias is "kissing [her eyes] atween, / And handling soft the hurts," she "lay the whiles in swoune" (35).

There is one problem, though, with reading Amoret's suffering in the Cave of Lust again as the suffering of an ideal Christian wife misread and labeled as a courtly lady. It is true that Amoret cannot fight against Busyrane because Busyrane, or the courtly culture he represents, misreads an ideal Protestant wife as a courtly lady, but it is problematic to say that Amoret is captured by Lust because people in the courtly culture see marital sex as lust, because the conventions of courtly love do

⁵²Rooks, *Love's Courtly Ethic*, 111.

often allow sexual relationships outside marriage. For example, Ovid's lover does not even care whether the husband is present. He expressly says, "I hope he chokes; let him drop dead, who cares"; Ovid's lover also teaches his lady to "give in [to her husband] as if [she] disliked it."⁵³ Even for a less radical theorist of courtly love like Capellanus, who believes that "It is not proper to love any woman whom one would be ashamed to seek to marry," the first rule of love still blurs the line between love and lust: "Marriage is no real excuse for not loving."⁵⁴ In short, in the conventions of courtly love, love almost always involves a sexual relationship outside the boundary of marriage. Even when Capellanus, at a more serious moment, defines ultra-marital sex as the "foul and shameful acts of Venus," he does not see it as a serious moral issue. He presents a lustful person as stupid rather than villainous: he advises his friend not to fall in love because "any man who devotes his efforts to love loses all his usefulness."⁵⁵ He also calls lust "momentary delight of the flesh," which only the insane would trade "eternal joys" for.⁵⁶ Reading Amoret as a courtly lady alone, then, may lead to a misreading of her willingness to love Scudamour as a willingness to indulge herself in sexual pleasure and of her rejection of Busyrane as pretentiousness and cruelty, but that misreading does not lead to a serious accusation of her lust. That is, if Amoret is misread as a courtly lady here, she would probably be laughed at, not violated, frightened, and almost killed. Why then does Amoret have to suffer in the Cave of Lust and be wrongly accused if she is not here misread as a courtly lady? The accusation from Sclaunder in the next episode shows more exactly how and why Amoret is misread.

Before Sclaunder appears, Spenser first warns against "some rash witted wight, / Whose looser thought will lightly be misled, / These gentle Ladies will misdeeme too light, / for thus conuersing with this noble Knight [Arthur]" (4.8.29). Sclaunder is here shown as a representative of such people: she "follow'd them [Arthur, Aemylia, and Amoret] fast / Him calling theefe, them whores" (35). That is, Sclaunder is the one who accuses Amoret of lust; that is, Sclaunder interprets a lawful relationship as lust even when it is not a sexual one. Spenser tells his readers the reason why Sclaunder defines any relationship between men and woman as lust:

⁵³ Ovid, *Art of Love*, 20.

⁵⁴ Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, 185.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 188 and 187.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

For she was stuff with rancour and despight
 Vp to the throat, that oft with bitternesse
 It forth would breake, and gush in great excesse,
 Pouring out streames of poison and of gall
 Gainst all, that truth or vertue doe professe,
 Whom she with leasings lewdly did miscall.

(4.8.24)

Another figure in *The Faerie Queene* who “spewd out of her filthy maw / A floud of poison horrible and blacke, / . . . / Which stunck so vildly” (1.1.20) is Error, whose “vomit full of bookes and papers was” (20). Appearing in the shape of a dragon similar to the one in Revelation 16:13, Error almost certainly represents “a particular religious heresy at a specific historical moment.”⁵⁷ The commentator of the Geneva Bible points out that the vomit of “frogges” represents “Popes ambassadours which are euer crying and croking like frogs and come out of Antichristes mouth, because they shulde speake nothing but lies and use all maner of craftie deceit to mainteine their riche Euphrates against the true Christians.”⁵⁸ In short, the dragon in Revelation represents for Protestants erroneous Catholic doctrine, and since both Error and Sclaunder share features similar to those of the dragon, they probably both represent some aspects of erroneous Catholic doctrine.

To be more specific, as the enemy of truth and virtue—and of Amoret, the ideal Protestant wife, Sclaunder probably represents a Catholic misunderstanding of married chastity. She misinterprets a sexual desire as lust, even within the boundary of marriage. She does not believe a beautiful woman who is willing to be bound in matrimony with a man can be chaste when she is with other men because she does not know the time when “The Lyon there did with the Lambe consort” (4.8.31). That is, Sclaunder does not believe the existence of the paradise described in the Bible, where “The wolfe also shal dwell with the lambe, and the leoparde shal lye with the kid, and the calfe, and the lyon, and the fat beast together, and a little childe shal lead them.” The comment on this verse in the Geneva Bible reveals further what Sclaunder is ignorant of: “Men because of their wicked affections are named by the names of beasts, wherein the like affections reigne: but Christ by his Spirit shal reforme them, & work in them such mutual charitie, that they shal be

⁵⁷ Hume, *Edmund Spenser*, 79.

⁵⁸ Rev. 16:13, marginal note “m.”

like lambes, fauoring & louing one another, and cast of all their cruel affections."⁵⁹ Sclaunder, then, slanders Amoret because she does not know that wicked affections can be purified by Christ. Amoret, then, suffers under Sclaunder because she is here misread by a Catholic, who defines every relation between a man and a woman as lust, as she suffers in the House of Busyrane because she is misread by a tyrannous courtly lover, who frames her with the courtly codes of love.

Furthermore, Sclaunder insists on misreading Amoret's chastity and thus tortures her not only because she does not understand the Protestant idea of chastity in marriage but also because she is familiar only with a time when "beautie, which was made to represent / The great Creatours own resemblance bright, / Vnto abuse of lawless lust was lent, / And made the baite of bestiall delight" (4.8.32). That is, she is only familiar with a courtly culture in which womanhood is replaced by desire and ease and is thus often abused. Spenser himself warns ladies about the abuse of beauty in "An Hymne of Beavtie:" "Loath . . . / Disloiall lust, faire beauties foulest blame, / That base affections . . . / Commend to you by loues abused name" (169–72). The word abuse reminds the reader of the name Busyrane, who can't tell an ideal Protestant wife from a courtly lady, as Sclaunder, representing the Catholic point of view, can't tell the difference between lust and married chastity in a courtly culture, seeing both as leading to a sexual union. As Bullinger explains, "marriage itself is good," but some will "feel the smart of their foul abuse worthily,"⁶⁰ Spenser advises his readers in the Hymne that "Yet nathemore is [the abuse of beauty] fair beauties blame / But theirs that do abuse it vnto ill" (155–56). Busyrane tortures Amoret by framing her in a courtly culture where love brings cruelty, despite, and even sexual union outside marriage. Similarly, Sclaunder reads Amoret from a Catholic perspective, calling her names because of her innocent friendship with Arthur. They both misread Amoret: the former defines her as a courtly lady with the codes of courtly love; the latter judges her with the Catholic standard for the proper behavior between men and women in a courtly culture. Again, there is nothing Amoret can do but to "[endure] all with patience milde" (4.8.28) because she has to be willing to have a sexual union with Scudamour in order to represent chastity in a Protestant sense. Her inability to fight Lust is not because "Such

⁵⁹ Isa. 11:6, marginal note "c."

⁶⁰ Bullinger, *Decades*, 396.

a destructive extremity of appetite must be destroyed by its extreme opposite, the militant virginity of Belphoebe":⁶¹ Amoret is, after all, as chaste as Belphoebe and like her is the extreme opposite of lust. Rather, she can not fight back because there is no way for her to change what others think about her. She has to suffer simply because she wants to stand firm as an ideal Protestant wife in a courtly society where Catholic doctrine about chastity is still widely accepted.

To conclude, Spenser here presents an ideal Protestant wife who suffers for truth and virtue against a courtly culture where Catholic ideas about marriage and sex still linger. On the one hand, Spenser draws a line between acceptable behavior and unacceptable behavior in the conventions of courtly love by showing the proper motivation behind and the importance of truthfulness. He redefines acceptable behavior in terms of "goodly womanhead" and explains that the unacceptable is an abuse of the same. That is, he modifies the codes of courtly love to fit them to a Protestant model for chastity. On the other hand, Spenser repudiates the Catholic solution to the evil caused by the conventions of courtly love. He insists, as most Christians, that any sexual relationship outside the boundary of marriage is adultery, but he defines a sexual relationship within the boundary of marriage as chastity. He also further allows innocent friendship between men and women. That is, Spenser judges a relationship to be chaste and faithful not by the courtly conventions or Catholic doctrine—not by the very possibility of sexual relationship or by seemingly illicit friendship between a beautiful lady and a man. He judges a lady to be chaste and faithful by both the motivation and truthfulness behind her courtly behavior and her ability to confine her love to her rightful husband; he sees suffering as a natural part of the life of an ideal Protestant wife in a courtly and Catholic culture.

In this sense, Amoret's suffering in the House of Busyrane, the Cave of Lust, and the Cottage of Sclaunder is sacred. It would be impossible for Amoret not to suffer if she in any sense represents an ideal Protestant wife because she lives in a courtly and Catholic culture, where people are confused about the virtue she represents. In all her suffering, she never forgets what she learns in the Garden of Adonis and the Temple of Venus. Silently she waits for others to understand what virtue she represents—that a woman should accept the codes of courtly love

⁶¹Elizabeth Heale, *"The Faerie Queene": A Reader's Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 111.

with proper reservation like a Christian and be willing to build a sexual relationship with her husband like a Protestant. Silently, she takes all the slander heaped upon an ideal Protestant wife who is chaste enough to develop friendship with other men. Hopefully, the readers will not act like Sclaunder, whose "nature is all goodnesse to abuse" and who "steale[s] away the crowne of their good name" (4.8.25). Hopefully the readers will understand, as all the faithful do, the virtue of married chastity she represents and the suffering she bears.

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