"Wounded Harts": Metaphor and Desire in the Epic-Romances of Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser

A Thesis

by

Paul Chandler Phelps

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Faculty of English Language and Literature
Oxford University

Supervisor: Professor Richard A. McCabe

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The Heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquish'd, bear
Silence, but not submission; in his lair
Fix'd Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came, it cometh, and will come,—the power
To punish or forgive—in *ONE* we shall be slower.
—Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto Three, LXXXIV

ABSTRACT

If we consider the representation of the body in the epic-romances of Torquato Tasso, Philip Sidney, and Edmund Spenser, certain instances of wounding and laceration emerge as crucial turning points in the development of their respective narratives: Clorinda's redemptive mutilation, Parthenia's blood-drenched pallor, Amavia's disquieting suicide, Venus's insatiable orifice, Amoret's "perfect hole." This thesis affords a detailed comparative study of such passages, contending that the wound assumed a critical metaphoric dimension in sixteenth-century epic-romance literature, particularly in relation to the perceived association between body condition and erotic desire. Along with its function as a marker of martial valor and somatic sacredness, the wound, I argue, increasingly is designated in these epic-romances as an interiorizing apparatus, one liable to accrue at any instance into a surplus of unanticipated meaning. As such, the wound becomes an emblem in these texts of what I call the phenomenology of desire—the equation of consummation and loss—as well as the aesthetic and metaphoric mechanism by which these writers seek to overcome it.

The four chapters of this thesis constitute individual but cumulative points of response to the problem of thinking about desire as a type of wound. For Tasso, a wound poses a challenge to physical, psychological, and spiritual integrity, but its remarkable capacity for aestheticization also allows Tasso to envision it as a synthesizer of sacred and erotic affects. For Sidney, the prospect that a wound could define a body as courageous or pathetic, as sacred or corrupt, became both politically and socially troubling, and the *New Arcadia*, I argue, proleptically attempts to defend Sidney against interpretations of wounds that register them as manifestations of corrupt desire. For Spenser, body fracture and erotic wounding

are analogic (indeed, almost indistinguishable), and *The Faerie Queene* investigates the prospect that confusing these analogies can become an empowering, even revelatory experience. In each of these epic-romances, a wound serves both a literal and a figurative function and, in this way, is established as the foremost image by which these writers imagine strength and mutilation, affect and heroism, epic and romance as being inextricably bound.

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INTRODUCTION

WOUNDING THE BODY, WOUNDING THE HEART

> Essential: to start with the body and employ it *as a guide*.
> —Friedrich Nietzsche[1]

In Book One of Edmund Spenser's epic-romance *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596), the knight Arthur and his squire Timias arrive outside a castle imprisoning the book's hero, the Red Crosse Knight, who is being held captive on account of his erotic capitulation to the false seductress Duessa. Before entering, however, the pair is made to battle with Duessa and her newly birthed companion, the "hideous Geant" Orgoglio.[2] As a flat Pauline allegory for the arrogance born out of erotic incontinence, Orgoglio is no match for Arthur's magnificence; the more threatening portrait of evilness here is Duessa, who confronts Timias in the regalia of the Whore of Babylon:

> Then tooke the angrie witch her golden cup,
> Which still she bore, replete with magick artes;
> Death and despeyre did many thereof sup,
> And secret poyson through their inner partes,
> Th'eternall bale of heauie wounded harts;
> Which after charmes and some enchauntments said,
> She lightly sprinkled on his weaker partes;
> Therewith his sturdie corage soone was quayd,
> And all his sences were with suddein dread dismayd.
> (I.viii.14)

My thesis adopts its title from a half line in this stanza: "'Wounded Harts': Metaphor and Desire in the Epic-Romances of Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser." I argue that the symbolic and metaphoric dimensions of wounding assumed an importance in the epic-romance literatures of sixteenth-century Europe, particularly an importance in defining how authors of this

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 289. My emphasis.
[2] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 2006), 93. Hereafter all references to *The Faerie Queene* will be designated by book, canto, and stanza.

literature perceived and represented the association between body condition and erotic desire. At its most rudimentary, this association is easily discernable in the stanza above, which invests the metaphor "wounded harts" with elements from the image's conventionally tripartite prestige: as a physical disturbance, a spiritual malady, and a repository for melancholic energy. The interlacing of these cultural spheres of vulnerary thought, in fact, are what afford Duessa's "golden cup" its unique insidiousness; the "sprinkle[s]" of its "secret poyson" are not fatal but rather enfeebling, implicating Timias in an "eternall bale" from which *The Faerie Queene* never releases him. A traditional account of the episode's allegory would read the endlessness of Timias's plight as a gesture to the congenital nature of his sin, a point emphasized by the regularity with which sixteenth-century protestant commentators associated the Whore of Babylon with the Catholic Church.[3] But the pairing of woundedness and endlessness, I will show in this thesis, extends beyond local moments of allegory; it is, in fact, a feature of what it meant to be wounded in this period, to be beset by a physical trauma with often indeterminate psychic consequences. The rich, conventional metaphors of wounding—as personal sin, as melancholic psychopathology, as a microcosm for ruptured or violated spiritual, national, and dynastic borders—only partially capture the importance of woundedness in sixteenth-century Europe. Its more seminal feature, and the one that made it such a powerful device in early modern epic-romance literature, is its invocation as an illustration of the ineluctability of human appetency in general, its physical mirroring of the circular, psychic instability that attends desire and the physical pangs that desire levies on the body.

[3] On this association, see the entry on "Duessa" in A. C. Hamilton's *The Spenser Encyclopaedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 601–5.

This, then, is a thesis about wounds: wounds, specifically, as aesthetic representations of desire. Much, though not all, of this work turns on images of wounds (to the head, to the side, to the breast, to the thigh) that are suggestive of erotic desire, though we will see that the authors of the epic-romances studied here expanded their perceptions of woundedness to include other desires as well: specifically, martial, political, and religious desires. Often, as in the stanza above, wounding is dangerous and damaging, a function of weakness and the failure of personal virtue, a classical mediation between bodily pain and the psychological pangs of erotic failure; at other moments, though, it can be empowering, a marker of heroic prowess and, as this thesis will reveal, psychological and spiritual development. The broad hypothesis of this thesis is that the difference between the former and the latter usages depends on how forcibly an author exposes a wound as the consequence of appetency, though this proposition might best be amended to suit the desires of the writers considered here: Torquato Tasso, Philip Sidney, and Edmund Spenser. As participants in the developing genre of epic-romance, and thus experimenters with the conceptual possibilities of hybridity, Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser were tasked with perceiving how a "wounded hart" could become synonymous with "heroic love," a task, I argue, that forced them to incorporate rather than excise psychic abjection and bodily mutilation into their heroic paradigms.[4] Accordingly, their representations of wounds attempt to recover the image from its conventionally pejorative connotations, to reinvest both the literal image and its

[4] I use the term "heroic love" here as it would have been understood in the sixteenth century, both as a virtue of the nobility and as a Neoplatonic ideal, an ennobling passion by which the soul transcends corporeal limitation. Where the image the "wounded hart" generally serves as a figure for conflating physical malady and mental distemper, and thus distinguishes heroic love from its more pathological manifestations, I argue that images of "wounded hart[s]" in early modern epic-romance in fact redefine heroic love as a passion that incorporates bodily and psychic trauma. On standard definitions of "heroic love," see Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1990), 35–38.

metaphors with language that, while still asserting the precariousness of human existence, also becomes constructive and edifying in its own right. In the chapters that follow, I want to argue that the way these writers positively reimagined the image and metaphor is by considering it in terms that disrupt its paradigmatic manifestation: as "[t]h'eternall bale" of lovers, warriors, and poets. There are, we will see, as many ways of being wounded as there are reasons for wounding, and it is to this variety that these writers turned again and again, exploring the dynamic possibilities created by treating wounds as moments of powerful hermeneutic instability, in which a wound can both interpret and itself be subjected to interpretation. These writers, in other words, repeatedly elaborate on "wounded harts" in order to account for the plurality and complexity of human experience, and whether they sought to celebrate this variety or bring it under control, they nevertheless perceived the dynamic metaphoricity of the wound as a potentially fertile participant in the construction and maintenance of their "selves."

After a brief introduction that situates this thesis critically and theoretically, the first chapter examines one of the sixteenth century's most influential and extensive studies of the relationship between erotic love and Christian virtue: Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. The *Liberata*, I argue, attempts to synthesize this relationship by treating wounding as an aesthetic phenomenon, as an experience that inspires awe and encourages meditation as much as (if not more than) it presents a challenge to the psychical, spiritual, and psychological integrity of a subject. To render a fuller treatment of how the wound comes to be imbued in this manner in Tasso's epic-romance, I offer a good deal of attention to the discrepancies created between Tasso's Italian and the widely circulated and beloved English translation of the text: Edward Fairfax's 1600 *Godfrey of Bulloigne*. The crux of Chapter One's argument, however, rests on reclamation of the image of the wound from its current critical

utilization: as a conduit for psychoanalytic inquiry. The *Liberata*, I demonstrate, in fact constitutes a point in the development of the metaphor that challenges rather than enforces these anachronistic inquiries into early modern literature. As a synecdoche for the wider critical approach I take in this thesis, my perceptions of Tasso's positive valorization of the wound in the *Liberata* relocate the wound's medical, spiritual, and philosophical associations with pathology to a conversation about its generic—epic and romantic—functions. To better defend this position, my first chapter also treats Tasso's critical writings on genre as well as the famous autobiographical accounts of his sickness, secondary documents without which it would be difficult to comprehend how urgently Tasso pursued a reevaluation of the wound's pejorative manifestations in his magnum opus.

The interlacing of erotic love, wounding, and political, social, and personal power is explored more fully in this thesis's second and third chapters, chapters that consider the life, death, and literature of the sixteenth century's most memorably wounded writer: Sir Philip Sidney. The elegiac tradition that followed Sidney's own death itself creates a point in the positive development of the image, though the more salient feature of this writing is how it actively misinterprets and misrepresents the circumstances of Sidney's own wound. Contextualized by a review of early modern vulnerary writing, my second chapter argues that the tendency to imagine Sidney's death in aggrandizing terms in fact obscures rather than clarifies how Sidney himself—in his fiction—imagined the experience and image as a potentially positive manifestation of human desire. Spenser's pastoral elegy *Astrophel*, published nearly ten years after Sidney's death, constitutes a departure from the images of Sidney and his wound offered elsewhere in the elegies, and, as such, it provides a lens through which to reconsider the *New Arcadia*'s representations of wounds: namely, by memorializing Sidney's wound as a consequence of unrestrained political and social

appetency. We know from Sidney's biographers and his letters that such personal concerns over the ability of the body to represent desire plagued him until his death in 1586, and so it ought not surprise us that his longest work of fiction explores how a body might make social and political capital out of an experience that might otherwise be interpreted negatively.

As a response to this aesthetic concern, Sidney's prose-romance, I argue in Chapter Three, incorporates its representations of wounding (both physical and metaphorical) into its developing dialogue about the speciousness or honesty of erotic performativity. As the heroes of Sidney's *Arcadia*—the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus—are made to clothe themselves in garb that obscures their genders and stations, so too does Sidney begin to incorporate representations of woundedness into his critique of the social constructedness of body display in general and amorous devotion in particular. The lingering relevance of Sidney's prose-romance broadly concerns this precocious experimentation with the boundaries of erotic performance, but I contend that these performances ultimately are sublimated, especially in the revised material of the *Arcadia*, to acts of abjection and self-assault, acts, specifically, that attempt to associate personal suffering and endurance with the prose-romance's developing representation of heroic virtue. Unlike Tasso's *Liberata*, in which goodness is more or less a function of how fervently one pursues Christian faithfulness, the *New Arcadia* increasingly reveals its most heroic characters as those willing to and capable of enduring woundedness and disfigurement on behalf of their desires. Consequently, the *New Arcadia* examines the proposition that willful submission to the pangs of wounding could itself become a source of social, political, and religious empowerment.

For Spenser, no less than for Tasso or Sidney, an attempt to judge the value of wounding cannot be separated from the role that it plays in human conduct and interaction. The particular argument of my fourth chapter responds to this inseparability by evaluating

how moments of woundedness in *The Faerie Queene* emphasize the interstitial nature of the experience, both the positioning of the wound on the body's boundary and its subsequent function as a gateway into and out of the body. In contrast to the more optimistic images of abjection and disfigurement in Tasso's and Sidney's epic-romances, *The Faerie Queene* seems intentionally to blur the possibility that a wound could synthesize incorruptibly erotic desire and heroic virtue, though its response to the doggedly circular nature of human appetency is perhaps more palatable. Instead of relying on aesthetic representation to mitigate the moral suspiciousness of wounded bodies, Spenser's epic-romance explores how the psychic trials produced by wounding can themselves become revelatory and liberating. And whether they witness or experience wounds, Spenser's characters repeatedly engage these lacerations as both physical and psychological *limens*, as challenges or reprimands to forms of perception and the deeply sedimented beliefs that define their allegorical functions and narrative roles. "If these edges were dangerous," wrote Michael Camille in a different though not wholly unrelated context, "they were also powerful places," with "betwixt and between" constituting "[an] important zone of transformation."[5] As a voice of his ancestors and an innovator of their perceptions, Spenser chronicles in *The Faerie Queene* the tendency, innate in his genre, to effect this transformation, to turn rupture into rapture and wring meaning from the unclearly defined space that occurs when the edge of the body is opened to the outside world and the outside world peers into its inner recesses.

The individual arguments of my chapters are connected by the overwhelming verve with which these authors pursue images of wounds that reveal them as the enemy rather than the source of destruction, though in substantiating this claim I often depend on an interweaving of historicist lines of inquiry with more theoretical approaches to the body. In

[5] Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), 16.

taking this cross-pollinated approach, I follow the lead of a number of recent scholars who consider the construction of early modern subjectivity as tantamount to the self's engagement with alterity, but I seek to amend these positions by treating the wound—with its dual states of meaning—as a prime example of how otherness could be engaged within rather than outside the confines of the body.[6] Not only do wounds mediate between bodies and selves—connecting, as it were, the material, interpretable knowledge of the body with the complex and visceral experience of pain—but wounds were also qualified in early modern vulnerary writing as living beings in their own right, parasitic life-forms infecting the body with an unpredictable volatility. They are thus, as in Spenser's treatment of them, both "this" and "that," both self and other, and attentiveness to this liminality, I think, can complicate and expand what we think of as the history of the early modern body and its oblique relationship to desire. Ultimately, it was this duality that afforded the writers of these epic-romances the opportunity to reposition the wound as a positive rather than negative experience, for, in its own bridging of the soma and the psyche, it could also be made to represent other reconciliations as well. Out of these, this thesis hypothesizes, Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser sought to refute interpretations of wounds that assess the fractured body as a consequence of unrestrained appetency and, in doing so, to reclaim the borders of the flesh as a space of human experience and engagement not quite as frail, as

[6] Though they could be categorized as psychoanalytic criticisms—as any study of the "otherness" inherent in subjectivity could be—the following works are more notable for their combination of empirical and theoretical approaches to the body: Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor, eds., *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and the Making of Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Christopher Pye, *The Vanishing: Shakespeare, the Subject, and Early Modern Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); and David Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails: Belief, Scepticism, and the Interior of the Body* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Isaiah 40:6 puts it, as "grass."[7] Studying a period, indeed, when Reformationist and humanist discourses were leveling their own wounds against the body, this thesis, I hope, will not only give us new ways to look at the texts I examine but also recover from them the larger story about how human desire becomes etched into the skin—both then and now.

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[7] See Isaiah 40: 6, *ESV*: "A voice says 'Cry!' / And I said, 'What shall I cry?' / All flesh is grass, / And all its beauty is like the flower of the field."

WOUNDING THE BODY: METAPHOR, INWARDNESS, AND A BRIEF HISTORY OF PAIN

To reconstruct what it might have meant to be heart-wounded in Renaissance Europe, the modern imagination must, first and foremost, undergo an act of reembodiment. From our current vantage point, in which metaphor is either hackneyed ("the eye of the needle," for example) or so ingrained as to be unrecognizable ("light" and "dark" are now distinctly emotive adjectives), the phrase "wounded harts" might first strike us as something that it is not: a distinctly psychological malady. In 2007, a monograph was published under the pretense that by "wounded hart" early moderns necessarily referred to an inward condition, as a means to illustrate metaphorically the heart's subservience to the vicissitudes of amorous melancholy.[8] But as David Hillman and others have demonstrated for drama, bodily phrases such as this are not merely metaphorical referents but rather indicative of the extraordinarily somatic nature of early modernity and demand to be read with what Gail Kern Paster has termed an "interpretive literalism."[9] Of course, to speak of something incorporeal as having been wounded (a soul, a conscience, a nation) is to speak of it as being in the body or, more specifically, made intelligible by its relationship to the body.[10]

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[8] See Marion Wells, *The Secret Wound: Love-Melancholy and Early Modern Romance* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2007). Wells's dissension from what she terms "a particularly physiological mode of self-fashioning" is implicit in her thesis: "to explore the ways in which [romance] represents a challenge to certain New Historicist claims about early modern conceptions of selfhood by positing a psychologically *theorizable* self, [… to] emphasize throughout […] that the desiring self clearly makes sense only in the context of a specific philosophical account of the mind" (4, emphasis in the original). I give a more precise refutation of Wells's position in Chapter One.

[9] Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails*, 1–3, and Gail Kern Paster, "Nervous Tension: Networks of Blood and Spirit in the Early Modern Body," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 107–21, at 111.

[10] On the importance of the body in the construction of metaphor, see Donald MacRae, "The Body and Social Metaphor," in *The Body as a Medium of Expression*, ed. Jonathan Benthall and Ted Polhemus (London: Dutton, 1975), 59–73, at 62. See also Geoffrey Hartman, "Words and Wounds," in *Medicine and Literature*, ed. Enid Rhodes Peschel (New York: Watson Publications, 1980), 178–88, for a more specific consideration of this point.

Furthermore, in the literatures studied in this thesis, wounded hearts occur without exception as either the consequence or the cause of wounded bodies, and in even some rarer cases (Timias, for example, in *The Faerie Queene*), the wound on the body becomes the wound in the heart. The proximity of wounded hearts and wounded bodies in early modern epic-romance, I think, ought to reconstitute the significance of these corporeal metaphors, ought, in other words, to encourage us to employ the body *as a guide* rather than as an increasingly mechanized instrument detached from the language of the self.[11] We would do well, then, to begin with the body, to consider, specifically, how its wounding in this period not only encouraged pre-Cartesian and Galenic systems of physiological study but also provided an empiric basis for creating analogues between ruptured flesh, consciousness, and desire.

It is no longer possible to speak, as Jonathan Sawday did in 1995, of the "lack" of "the history of the creation of the body as cultural field of enquiry in the European Renaissance."[12] As a deeply cultural phenomenon, wounding has been a recurrent participant in these literary, historical, philosophical, and anthropological scholarships, scholarships that have, on the one hand, encouraged an understanding of how vehemently pre-Cartesian early modern conceptions of the body were and, on the other, suggested that the period's interest in the experience of body mutilation itself constitutes an important point in the development of modernity.[13] Both matter and sensation, an aesthetic

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[11] We could therefore say that a consideration of wounding in this period offers additional substantiation to scholarships that have sought to show how early modern inwardness entailed an act of physiological inquiry, an actualization of the metaphor "inward self." See, as a few examples, Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails*, Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), and Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[12] Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 5.

[13] See Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen and Karl Enenkel's discussion of how "early modern conceptualizations of pain at once confirm and question modern anti-dualist views" in the

literalization, in other words, of what it means to be *in pain*, a wound posed a central challenge to dualist assumptions about the body and the mind, offering early modern writers, as well as physicians, barber-surgeons, and philosophers, a material instrument by which the psychic experience of pain could be visualized and examined. This linking of the body to the intractable sensations of pain became one basis for reading wounds as markers of desire, for pain was very rarely considered in the Renaissance outside of its etymology: from the Latin *poenas*, "penalty or punishment." The relationship of this thesis to previous criticisms of the epic-romances studied here could be summarized as a dissension from treating the experience of pain in these texts as moments of penalty or punishment; by rupturing the flesh, wounds did indeed subject the body to infection, interpretation, and the psychological pangs of pain, but they also, and more essentially, allowed for the proliferation of myths about the body, its ability to be stigmatized, as one example, or rendered in Homeric, providential, or martyrological terms.

As a study of linguistic representation as much as literature, of conceptual possibilities as much as historical reality, this thesis only obliquely considers these already examined applications of early modern wounding; the writers treated here rather sought to borrow from these discourses the possibility that a body wounded as a consequence of desire also could be rendered in symbolically enhancing terms.[14] But I would also argue that

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introduction to *The Sense of Suffering: Constructions of Physical Pain in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen and Karl Enenkel (Boston: Brill, 2008), 1–16, at 5. For how the experience of pain comes to be circumscribed by historical and cultural moment, see Roy Porter, "Western Medicine and Pain: Historical Perspectives," in *Religion, Health, Suffering*, ed. John Hinnells and Roy Porter (London: Kegan Paul, 1999), 364–80.

[14] For some influential considerations of how individual suffering became constructive across these registers in the Renaissance, see Piero Camporesi, *The Incorruptible Flesh: Bodily Mutation and Mortification in Religion and Folklore*, trans. Tania Croft-Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Stephen Greenblatt, "Mutilation and Meaning," in *The Body in Parts*, 221–41, and Melissa Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Sarah

Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser found these "citational" responses to wounding unsatisfying, especially considering how rapidly notions of somatic sacredness were declining in Renaissance Europe. Moreover, such citations were merely acts of performance and thus available to all bodies, as in the example of Mary Queen of Scots, who infamously attempted to transform her execution into a platform for her vindication as a Catholic martyr. Even more active forms of heroism—as when Henry V anticipates the time when the survivor of Agincourt would "strip his sleeve and show his scares / And say, 'these wounds I had on Crispin's day'" (4.3.47-8)—are devalued in these epic-romances, partly as a consequence of genre but also, I would argue, because these writers imagined heart wounding as a fundamentally more honest example of human suffering.[15] To speak of "wounded harts," for instance, not only intimated the trenchant interlacing of body and soul that hallmarked Renaissance selfhood, but also, and more importantly, this metaphor situated the experience of enduring pain in the interior rather than the exterior of the body. Accordingly, in these literatures, a wounded heart could be utilized as an emblem of the inextricability of selfhood and corporeality and yet also emphasize the precariousness of this pairing, a duality that "citational" responses to physical malady necessarily neglected.

We could say, then, that the metaphor "wounded harts" betrays much of the period's attitude toward bodies, especially wounded bodies. In both "citational" and metaphorical approaches to the soma, in other words, a fascination with physical suffering as constructive created a locus around which questions about the body—its relationship to subjectivity and otherness, belief and doubt—tended to cluster. But these approaches to encoding the body

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Covington's *Wounds, Flesh, and Metaphor in Seventeenth Century England* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009) for a compendious study of woundedness in political, philosophical, and religious writings after the turn of the century.

[15] William Shakespeare, "Henry V," in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blackmore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 1009. All references to Shakespeare's plays are to this edition and hereafter will be cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number.

with language or historical precedent occurred in light of more prominent explorations of physical pain in the period: that is, the utilization of pain in the construction of power and authority. Recent scholarship, indeed, has emphasized pain's punitive and authoritarian dimensions.[16] This is partly due to the continuing influence of Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* on early modern scholarship, a text that, among other insights, argues against progressive, post-Enlightenment narratives about pain that interpret it as fundamentally brutal and savage. For Foucault, there is a "quantitative art of pain," which is to say that methodic or strategic deployment of pain on the body helped contain that body within the ideological fields of monarchical power.[17] And while torture had been outlawed in England since the twelfth century, this was nonetheless a culture versed in the disciplinary aspects of physical punishment, conditioned, specifically, to think that physical pain—and the wounds or scars it produced—was reflective of a truth about a particular body that otherwise would not be knowable.[18]

These suppositions about how pain disabled bodily performance, substantiated the power of the monarch, and opened the self to clear and unimpeded interpretation were compounded by more scientific inquiries into the soma: vulnerary writing in particular, as I explore in Chapter Two, but also anatomy in general. The publication of Vesalius's *De*

[16] A useful bibliography of such criticisms can be found in Jetze Touber's "Articulating Pain: Martyrology, Torture, and Execution in the Works of Antonio Gallonio," in *The Sense of Suffering,* 59–90, though see also Francis Barker, *The Culture of Violence: Tragedy and History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), Lisa Silverman, *Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), and Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Violation and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[17] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1979), 34.

[18] See Page Dubois, *Torture and Truth* (New York: Routledge, 1991), who traces the etymology of torture to the Greek *basanos* [touchstone] and thereby argues that "the logic of our philosophical tradition, of some of our inherited beliefs about truth, leads almost inevitably to conceiving of the body […] as the site from which truth can be produced, and to using violence as necessary to extract that truth" (132).

Humani Corporis Fabrica in 1543, for example, created what could be called an increasing consciousness to a "normative" or mechanical body, though I would note that this has been a matter of some debate in Renaissance scholarship.[19] Nevertheless, the anatomist opened the body to discover what was inside it, further encouraging an assessment of the act of rupturing the body that emphasized its truth-seeking functions.[20] And whether it was the reduction of John Stubbs to a pun—on account of his displeasure with Elizabeth's liaisons with the Catholic Duc d'Anjou—or William Harvey's 1628 discovery of the circulation of blood, analogies between inwardness and the fractured body were frequently finding substantiation in early modern Europe, analogies, no less, that spanned across the literary spectrum, from the love lyrics of Michael Drayton, to any number of Shakespeare's plays, and, of course, to all three texts studied in this thesis.

This is not to suggest that the writers considered here approved of these brutal examinations into the body but rather to say that their perceptions of the heart as wounded relied on the potentiality that its experience of pain could be as revelatory as the anatomist found the corpse or the torturer the tortured body. In both approaches, the body hides truth, but its splaying is apocalyptic, a literal demonstration of how honesty and truth could be apprehended. In early modern Europe, then, not only were selfhood and materiality ineluctably linked, but also a belief that a wounded body exposed and made interpretable

[19] Following Sawday, who broadly argues that human vivisection ultimately caused the body to lose its ascendency as the "ultimate guarantee of a hierarchical arrangement of society" (*The Body Emblazoned,* 130), David Hillman has suggested that this "technologizing" of the soma created "a gradual movement away from the location of the self within the body." See David Hillman, "Visceral Knowledge: Shakespeare, Skepticism, and the Interior of the Early Modern Body," in *The Body in Parts*, 83. By contrast, Gail Kern Paster argues that the widening consciousness in the period to human anatomy created order and harmony, offering early moderns empirical evidence for thinking about the body as being suffused with blood and spirit and thus also subjectivity ("Nervous Tension," 112).

[20] Sawday categorizes early modern anatomy as a "disinterested field of investigation" (5), though significantly notes how anatomists worked on the corpses of executed criminals and thus were "only one remove" (113) from the penal structures of pain.

that link constituted the most general of positions to bodily pain. Consider, for example, these strikingly antidualist lines from Descartes's *Meditationes De Prima Philosophia*:

> There is nothing which this nature teaches me more expressly (nor more sensibly) than that I have a body which is adversely affected when I feel pain, which has need of food and drink when I experience the feelings of hunger and thirst, and so on. Nor can I doubt there being some truth in all of this.
>
> Nature also teaches me by these sensations of pain, hunger, thirst, etc., that I am not only lodged in my body as a pilot in a vessel, but that I am very closely united to it, and so to speak so intermingled with it that I seem to compose with it one whole. For if that were not the case, when my body is hurt, I, who am merely a thinking thing, should not feel pain, for I should perceive this wound by the understanding only, just as the sailor perceives by sight when something is damaged in his vessel.[21]

Though I run the risk here of proof-texting one of early modernity's most prolific and influential thinkers, this passage from the "Meditations" is so distinctive and antidualist that it merits citation. Interpreting pain as an epistemic problem emitting from a somatic state, Descartes suggests that pain, fundamentally, repositions the self within the body and becomes, like desire, a basic component of what it means to have a self that is ineluctably bound with the soma. Never mind its cultural contexts, its mediation by conventional theorizations or historical precedents: to experience pain is to be subjected to a pulsating reminder that mind and body are inseparable, indeed, indistinguishable. This association was not incongruent with Galenic conceptualizations of bodily pain, to which each of the authors considered here would have been privy. Not only did Galenic humorology provide early moderns with a type of metaphor—with a "discourse [for] articulat[ing] and explain[ing] the vagaries of human emotion in corporeal terms"—but the medical regime more essentially postulated that all sensation (whether it was emotional, like desire, or

[21] René Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," in *Descartes: Key Philosophical Writings*, ed. Enrique Chávez Arvizo, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1997), 183.

psychosomatic, like pain) ought to be interpreted as palpable and physical reality.[22] It is therefore surprising that Galenism had "a limited conceptual interest in pain," though I would venture to guess that this is partly due to lexical failure, an inability of Galenic language to provide adequate descriptions of the sensations themselves.[23] Despite their transcendence of historical periods, for example, none of Galenism's fundamental terms—sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, melancholic—are themselves suitable to the phenomenon that Descartes describes above, though, by making corporeal what is otherwise inward and invisible, they nevertheless contributed to the somatization of inwardness in the period.

In this respect, the experience of pain in early modernity was something of a paradox, a process by which the self became incarnate and yet simultaneously subjected to the ideologies that define it. Even Foucault, who, in many ways, is the progenitor of new-historicist inquiries into the body, acknowledges this dynamic in penal utilizations of pain: "In executions, which ought to show only the terrorizing power of the prince, there was a whole aspect of the carnival, in which rules were inverted, authority mocked and criminals transformed into heroes."[24] The paradox could be put more generally: just as pain confronts the body with the prospect of exposing its secrets, it performs the subsequent function of illuminating the depth of the body's subjective capacities, the fact that the self, to borrow Descartes's own metaphor, is not simply set in the body like a pilot in a vessel. But in making that metaphor, Descartes acknowledges, if only implicitly, the problems inherent in his antidualist formulation: that, like bodily appetite, the more seminal feature of pain is its inability to be envisioned, its salutary or profitable aspects, as it were, unavailable to anyone but the subject in pain. As Michael Schoenfeldt has demonstrated, there were indeed some

[22] Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves*, 6.
[23] Dijkhuizen and Enenkel, *The Sense of Suffering,* 6–7.
[24] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 61.

optimistic attitudes toward pain in early modern England, the most obvious of which was its immediate signaling of some deeper danger or disorder.[25] Pain was also courageous, as Aristotle had noted, and curiously had the effect of making pleasure more enjoyable, as in the simply pragmatic formulation given by Montaigne: "How much more beautiful health seems to me after the illness, when they are so near and so contiguous."[26] But unlike "citational" responses to the body, responses that associated physical suffering with historical and thus interpretable precedent, these positive reactions were purely individual endowments, a fact that rendered them nearly incomprehensible in the public domain.

This juxtaposition between subjective and objective attitudes toward pain has constituted many modern conceptualizations of the experience, and while it would be unwise to apply current theories to the early modern period, I think they can in some ways be historicized. If early modernity found pain revelatory, an exposition of the self, then modern conceptualizations have been skeptical of any interpretation that asserts productivity. As the seminal voice of these assessments, Elaine Scarry has argued that pain "is world destroying," a limiting of the self's cognitive faculties, a rupturing of its communicative abilities, a disabling of its creative processes, in short, a physical experience with distinctly psychological effects.[27] Under this model, pain is not clarifying but

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[25] "The body that felt no pain would be a dangerous one to inhabit," writes Schoenfeldt. See Michael Schoenfeldt, "Aesthetics and Anesthetics: The Art of Pain Management in Early Modern England," in *The Sense of Suffering*, 19–37, at 26.

[26] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1117a, and Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works*, trans. Donald Frame (New York: Everyman's Library, 2003), 1021.

[27] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 29. See also Roselyne Rey, *The History of Pain*, trans. Louise Elliott Wallace, J. A. Cadden, and S. W. Cadden (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) and David Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) for two other studies that broadly suggest that pain alters rather than exposes the self.

obstructing, "calculated to disrupt profoundly the senses of personality."[28] By disassociating the experience from the body (and from truth in general), modern understandings of pain have also rendered the experience incommunicable, even if pain functions, as Descartes wrote, to make the self compose "one whole" with the body. What pain is, in other words, is far less important than what pain does. Again, Scarry is helpful in explaining this paradox:

> 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 it that "having pain" may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it means to "have certainty," while for the other 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.[29]

I have thus far been speaking of pain as if it was synonymous with the experience of wounding, and indeed the latter cannot occur without the former. But what is most important for this study is what happens to these paradoxes of pain when they become expressed on the flesh as a wound. By combining the psychic and sensational dimensions of pain with the aesthetic and corporeal materiality of the body, a wound, I would argue, synthesizes positions like Scarry's with those of Descartes, for as both a literal thing and a metaphor, a wound provided early modernity with a limitlessly plural aesthetic image, one,

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[28] Cited from a memo from Alberto Gonzales, Counsel to the President, from John Yoo, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, August 1, 2002. This memo is reproduced in Mark Danner's *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2004), 108–9.
[29] Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 4.

moreover, that could make the "unsharabl[e]" sharable.[30] But this, of course, was a two-way street; if wounds made it possible for a body to be assessed in terms that contradict its aesthetic figuration (i.e., how grisly or grotesque one's wound appears), they also subjected the body to a more tangible and visual form of interpretation and, as Miri Rubin has explained, the possibility that any number of things could enter or exit the body through them: certainly grace, as allegorized in Spenser's House of Holiness, but also blood, demons, and contagion.[31] This is not to suggest that the writers studied here were neglectful of this reality; indeed, many of the passages that concern wounding in these epic-romances offer some of the most gruesome and conspicuous images of the fractured body in all of Renaissance literature. Rather, and as the inheritors of a tradition of treating bodily breakages with both skepticism and fascination, Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser found that the symbolic possibilities of wounding and woundedness could rescue the self from its dialectical opposition to pain. A wound, therefore, and perhaps most essentially for these writers, transformed the body into a discursive instrument, reprojecting its anatomized condition into a realm of both physical and symbolic resonance and possibility.

Part of the reason that a wound was able to achieve such multidimensional power was due to the fact that, unlike pain, it always bore the possibility of metaphor. From, as I have said, the Latin *poenas* ("punishment"), pain seems to have securely traversed history as a destructive and punitive occurrence, indeed, a compulsory condition of postlapsarian humanity. And while pain, surely, offers metaphor (we can speak of hearts in pain), those

[30] See Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, on how a wound "externalize[s], objectif[ies], and make[s] sharable what is originally an interior and unsharable experience" (15–16).
[31] See Miri Rubin, "The Body, Whole and Vulnerable, in Fifteenth-Century England," in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 19–29.

metaphors, like the experience itself, "ha[ve] no referential content."[32] This may be less true for early moderns than it is for us, as the pervasiveness of pre-Cartesian thought systems, like Galenism, interpreted emotion in distinctly corporeal terms, though simply acknowledging this gestures to how overtly embodied psychic experience had to be in the period in order to be made intelligible.[33] More naturally, then, is the use of metaphor to describe pain. In the case of early modernity, not only did an understanding of woundedness provide this metaphor, but it did so essentially by creating a sense of cohesiveness, translating what Elaine Scarry calls the "objectlessness" of pain into something more collectively experienced and collectively interpretable. This, indeed, is the function of metaphor, to offer, as Hans Blumenberg once wrote, a "powerful means for understanding the rationally ungraspable or indescribable."[34] With all its conflicting cultural encodings, pain was the "rationally ungraspable or indescribable" phenomenon that wounding metaphorized, but this only begins to tell the story of why the wound became such a potent signifier in sixteenth-century epic-romance. As this thesis will attempt to demonstrate, the metaphor of woundedness eventually entered into the collective unconsciousness of the period, both as a way of describing psychic experience and as a way of explaining the ethos of a culture marred by religious, political, and bodily fracture. Thus, Sidney could write of the banality of

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[32] Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 4. Matthew Martin, paraphrasing Žižek, has similarly likened the equation of suffering and subjectivity to a sort of fantasy: "In an effort to overcome the primary trauma of existence, the subject attempts to articulate itself in the impossible, fantasy space in which suffering and being fully coincide. Yet there is always slippage between the I who suffers and I who says 'I am.'" See Matthew Martin, "Plays of Passion: Pain, History, and Theatre in *Edward II*," in *The Sacred and Profane in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Mary Papazian (Dover: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 84–108, at 85.

[33] See Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves*, 30. "Flesh," he writes of the Galenic regime, was not thought of as "a realm completely separate from the soul, but [was] a name for the thickening and coagulation of emotion around the intense sensations of pain and grief."

[34] Hans Blumenberg, *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* (Frankfurt: Surhkamp, 1979), 77, as translated in Barbara Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1991), 4.

"living deaths, deare wounds, faire storms, and freezing fires," as if oxymoron (via metaphor) was as natural a means of describing emotional strife as language made available.[35]

This thesis argues that the second term in Sidney's paradigmatic list of Petrarchan affects—"deare wounds"—is not, in fact, an oxymoron at all but a state achievable through manipulation of the metaphor. But how did the metaphor come to be imbued with such symbolic resonance? A history of woundedness as such would be impractical, and my individual readings make note of precedence where necessary. The origins of the word "wound," however, might be better indicative of how the image descended into early modernity. Strictly speaking, the English word "wound" is a derivative of the German *wunde*, but the *OED* also points out that *wunde* is "of unknown ultimate origin." The classical lexicon, by contrast, offered early modernity a rich vocabulary for speaking of physical malady, but this was hardly a clean process. The Greek for "wound" (τραῦμα—"trauma") did not appear as an English word until 1684, and speaking of trauma as if it were a psychic rather than physical problem, in any event, is post-Freudian.[36] Early modern consciousness to "wounding," then, more likely derived from the Greek πληγή (plégé, "affliction, plague"), πλάγος (plágos, "side, flank"), and πλήττω (plétto, "strike, bludgeon"), all possible cognates for the Latin *plaga* ("to strike, cut") and, significantly, the Italian *piaga*, which Tasso favors over the more bodily *ferita* ("to strike, to bargain with"). ἕλκεος (hélkos, "a sore, an ulcer") moreover, provided a term for speaking of a wound as infected or suppurated (i.e.,

[35] Sir Philip Sidney, "Astrophil and Stella, Sonnet VI" in *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 155.
[36] The *OED* lists Stephen Blankaart's 1684 *Physical Dictionary* as the first text that used the word "trauma" to mean "wound" and William James's 1894 *Psychological Review* as the first instance in which the word carried psychopathologic connotations. Zackariah Long, however, has argued that, while there was no early modern theory of trauma per se, there was a sense, especially in casuistic literatures, of the conscience as being woundable. See Zackariah Long, "Toward an Early Modern Theory of Trauma: Conscience in *Richard III*," *Journal of Literary and Trauma Studies* 1, no. 1 (2012): 49–72.

producing pus), and ουλη (oulé, "bruise, hurt") an understanding of physical rupture producing some sort of internal calamity. We derive, for example, the word "vulnerable" from the Latin cognate of ουλη (L. *vulnus*), an indication that there has always been a sense of using the term "wound" metaphorically.[37]

So what then is a wound? Indeed, just the image itself, without its metaphorical referents, contains multitudes. Its etymological history offers it a location, a pathologic as well as a physical telos, a sense of volatile mutability, a relationship to corruption, bodily decay, the permeability and solubility of flesh and spirit. It speaks to an experience, a suturing of then and now, past and present, body and self, irruption and eruption, at once indicative of violence, pain, transgression, endurance, patience, passion, and holiness. It figures aesthetically the body's other points of entry and exit: the anus or the vagina, for example, or, in Richard Crashaw's famous anthropomorphism, the mouth or the eye.[38] It is neither this nor that, I nor not I, neither inside nor outside but strewn somewhere in a liminal space between life and death, on the cusp, "locat[ing] perception at the pulsing boundaries of the body."[39] Its mere existence is paradoxical, synthesizing mutilation with meaning, grotesqueness with fascination, destruction with generation, finality with endless possibility.[40] In the punning formulation given by the eleventh-century Persian physician Ibn Sīnā (known to the West as Avicenna), it is a "solution of continuitye," as macabre as it is

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[37] Etymologies are adapted from Jean Baptiste Gardin Dumesnil's *Latin Synonyms* (London: Richard Taylor, 1809), 1925.

[38] "O these wakefull wounds of thine! / Are they Mouthes? or are they eyes?," wrote Crashaw in one of his more unrestrainedly corporeal poems about the crucifixion. See "On the wounds of our crucified Lord," in Richard Crashaw, *The Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw*, ed. George Walton Williams (New York: New York University Press, 1972), 155.

[39] Mitchell Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 113.

[40] Ibid, 113: "Once a wound appears before our eyes it is as if a fault line has opened up across the body's topograhy, one that threatens to tear open ever wider expanses of the body's hidden interior."

revelatory, not simply a synecdoche for the body but a literal, intrusive, and usurping metonym.[41] "Extend the wound," wrote Mitchell Merback, "beyond its already unstable boundaries and the body, as an organic whole, begins to disappear."[42] As an inquiry into the literal, spiritual, and metaphoric conflicts created by wounding, this thesis, we could say, studies that disappearance.

It, in fact, is precisely as the bearer of this metonymic potentiality that the wound was so intently held in view in sixteenth-century literature. But the larger notion controlling the argument of this work is that out of this capacity for embodiment the wound became early modernity's paradigmatic metaphor for human desire. Not only were the literal traumas of wounding (rupture, dissolution, accretion, infection) powerful analogues for the language of unrequited passion, but a wound's visible connection to the body and implicit relation to pain also offered a means by which the vicissitudes and volatility of psychic life could be explained in corporeal terms. If the body, like a nation or a set of legal codes, could fashion identity out of its borderlines, so too could the dimensions of the self be defined in extremis, though this was a more nebulous task given that desire had the effect of constantly reconstituting what could be meant by the designation "extremis." By engaging a language of bodily metaphor, however, early moderns could create a type of shrinkage, a hardening of the edges, so to speak, of what it meant to be human. A wounded heart, then, or simply a wounded body, became a way of translating the porosity of the flesh into a language of cohesiveness and relatability, a translation, as we will see, that caused

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[41] References to Avicenna's 1025 *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* (or "Canon of Medicine") are almost as frequent in early modern medical handbooks as references to Galen, especially when wounds are addressed. Though Avicenna would not have intended the pun on "solution," British and Continental vulnerary writers—beginning with Giovanni da Vigo in 1514—utilize the phrase to suggest a range of possibilities. A consideration of these and of the history of this phrase in general is given in Chapter Two.

[42] Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel*, 113.

transgression and violation (a movement beyond boundaries) to become epistemic rather than inscrutable phenomena. Accordingly, the literatures of the sixteenth century, especially epic-romance, could be said to challenge the abhorrence for physical malady stated by Satan in Book Four of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*: "Lives there who loves his pain?"[43] At that point the answer is clearly no, and for those beset by penal wounds it seems unlikely the answer would ever be otherwise. But via a language made familiar by Petrarchanism—in which pain provided a means for communicating the honesty of one's emotions—the writers I study in this thesis show how the metaphoric utilizations of wounding not only could illuminate (rather than obliterate) the desiring subject but also be manipulated to reconstitute what is generally thought of as an regrettable history of human appetite.

WOUNDING THE HEART: *MELANCHOLIA*, ROMANCE, & THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF DESIRE

In that regard, we might give some consideration as to why the wound became such a suitable metaphor for human appetency, why, in other words, early modernity recognized the intractability created by bodily fracture as a physical corollary for the mental experience of desire. The primary answer is that early moderns conceptualized appetite and pain in similar terms; both were, in a manner of speaking, "unsharable" and inexpressible. And while Galenism attempted to posit a physiological basis for both pain and appetite (as types of imbalance), increasing interest in the disease known as *melancholia* helped foster a wider consciousness to how seamlessly interconnected appetite and physical illness might be. This thesis represents a departure from studies of *melancholia* in early modern literature, especially those guided by psychoanalytic frameworks, studies, I argue throughout, that dismiss (or overlook) how, as a point of transition, synthesis, and imbrication, a wound deeply

[43] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (London: Longman, 2006), IV.888.

problematized what Louise Fradenburg called the "amorous subjectivity of Europe."[44] We might even go so far as to say that in the epic-romances I study here no such consciousness to the pangs of psychic disease is available without the constitutive knowledge of physical fracture, as a Tancred, an Amphialus, or a Timias, as three examples, are each made to experience physical wounding both prior to and as a clarification of their amorous pathologies. Nevertheless, the language of melancholic disease provides an entry point for speaking of the wound metaphorically, even if, in the period's medical and philosophical writings on love, the phrase "wounded heart" constituted a bastardization of what authors of epic-romance must have perceived by the image.

The essential feature of melancholic discourse, indeed, is its seamless relation of destruction and affect, its "connection [of] heroic love and a degrading disease."[45] As such, *melancholia*, as both a philosophical and a medical phenomenon, shared with martial, religious, and other extra-philosophical discourses a proclivity for speaking about the self as wounded.[46] Sixteenth-century philosophical conceptualizations of erotic disease, in fact, were primarily Lucretian and Ficinian, which is to say more psychological than corporeal.[47] For Lucretius, for example, erotic fury ("*furur*") is a "*vulnere caeco*" [secret wound], the result of an obsession with disillusionment:

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[44] Louise Arayne Fradenburg, *Sacrifice Your Love: Psychoanalysis, Historicism, and Chaucer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 2.
[45] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 7.
[46] See Angus Gowland, "The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy," *Past and Present* 191 (2006): 77–120, who argues that one of the distinctive features of *melancholia* was its applicability to practically all Early Modern arenas of thought.
[47] This is a matter of some debate, as Galenism certainly offered one way for understanding melancholy: as the preponderance of black bile. Nevertheless, early modernity maintained a distinction between Galenic melancholy and erotic or love-melancholy, which was considered a pathology rather than mere humoral imbalance. See Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages*, 188–9, and Gowland, "The Problems of Early Modern Melancholy," 86–7, for brief explanations of the controversy.

> *inde redit rabies eadem et furor ille revisit,*
> *cum sibi quid cupiant ipsi contingere quaerunt*
> *nec reperire malum id possunt quae machina vincat:*
> *usque adeo incerti tabescunt volnere caeco.*
>
> [But then the same madness returns and back comes that fury; again they seek what they desire to attain for themselves and cannot determine what artifice will subjugate the sickness: in such uncertainty do they waste away with a secret wound.][48]

Ficino, reading Lucretius, develops this into his wider perceptions about how love-melancholy is a distinctly ocular disease. But this does not cause the wound to be any more visible or material; in the *De amore*, in fact, love-woundedness is a precept of imagination:

> *Inquietudo quoque amantium tam diu necessario perseverat quam diu infectio illa sanguinis per fascinationem iniecta visceribus permanens, gravi cor premit cura. Vulnus alit venis: caecis membra flammis adurit.*
>
> [Also, the disquiet of lovers necessarily lasts as long as that infection of the blood, injected into the viscera through fascination. It presses the heart with heavy care, feeds the wound through the veins, and burns the members with unseen flames.][49]

Though, as with my citation to Descartes, I run the risk of reducing the significance of Lucretius and Ficino to early modern philosophies of love—and, indeed, a history of *melancholia*, like a history of woundedness, would be impractical—these two passages are nevertheless indicative of how the wound became synonymous, in melancholic discourse, with something like the unconscious.[50] As such, Lucretius's and Ficino's formulations of the wound as "*caecum*" will offer this thesis a reference point from which the writers considered here respond. One of the broad arguments of this study, indeed, is that "unseen wounds" must be seen and felt in order to adumbrate or metaphorize human desire; to put it another way: consciousness to the wounding effects of eroticism (or any desire) requires more than

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[48] Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, ed. J. Godwin (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1987), Book Four, 1115–20. Future citations are to this edition and will be indicated by book and line number.
[49] Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, trans. Sears Jayne (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985), as quoted in Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 73.
[50] By "*caecum*," Lucretius and Ficino likely mean "unseen," "invisible," "hidden" and "obscure," though "untoward," "confused," "aimless," and "blinded" are also possibilities.

simply thinking of physical rupture and emotional turmoil as analogous. For both Lucretius and Ficino, however, desire is a type of infection accompanied by mental and spiritual dissipation, a subjection of the body to the mind rather than a recognition of their interdependency.[51] Ought not a wound encourage this interdependency? It is surprising, I think, given how frequently medical and philosophic writing on *melancholia* spoke of the disease in terms of its capacity to wound (the heart, the conscience, the soul), that the two were not more actively compared in the period, though, perhaps for Ficino, this could be explained as a consequence of his neo-Platonism. More likely is that by the time that Ficino was working on the *De amore* (c. 1480), the discourse of woundedness had already entered a stage of dead metaphoricity; it no longer bore, in other words, its purely somatic significations. But if metaphor provides, as James Olney has written, "an intensity of awareness" and a "coherent vision of all reality," then there is no reason to doubt that the image could be used to retransform these understandings of erotic-melancholy.[52]

This is precisely what I want to stress in this thesis: that the representations of wounds and woundedness in the texts studied here recover the image from these deeply pneumatic formulations, formulations, I argue, that overlook the extent to which a wound, however secret, blind, unseen, or metaphorical, originates from a somatic state. In these epic-romances, in fact, the fractured body does not metaphorize human desire at all; it

[51] We might be tempted to think about these formulations as precursors or derivatives of grief, especially insofar as grief seems to intensify the interdependence of body and mind. But erotic obsession and grief were fundamentally different phenomena in early modern Europe. And while I am cautious throughout of psychoanalytic approaches to wounding, the distinction is nowhere more influentially or pithily stated than by Freud: "*melancholia* is in some way related to an unconscious loss of a love-object, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing unconscious about the loss." In other words, *melancholia* is more deeply rooted in fantasy, or, more specifically, the fantasizing of the soma. See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology*, ed. and trans. Philip Rieff (New York: Touchstone, 1977), 164–80, at 171.

[52] James Olney, *Metaphors of the Self: The Meaning of Autobiography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 23.

literalizes it, such that when Britomart, having seen the image of Artegall in her father's mirror, intones, "all mine entrailes flow with poisnous gore, / And th'vlcer groweth daily more and more; / Ne can my ronning sore finde remedee" (III.ii.39), we would do well not to align such language with that of person beset by *melancholia*. Not only does Britomart's quest depend on her consciousness to her lovesickness, but also the manner in which she fashions her illness—as emanating from her "entrailes" and "ronning" through her veins—is more anatomical than pneumatic, an indication that lovesickness was not simply a "*vulnus caecum*" but rather a hybrid of fully somatic with more modern notions of inwardness. What is being worked out over and over again in early modern epic-romance, then, is a set of questions about what the relationship is between somatic condition and erotic affect, questions that appear to accrue (almost without exception) around images of physical wounds. Perhaps this is why in so many early modern epic-romances we find images of wounds transitioning from bodily to figurative manifestations, as if the authors of these literatures were entranced more by the transference of literal states than by the mere metaphorical association.[53] We could say that this thesis, then, responds to scholarship that considers how wounds substantiate fully "psychological" investigations into epic-romance; images of wounding in these texts rather repudiate the possibility that something like erotic passion could become as psychologically unmanageable as it appears in early modern writings on *melancholia* or our own post-Freudian conceptions of erotic pathology.[54]

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[53] Such transference is a feature endemic to epic-romance and more than likely results from the genre's need to incorporate mortification into its conceptions of perfection or perfectability. But the actual passages in which these transferences occur (Angelica's healing of Medoro, Erminia's of Tancred, Belphoebe's of Timias, even, Venus's of Adonis), this thesis argues, do not simply demonstrate the mind's vulnerability to bodily distemper; instead, in such moments, the collision of physical and mental states allows these writers the opportunity to reenvision the consequences and effects of erotic engagement.

[54] This may seem counterintuitive, as the wound (as fully metaphorized) is indistinguishable from psychoanalytic criticisms of early modern texts. Nevertheless, and following the lead

It would follow that something about the nature of being wounded as a consequence to or cause of desire struck Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser as an essentially positive experience, and this thesis shows how their epic-romances proffer three individual but cumulative responses to what otherwise might have looked like the result of hubris or cupidity. Augustine, in fact, had given a model for revising notions of love-woundedness that asserted its intractability, conflating Ovidian, erotic sentiments with his understanding of caritas.[55] I would hypothesize that the writers considered here (regardless of their religious differences) found such an explanation unsuitable for the physical dimensions of psychic calamity. I want to suggest, instead, that the reason a wound became such a powerful designator for desire in these epic-romances has to do with its mirroring of what I will call throughout this thesis the phenomenology of desire. Such a phenomenology also explains, to an extent, why examinations of *melancholia* in this literature have been largely psychoanalytic and therefore

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of Stephen Greenblatt's now-infamous declaration that psychoanalysis will become a productive mode of textual study "when it historicizes its own procedures," I would offer that the overt physicality of what it meant to be mentally wounded in the period might reshape how we comprehend psychic experience in early modernity. A consideration of how a physical wound comes to be designated in romance as an interiorizing apparatus, moreover, might have the effect of historicizing what has been a mode of textual inquiry blighted by ahistorical presumptions. See Stephen Greenblatt, "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture," in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 210–24, at 221.

[55] "*sagittaveras tu cor nostrum caritate tua et gestabamus verba tua transfixa visceribus. et exempla servorum tuorum, quos de nigris lucidos et de mortuis vivos feceras, congesta in sinum cogitationis nostrae urebant et absumebant gravem torporem, ne in ima vergeremus, et accendebant nos valide, ut omnis ex lingua subdola contradictionis flatus inflammare nos acrius posset, non extinguere*" [Thou hadst pierced our hearts with Thy charity, and we carried Thy words as it were fixed in our entrails: and the examples of Thy servants, whom for black Thou hadst made bright, and for dead, alive, being piled together in the receptacle of our thoughts, kindled and burned up that our heavy torpor, that we should not sink down to the abyss; and they fired us so vehemently, that all the blasts of subtle tongues from gainsayers might only inflame us the more fiercely, not extinguish us]. See Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, ed. John Henry Parker, trans. E. B. Pusey (Oxford: Baxter, 1853), Book Nine, 2.3. Numerous translations of Augustine's "Confessions" were available in the sixteenth century; a noteworthy study of Augustine's influence on Tasso's and Spenser's epics in particular is J. Christopher Warner's *The Augustinian Epic, Petrarch to Milton* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

constitutes the mental experience that these authors use images of wounds to refute. In other words, this thesis argues that it is a phenomenology of desire that a wound both metaphorizes and subsequently undermines in these literatures.

"Phenomenology" and "desire" might seem, on the face of it, like natural allies, especially insofar as psychoanalytic criticisms are concerned. An older work on Shakespeare, for example, utilized the phrase "phenomenology of desire" to refer to the complex Hegelian and Lacanian notions of "mirrored" identity: that identity in general and erotic object choice in particular develop through psychosexual and epistemological confrontations with the other, specifically confrontations in which the self recognizes the other as "mirroring" its own identity.[56] In these philosophies, erotic pathology is a type of intensified narcissism, a phenomenon, to quote Freud's rather germane formulation, in which desire "behaves like an open wound, drawing to itself cathetic energy from all sides […] and draining the ego until it is utterly depleted."[57] I hope to show in this thesis that Freud's formulation cannot possibly hold up when applied to the passages concerning wounds in the epic-romances studied here, though we will find that it is precisely because these writers sensed its possibility that they offered such protracted responses to it. This is not to say that

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[56] See W. Thomas MacCary, *Friends and Lovers: The Phenomenology of Desire in Shakespearean Comedy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). According to MacCary, Shakespeare's comedies locate sexual identity as developing through "four stages of object choice," the whole of which constitutes a "phenomenology of desire" (3). "First," MacCary writes, Shakespeare's male lovers "love themselves (or seek themselves); then, they love mirror images of themselves in twins or friends; after that, they love those same images in transvestized young women; finally, they learn to love young women in all their specific, unique and complex virtues" (5). This "phenomenology," argues MacCary, ought to resonate with a modern reader because it replicates our own experiences of transitioning from infantile narcissism to more mature, conscious dispositions towards sexuality.

[57] Freud, *General Psychological Theory*, 174. Freud also mentions the wound near the end of "Mourning and Melancholia": "The conflict in the ego, which in melancholia is substituted for the struggle surging around the object, must act like a painful wound which calls out unusually strong anti-cathexes" (179). In both instances, the wound becomes an orifice through which the object of desire is subsumed and the ego is displaced.

anything like a "draining of the ego" occurs in early modern epic-romance, only that it would be foolish to propose that the moment in history in which modern consciousness began to bourgeon lacked an understanding of desire as a process of the psyche. Attentiveness to wounding in this literature, however, teaches us that desire was not simply a psychological process and that something about its mirroring of the physical event of wounding allowed it to become an enabling process of self-definition rather than a seeping or a slippage of the self and its intense dependency on the other.

One of the clearest ways that wounds operate in early modern literature in this capacity is by translating the complex and, in psychoanalytic language, unconscious phenomenon of desiring something into a type of discourse with historical, "citational," and aesthetic relevance.[58] But what discourse was this exactly? I have already suggested that for the writers considered here an unquestioned acceptance of the medical and philosophical propositions of *melancholia* would not have been sufficient to their own romantic desires to prize rather than excise erotic engagement from their texts.[59] In this regard, these writers dissent from their immediate predecessor Ariosto, who David Quint once wrote,

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[58] In making this claim, I am reminded of the foundational principle in Lacanian psycho-philosophy: that "[t]he unconscious is structured like a language." One way to think about the function of wounds in these romances is as conduits, as mechanisms for suturing those parts of psychic experience that exceed verbalization to a commutable reality.

[59] Tasso, of course, was beset by a type of *melancholia*, but his own writings about his sickness are terribly unclear, and the *Liberata*, in any event, attempts to valorize its erotic relationships which verge on the pathological. I would like to think that the argument that Douglas Trevor makes about Spenser's conception of a melancholic—that the "new poet" could hardly align himself with something like psychological instability—would have resonated with the ambitious Sidney as well, especially Trevor's suggestion that Spenser responds to psychic disturbance with a "Neoplatonic notion of learned sadness." Whatever the case, Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser all make exceptional efforts, especially in those passages concerning wounds, to fuse erotic pathology with potential moments of virtue and heroism. See Douglas Trevor, *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 17.

"jettison[ed] pure romance in order to proceed to epic closure."[60] We will find that one of the distinctive and cohesive features about the passages describing wounds in these epic-romances is how they marry "pure romance" and "epic closure." These writers make this marriage possible, I argue, by reorganizing perception of that dual subject/object that aestheticizes and outlines (physically, sensationally, topographically) the psychic forces of eroticism: the wound. As a figure of synthesis, transition, creation and destruction, repression and expression, the wound, in other words, became a poetic image capable of fusing erotic energies (which are so prevalent in the Italian romance tradition) with these texts' more epic, imperial, and heroic aspirations. But this fusion first required an admission to the destructive capacities of physical and mental fracture. My readings of these epic-romances, therefore, suggest that what Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser take issue with are interpretations of wounds that assert how the image actualizes the phenomenology of desire, exposing the errantry and corruptibility of the psychic life of a lover.

The argument could be put more concretely; early modern conceptions of something like a "phenomenology of desire," for example, are largely implicit in the period's understanding of eros as a type of "lack," certainly a principle fully on display in Renaissance love-lyrics.[61] Consider, for example, these lines from John Donne's "Farewell to Love":

> Being had, enjoying it decays,
> And thence,
> What before pleased them so takes but one sense,
> And that so lamely, as it leaves behind
> A kind of sorrowing dullness to the mind.[62]

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[60] David Quint, "The Figure of Atlante: Ariosto and Boiardo's Poem," *Modern Language Notes* 94 (1979): 77–91, at 87.
[61] Ann Carson's *Eros the Bittersweet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) contains myriad etymologies suggesting this possibility.
[62] John Donne, "Farewell to Love" in *The Complete Poems of John Donne*, ed. Robin Robbins (London: Longman, 2008), 183, lines 16–20.

There is also the famous example of Shakespeare's 129th sonnet, which seems to capture the same sentiment with more verve and frustration. Here is the poem in full:

> Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action, and till action, lust
> Is perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
> Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
> Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
> Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
> Past reason hated as a swallowed bait
> On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
> [Mad] in pursuit and in possession so,
> Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
> A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe,
> Before, a joy propos'd, behind, a dream.
> All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
> To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.[63]

Though explicitly in reference to erotic desire, these verses from Donne and Shakespeare argue for an assessment of desire that emphasizes its disillusionment, its endless reanimation to some other object or the same object again. In other words, desire desires itself and paradoxically, impossibly, desires its containment as such. In Lacanian language, such desire is insatiable—what Lacan called the "*objet petit a*"—as the moment in which desire is consummated also constitutes the moment in which that desire is lost.[64] I have no intentions in this thesis of being guided by Lacanian frameworks, or any structuralist or post-structuralist discourse for that matter, but we could understand the investments that Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser take in the wound as eliciting from a sort of recognition that, as a poetic device, the image could be utilized to give voice to that moment that occurs in between

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[63] In *Riverside Shakespeare*, 1867.

[64] This realization eventually caused Lacan to question whether or not consummation was an intelligible facet of human reality. The clearest expostulation of these theories is given in Lacan's "The Signification of the Phallus," in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Bruce Frink (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002). Slavoj Žižek's decryption of Lacan's theory is helpful in this regard. According to Žižek, "desire's *raison d'être* is not to realize its goal, to find full satisfaction, but to reproduce itself as desire." See Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), 37.

proposed joys and subsequent disillusionments. At the very least, the individual readings I give here proceed from the hypothesis that it was this lack that a wound metaphorized and literalized. And if Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser were going to translate the wound into a constructive synthesizer (of epic and romance, of eroticism and heroism), then they needed, first and foremost, to find a way to envision this loss as a type of gain. Not obviously influenced by the developing philosophies of neo-stoicism and the "delicious solitude" that it posited,[65] this group met head-on the possibility that desire might be endlessly cruel and self-fracturing and fundamentally, I argue, utilized the nebulous but capacious space of wounding to both instantiate and then repudiate this phenomenon.

The deployment of such "phenomenology" in these epic-romances, in fact, has typified critical debates about these texts' generic affiliations and innovations and, in this way, has created a type of watershed for psychoanalytic and post-structuralist inquiries. Jonathan Goldberg, for example, has offered this "phenomenology" as the fundamental component of romance, in his now-infamous reading of *The Faerie Queene*'s narrative tendencies:

> [*The Faerie Queene*] offers its lures in endless substitution and deferral; but the lures remain teasing, and the whetted desires lead to frustration. […] The space of narration is, in a word, where loss and excess meet, where orgasm would be no different from castration, where the triple goddess (Venus, virgin, and wife) is satisfied. […] As [Roland] Barthes says: "In narrative (and this is perhaps its 'definition'), the symbolic and the operative are non-decidable, subject to the rule of an *and / or*." Such is the nature of the text and its fatally ambivalent pleasures.[66]

A paradigm not as encumbered by structuralist precepts would be Helen Cooper's:

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[65] From Andrew Marvell's "The Garden" (line 16). See Andrew Marvell, *The Complete Poems*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (New York: Penguin, 1996), 100. Marvell's "Garden," following the recommendation of the famous neo-stoic Justus Lipsius, is without women and thus without the threat of erotic calamity.

[66] Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 24. The citation is to Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), 77.

> The romance quest is closely related to the discourse of desire, since the seeking, the aspiration that constitutes the quest, requires a goal somewhere ahead of you: potentially always somewhere ahead of you, like desire itself.[67]

The sense in reading these definitions of "romance," which could be expanded to include the writings of Northrop Frye, Maureen Quilligan, Patricia Parker, and David Lee Miller, among many others, is that the essence of the romance genre is its inability to satisfy, that, indeed, the genre does not simply begin and end *in media res* but is generated out of what Colin Burrow termed "incompletability."[68] Where else in these texts is this radical instability of language and the "endlessely substitutive" nature of discourse more fully on display than it is in those moments when an understanding of character is subsumed into the psychic, physical, and indeed, linguistic indeterminacy created by wounding?[69] Goldberg is attentive to this, as *Endlesse Worke* begins its inquiry into the structures of romance by gesturing to the cancellation and revision of the ending of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, an episode that, Goldberg argues, transforms the reader into a sort of surrogate of the protagonist (Amoret) and her incompletely healed "perfect hole" (III.xii.38). But, as Lauren Silberman recently pointed out, it has been the vogue to read "perfect hole" with emphasis on the latter term.[70] I wonder, however, how it might look if we stop thinking about these two terms, "perfect" and "hole," as oppositional and consider why these writers might have dilated on passages concerning wounds and offered such substantial explorations of their potential to perfect.

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[67] Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 48.
[68] Colin Burrow, *Edmund Spenser* (London: Northcote House, 1996), 31.
[69] Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke*, 8.
[70] Lauren Silberman, "'Perfect hole': Spenser and Greek Romance," *Spenser Studies* 23 (2008): 283–92, esp. 283–85. A. Kent Hieatt also argued that by "hole" Spenser must have meant "holesome" or "healthy." See A. Kent Hieatt, "Review of *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* by Maureen Quilligan," *Milton Quarterly* 18 (1984): 94–95.

A "perfect hole" will never be a cohesive literary image, but it does not have to become an "anasemic" space of narrative indeterminacy.[71] Indeed, my argument about *The Faerie Queene* specifically in this thesis is that its lack of closure, ambivalences, and deferred consummations are circumvented rather than subtended by its depictions of wounded bodies. Whether erotic, social, political, even narratological, desire, for these writers, would have been an experience that invariably resisted rationalizing structures, a potent but irresistible challenge to the self's attempts at individuation. Their perceptions of the wound as imbued with this potency, however, seem to have spurred another desire: to resist it. It is in this way that this thesis fundamentally differs from writings on wounds and woundedness in epic-romance. Rather than dissolving the self and subjecting a victim to the banality of pain, a wound, I would suggest, actually provided early modernity with an image and metaphor capable of suturing the object of desire (what makes romance "other" and incompletable) with both the physiology and the psychology of the subject. For Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser, the wound, in other words, provided a veritable aetiology of the subject, a space of dramatic self-awareness, synthesis, transition, power, and commutability, not essentially and sometimes not at all grounded in the language of the other.[72]

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[71] In making this claim, I follow the lead of Katherine Eggert, who argued that, "[f]eminine enclosures in *The Faerie Queene* may be scary, but they're hardly empty." There are great differences, as we will see, between masculine and feminine "enclosures" or wounds, and I am not, in any event, fully convinced of Eggert's reason for dismissing psychoanalytic approaches to romance narratology: that, as she writes, Spenser's "poetry lingers lovingly on the edge of hollow feminine enclosures." Nevertheless, her renunciation is helpful in providing a critical basis around which to organize my own perceptions of romance "enclosures." See Katherine Eggert, "Spenser's Ravishment: Rape and Rapture in *The Faerie Queene*," *Representations* 70 (2000): 1–26, at 23, n.43, and 14.

[72] Such a statement is congruent with post-Freudian conceptualizations of traumatic melancholy. Rather than postulating that psychic instability emerges when the ego obsesses on the object of desire, recent studies in psychopathology are more concerned with determining how the analogy that Freud denies—that the "incidence of an organic lesion is incompatible with a development of neurosis"—in fact constitutes a more natural exploration of how the mind experiences its own mental fracture. We could say, then, that

When I first wrote the introduction to this thesis, I began with a reading of a rare and odd moment in the iconography of wounds: the production and revision of Gustave Courbet's self-portrait *L'homme blessé* [the wounded man].[73] It seems to me now to be of even more importance than I originally thought. In its first incarnation, an 1844 charcoal sketch, the work depicts a man and woman sitting arm and arm beneath a shady bower, their countenances so fashioned as to define what Alfred de Musset once called "the faint sleep between two beings who love each other."[74] But when Courbet revised the painting in 1854, he removed the woman from the scene and replaced her with miscellanea evocative of the aftermath of a duel: a sword to Courbet's right and, more significantly, a bloodstain on his blouse, just above his left breast. Courbet's posture in both the original and the revised, as many commentators have noted, is also redolent of Eugène Delacroix's *Saint Sebastian* (1836) and thus designed to imply an interplay between sacred and amorous modes of wounding.[75] But this is simply one among many suggestive implications. The more startling affinities occur between the versions of the paintings themselves, which seem quite intentionally to muddle the concepts of what an aspiring romantic hero ought to be. In the original, we have Courbet the lover, wayward, resting with his beloved in the aegis of a sylvan bower; in the revision, Courbet is far more cloaked, sequestered by a density of color, presumably, this time, dying not sleeping. There is even, as Derrida once noted, the obliteration of the artist himself in the 1854 painting. What is a suggestive gesture of artistic possibility, for example,

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the dilated passages that these authors offer on wounds constitute an attempt to provide a context for an internalization of desire, an attempt at explaining, in corporeal terms, its effects on the body. On the repudiation of Freudian principles in this regard, see Catherine Malabou, *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage*, trans. Steven Miller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 1–22, at 6.

[73] See Figures One and Two.

[74] Alfred de Musset, *La Confession d'un enfant du siècle* (Paris: Garnier, 1956), 316.

[75] See Figure Three. On the connection, see Linda Nochlin, *Gustave Courbet: A Study in Style and Society* (New York: Garland, 1976), 40, n.1.

in the charcoal sketch—Courbet's open and inviting right hand—is eventually reworked into the opaque swath of Courbet's cloak.[76] The two versions, in fact, share only one feature: the broad grin of satisfaction spreading across the artist's face. Does this evidence the artist's epic-romantic tendencies, his association of erotic passion with martial quest? Or is the final version a testament to his abandonment of sensuality; has he, in other words, made himself into a martyr for unrequited lovers and thus is dying from a wound he sustained in battle with an Acrasia-like enchantress? Perhaps, even, the truth that the artist suggests is hidden in the production, its transition from one stage to the next. It is impossible to think this, of course, as Courbet could not have known that technology capable of seeing beneath the surface of his paintings would ever be invented. But it is tempting nevertheless, and Courbet's own words about his self-portraits seem to suggest that he placed as much emphasis on production as presentation. "During my life," he wrote to his patron Alfred Bruyas, "I have painted many portraits of myself, corresponding to the changes in my state of mind; in short, I have painted the story of my life."[77]

David Hillman has written that one way in which early moderns combated the period's developing epistemologies and disembodied ideologies of the self was "through recourse to fantasies of a clearly defined boundary between 'inside' and 'outside.'"[78] As the site of both empirical fact and psychic signification, the wound would seem at first to destabilize belief in the fully bounded body. But what we find in the three epic-romances studied here is that no other literary or iconographic image was as suitable for explaining, in both metaphoric and corporeal terms, the relationship between the somatic inner and the outer. It is as if these authors have intuited what Courbet would eventually assert about his

[76] See Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires d'aveugles: L'autoportrait et autres ruines* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1990), 75.
[77] As quoted in Gerstle Mack's *Gustave Courbet* (Boston: De Capo, 1989), 115.
[78] Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails,* 5.

own self: that it is irreducibly bound up with phase rather than essence, ambiguity rather than clarity, phenomenology rather than ontology. In fact, if we think for just a moment about the pure shape of these writers' stories rather than the allure of their protagonists or the multivalency of their allegories, individual scenes emerge with almost archetypal clarity: Clorinda's redemptive mutilation, Parthenia's blood-drenched pallor, Amavia's disquieting suicide, Venus's insatiable orifice, and, of course, Amoret's "perfect hole." In each of these instances the point under study is the transition and movement of a wound from one register to another, its mercurial capaciousness and inexhaustibility. In each of these instances, in other words, a wound is designated by its movement as an interiorizing apparatus, one capable of slipping in the instance into a surplus of unanticipated meaning. This is a thesis about that slippage, about how due consciousness to its synthesizing potentialities can help us overcome what have been anachronistic and sometimes unflinchingly circular determinations about the "amorous subjectivity" of early modern epic-romance.

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CHAPTER ONE

"*BELLE PIAGHE*": SACRED EROTICISMS IN TORQUATO TASSO'S *GERUSALEMME LIBERATA*

Oimè! dal dì che pria
trassi l'aure vitali e i lumi apersi
in questa luce a me non mai serena,
fui dell' inguista e ria
trastullo e segno, e di sua man soffersi
piaghe che lunga età risalda appena.
—Torquato Tasso, "Canzone al Metauro"

Grief is the price we pay for love.
—C. S. Lewis

In the final canto of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, the pagan enchantress Armida, upon failing to slay her beloved and enemy Rinaldo, raises an arrow toward her own breast, preparing to take her life and seal with it her fate as an ugly (albeit aggrieved) icon of romantic venery. Romance has prepared us for this moment; we expect that her death will prove apocalyptic, that it will allow us to peer into the raw, unclouded ugliness of her true self. Even the poem has prepared us for this revelation, as many readers have acknowledged, pointing to those octaves in canto four that liken Armida's lovely, sultry exterior to the deceptive veils of allegoresis.[79] But her stripping is not to be; Rinaldo appears from the midst of the ensuing battle to wrest the bow and arrow from her hands, undoing the death wish that she only two octaves previously revealed:

[79] See in particular David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 114–116, and Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1989), 210. Where Quint argues that Tasso has prepared the reader for Armida's Christian transformation, Giamatti claims that "the shift […] is too great, and we are finally unconvinced of Armida's redemption." In the third section of this chapter, I discuss more thoroughly those octaves (31–2) from canto four.

Dimostratevi in me (ch'io vi perdono
la passata viltà) forti ed acute.
Misera Armida, in qual fortuna or sono,
se sol da voi posso sperar salute?
Poi ch'ogn'altro rimedio è in me non buono
se non sol di ferute a le ferute,
sani piaga di stral piaga d'amore,
e sia la morte medicina al core.

[I pardon will your feare and weakenes past,
Be strong (mine arrowes) cruell, sharpe gainst mee,
Ah wretch, how is thy chance and fortune cast,
If plast in these, thy good and comfort bee?
But since all hope is vaine, all helpe is wast,
Since hurts ease hurts, wounds must cure wounds in thee;
Then with thine arrowes stroake cure stroakes of loue,
Death for thy hart must salue, and surgeon proue.][80]
(XX.125)

Our study of woundedness in early modern romance begins with Tasso, in whose autobiographical, critical, and poetic texts the metaphor of woundedness is often deployed in order to explore at once signs of grief and uncertainty as well as the mechanisms by which such weaknesses can be overcome. Here, in the penultimate moment of Tasso's greatest work, the wound ("*piaga*") fulfills both these desires, at once expressing Armida's plight and providing, by way of death, her respite from her pain. But that is not all; what Armida calls her "*piaga d'amore*" [wound of love] violently latches her outward desires with her internal condition: her newly developed love for Rinaldo. "*Poi ch'ogn'altro rimedio è in me non buono*,"

[80] All Italian quotations to the poem are from Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, ed. Lanfranco Caretti (Torino: Guilio Einaudi, 1993). English translations generally are to Edward Fairfax, *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, ed. Kathleen Lea and T. M. Gang (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). Future references to the poem will be noted in parentheses by canto and octave. I have chosen to use Fairfax's translation of the poem in order to get a closer sense to how Tasso's epic-romance would have been received by Sidney's and Spenser's contemporaries. Fairfax's translation, as noted by Roberto Weiss, *Jerusalem Delivered: The Edward Fairfax Translation* (London: Centaur, 1962), is both liberal with its source text and unnecessarily decorous. As such, I have used my own translations to supplement Fairfax's. As a general rule, all translations that follow block quotations of the poem's Italian are to the Fairfax. Unless otherwise noted, all other translations (including those to Tasso's critical writings and epistles) are my own.

she convinces herself, "*se non sol di ferute a le ferute, / sani piaga di stral piaga d'amore / e sia la morte medicini al core*" [Since all else has failed to restore health in me, since one pain cures another pain, then may the wound of the arrow heal the wound of love and death be the physician of my heart]. It will be my argument in this chapter that Tasso has indeed prepared us for this moment, prepared us by consistently and intentionally representing the wound as both a harbinger and an icon of redemption.

The last in a series of episodes from the *Liberata* in which Tasso utilizes woundedness in this way, Armida's attempted suicide shows the poet stripping his vile enchantress and revealing the truth at the heart of her identity. Armida's admission of her "*piaga d'amore*" indeed is her unveiling, a point that many readers of this episode seem to have missed.[81] What her sultry exterior covers is not ugliness, not even, as has been proposed, hollowness, but rather a sickness that both fuels and makes possible her imminent conversion to Christianity. This sudden shift, as Bartlett Giamatti has noted, is not without its flaws or its difficulties. No precedence in romance appears to explain this change from enchantress-turned-hag to enchantress-turned-Christian, though Melinda Gough has persuasively demonstrated how Armida's transformation may have roots in Jerome and Boccaccio.[82] Whatever the extent of this intertextuality, I believe that a reading sensitive to Tasso's understanding of wounded bodies and wounded hearts—a reading, moreover, framed by Tasso's critical writings on romance and heroic poetry as well as the glimpses of his lucid self we find in his letters—will help clarify this episode's representation of the

[81] Why Armida has not been exposed as physically and morally ugly has puzzled many critics. In addition to Quint and Giamatti, see Melinda Gough, "Tasso's Enchantress, Tasso's Captive Woman" *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (2001): 523–52, Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1995), 85–145, and Walter Stephens, "Saint Paul Among the Amazons" in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1989), 193–200.
[82] Gough, "Tasso's Enchantress," 533–36.

wound as a positive rather than a negative sign. Armida is finally spared, we will see, both from her own hands and from Tasso's discriminating pen, because her understanding of the wounded body and the wounded heart have combined and rendered her interior and her exterior indistinguishable from one another. To expose her, then, as a hideous crone would be not only to upset the moral and spiritual direction of Tasso's poem but also to allow for the pleasures and dangers that an unwounded Armida represents to slide unpunished and unrepaired into the romantic byways of the poem.

The point at issue here, of course, is romance, and Tasso's poem has been the bane of critics attempting to explain how the *Liberata* fits into a generic tradition that ranges from Trissino, to Ariosto, and finally to Spenser. Armida's transformation and Tasso's refusal to strip her to her nether parts constitutes an important example among many of Tasso's generic modifications, important because it has a clear relationship to his theoretical writings. In the *Discorsi del poema eroico*, for example, Tasso offers his reasons for not stripping Armida as Ariosto stripped Alcina, "*le fraudi e gli artifici*" [of her artifices and deceits]:[83]

> *benché la meraviglia nasca da l'una e da l'altra poesia, cioè da quella ch'imita le cose brutte e da quell ache rassogmiglia le belle, nondimeno non è così propria de l'una come de l'altra: perché tosto suol mancare la meraviglia de le cose brutte, le quali con la novità perdono ancora l'estimazione; ma la meraviglia de le cose belle è più durevole e di maggiore estima. E bellissimo oltre tutti gli altri poemi è l'eroico: laonde questo diletto è suo proprio.*
>
> [although marvel is born by both kinds of poetry, that which imitates ugly things and that which resembles beautiful ones, it is not so equal from one to the other: because we soon miss the marvel at ugly things, as they along with their novelty lose our esteem, marvel at the beautiful is more lasting and entails greater esteem. And because heroic poems are beautiful beyond all others: this is its own delight.][84]

[83] Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, ed. Cesare Segre (Milan: Cátedra, 2002), 7.64. All references to *Orlando furioso* are to this edition. Tasso's father, Bernardo, had written a long epic on Amadis de Gaul, appropriately titled *L'Amadigi di Gaula* (1560).
[84] Torquato Tasso, *Discorsi dell'arte poetica e del poema eroico,* ed. Luigi Poma (Bari: Laterza, 1964), 693.

Annabel Patterson has responded to this tendency in Tasso's poetry, arguing that the innovation might have come from Tasso's fascination with Neoplatonism, that his failure to reveal hags as hags stems from his belief that epic poetry must imitate the beautiful.[85] In the passage above, however, poetry that depicts the ugly is not denied aesthetic effect; it is rather accused of suspending a portion of its rhetorical power. Writing under the censorship of the Inquisition and with the burden of the revival of Aristotelian poetics always upon his back, Tasso no doubt sought for such a critical understanding of poetry. But his belief in the beautiful, as this chapter will prove, pushes far deeper, into the interstices of his own anxieties about how epic and romance might be combined, about how, finally, the moral and spiritual substance of his poem might bear the weight of the wayward, enfeebling sexuality endemic to romance in general and romance's depiction of wounds in particular.[86]

When Tasso explicitly criticizes Ariosto in the *Discorsi*, then, we have the faint sense that his criticism is not simply over the nature of Ariosto's reliance on a dark allegory, on offering Alcina as an analogue for the poet that has to be undone by the poem's end. Tasso's anxiety with allegory, rather, stems from a desire to prove that there are productive

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[85] Annabel Patterson, "Tasso and Neoplatonism: The Growth of His Epic Theory," *Studies in the Renaissance* 18 (1971): 105–33. This is a point of some contention. For an argument that Tasso was disillusioned with rather than fascinated by Neoplatonism see Thomas Greene, *The Descent from Heaven* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 104–43. For the implications of this disillusionment on Tasso's conception of allegory, see Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus*, 341–42.

[86] Richard Rambuss reads the figure of the wound in a similar manner, arguing for the union of the sacred and the erotic across late Renaissance metaphysical poetry. Though to a very different end, Rambuss's conception of the wound as an iconographic figure in which sacred and erotic tendencies collide and combine is similar to my own argument about wounds in Tasso's romance, with one important difference. Where Rambuss proposes that transgression leads to a form of anti-authoritarian, self-fashioned liberation, Tasso's poem, I argue, uses the figure of the wound to create a context in which transgression (whether sexual or otherwise) could be implicated into a discourse of probity, virtue, and redemption. See Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 26–35.

reasons why love and erotic passion often seem psychologically unmanageable.[87] It is no wonder that Tasso settled upon the wound as one figure in his poetry that could vastly adjust his forbearers' conceptions of what differentiated romance from epic; the wound's already codified dynamism, its interlacing of discourses—martial, socio-political, theological—necessarily presented Tasso with a poetic impasse, a figure whose treatment in his text could have deep implications for both his religious and his literary orthodoxy. But what we find in the *Liberata* is not the careful skepticism with which Virgil treats erotic wounds in the *Aenied* or the outright denial of eroticism that Ariosto ultimately offers in *Orlando furioso*; rather, what we find in Tasso's poem is an attempt to amend the destructive aspects of eros that menace the liberation of Jerusalem. This, in fact, is the desire that must have led Tasso, near the beginning of the *Discorsi*, to exclaim, "[*l*]*aonde non meritano lode alcuna coloro che hanno descritti gli abbracciamenti amorosi in quella guisa che l'Ariosto descrisse quel di Ruggiero con Alcina*" [they merit no praise at all, therefore, who have described amorous embraces in the fashion of Ariosto depicting Ruggiero with Alcina].[88] The "*quelle guisa*" [the fashion] that Tasso speaks to here

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[87] Gordon Teskey notes the irony in Tasso's struggle to make his poem allegorically innocuous and structurally sound while Tasso himself succumbed to a fantastic, nervous sickness spurred on by his sadomasochistic desires that the Inquisition censor his poem. "It is as if," Teskey writes, "meditating on the collective body of the Church Militant and identifying himself with it, Tasso came to regard as subversive the mere existence in himself of an interior apart from a whole." Gordon Teskey, *Allegory and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 126. On Tasso and allegory, see also Michael Murrin, *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in Its Rise and Decline* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 87–127, and Mindele Anne Treip, *Allegorical Poetics and the Epic: The Renaissance Tradition to "Paradise Lost"* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), 65–67.

[88] Tasso, *Discorsi del poema eroico*, 11–12. Tasso's skepticism with the uncanny allegorical extends to the romantic topos of forests as well. In the second book of the *Discorsi*, he warns against "*incanti* […] *ne la selva che ingannanò con delusioni*" [the enchantments in the woods, deceiving with allusions] and suggests that "*la materia* [of poetry] *è simile ad una selva oscura, tenebrosa e priva d'ogni luce*" [the material (of poetry) is like a dark forest, murky and without a ray of light]. Tasso felt as if, to truly write epic and romance, he had to purge the literary history of epic-romance of its ongoing compulsion to have its heroes err into forests, forests that they must eventually cut down to overcome their enfeeblement. Our treatment of the wound as a beautiful icon of desire will show why, in the *Liberata*, Armida's enchanted

and to which Ariosto's romance is lacking, I argue, is the wound, for it is the single unifying feature of all three primary moments of amorous embrace in Tasso's poem: Tancred's love for Clorinda, Erminia's love for Tancred, and Armida's love for Rinaldo. The distinctive element, then, of Tasso's poem is not his treatment of the wound as a generic symbol, but his modification of the wound as an inherently ugly, romantic icon of fracture and deferral to a symbol of both spiritual and sexual redemption. It is his treatment of the wound, in other words, as beautiful, as both the "*piaga d'amore*" and the "*belle piaga*." We will find here that Tasso makes possible this amelioration of a traditionally (and generically) negative occurrence by concentrating in the figure of the wound both the sacred and the erotic desires of his characters, a combination that destroys their presumed opposition to each other and thereby elides the epic and romantic energies of his poem.

If the relationship of the *Liberata*'s wounds to a diachronic history of epic and romance constitutes one manner in which this chapter engages secondary criticism, then the utilization of the wound as a figure in Tasso's poetry that welcomes psychoanalytic criticisms constitutes a second, though the two are hardly distinct from one another. The recent vogue of reading the *Liberata* psychoanalytically makes use of the wound as both a romantic icon and a useful figure for exposing pseudo-sexual and pseudo-oedipal tendencies, which many readers have simply passed off as a generic condition of romance: the uncanny. This dual focus has led critics to explore the relationship between Tasso's melancholic illness and the tensions evident in his troubled epic, especially those tensions that center on Tancred's love for Clorinda. One such reader is Margaret Ferguson, who, in a groundbreaking essay on the uncanny in the *Liberata*, considered how the melancholic structure of Tasso's poem

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forest does not have to be cut down with the same maddening verve with which Ariosto's forests are cut down. For a theoretical critique of Ariostean romance in Tasso in general and of these lines in particular, see Andrew Fichter, "Tasso's Epic of Deliverance," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 93, no. 2 (1978): 265–74.

paralleled a pattern of desire she saw emerging in Tasso's failure to extricate his poetic career from that of his father; she reads, for example, Tancred's violent and self-destructive encounter with the phantasmal Clorinda (an encounter, significantly, in which Tancred attempts to wound the tree upon which Clorinda's phantasm appears) as illustrative of the poet's own inability "to escape the family romance."[89] For Ferguson, then, epic-romance is something akin to the anxiety of influence, in which Tasso's authorial act of imitation (of his father, of Ariosto) mirrors Tancred's wounding of a speaking tree. She responds, accordingly, to Tasso's theory of the romantic marvelous by suggesting that there is a "weakness […] evident in his tendency to vacillate between defending his 'marvels' […] and apologizing for them," a weakness that she registers as his unwitting capitulation to the uncanny, psychic pathologies of melancholy.[90]

Lynn Enterline and Elizabeth Bellamy, building on Ferguson's model, have considered how melancholy functions as a figure of authorial anxiety in the poem in general, focusing on Tancred's uneasy attempt to distinguish between melancholic phantasms of the mind and the "true visions" of the poetry. According to Enterline, the hieroglyphs in the enchanted forest ought to be interpreted as representations of the frightening visions that caused and sustained Tasso's own battle with melancholy, especially considering that, in both instances, it is the dubiety of the visions that proves to be psychically disruptive. "As a figure for the author who tries and fails to read himself as the origin of his own text," writes Enterline, "Tancredi dramatizes the destructive potential of allegory as a poetic version of the phantasm of dubious origin that fill his author with 'infinite melancholy.'"[91] Bellamy's position is very similar, arguing that Tasso's attempt to transcend Ariosto's errant narrative is

[89] Margaret Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 127.
[90] Ibid, 105.
[91] Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus*, 82.

analogous to Freud's failed effort to distinguish sublimation from narcissism.[92] Tasso's recuperative project for epic narrative, in these terms, entangles itself in the woods surrounding Jerusalem, woods that will be needed to build the siege towers in order to defeat Aladdin's forces and return the city to Christianity. In the interim, however, these woods constitute the site of romance errantry, so that Tasso can show both his control of and demonstrate his mastery over those epic and romantic topoi that caused Tasso to label Ariosto's poem a confused, structurally disorganized work. Her assessment of Tancred's "return" to Clorinda also follows this model; "[t]hus, of ever greater psychic significance than the *micidial* Tancredi's return to the murder of his lover," she argues, "may be Tasso's own return to the *translatio topos* of the bleeding tree."[93] In other words, the interpretive revelation of Tancred's encounter with the phantasmal Clorinda is not Tasso's departure from or improvement upon Ariosto's epic topos but his failure, in the act of attempting, at recreating such generic conditions.

The distinctly romantic elements of Tasso's poem, however, are nowhere put more ruthlessly under a psychoanalytic lens than in Marion Wells's study of "Love-Melancholy and Romance" in the *Liberata*. Rather than focusing entirely on the allegorical implications of Tancred's love for Clorinda, Wells attempts to reposition the discussion about love-melancholy in the poem in terms of a complex "pneumo-phantasmic theory of the mind" that she notices developing in the writings of Lucretius and Ficino, a theory, she proposes, that is akin to the psychoanalytic models utilized by Ferguson and Enterline but that more importantly functions conventionally as a paradigm for thinking about the relationship

[92] This argument is developed in two separate writings: Elizabeth Bellamy, *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 131–88; and Elizabeth Bellamy, "From Virgil to Tasso: The Epic Topos as an Uncanny Return," in *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*, ed. Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 207–32.
[93] Bellamy, "From Virgil to Tasso," 224.

between the self and its desires.[94] Bringing to light these models allows Wells, as she says, to "focus on Tasso's construal of the relationship between Tancred's love-melancholy and the poetics of romance, examining in particular the influence of the Lucretian / Ficinian model of an eroticized *furor* that seeks an impossible fusion with a quasi-maternal figure."[95] But as with Ferguson's and Enterline's psychoanalytic approaches, Well's insistence on these models as foregrounding Tasso's representations of psychic fracture necessarily causes her to overlook how equally important the phenomena of pain and physical wounding are to those representations. One such moment of oversight occurs right at the outset of Wells' chapter on Tasso, when her persistence on the pervasiveness of *atra voluptas* [dark pleasure] in late medieval romance has the unfortunate consequence of narrowing her vision to the *Liberata*'s treatment of that topic. The moment, not incidentally, also constitutes her thesis. Tancred's love for Clorinda, she writes,

> is an obsessive fixation on the phantasmlike figure, a pleasing *sembianza* that dominates his mind, drawing him permanently away from the center of the epic account into the "romance" byways of the poem.[96]

By focusing on Tasso's persistence in woundedness as the aesthetic *par excellence*, this chapter will offer a reading that might ameliorate Tancred's (and Tasso's other wounded characters') participation in some dark pleasure, his complete capitulation to the exigencies of love-melancholy. To be sure, the paradigms that Wells brings into the text are important, as Lucretius and Ficino undoubtedly influenced Tasso's conceptualization of both the pleasures and pains of eros. But there are other reasons besides the melancholic, we will see, for why erotic passion at times becomes psychologically unmanageable in the *Liberata*, just as there are other ways of reading besides the psychoanalytic for explaining the preponderance in the

[94] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 137.
[95] Ibid, 138.
[96] Ibid, 140.

romance of such moments. After all, and despite the attacks on its integrity that epic form mandates, heroic love is still the singular virtue praised by the romance and the ideal that Tancred, in his battles with both physical and psychological wounds, hopes to obtain.

One distinct failing of psychoanalytic readings like those outlined above is the continual misidentification of what an ethos of romance might be. Underlying Ferguson's, Enterline's, and Wells's accounts of how Tasso's own melancholy invades his poem is a meta-conversation about the form of Tasso's romance in particular and all romance in general. These recent psychoanalytic assessments, I think, have defined romance all too narrowly, which is to say they have treated singular martial heroism and the fulfillment of one's duty as the epic and anything else, or anything less, as the romantic. But romance, Patricia Parker has reminded us, has no codified definition; the genre itself, like its subject matter, sways and errs and means very different things to very different poets.[97] My misgivings with psychoanalytic readings of the nexus between Tasso's own melancholy and Tancred's melancholy in the poem derive from this misidentification and extrapolation. Tasso himself, without a doubt, saw the romance elements of his poem conforming to an epic tradition; for him, history and genre were inextricably linked.[98] In what follows, it will

[97] "The term 'romance,'" writes Parker, is "neither a fixed generic prescription nor an abstract transhistorical category. The former is rendered impossible by the poets' own extension of the term beyond its strictly generic meaning, and therefore is invoked only where appropriate […]. The latter is invalidated by the changing connotations of the word 'romance' in the centuries after Chrétien and his Renaissance successors, and by the discontinuities as well as continuities between the manifestations of a form which historically has had an extraordinary resilience, a tendency to turn up, Proteus-like, in a multiplicity of different guises." Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 5. Parker's study of romance does not include the *Gerusalemme liberata*, in part, I think, because the narrative of Tasso's poem does not quite fit the generic ascriptions Parker assigns the mode: fracture, deferral, and dilation.

[98] On Tasso's understanding of how the historical elements in his poem conformed to a generic tradition, see Robert Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 182–210; for a more recent account, see Maggie Günsberg, *The Epic Rhetoric of Tasso: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: European Humanities Research Center,

be my working assumption that Tasso utilizes the figure of the wound both historically and generically, which is to say as both a figure in flux, dynamic and multivalent, and as responsive to the history of the metaphor of woundedness. Awareness to these allusive and multivalent usages of wounds in Tasso's romance, I believe, will prove the extent to which psychoanalytic assessments of the image disproportionately extrapolate information given allegorically in the text. The consequence, in fact, of this sort of extrapolation is that the "semantic complexity" of epic-romance in general and wounding in particular becomes "flatten[ed]," transformed into a vehicle for anachronism rather than part of a more historically comprehensive poetic tenor.[99] The object of this chapter (indeed, this whole work) is to bring that tenor, with its extensive level of allusion and "semantic complexity," back to the surface: to restore to readers the "literary competence," to borrow Jonathan Culler's phrase, that would have been brought to the *Gerusalemme liberata* as a matter of course by its earliest critics.[100] Without that competence, Tasso's "*belle piaghe*" may indeed appear to us as invitations for extratextual inquires, as images so mired in ambiguity that only something like condensation or displacement could fully capture their danger and plurality. But as both the cause and the consequence of the *Liberata*'s most heroic relationships and as

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1998), 7–112. Here, I treat the wound as if it were both a historical and a generic figure, as I believe Tasso's own theories of heroic poetry suggest. Tasso, in other words, would not have thought his elaboration on the wound to be either distinctly historical or generic.

[99] Citations are from Sergio Zatti's "Errancy, Infirmity, and Conquest: Figures of Conflict," in *The Quest for Epic: From Ariosto to Tasso*, ed. Denis Looney, trans. Sally Hill and Denis Looney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 166–7. Here is the quotation in full: "Psychoanalytic methodology has accustomed [readers of the *Liberata*] to practices that almost always end up flattening the semantic complexity of the work and historical density that enriches it, while emphasizing a number of stock elementary symbols that are generally too generic to be incorrect."

[100] Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 62. According the Culler, "literary competence would focus on the conventions that make possible literary structure and meaning, […] on the codes or systems of convention that enable readers to identify literary genres, recognize plots and pursue the kind of symbolic interpretations that allows us to gauge the significance of poems and stories."

the impetuses for bringing those relationships towards perfection, the wounds of Tasso's poem, I argue, could be interpreted more accurately as points of exploration in his writing for working out the potentially reconcilable relationship between the sacred and the erotic, the heroic and the pathetic, the epic and the romantic.

My subject in this chapter, then, is the peculiar use Tasso makes of the wound as a positive valorization of a generally negative experience, though to understand how Tasso derived such a theory of woundedness, we must first consider what source material informs his representation of wounds as such. The very existence of a history of this kind—between Tasso's own conceptions of his poem and that of his forbearers and contemporaries—is explained somewhat by Tasso's theoretical musings over the difference between epic and romance, especially when he argues that those works called romances are not different "*de specie*" [in kind] from those called epic or heroic poems.[101] Underlying such an assertion is the feeling, distorted by many psychoanalytic readings, that the *materia* of romance in fact could bear the weight of epic didacticism and heroic purpose. Tasso partly accounted for this elision of genres by begging repeatedly for the censorship of the Inquisition and the Aristotelian scholars at the Florentine Accademia *della* Crusca; historical and religious accuracy, he believed, could effect this combination.[102] I want to propose that as an image with a long literary history and explicit Christian connotations, the wound offered Tasso another mechanism that aided in this synthesis, an image that allowed him to account for how the seduction of Christian warriors by Muslim women potentially could be viewed as a positive rather than a negative occurrence.

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[101] Torquato Tasso, "*Apologia in difesa della Gerusalemme liberata*" in *Opere*, ed. Bruno Maier (Milano: Rizzoli, 1962), 633.

[102] Tasso sought legitimization of the *Liberata* both from the Inquisition (once in Bologna in 1575 and again in Ferrara in 1577) and from a group of advisors in Rome who judged his compliance with rules derived from Aristotelian poetics.

We are, however, accustomed to registering such moments in romance negatively, as if they illustrate an ontological flaw with both the character and the author. And Tasso's theoretical writings on the blending of epic and romance—primarily his *Apologia in difesa della Gerusalemme liberata*—do not quite absolve the author from similar skepticisms. In fact, if the *Apologia* reveals anything about Tasso, it is that his attempt to combine the epic and romantic elements of his poem eventually generated psychic as well as theoretical conflicts.[103] As a traditionally epic icon translated into a romantic figure of deferral and delay, the wound indeed would have presented Tasso with an embattled poetic image, embattled especially in those moments in which heroic action juxtaposed amorous union. But it is because of this juxtaposition and the psychic as well as poetic tensions it created, this chapter hypothesizes, that Tasso vehemently pursued contexts that would ameliorate those tensions, contexts, I think, that he ultimately discovered by exploring the semantic possibilities afforded by the wound. At the heart, in other words, of Tasso's understanding of how epic might come to bear the weight of romance, or how, to put it more specifically, Tancred might come to be both a Christian hero and Clorinda's lover, sits the wound, the single unifying feature of every amorous encounter in the *Liberata*.

The *Liberata* makes this synthesis possible by offering multiple possibilities for how an individual wound could be interpreted, and it is these manipulations of point of view that become the keys to Tasso's representation of a wound as both a romantic and an epic, a sacred and an erotic, symbol. As a complex physiological phenomenon, for example, a wound is interpretable by both the self and the observer—though, significantly, to different ends—and as such, it provided Tasso with a way to juxtapose a character's interiority with an observer's psychology. In the *Liberata*, then, the self is not simply a knowable, verifiable

[103] For a discussion of the *Apologia* in these terms see Ferguson, *Trials of Desire*, 54–60, and Durling, *The Figure of the Poet*, 200–10.

artifact, able to be mined out of the text as perhaps it could be in an essay by Montaigne. Tasso's "self" is rather the composite of the assertions and descriptions given by the other characters in the romance, and this is especially true for those "selves" that are sequestered by bodies covered with physical wounds. The consequence of externalizing such psychological knowledge, as Sergio Zatti argues, is that "[i]mages of alterity [begin in the poem to] run parallel to figures of self-awareness," images that Zatti locates in Tasso's biography as well.[104] Indeed, this interpretative process appears all the more symptomatic for the poem when we consider that Tasso thought of the *Liberata* as the instrument of his voice intended to legitimize his own conceptions of his identity, conceptions that we know were left unfulfilled and unlegitimized during his lifetime.[105] The tensions, in these terms, between self-awareness and legitimization not only beget the fantastic desires of both the poet and his aggrieved characters, but they do so, essentially, by mirroring the interpretative crisis presented by pain: how often one's experience of one's own pain and another's interpretation of it fail to coalesce. The development of Tasso's biographical and poetic tensions thus can be traced to origins that do not in themselves necessarily depend on or support a psychoanalytic approach. One could, in fact, make the argument that the fantastic visions that confront Tancred after Clorinda's death, as well as those that dominate and eventually ruin Tasso's own life, result from this disparity between self-awareness and alterity, between feeling and vision, between one's own conceptions of oneself and the subsequent perceptions of others.

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[104] Zatti, "Errancy," 163.

[105] "He continually collaborates with the authority that persecutes him," Zatti writes, "providing it with a function and a right that he is later continually tempted to deny. Thus, two complementary and opposing factors feed Tasso's desire for the poem's legitimation: his awareness of the work's artistic novelty and moral audacity paradoxically demands the sanction of a tribunal whose authority he does not recognize" (Ibid, 169).

Tasso was the object of this sort of sensitivity to the difference between the wounded and the spectator of those wounds. His anxieties over the division between sight and truth even seeped into his delusions about the cause and consequences of his own illness. His letters to his friends, his family, his physicians at Sant'Anna, and his patron Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, all belie his naïveté to how the self experiences pain as a simultaneous division and coherence of the body and mind. For example, "*[s]ono alcuni anni ch'io sono infermo*," he writes to the Paduan physician Girolamo Mercuriale in 1583,

> *e l'infermità mia non è conosciuta da me; nondimeno io ho certa opinione di essere stato ammaliato. Ma qualunque sia stata la cagione del mio male, gli effetti sono questi: rodimento d'intestino, con un poco di flusso di sangue; tintinni ne gli orecchi e ne la testa, alcuna volta sì forti che mi pare di averci un di questi orioli da corda; imaginazione continua di varie cose, e tutte spiacevoli: la qual mi perturba in modo ch'io non posso applicar la mente a gli studi pur un sestodecimo d'ora; e quanto più mi sforzo di tenervela intenta, tanto più sono distratto da varie imaginazioni, e qualche volta da sdegni grandissimi, i quali si muovono in me secondo le varie fantasie che mi nascono. Oltra di ciò, sempre dopo il mangiare la teste mi fuma fuor di modo e si riscalda grandemente; ed in tutto ciò ch'io odo vo, per così dire, fingendo con la fantasia alcuna voce umana, di maniera che mi pare assai spesso che parlino le cose inanimate.*
>
> [I have been sick for many years and the nature of my sickness is unknown even to me; nonetheless I am certain that I have been bewitched. But whatever the cause of my illness, the effects are these: a gnawing in my intestines, with a little bloody flux; ringing in my ears and in my head, sometimes so strong that I think of myself as an oriole on a rope; continual visions of various things, all of which are displeasing: which disturb me to such a degree that I cannot apply my mind to my studies not even for a few minutes; and the more I try to hold to my intent, the more I am distracted by various imaginings, and sometimes by enormous rages, which occur in me according to the various fantasies which arise in my mind. In addition to this, always after eating I am extraordinarily befuddled, and my head is hot; and in all that I hear, as it were, I fantasize some human voice, such that it seems to me often enough that inanimate objects talk.][106]

The physical symptoms of Tasso's illness, such as the bloody flux and the ringing in the ears, here merge imperceptibly into a severe mental disturbance. From a modern viewpoint, we might say that Tasso's hypochondria simply mirrored the fragility of his mental state, but for Tasso himself, his ill health was a periodic crisis (intellectual, artistic, and spiritual) that he

[106] Tasso, *Opere*, 783.

saw himself as having to endure. For him, body and mind were inextricably bound, and were so, as his letter to Girolamo suggests, because there was no other way for him to conceptualize the experience of pain, whether physical or emotional, than to draw attention to its physical, visible effects. The body, of course, was a liability for Tasso, and during his time at Sant'Anna di Ferrara, where he was imprisoned from 1579–86, whatever sort of psychological condition he suffered most likely was exacerbated by the haphazard administration of opium and other medications, treatments that, in addition to their narcotic effects, would have caused physical pain similar to what Tasso describes above.[107]

The letter to Girolamo proves that Tasso understood, if only partly, how freighted and intractable discussions about the mind's relation to the body's pain were in the period. The letter also proves that the poet was keenly aware of the ineluctable circularity that defined the experience of pain, as he seems unable to separate whether it is pain in his mind or pain in his stomach that is the harbinger of his illness. We find in another letter, this one from Tasso to his friend Maurizeo Cataneo, that the delusional visions that caused Tasso such physical pain also occasionally resulted in a triumphant revelation. "*E fra tanti terrori*," he writes on 30 December 1585 from within his prison cell,

> *e tanti dolori m'apparve in aria l'imagine de la gloriosa Vergine co 'l Figlio in braccio, in un mezzo cerchio di colori e di vapori: laonde io non debbo disperar de la sua grazia.*
>
> [And among so many terrors there appeared to me in the air the image of the glorious Virgin with her Son in her arms, in a half circle of color and vapor: whereof I must not despair of her grace.][108]

The image of the Virgin "*co 'l Figlio in braccio*" [with the son in her arms] appears to be a sort of hallucinatory Madonna-with-Child, but it could also be a *Pietà*: the Virgin with the

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[107] For a complete discussion of both Tasso's letters and the medical mishaps from his time at Sant'Anna, see Charles Klopp, *Sentences: The Memoirs and Letters of Italian Political Prisoners* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 19.
[108] Tasso, *Opere*, 789.

bleeding Christ in her arms.[109] If the latter is true, then the excerpt from Tasso's letter to Cataneo suggests that Tasso's hope for grace rested in an image of the body that was both painful and redemptive. In the *Liberata*, Tasso certainly dramatizes the body in this way, though it remains open to interpretation whether or not Tasso elaborates on the body specifically to reveal its destructive capacities, to bear witness to its putrefaction and inadequacy to house the soul. His poem, indeed, is haunted by images of the body in crisis: splintered, dismembered bodies, wounded by the fortunes of war. But individually wounded bodies, like Trancred's or Clorinda's, are shown often to be involved in the transition from physicality to visionary redemption, or vice versa. They are both described from within (the wounded character attempting to make sense of his or her own wounds) and from without (the narrator or a spectator providing us with a psychological map).

Taken together, these two letters demonstrate Tasso's understanding of the phenomenology of desire—to the knowledge that consummation is a type of loss—and reveal his desire to overcome it. His inability to verbalize his disease in terms other than the visible bears witness to the sort of mental asphyxiation placed on the desiring, melancholic mind. His visions, indeed, are merely fantastic; they do not last, and they leave him with a dullness that habituates his psychological distress. This is no where more apparent than from the ending of his letter to Cataneo, which suggests that Tasso was not quite encouraged by his vision but suspicious and distressed by what he had seen. "*E benché potesse facilmente essere una fantasia*," he tells Cataneo,

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[109] The Italian "*Figlio*" is not restrictive. In any case, the image of the Madonna-with-Child foreshadowed the image of the *Pietà*. Gertrud Schiller, in *Iconography of Christian Art* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1972), notes that depictions of the *Pietà* often echo depictions of adorations associated with the nativity. The *Pietà* would actually have been more appropriate to Tasso's state of mind at this point, since as a devotional image it referred to redemption through suffering. As we shall see, the image of someone sorrowing over the wounded body of another occurs more than once in the *Gerusalemme liberata.*

> *perch'io sono frenetico, e quasi sempre perturbato da vari fantasmi, e pieno di maninconia infinita, nondimeno, per la grazia d'Iddio, posso cohibere assensum alcuna volta, la qual operazione è del savio, come piace a Cicerone: laonde più tosto devrei credere che quello fosse un miracolo de la Vergine*.
>
> [And although it might have easily been a fantasy, I am jittery, and bothered incessantly by phantoms of various sorts, and plunged in melancholy. Nonetheless, by the grace of God, I am able at times to control my emotions: an act that Cicero asserts is the mark of a wise man. For these reasons, I prefer to believe that what I saw was a miracle wrought by the Virgin.][110]

The principal danger of being confined in Sant'Anna, for Tasso, was that his reason would not be strong enough to control the feelings and images that arose to beset him from the depths of his own imagination. And it is into this complicated, psychological lability that Tasso began to write the *Liberata*. The poem offers us images of wounds in both contexts—as psychologically damaging and as spiritually uplifting. It also complicates the matter by making it difficult to determine, often, into which register a wound has been implicated. It models its author's psychology—searching for a means to write off delusion and destruction as redemptive but being uncertain about its own estimations as such. It is at once both erotic and redemptive, as its most erotically suggestive passages (as those from Clorinda's death or Erminia's treatment of Tancred's wounds) also are its most spiritually important. But it is in those moments, as in others in the romance that this chapter will consider, when the beauty of the wound intensifies its sacred purposes above its erotic snares, that we glimpse the freighted author frenetically, desperately attempting to overcome the circular mental and physical fixity placed on him by the pathology of his inward and outward pains.

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[110] Tasso, *Opere*, 789.

"*Di Rubini*": Tancred's Fantasies and the Aesthetics of Wounding

One thing is for certain: Tasso wished us to be in awe of Clorinda's beauty. As Elizabeth Bellamy points out, "Tasso establishes Clorinda as the paradigmatic 'marvel' of the *Liberata*."[111] Her beauty—what Tasso often refers to as her *bella sembianza* [lovely appearance]—rivals even the splendor of the infrequent moments of divine intervention in the poem, and this, of course, despite the fact that she is one of the fiercest Muslim defenders. Critics have often responded to Clorinda's beauty with a characteristic uncertainty, unwilling, on the one hand, to align her external figuration with some Neoplatonic essence and, on the other, cautious to assume that her aesthetic position in the text is similar to Armida's.[112] Despite seeming so, the nature of that comparison is not entirely unjustified, and it may well serve as a basis around which to begin reexamining the fantastic intrusions that Clorinda's physical appearance take on Tancred. When the soldiers from the Christian camp gather to admire Armida, for example, they are entranced not simply by her physical appearance, but what Tasso calls her "*occulti secreti*" [hidden secrets] (IV.31). Armida's aesthetic power, in other words, derives from insinuation and suggestion, from the deferral of consummation to a tantalizing, otherworldly place. She constitutes, in this manner, one form of desire that the *Liberata* explores, a form that we can broadly label as the sexual and the allegorical. The Christian soldiers attempt to see into or see behind her

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[111] Bellamy, *Translation of Power*, 183. Clorinda's appearances in the poem often are accompanied with the exclamation: "*oh meraviglia*!" Bellamy, however, sees Clorinda's figuration as such as evidence of her suitability to become the uncanny phantasm realized in the bleeding tree. Her assertion of Clorinda's marvelousness, in these terms, extends beyond the purely physical to the fantastical. Here I show that Clorinda's beauty, rather, is distinctly physical, and her influence on Tancred's psychology similarly so.

[112] Marion Wells's reading constitutes one example of the former. "The preservation of Clorinda's lovely appearance in Tancred's mind attests to the intrusion of the material world, via the mediating power of the spirits, into the psychic realm where […] it destabilizes the lover's very self" (Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 143). See as an example of the latter Gough, "Tasso's Enchantress," 523–52.

outward form because they are "*non ben pago di bellezza esterna*" [not well content with outward beauty] (IV.31).[113] And that is how the reader stumbles upon Armida: disrobing, seducing, and walking away with a horde of Christian soldiers eager to peer upon the kernel of truth veiled by her clothing.[114] Their negligence indeed could be said to constitute a failing in their heroic purpose, but, as we will see, it is a mistake to assume that Tancred's fantastic obsession with Clorinda follows a similar obsession and neglect.

Clorinda's physical makeup is precisely the opposite of Armida's. Despite her figuration as similarly veiled, similarly allegorical, Clorinda's exterior does not emanate from a completely material substance nor does it appear to mask a hidden sensuality. Clorinda is indeed masked (like Britomart, her knightly garb veils her gender), but she is never as expressly sexualized as Armida is. Her closest moments of eroticization, not surprisingly, occur when she is wounded; and those erotics, as we will see, are caused by Tancred's perceptions of Clorinda rather than her own image of herself. Whatever fantastic intrusions,

[113] Lynn Enterline has argued that in this way the soldiers resemble Tasso, the reader, and Tancred, especially Tancred when he encounters the phantasmal Clorinda and the bleeding tree in XIII.41–45: "The absence of intention in Tancredi's second offense against Clorinda parallels a certain linguistic 'crime' in the scene, one that produces momentary alienation from the self. Tasso's dilemma as autoreflexive critic is reproduced at the bleeding tree because the attempt to read allegorical signs produces a momentary evacuation of personal agency in language" (Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus*, 115). I have begun with a comparison of Armida's and Clorinda's external figuration in order to show that the two are not allegorically similar and that, to the contrary, Tancred's encounter with the phantasmal Clorinda does not delude him or momentarily evacuate his personal agency in a similar fashion to the sexually obsessed followers of Armida.

[114] Here Tasso makes an extraordinary simile: "*Come per acqua o per cristallo intero / trapassa il raggio, e no 'l divide o parte, / per entro il chiuso manto osa il pensiero / sí penetrar ne law vietata parte*" [As the sunbeam passes through water or solid crystal, and does not divide it or separate, within the gathered mantle the mind dares to penetrate to the forbidden region] (IV.32). The constraints placed on those attempting to interpret an image that, as Tasso says, is "*vietata*" [prohibited, forbidden] are dissimilar to those whose interpretive pursuits are not so material or (in) vain. Tasso himself suggests this may be the case in his "*The Allegorie of the* Poem," a short decrisption appended to the *Liberata* sometime after it was substantially complete. "*Rinaldo, Tancredie,* and the other Princes," translates Fairfax, "are in liew of other powers of the soule; and the *Bodie* here becomes notified by the souldiers less noble." See Torquato Tasso, "*The Allegorie of the* Poem," in Fairfax, *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, 89: 39–42.

then, impressed themselves into Tancred's mind when he first gazed Clorinda de-helmed, drinking from a stream, I suggest that Clorinda's figuration as uncommonly beautiful has nothing to do with the material world as we conceive of it when the Christian soldiers encounter the scantly clothed Armida.[115] Rather, Tancred is stunned because that is psychologically characteristic of a wounded lover: to become in the instant inscrutable to oneself and to those nearby.

The passage in question here is III.21–22, in which, during battle, Tancred de-helms Clorinda only to have the narrator admonish him for being ignorant of his opponent's identity. The progression from battle-wound to heart-wound, however, acknowledges that the origin of love, in this poem, will be an external body rather than an internal image:

> *Clorinda intanto ad incontrar l'assalto*
> *va di Tancredi, e pon la lancia in resta.*
> *Ferírsi a le visiere, e i tronchi in alto*
> *volaro e parte nuda ella ne resta ;*
> *ché, rotti i lacci a l'elmo suo, d'un salto*
> *(mirabil colpo!) ei le balzò di testa ;*
> *e le chiome dorate al vento sparse,*
> *giovane donna in mezzo 'l campo apparse.*
> *Lampeggiàr gli occhi, e folgoràr gli sguardi,*
> *dolci ne l'ira; or che sarian nel riso?*
> *Tancredi, a che pur pensi? a che pur guardi?*
> *non riconosci tu l'altero viso?*
> *Quest'è pur quel bel volto onde tutt'ardi ;*
> *tuo core il dica, ov'è il suo essempio inciso.*
> *Questa è colei che rinfrescar la fronte*
> *vedesti già nel solitario fonte.*
>
> [This while foorth prickt *Clorinda* from the throng,
> And gainst *Tancredie* set her speare in rest,
> Vpon their helmes they crackt their lances long,
> And from her head her guilden caske he kest,

[115] Besides Godfrey, Tancred is the only other Christian soldier who is unaffected by Armida's presence in the camp. Tasso stages Tancred's resistance of Armida in terms of his love for Clorinda: "*Ma contra l'arme di costei non meno / si mostrò di Tancredi invitto il core, / però ch'altro desio gli ingombra il seno, né vi può loco aver novello ardore*" [But against the arms of this woman no less showed Tancred's invincible heart, his breast heaves with desire for another, and no new love can there be seen] (V.65).

For euery lace he broke and euery thong,
And in the dust threw downe her plumed crest,
About her shoulders shone her gold locks,
Like sunnie beams, on Alabaster rocks.]

[Her lookes with fire, her eies with lightning blaze,
Sweet was her wrath, what then would be her smile?
Tancred, whereon think'st thou? what dost though gaze?
Hast thou forgot her in so short a while?
The same is she, the shape of whose sweet face
The god of loue did in thy hart compile,
The same that left thee by the cooling streame,
Safe from sunnes heat, but scorcht with beauties beam.]
(III.21–22)

Tasso's language here belies his primary focus on the internal, or fantastic, nature of wounds, highlighting both Tancred's body and his soul simultaneously. And Tasso neatly divides this among the stanzas, demonstrating how the physical act of wounding, or, here, attempts at wounding, can lead directly to the unveiling of wounds inside rather than outside the body. But even when Tasso reveals Tancred's love-wound, he struggles do so in terms other than the corporeal. Not only do the narrator's admonishments suggest that Tancred is capable of fulfilling his heroic duty (he has, of course, forgotten about Clorinda at this point), but also they dramatize his revelation that the she whom he loves is also the she with whom he wars. That he sees her in all her beauty, then, is merely the salt being rubbed into his wounded heart, for now he has confirmation that the image he has fantasized has a corporeal form.

But Tancred requires the external body in order to put skin on his internal vision. Clorinda's beauty here is striking, and Fairfax seems at pains to express the marvel, partly to intensify the admonishment but also to stage the martial encounter in terms powerful enough to mitigate its presumed heroic utility. But the passage does not give up one mode in favor of the other but rather shows them as being intertwined; Tancred, for example, has to strike Clorinda very precariously near the face in order to glimpse how her blonde hair

hangs upon her shoulders: "like sunny beams on alabaster rocks."[116] These lines are similarly physical when they address Tancred's psyche. I am relying here on a reading of the line "*tuo core il dica, ov'è il suo essempio inciso*" [your heart can tell you, on which its image is engraven], a line that Fairfax handles poorly, as his translation fails to convey the physicality expressed by the line. For example, the use of the verb *inciso* (from *incidere*—to incise, carve up, puncture, engrave, or impress) encourages a more martial and physical reading. Engraved images are also incised images, and their presentation as such demands attentiveness to their physical effects, even if, in reality, they are purely internal experiences. Tasso, in these terms, has staged the emotion inside Tancred's heart as a type of wound, a wound, no less, that brims with heroic physicality, as if his heart were being butchered in the same way that a Christian soldier might butcher his Muslim adversary. We have no other option, then, but to assume that bound up in Tancred's love for Clorinda is her external body (or, more accurately, his vision of her external body), which, in the Italian, is both stunningly beautiful and strikingly disrupted. Tasso's language here does not, as some readers have proposed, highlight an unnatural fixity on Clorinda's image; rather, the language here, in all its beautiful splendor, highlights Tancred's realization that metaphorical occurrences have physical consequences and that the subsequent languishing is not unjustified, whether it comes to fruition or not.

In the stanzas that follow, Tancred begs Clorinda to pierce his breast with her lance and therefore marry the two manifestations of his love for her. His capitulation to Clorinda, however, is interrupted when one of Tancred's men attempts to save their captain, striking Clorinda's bare neck and offering the poem's first true instance of physical wounding. So early in the epic narrative, Tancred's swift turn from heroic warrior to melancholic lover

[116] Fairfax's addition. The Italian reads "*e le chiome dorate al vento sparse, / giovane donna in mezzo 'l campo apparse*" [and her golden hair scattered by the wind, a youthful maid amidst the field appears]. Fairfax's translation intensifies the beauty revealed by Clorinda's wound.

might indeed seem like a relinquishment of his heroic duties, though once again Tasso stages Clorinda's (and by extension, Tancred's) wound as beautiful and thus continues to suggest that Tancred's lovesickness might not be entirely antiheroic:

> *Pur non gí tutto in vano, e ne' confini*
> *del bianco collo il bel capo ferille.*
> *Fu levissima piaga, e i biondi crini*
> *rosseggiaron cosí d'alquante stille,*
> *come rosseggia l'or che di rubini*
> *per man d'illustre artefice sfaville.*
> *Ma il prence infuriato allor si strinse*
> *adosso a quell villano, e 'l ferro spinse.*
>
> [But yet the cutting steele arriued theare,
> Where her faire necke adjoin'd her noble head,
> Light was the wound, but through her amber heare
> The purple drops downe railed bloodie read,
> So rubies set in flaming gold appeare:
> But Lord *Tancredie* pale with rage as lead,
> Flew on the villaine, who to flight him bound;
> The smart was his, though she receiu'd the wound.]
> (III.30)

Fairfax's translation hardly carries the aesthetic weight of these lines. For one, the last three lines are additions to the Italian, which retains the sense that this Christian soldier is a villain not just against Clorinda or against Tancred but against beauty itself.[117] Lanfranco Caretti, for example, in his edition of the *Liberata*, glosses "*villano*" with "*insensibile alla bellezza*" [insensitive to beauty].[118] But while the villain might be insensitive in this manner, he is also the cause of another type of beauty: wounded beauty. Tasso is very careful in the above passage to make a connection between the beauty of Clorinda's unwounded appearance—"*del bianco collo il bel capo ferille*" [near the fair white neck her beautiful head he wounded]—and

[117] "*Ma il prence infuriato allor si strinse / adosso a quel villano, e 'l ferro spines*" [but the enraged prince pressed towards the villain, and thrust with his sword]. By replacing the final lines of the stanza, Fairfax emphasized Clorinda's wound (which is mostly unimportant in the passage) rather than Tancred's ire toward the villain.

[118] Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 83. Tasso himself, furthermore, refers to the villain in stanza 29 as "*uomo inumano*" [man inhumane], an epithet that ameliorates somewhat Tancred's interpretation of Clorinda's wound.

the beauty of her "[*f*]*u levissima piaga*" [the smallest of wounds]. This all happens very intentionally in the Italian. Clorinda's wound does not sully her; it makes her more beautiful, as the streams of blood mingle with her golden locks: "*come rosseggia l'or che di rubini / per man d'illustre artefice sfaville*" [and turns red like rubies polished by a great craftsmen]. Alluding to similar lines in Virgil and Dante, Tasso's use of the simile of the golden ruby is unprecedented in its association with a wounded body. Elsewhere the terms are more generally associated with supreme beauty: divine or human.[119] This is important simply insofar as an early reader of the *Liberata* and certainly a well-read Elizabethan reading Fairfax's translation ("rubies set in flaming gold"), would have recognized these lines' associations with divine beauty.

Tancred, in these terms, is the true victim of Clorinda's wound, as there is no indication that Clorinda considers the pain of her wound anymore than the epithet "[*f*]*u levissima piaga*" suggests.[120] But there also is no evidence that the description we have been given of Clorinda's wound even partly makes its way into Tancred's consciousness. In fact, what the stanza tells us is that Tancred was infuriated ("*infurioto*") and enacted his wrath on the Christian soldier with deadly intent ("*e 'l ferro spinse*"). In other words, the stanza shows

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[119] The river of light in canto thirty of Dante's *Paradiso*, for instance, sends up "living sparks" which "*d'ogne parte si mettìen ne' fiori / quasi rubin che oro circunscrive*" [on all sides sink down into the flowers, like rubies set in gold]. See Dante Alighieri, *La Divina commedia di Dante Alighieri*, ed. Paolo Costa (Firenze: Tipografia All'insecna di Dante, 1830), 798: 30.66. Virgil, likewise, uses the simile to describe the beauty of Aeneas's son: "[*I*]*pse inter medios, Veneris iustissima cura, / Dardanius caput, ecce, puer detectus honestum / qualis gemma micat fuluum quae diuidit aurum / aut collo decus aut capiti*" [behold, in their midst, the boy himself, Venus's most just care, his head uncovered, glittering like a jewel set in yellow gold, either on his neck or his forehead]. See Virgil, *Aeneid VII-XII*, ed. G. P. Goold and Jeffery Henderson, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 174: X.132–4.

[120] Clorinda's wound, of course, marks the point at which she decides to retreat to the city, but this has nothing to do with her wounding. From the start, her attack on the Christian forces appears like a small-scale harassment rather than a large tactical move. Her retreat makes too much military sense to have been impressed upon her by her wound, rendering the attention that Tasso gives to it reflective of something other than the immediate events.

us that Tancred, while neglecting his Christian duty, is not yet incapable of thinking with the same singular martial utility that garnered him such praise from Godfrey in canto one. But his energy is quite misplaced.

Is Tancred, then, no longer focused on Clorinda; has his appropriation of Clorinda's wound truly caused him to regress into the romantic byways of the poem? I would argue no. His appropriation of her wound certainly suggests that he has consumed himself with her, though the psychology of such internal wounds appears more like a delusion than mere concern. He has not yet fallen over into that realm of complete melancholic languish, for he seems acutely aware of her as he rides off to punish the assailant. What he is no longer in touch with is his Christian duty, pursuing the villain in a manner similar to how Timias, in Book Three of *The Faerie Queene*, pursues that always-receding icon of desire, Florimell: blindly, without thought or reason. Slaying his own man, in these terms, acknowledges the psychological instability placed on him by his appropriation of Clorinda's wound. And it is not even that his withdrawal from the main action is unacceptable; individual duals frequently occurred during campaigns, as we see later when Tancred and Argant remove themselves from the main action of the poem in order to finish the battle they began in canto six. The evidence supporting Tancred's abrupt neglect of his duties is quite strong. His distraction, for one, nearly ends in disaster for his men; "From vaine pursuite at last [he] returned bake," translates Fairfax, "And his braue troope discomfite saw welneare" (III. 36). Only Tancred's swiftness and valor saves them. Fairfax's "discomfite" translates the Italian "*lunge / troppo è trascorsa la sua audace gente*" [how too far forward his brave men proceeded], a description that reveals how Tancred's force is threatened by the same tactical blunder that Clorinda is careful to avoid. The Italian also makes an allegorical point: the literal danger

threatening his men, who have gone "*lunge troppo*" [too far], mirrors Tancred's moral plight.[121] Making good on his metonymic view of the body outlined in "*The Allegorie of the* Poem," Tasso here has Tancred's men err as he errs, though the nature of their follies runs in separate directions.[122] Tancred's folly is love, which the poem instructs us, early in its opening moments, is *"si nutre d'affanni*" [nursed with bad circumstance] (I.45). In these terms, the wound that Clorinda sustains at the hands of an irrelevant Christian soldier simply does not cause Tancred's aberrant behavior; it rather feeds his love for her.

The beauty of Clorinda's wound demonstrates the extent to which Tancred's "*follie d'amore*" endangers his participation in the Christian quest, rendering his pursuit of his own soldier a sort of exemplum in which the psychological (his love) has been prized over the material (his duty). What we have seen, rather, in our treatment of the wound in this passage is that there is some concrete physical evidence for Tancred's waywardness and a fair amount of textual evidence, whether via allusion or aesthetics, to at least suggest that his subjugation to a love-wound will not be an entirely damaging distraction. The power of the romantic imagination is kept at bay, as the passage reads (whether in translation or in the vernacular) with very little erotic innuendo. It is the epic-romantic imagination that runs wild in these passages; Tancred, we assume, though we are never told, imagines that the wound Clorinda has sustained is far worse than is actually the case. Indeed, Tancred's conception of both the wound in his heart and the wound on his beloved's forehead are drastically out of proportion with the truth. But is the level of the disproportion so great as to exclaim that here Tasso is revealing some deep skepticism or anxiety about the beautiful,

[121] Elsewhere in the poem Tasso also invokes linear distance to suggest Tancred's moral error. The hermit Peter, for example, tells Tancred "*o da te stesso / troppo diverso e da i princípi tuoi*" [too far off the mark of your true self and your first aim you stray] (XII.86).
[122] A quotation from "*The Allegorie*" seems apposite in this context. "The *Army*," Fairfax translates, "compounded of diuvers Princes, and of other Christian souldiers, signifieth *Man*, compounded of soule and bodie." Tasso, "*The Allegorie*," in Fairfax, *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, 89.

encouraging his readers to be wary of the permeability of Tancred's mind? I would suggest that such a reading necessarily dismisses how Tasso has staged Tancred's desire for Clorinda: as beautiful and destructive, as erotically seductive and sacred. We are alerted to Tancred's "*follia d'amore*" by the violence of his reaction to a wound that scarcely bothers its victim, but we are encouraged by the passage's aesthetic makeup—which delicately tempers and validates Tancred's reaction—that this folly extends no further.

"*Il Segreta Virtu*": Erminia's Healing Wounds

A similar gap between imagination and reality characterizes Erminia's reaction to Tancred's first wound, though her "*follia d'amore*" takes a much different course: one perhaps more akin to a dark pleasure. But here as before, Tasso stages Erminia's fantastic visions of Tancred's wounds in such terms so as to call into question his suspicion of love-wounds as fundamentally destructive. Erminia's psychological subjugation by the wounded Tancred, in fact, reveals a corollary (or perhaps competing) context to Tancred's single-minded desire to avenge Clorinda, for Erminia's response to her love-wound is indicative of both her gender and her station within the Muslim forces (she is a nurse and one of Clorinda's attendants). Watching Tancred's initial duel with Argant from a high tower in Jerusalem, Erminia seems anxious, plagued by the same dutiful obligations to her king and country that afflict Tancred in his pursuit of Clorinda's assailant. But unlike Tancred, Erminia does not swiftly neglect her duty; as a loyal pagan, she deliberates over whether or not to care for Argant. But, in the process of these thoughts, she dreams of her wounded beloved, seeing "[Tancred's] blood from [Argant's] wounds distill" (VI.66):[123]

[123] Fairfax's translation. The Italian is a good bit more literal: "*Né sol la tema di futuro danno / con sollecito moto il cor le scote / ma de le piaghe ch'egli avea l'affanno / è cagion che quetar l'alma non potè*" [Not only fear of future pains shakes her troubled heart, but the great wounds he feels

Con orribile imago il suo pensiero
ad or ad or la turba e la sgomenta,
e via piú che la morte il sonno è fero,
sí strane larve il sogno le appresenta.

[Her idle braine vnto her soule presented
Death, in an hundred vglie fashions painted;
And if she slept, then was her greefe augmented,
With such sad visions were her thoughts acquainted;]
(VI. 65)

As Tancred appropriates Clorinda's wound, so Erminia appropriates Argant's. Once again the nature of the appropriation is out of proportion to its source, despite Tasso's suggestion that the duel between Argant and Tancred was unusually ferocious: "*e colpo in van non esce*" [not one blow fell in vain] (VI.48). But Erminia here is not simply giving credence to the proposition that appropriated wounds are psychologically divisive; she rather (and perhaps unconsciously) is demonstrating how such fantastically false images of reality, in their very nature of being incorrect, can offer sentiments of hope and direction. Erminia never sees Tancred's wounds, for example, nor has any confirmation that his wounds are even remotely as grisly as she imagines. In fact, when Tancred hears in the next canto that Clorinda has been attacked on her way to the Christian camp (it, of course, is Erminia in disguise), he manages to get on his horse and dash after her without a word from Tasso about his wounds getting in the way of such precipitate action. And yet, despite this, Erminia's fantastical imaginings about the severity of Tancred's wounds elicit her deepest maternal skills and represent the premier moment in the text of her self-fashioning. In these terms, her coming into being, her recognition of her efficacy among the crusade, occurs precisely because her understanding of Tancred's pain is out of proportion to its reality.

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already takes / the sense of quiet from her consciousness]. Fairfax obviously mistranslates intentionally here, so as to emphasize Erminia's vision.

Despite this, Erminia's response to Tancred's wounds here cannot be reduced to the hyperbole of love-pathology. Nor can Erminia's love for Tancred be considered recalcitrance; she is not important enough to the Muslim forces that her neglect of her duties would cause a rift in the campaign. Thus, when Erminia's dream finally turns erotic, as it does at the end of stanza 65, Tasso has already prepared his reader to not so readily assume that such eroticism is an ontological flaw:

> *Parle veder l'amato cavaliero*
> *lacero e sanguinoso, e par che senta*
> *ch'egli aita le chieda; e desta intanto,*
> *si trova gli occhi e 'l sen molle di pianto.*
>
> [She saw her Lord with wounds and hurts tormented,
> How he complain'd, call'd for her helpe, and fainted,
> And found, awakt from the vnquiet sleeping,
> Her hart with panting, sore; eies, red with weeping.]
> (VI.65)

There is a muddling here of Erminia's dual modes: the ghastliness of the vision emblematizes the wound's ability to fracture the mental from the material, and the image of the maid waking to find herself drenched in her own tears similarly attest to that potency, giving it a palpable presence. There can be no mistake: this is an overtly erotic vision, suggestively wrought among some of the poem's more nightmarish lines. The man calls out her name and collapses, and she is left gasping and wet. In some ways, Fairfax's translation obscures this eroticism. The Italian, for instance, is more dramatic; rather than "eies, red with weeping," Tasso's metaphor describes Erminia's eyes and chest as being "*molle di pianto*" [flooded with tears]. Fairfax's description of Erminia's "panting," however, is more effective, especially considering that the verb "to pant" had a slightly wider (and more sensual) meaning in the Renaissance than it does today.[124] This is not to say that Erminia

[124] The Italian, however, does not suggest this reading: "*si trova gli occhi e 'l sen molle di pianto*" [she finds her eyes and chests soaked in a flood of tears]. Fairfax most likely inserts

finds her nightmare pleasurable, only that Tasso has described it as such in order to shorten the gap between mental imaginings and physical presences (as Tasso himself would have known all too well). The fact that this physical presence is both erotic and frightening suggests how irrevocably certain desires can become imbricated and confused, how the process by which an image impresses itself into the imagination *can*, indeed, demarcate the phenomenology of desire as we have been discussing it. But in this passage Erminia's love (curiously?) allows us to see an instance when such an illusion functions properly to gratify a desire: here, Erminia's desire for Tancred to respond to her, to need her as she needs him. If anything, then, we have here an image of the wounded lover whose pathology has not yet resulted in negligent action, or any sort of loss, even as it spurs distinctly erotic musings. It rather results in a powerful meditation (stanzas 70–77), in which Erminia considers both her duty and her love, finally recognizing her personal utility and struggling to put it into action.

I realize that here I am making an argument that might, at first glance, seem antithetical to Tasso's poetic project: his desire to aestheticize an instance in history in which Christianity overwhelmed its pagan and Muslim enemies and to render this moment in history as supremely and unimpeachably bright. And for the majority of the poem, such an emphasis properly functions. The Muslim defenders, Solyman and Argant, are not in themselves pitiable, and even though Armida, at the poem's close, demands some level of pity, she is never expressly described as Muslim, only a mercenary called to Muslim aid. Erminia, then, stands alone as the singular character in the text who has no true allegiance besides her love for Tancred, and her commitment to this desire (shown as it is here as not

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"panting" (which, in addition to physical exhaustion or shortness of breath, could include the palpitations of the chest on account of hyperactivity in the heart) as a way to emphasize the erotic overtones of the moistened chest. There is a good example of this usage in *Antony and Cleopatra,* when Antony exhorts Cleopatra to leap, "Through proofe of Harnesse to my heart, and there. / Ride on the pants triumphing" (4.8.16).

expressly incorrect) threatens to upset our identification with the Christian forces. This has been a point variously discussed by readers; Sergio Zatti, for example, in his essay "L'Uniforme cristiano e il multiforme pagona nella *Gerusalemme liberata*," points out that

> Tasso often refers in his letters to the scandalized reaction of his contemporaries. Reactions of the majority of critics from this day until ours attest to the solidarity that readers of the *Liberata* feel for the defeated pagans (particularly for some of them), as well as the limited poetic charm exerted by figures such as Goffredo or Peter the Hermit, whom readers generally judge negatively.[125]

There, of course, are instances in the text that suggest an unequivocal sense of compassion for the Muslims in the poem, and whether we learn to identify with those moments or not will greatly influence our assessment of the poem's wounds as either grisly indictors of weakness and corruption or emblems of integrity, triumph, and conquest.[126] In the passages above, we see that the ability of the mind to identify wounds as weakening rather than edifying has almost nothing to do with the psychology of the wounded or the bare facts of a given circumstance; it seems, rather, that what mediates an assessment of a wounded body depends more on the mental fortitude of the reader in question. For Tancred, for example, Clorinda's wounds were certainly a distraction and an inhibitor, but for Erminia they are both the reason for her life and the spur that gets her going. And we pity her, not because she is a pagan or the unfortunate victim of misplaced and misinterpreted love but because her capacity to overcome the violence with which wounds rend body and mind, materials and metaphors, goes unpraised by the poetry and certainly unrewarded.

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[125] See Sergio Zatti, "Christian Uniformity, Pagan Multiplicity," in *The Quest for Epic*, 143, for a recent retranslation of this essay.

[126] Jo Ann Cavallo notes something quite similar: "In fact, not until Zatti's study of the tensions between unity and diversity in the poem has anyone acknowledged the extent to which Tasso identified with the enemies of Goffredo and the truant elements that he supposedly intended to stamp out." Jo Ann Cavallo, "Tasso's Armida and the Victory of Romance," in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 77–114, at 83.

And yet Tasso makes no mistake that we ought to assess her and her appropriation of Tancred's wound in such a way. In fact, following quickly on the heels of the stanzas in which Erminia succumbs to the nervous dream-visions of Tancred's wounds, Tasso stages Erminia's waking from her nightmare as the recovery of her technical healing powers:

> *E però ch'ella da la madre apprese*
> *qual piú secreta sia virtú de l'erbe,*
> *e con quai carmi ne le membra offese*
> *sani ogni piaga e 'l duol si disacerbe*
> *(arte che per usanza in quel paese*
> *ne le figlie de i re par che si serbe),*
> *vorria di sua man propria a le ferute*
> *del suo caro signor recar salute.*
>
> [And for her mother had her taught before
> The secret vertue of each herbe that springs,
> Besides fit charmes for euerie wound or sore,
> Corruption breedeth, or misfortune brings,
> (An art esteemed in those times of yore,
> Beseeming daughters of great Lords and kings)
> She would herselfe, be surgeon to her knight,
> And heale him with her skill, or with her sight.]
> (VI.67)

Fairfax again makes an important emendation to the stanza's concluding lines. The Italian, "*vorria di sua man propria a le ferute / del suo caro signor recar salute*" [and by her own hand she wished to be surgeon to her dear lord and restore his health], hardly carries the same weight as Fairfax's "[s]he would herselfe, be surgeon to her knight, / And heale him with her skill, or with her sight." The final qualifier—"or with her sight"—suggests that Erminia envisions love as potentially as potent to heal as any medicinal or surgical process. Erminia, then, is both healer and soother, healing herself as she imagines she is healing Tancred, finding that bizarre sadomasochistic pleasure that arises from bearing someone else's pain. But to call it sadomasochism would perhaps be to ignore what secret virtue this nightmare has produced:

"*e di leggier non si conturba e pave / ad ogni imagin di terror men grave*" [nor does she allow fear or dismay when slight forms of terror approach her] (VI.69).[127]

"*La Morte Ancella*": Clorinda's Woundless Heart

Clorinda's death in canto twelve fulfills both the threat implicit in the erotic potential of her earlier wound as well as the healing (and redemptive) power inherent in Erminia's reaction to Tancred's wounds. Like her flesh wound in canto three, Clorinda's mortal wound sends Tancred into paroxysms of guilt that undermine his effectiveness as a Christian hero. For Clorinda herself, however, the wound is an opportunity for Christian redemption. The beauty of her dying body is a mark of divine favor.[128] Tasso's depiction of the battle

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[127] Enterline has suggested an affinity between Erminia and Armida, arguing that Tasso crafts both women as analogs for the poet. To defend this assertion, Enterline reads those passages from canto seven in which Erminia, disguised as Clorinda, writes in a pseudo-Petrarchan manner her "autobiography" into the trees (VII.116–7). For Enterline's psychoanalytic model, Erminia's carving in the tree is a form of wounding that unites "narrator, audience, and text [in an] outpouring of grief" (*The Tears of Narcissus*, 139). I believe my emphasis on wounding in the lines above as potentially healing rather than damaging provides a possible exception to, or revision of, Enterline's assertions. If Armida's sexual exterior is to be likened with allegory, as we noted earlier, then Erminia's conception of wounding here, ripe with its sexual undertones, certainly does not show the author in an interminable chain of grief shared between reader, author, and character. Rather, in a move that codifies Tasso's refusal to strip Armida to a wretched core, Erminia's estimation of the love-wound as potentially healing demonstrates Tasso's belief that not all magic, or all love, inheres in a destructive context. We see by the poem's conclusion that even Armida's love is translated into an intensification of the love that causes Erminia to heal Tancred's wounds and, in the process, be wounded herself.

[128] Tasso's figuration of Clorinda's death as such is preceded in form by the death and subsequent ascension of the Norwegian Prince Sven. Sven's wounded body, like Clorinda's, is extraordinarily beautiful, though the beauty of Sven's wounds derive from a sacred rather than an erotic or a pathologic source. The one Christian knight who survives the battle in which Sven is killed recounts to Godfrey the beauty and splendor of his master's corpse: "*Allor vegg'io che da la bella face, / anzi dal sol notturno, un raggio scende / che dritto là dove il gran corpo giace, / quasi aureo tratto di pennel, si stende; / e sovra lui tal lume e tanto face / ch'ogni sua piaga ne sfavilla e splende, / e subito da me si raffigura / ne la sanguigna orribile mistura*" [Then from that fair star I beheld a ray like that from a nocturnal sun decline, that, toward the place where a huge body lay, with golden brush stroke drew its lustrous line, and let such glorious light about him play, and made his wounds sparkle and shine. At once it strikes me that the man I see amid those piles of limbs is he] (VIII.32). Lest we mistake this image's highly artificial qualities,

between Tancred and Clorinda at first seems to confuse love and war just as much as earlier scenes of wounding do. Tasso holds out the image of the two combatants as lovers even as he reminds us that they are not lovers. In the course of the battle, Tancred grapples closely with his adversary several times but is always repelled:

> *Tre volte il cavalier la donna stringe*
> *con le robuste braccia, ed altrettante*
> *da que' nodi tenaci ella si scinge,*
> *nodi di fer nemico e non d'amante.*
> *Tornano al ferro, e l'uno e l'altro il tinge*
> *con molte piaghe; e stanco ed anelante*
> *e questi e quegli al fin pur si ritira,*
> *e dopo lungo faticar respira.*
>
> [Thrice his strong armes he fouldes about her waste,
> And thrice was forst to let the virgine goe,
> For she disdained to be so embraste,
> No louer would haue strain'd his mistresse soe:
> They tooke their swords againe, and each enchaste
> Deepe wounds in the soft flesh of his strong foe,
> Till weake and wearie, fain, aliue vneath,
> They both retirde at once, and once tooke breath]
> (XII.57)

Marion Wells reads this passage quite overtly in psychoanalytic terms, arguing that Tancred's internal violence has finally found an external reality, a reality that also holds his beloved in such close proximity. "The *nodi tenaci*" [stubborn knots], she writes, "suggest the closeness of an eroticized bond, that strong admixture of bloodlust and erotic passion."[129] However much Tancred is enraged, he certainly is not attacking Clorinda due to his unrequited or unfilled erotic or amorous desire, nor is he causing himself or his lover pain in what Wells

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Tasso here openly compares the beam of light to the stroke of a painter's brush ("*tratto di pennel*"), creating a magical collision between the divine and the aesthetic. Unlike Clorinda's flesh wound in canto three, in which the artistry intimated its capacity to distract and disillusion, Sven's wounds appear beautiful as part of his own heavenly transformation. They owe their beauty to divine intervention rather than to the passion of the human gaze. It is significant, then, that Tasso describes their wounds so similarly, that although arising from different sources they come across as exuding the same celestial light.

[129] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 148.

calls his "deluded attempt to join with [his] beloved."[130] Such misplaced desire would at least require some knowledge that the person he attacks is in fact the person whom he loves. But Tancred does not even know that it is Clorinda that he attacks, as is clear from the Italian "*non d'amante*" [not of a lover]; and the erotic elements of the passage, in any event, speak only to the reader who is privy to Clorinda's identity. The passage does, of course, render this sexually violent moment in aesthetic terms and so tempers the presence of any dark sexual weight forced upon it by a psychoanalytic approach. The description of the battle, for example, is extremely sensual, and Fairfax, in his fondness for conceits based on contrast, manages to emphasize this sensuality nicely. What in Tasso's Italian are many wounds ("*molte piaghe*") become for Fairfax "[d]eepe wounds in the soft flesh of this strong foe." When Fairfax chooses the Spenserian "enchaste" to replace the verb "*tingere*" (they "dye" their blades in many wounds), he even suggests affinities between the physical act of wounding and a type of artistic production.

By offering such an aestheticized translation, Fairfax has either misrepresented the sense of Tancred's and Clorinda's wounding of each other, or he has gotten it precisely as Tasso wishes. If precedence means anything in romance, and often it does, then Fairfax is correct: the blood that dyes Tancred's and Clorinda's swords is both physically gruesome and aesthetically beautiful, emphasizing how grotesque this unfortunate encounter has become while not entirely precluding the prospect for a positive interpretation. Indeed, Tasso's description of Clorinda's wounds a few octaves later retains the same emphasis:

> *Spinge egli il ferro nel bel sen di punta*
> *che vi s'immerge e 'l sangue avido beve;*
> *e la veste, che d'or vago trapunta*
> *le mammelle stringea tenera e leve,*
> *l'empie d'un caldo fiume. Ella già sente*
> *morirsi, e 'l piè le manca egro e languente.*

[130] Ibid, 147.

[His sword into her bosome deepe he driues,
And bath'd in lukewarme blood his iron cold,
Betweene her brests the cruell weapon riues
Her curious square, embost with swelling gold.
Her knees grow weake, the paines of death she feeles,
And like a falling Cedar bends and reels.]
(XII.64)

Fairfax's translation, once again, obscures most of the passage's erotic and violent implications. Marilyn Migiel, for example, notes the oral aggression in this scene: "Tancredi's sword is both phallic and mouth-like, for at the same time that it pierces Clorinda, it drinks her blood."[131] The sword, in these terms, that only moments ago broke skin like a sculptor's chisel into a fresh piece of marble, is transformed here into a rapacious, blood-thirsty orifice, an image that, while retaining the sword's former artistry, also prizes its grotesque rather than aesthetic function. Wells, similarly, considers how this passage could be construed erotically, arguing, somewhat haphazardly, that, "the struggle between Tancredi and Clorinda indicates clearly that the sword represents a destructive conflation of sexual and filial longing."[132] By filial longing, she means maternal, a reading available in this passage only by a tenuous connection to Christ's wounds and the *Pietà*, neither of which are dramatized fully here.[133] But Wells's reading is not without a helpful observation. "We seem to find in Tasso's disturbing scene," she writes, "a literalization of the metaphorical link between breast and wound."[134] In other words, Tancred's thirsty sword drinks the blood

[131] Marilyn Migiel, *Gender and Genealogy in Tasso's "Gerusalemme liberata"* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 44.
[132] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 150.
[133] Caroline Walker Bynum has suggested that, in medieval literature and iconography, the Virgin's breast was often linked to Christ's wound, her life-giving milk with his soul-saving blood. The tenuous connection made by Wells, then, is that Tancred's bloodthirsty sword actually receives health in a manner similar to a child giving suck or a sinner seeking redemption. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 227–37.
[134] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 150.

(milk) of Clorinda's breast, wounding her in the process of appropriating her strength. Significantly, the sword takes life from Clorinda in a perverse dramatization of Tancred's desire, but he still does not know that it is Clorinda whom he wounds.

The metaphorical link between breast and wound in this passage, then, relies on some level of gender identification, which readings such as Migiel's and Wells's appear to take for granted. For Tancred's sword to act as a phallic extension, or for the breast to be translated into a nourishing wound, Tancred, at the very least, has to have some knowledge as to his attacker's gender. But the passage does not suggest this; rather, it shows Tancred's bloodthirsty sword as being *in the process* of discovering Clorinda's gender. What Fairfax translates as Clorinda's "curious square, embost with swelling gold," for example, in the Italian, is a garment that covers her breasts: *"e la veste, che d'or vago trapunta / le mammelle stringea tenera e leve, / l'empie d'un caldo fiume*" [and floods with a hot stream the garment, quilted with fine gold, tenderly and lightly covering her breasts]. The target of Tancred's blow thus is more than an ungendered anatomical area; it is an aspect of Clorinda that is confined and hidden by the exigencies of her knightly career. In retrospect, Tancred's blow is distinctly phallic, penetrating Clorinda's suddenly gendered body. Fairfax's use of the words "curious" and "swelling" to describe Clorinda's garment, while perfectly applicable (in their Renaissance senses) to fine clothing, also heightens the sexual overtones by suggesting mystery, fascination, and tumescence.[135] At the same time that the passage brings Clorinda's physicality forward, however, it places this physicality in an artificial context. By describing the wound in terms of its effect on Clorinda's clothing rather than on Clorinda's body, Tasso stresses its outward appearance. The wound enhances the splendor of her garment and the

[135] The Italian description of the cloth, "*d'or vago trapunta*" [quilted in fine gold] carries some of the same double meaning. The word "*vago*" [vague, delicate] could suggest the sense of interest or desire as well as beauty.

beauty of the scene of which it is a part, a distinction highlighted by the contrast between the "*ferro*" [iron], which in Fairfax's translation is cold and cruel, and the "*caldo fiume*" [hot flood] that highlights the living vibrancy of her corporeal body. Clorinda's wounded body, then, like her gorgeous apparel, becomes part of the total artistic effect. Besides the attractive stain on her chest, the only other symptom of her wound is a pallor that overtakes her as she dies: "*D'un bel pallore ha il bianco volto asperso, / come a' gigli sarian miste violè*" [a lovely pallor overspreads her face like violets mixed with lilies] (XII.69).

It is significant that the material that marks Clorinda as female is also the material that acknowledges her ontological distance from such gender markers. Despite the distinctly sexual nature of Tancred's blows, he wounds not his beloved but an image of her created in the space between her clothing (*la veste*) and her gender-specific, anatomical identification (*la mamelle*). Tasso's use of the adjective "*avido*" [greedy] in the octave's second line, moreover, suggests that Tancred's sword does not actually penetrate Clorinda's bosom; it is greedy to drink Clorinda's blood, but the wound it creates appears rather in the interstices between her dressing gown and breasts, a fact that acknowledges the inability of this wound to differentiate between ontological and material registers. More likely, however, is that Tasso has had Tancred wound Clorinda in such a way so as to emphasize the imbrication of material and mental registers bound up in her androgyny. The scene, for example, is staged precisely as a meditation on desire, in which the wound at once reflects both the desires of its maker and its object; Tancred's sword wishes to penetrate (heroically, sexually) Clorinda's guarded breasts, but instead his sword strikes her garment, a corollary but not quite explicitly sexual anatomical area. For Clorinda, the wound represents a synthesis of herself, her soul, and her outward conception of her knightly identity. This is the sense conveyed by Fairfax's translation of the octave's final lines: "Her knees grow weake, the paines of death she feeles,

/ And like a falling Cedar, bends and reeles." The last line is an addition to the Italian, but Fairfax's focus on her masculinity neatly contrasts her feminine-specific wounding in the same way that the cold iron of Tancred's sword penetrates her enflamed flesh. This, as elsewhere, is how we would imagine Clorinda would have seen herself in this moment, how her fantasy of herself might have played out. But in this passage, the wound does not usher in a deluded, fantastic vision. It rather is the fantastic vision come to life, not rending material and metaphor but bringing them together irrevocably, even if also inexplicably.

Such a definition of the wound appears to contrast the distinctly romantic element that Wells has identified in Clorinda: namely, her transition from fantastic marvel to phantasmic *meraviglia*.[136] "The exploration of the psychological structure of romance," she says, "suggests that Clorinda become a phantasmic figure of alienation and lack in the poem precisely to the extent that she comes to represent the lure of romance."[137] I think rather that Tasso's exploration of the psychological structure of romance, considered in terms of his discriminating point of view, has led Tasso to define Clorinda as neither a figure of alienation or lack nor of wish fulfillment or manifest desire. The romance shows instead, by way of its aestheticization of the wound, that the psychology of a lover cannot be reduced to allegorical truths, that, if the romance is in the process of identifying Clorinda with romantic loss, it is also in the process of identifying her with heroic gain and conquest.

This dual identification, in fact, becomes more apparent when we consider how the beauty of Clorinda's wound in this passage recalls Tasso's depiction of her earlier flesh

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[136] In making this claim about Clorinda, Wells is in good company. Bellamy, for example, refers to Clorinda "as an image" (Bellamy, *Translations of Power*, 171) and Migiel repeatedly calls Clorinda a "phantasmatic image" to which Tancred is bound by desire (Migiel, *Gender and Genealogy*, 21).

[137] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 151. By "the psychological structure of romance," Wells is most likely referring to the genre's propensity for creating unreadable phantasms with dubious ontologies.

wound as well as Erminia's vision of the wounded Tancred. In this case, however, the point of view is not that of the participants in the action; these wounds, in other words, are not beautiful solely in the distracted minds of lovers. In fact, Tasso goes to some lengths to stress the difference between Tancred's resolute attitude and the sumptuous rhetoric of describing wounds. Because Tancred does not know that his adversary is Clorinda, he views her wounds with satisfaction rather than horror:

> *Vede Tancredi in maggior copia il sangue*
> *del suo nemico, e sé non tanto offeso.*
> *Ne gode e superbisce. Oh nostra folle*
> *mente ch'ogn'aura di fortuna estollle*!
>
> [*Tancred* beheild his foes out streaming blood,
> And gaping wounds, and waxt proud with the sight,
> O vanitie of mans vnstable minde,
> Puft vp with euerie blast of friendly winde!]
> (XII.58)

The narrator continues to dwell on Tancred's ignorance as a way of suggesting the knight's perspective without directly invoking it. As readers who know Clorinda's identity, we are asked to imagine the response Tancred would have to these wounds. To some degree, the rhetoric of this passage is influenced by these references to Tancred's misguided passion. But Clorinda is as important as Tancred here. Unlike the earlier passages—in which the victim of a wound is unconcerned or absent—the effect of this passage depends as much on the response that Clorinda will have to her own death as it does on the tragic irony of Tancred's reaction. Canto twelve begins, for instance, with Clorinda's life story, in which we hear that she is destined to die and that her death will be her Christian salvation. The stanza describing her fatal wound reminds us of the role that providence plays in her death: "*Ma ecco omai l'ora fatale è giunta / che 'l viver di Clorinda al suo fin deve*" [But now behold the fatal hour arrives that at its end Clorinda's life will owe] (XII.64). In this context, the beauty of her wounds has as much in common with a kind of sacred heroism as it does with Tancred's

erotic imagination. And since the passage as a whole never commits to a single point of view, the beauty of Clorinda's wound potentially is both sacred and erotic.

The potential of this synthesis of seeming opposites even emerges as Clorinda's wound becomes more identified with Tancred's martial neglect and heroic folly. Once Tancred learns Clorinda's identity, for instance, he reacts to her wound with the same horror he displayed after her initial wounding in canto three. He immediately abandons himself to a sympathetic imitation of the corpse, though, again, Tancred's appropriation of Clorinda's wound creates a division between material beauty and imagined horror:

> *Come l'alma gentile uscita ei vede,*
> *rallenta quel vigor ch'avea raccolto;*
> *e l'imperio di sé libero cede*
> *al duol già fatto impetuoso e stolto,*
> *ch'al cor si stringe e, chiusa in breve sede*
> *la vita, empie di morte i sensi e 'l volto.*
> *Già simile a l'estinto il vivo langue*
> *al colore, al silenzio, a gli atti, al sangue.*

> [But when he saw her gentle soul was went,
> His manly courage to relent began;
> Grief, sorrow, anguish, sadness, discontent,
> Free empire got, and lordship on the man,
> His life within his hart they close vp pent,
> Death through his senses and his visage ran:
> Like his dead Ladie, dead seem'd *Tancred* good,
> In palenesse, stillnesse, wounds and streams of blood]
> (XII.70)

In Tancred's estimation, Clorinda's mortal wound is far more grisly than Tasso had rendered it earlier, not just confining the knight to a guilty despair but robbing him of himself, his consciousness, and his identity. Indeed, Tasso describes this process, which is really nothing but a swoon, in a way that captures the threat that the erotic wound poses to the Christian quest. Not only is Tancred abandoning his manly qualities, he is losing his selfhood as well: "*e l'imperio di se libero cede / al duol già fatto impetuoso e stolto*" [and the empire of his soul yields

the reigns to impetuous and foolish sorrow]. Tasso's use of "*l'imperio"* [the empire] to describe Tancred's loss of self-control echoes the poem's larger concern with Christian and pagan empires and with the rule of the soul over the body. Tancred, of course, has lost both empires here: both his soul and his Christian duty. The moment of loss, however, is also the moment of Clorinda's sacred gain, as the poetry delicately balances her gorgeous, mortal wound with Tancred's horrific, psychological woundedness.

It is curious, then, that Tancred refers to his reaction to Clorinda's wound as his primal error—"*che 'l primo error*"—a statement that perhaps suggests a brief moment of conscious rationality amidst an octave full of delusion and incalculable pain. Waking from his trance, the knight appears to reclaim himself from the grips of madness that ensnared him only moments before:

> *Vivrò fra i miei tormenti e le mie cure,*
> *mie giuste furie, forsennato, errante;*
> *paventarò l'ombre solinghe e scure*
> *che 'l primo error mi recheranno inante,*
> *e del sol che scoprí le mie sventure,*
> *a schivo ed I orrore avrò il sembiante.*
> *Temerò me medesmo; e da me stesso*
> *Sempre fuggendo, avrò me sempre appresso.*
>
> [Still must I live in anguish, grief, and care ;
> Furies my guilty conscience that torment,
> The ugly shades dark night, and troubled air,
> In grisly forms her slaughter still present ;
> Madness and death about my bed repair,
> Hell gapeth wide to swallow up his tent ;
> Swift from myself I run, myself I fear,
> Yet still my hell within myself I bear.]
> (XII.77)

The passage is remarkable for its evocation of a psyche divided by trauma. The salient romantic feature of Tancred's trauma, however, is its circular rigidity, its containment and expression of the phenomenon of desiring that which cannot be consummated. And Tancred's capitulation to this dark romance stems from his intertwining of heroic action and

heroic love, a point that Tasso emphasizes by calling this mistake Tancred's primal error. That error, however, is not simply his Christian neglect; it is also his inability to correctly assess Clorinda's wounds. Tancred, for example, especially in Fairfax's translation, explicitly envisions Clorinda's wounds in grotesque terms, despite their previous aesthetics: "*che 'l primo error mi recheranno inante*" [where memories of my first folly obstruct me]. We have the faint sense that Tancred's error will obstruct him from his heroic pursuits, but his pathology is also a product of his heroic action. By slaying Clorinda, Tancred fulfills both his Christian duty and, unfortunately, the dark fantasy that plagued him earlier in the romance. Tancred's desires, at least here, have both come true.

Clorinda's wound continues to affect Tancred for some time. When he has partially recovered back at the Christian camp, he goes to see Clorinda's body, and, on catching sight of "that deepe and cruell wound," he nearly faints again and concludes by cursing his hands and eyes for their complicity in the wounding (XII.81). The poem treats Tancred's sympathy for Clorinda as if it creates a similar wound in him, a not at all insignificant fact insofar as the poem is beginning to stage Tancred's desires (and, of course, Clorinda's) as a wound. His friends' efforts to comfort him fail because, "*[q]ual in membro gentil piaga mortale / tocca s'inaspra e in lei cresce il dolore, / tal da i dolci conforti in sí gran male / piú inacerbisce medicato il core*" [even a gentle touch to a mortal wound exasperates the torment's maddening pain and the sweet comforts at his pain clutch at his sick heart, and make it bitterer still] (XII.85).[138] In addition to referring to Tancred's pathology as "*mortale*," Tasso's language here belies its metaphorical nature, as if Tancred is suffering from a physical wound that is not simply resisting a remedy but also becoming worse because of it. This, indeed, is the case, as

[138] Fairfax's translation also carries this sense nicely: "But as a mortall wound the more doth smart / The more it searched is, handled or sought; / So their sweete words to his afflicted hart / More grief, more anguish, pain and torment brought."

Tancred discovers when his attempt to overcome his melancholic grief causes his whole particular nightmare to repeat itself. Wandering into Armida's enchanted forest, Tancred has no trouble ignoring the erotic threats posed by the enchantress's nymphs; it rather is a tree bearing a cryptic inscription that gives Tancred pause. "*Non dée guerra co' morti aver chi vive*" [no living hand against the dead should strike], the inscription reads. Rather than heeding it, though, Tancred's heightened anxiety causes him to do that which it admonishes:

> *Pur tragge al fin la spada, e con gran forza*
> *percote l'alta pianta. Oh meraviglia!*
> *manda fuor sangue la recisa scorza,*
> *e fa la terra intorno a sé vermiglia.*
> *Tutto si raccapriccia, e pur rinforza*
> *il colpo e 'l fin vederne ei si consiglia.*
> *Allor, quasi di tomba, uscir ne sente*
> *un indistinto gemito dolente* […]
>
> [He drew his sword at last and gaue the tree
> A mightie blow, that made a gaping wound,
> Out of the rift red streames he trickling see
> That all bebled the verdant plaine around,
> His haire start vp, yet once againe stroake he,
> He nould giue ouer till the end he found
> Of this aduenture, when with plaint and mone,
> (As from some hollow graue) he heard one grone.]
> (XIII, 41)

Andrew Fichter has argued that Tancred's hesitation in the face of this vision shows how "romance enchantment derives its power from the hero's inability to accept death's finality," an inability, moreover, that highlights the Christian vision to "break the enchanted circle."[139] "[Tancred's] melancholic identification with Clorinda's *bel corpo*," adds Wells, "indicates […] that the object has become uneasily fused with his own self."[140] Though writing under different methodological systems, Fichter and Wells basically are making the same assertion: that Tancred's inability to accept the finality of Clorinda's death arises because he has so

[139] Andrew Fichter, *Poets Historical: Dynastic Epic in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 153.
[140] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 154.

inordinately appropriated her wound as his own. What torments Tancred is not simply the death of Clorinda in itself but also, or more so, his involvement in her death. Her wound returns to him in this deluded, schizophrenic moment because it is his own creation. His distraction shows the degree to which one's involvement in wounding also can be obsessive and destructive. The trees must be cut down for Jerusalem to be liberated, but Tancred imagines, once again, that his fulfillment of his Christian duty is in opposition to his desires.

I noted earlier that an anti-Cartesian conflation of the body and self necessarily occurs during the experience of pain and that Tasso's representation of wounding more or less follows this model. When Tancred, then, begins to strike down the trees in Armida's forest, he demonstrates a physical externalization of a delusion that he experiences corporeally, so that, again, it would be incorrect to assume that Tancred's love for Clorinda has manifested itself as her pain. Rather, Tasso's understanding of how pain causes one, in the instance, to become more aware of one's mortality and corporeality would suggest that Tancred's ire and confusion here are the products of an attempt to make his grief bearable, perhaps even intelligible. Wells, however, has given an entirely different interpretation to these lines, arguing that "Tancredi's failure to carry out Goffredo's orders—to cut the trees down—suggests that this episode reenacts the autobiographical poem's narrative of incomplete separation from, and melancholic yearning for, the mother."[141] To defend this suggestion she highlights some affinities between Tancred's wounding of the phantasmal Clorinda and Rinaldo's wounding of the similarly tree-shrouded Armida near the poem's close. But the latter is much more erotically charged than the former, a fact that seems to suggest that the wound Tancred is suffering from and the wound that Rinaldo resists are not one in the same. What stands to distinguish these two seemingly parallel moments of

[141] Ibid, 159.

wounding in the romance is the nature of the desire that emerges from each: for Tancred and Clorinda, passion results directly in Christian redemption, even as it spurs a violent madness; for Rinaldo, the vision of a hundred nymphs emerging from wounded trees is less than effective in stirring his erotic tendencies. The affinities between these two episodes, at the linguistic level, are a function of their use in the narrative: Rinaldo must overcome what Tancred was unable to, primarily because, unlike Tancred, Rinaldo has not become the victim of an appropriated wound. But the above passage does not directly warrant such a psychoanalytic reading, anyhow. Tasso's emphasis on Tancred's melancholic madness speaks only to his mental subjugation, a subjugation that can be explained by the ability of Clorinda's wound to represent, contain, and then upset Tancred's desires.

In part, however, Tancred's desires are fulfilled when Clorinda's wound leads directly to her salvation, though Tancred is incapable of seeing her death in such beautiful terms. Tasso, even, sets Tancred's deluded woundedness in opposition to providence, as Arestes informs Clorinda before she departs on her last quest that she was born to Christian parents but raised a pagan by him, despite divine intervention to the contrary.[142] But Clorinda does not change her intent as a result of this knowledge; and just as the enchanted forest must be cut down before Jerusalem can be delivered, so too must Clorinda be mortally wounded:

> *Segue egli la vittoria, e la trafitta*
> *vergine minacciando incalza e preme.*
> *Elle, mentre cadea, la voce afflitta*
> *movendo, disse le parole estreme;*
> *parole ch'a lei novo un spirto ditta,*
> *pirto di fé, di carità, di speme:*
> *virtú ch'or Dio le infonde, e se rubella*
> *in vita fu, la vuole in morte ancella.*

[142] An angel of the Lord appears to Arestes in a dream and says to him, "*Io ti comando / ciò che la madre sua primier t'impose: / che battezzi l'infante; ella è diletta / del Cielo, e la sua cura a me s'aspetta*" [I command you to perform this child's mother's first desire: baptize the infant, for heaven holds her dear, and into my care she is now entrusted" (XII.36).

[The Prince his hand vpon her shield doth streach,
And low on earth the wounded damsell laith,
And while she fell, with weake and woefull speech,
Her praiers last, and last complainst she saith,
A spirit new did her those praiers teach,
Spirit of hope, of charitie, and faith;
And though her life to Christ rebellious weare,
Yet died she his childe and handmaide deare.]
(XII.65)

Readers have often focused on the octave's final word, "*ancella*" [handmaid], not simply for confirmation that Clorinda has become Christian but, more specifically, to show how Tancred's desires for Clorinda have quasi-oedipal origins.[143] She morphs, in other words, into the fullness of both Tancred's desires: representing at once his (albeit unwitting) evangelic pursuit and a sort of Venus in Virgo. Structurally, the stanza unfolds in this manner, beginning with Tancred standing above his wounded lover as victor only to become victim by line eight. Even the language of the octave wars with itself, demarcating how fractured and freighted Tancred's misplaced ire is here. It would be possible, for example, to read "*segue*" as "*presegue*" ("pursued" instead of "follows"), in line one, and "*afflitta*" as "*fievole*" ("plagued" instead of "faint"), in line three, where the passage's more pejorative connotations emphasize the ontological differences between lover and beloved. Even the contrast between "*rubella*," with its unbridled masculinity, and "*ancella*," the feminine submissive and subservient, suggests the opposition of energies emerging in this scene, though the assonance in the concluding couplet also marks a significant affinity. Given voice in stanza 68, that affinity is the inverse relation between Tancred's madness and

[143] In addition to Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 150, see Gough, "Tasso's Enchantress," 526; Gough compares Tasso's use of "*ancella*" in this context to two other moments in the poem when women place themselves at the feet of a male: Erminia's binding of Tancred's wounds and Armida's capitulation to Rinaldo. According to Gough, the use of the term is not oedipal but rather shows, by way of Old Testament allusion, one way in which Tasso "converted pagan literature and rhetoric for Christian ends rather than censoring or abandoning it."

Clorinda's joy: "[t]he Nymphe to heau'n with ioy her selfe papard," translates Fairfax, "And as her life decaies, her ioyes encrease" (XII.68). Her wound, then, does not just prompt Clorinda's new religious conviction; it increases it. Her martial life, her *rubella*, moreover, lives on in Tancred, in his madness, in his appropriation of her worldly and earthly desires. As such, by dying, Clorinda does not become a symbol for Tancred's mother, or even for some nascent loss of comfort and care. She did not, in any event, ever provide Tancred with those things; he only imagined that she would, though, as I have shown, his imaginings were the results of his psychological containment by her wounds.

Does romance, then, truly draw its power "from the mind's melancholic preference for a phantasmic object over a real one," as Wells claims?[144] Clorinda's transformation from wounded pagan to woundless Christian, I think, reflects the pivotal function of the individual wound in the whole romance's understanding of the body, an understanding that in no way prizes the phantasmic over the real, the mental over the material. Tasso's understanding of the body, instead, is a synthesis of its functions and its thoughts, and though the wound poses a threat to this synthesis, it also makes it possible. Clorinda's death, for example, while horrific and tragic, consecrates her as the heroine of the romance, despite her unwitting involvement in a chivalric encounter with love and mistaken identity. Her ascension to a heavenly Jerusalem, translated by the very wound that consummates her career as a heroine, begins as a manifestation of the erotic qualities of the romance body but ends as a demonstration of the sacred qualities of the Christian epic body. The beauty Tasso attributes to her wounded body, as such, is an attribute of her sacred conversion as much as it is a reflection of Tancred's passion and desire.

[144] Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 159.

ERMINIA DELIVERED: DEFENDING EPIC-ROMANCE

Tasso's synthesis of sacred and erotic energies in Clorinda's wounding and death might be said to begin the translation of traditionally epic material into the fabric of romance in this poem. But Clorinda's distinctly romantic ontology, her reappearance in the narrative as a phantasm, has not traditionally been viewed as romantic as much as her attendant Erminia has. In an older essay on Erminia, Kristen Olson Murtaugh, for example, suggests that Erminia embodies the spirit of romance (as opposed to that of epic) in the poem. Tasso's redemption of Erminia, Murtaugh argues, parallels the redemption of the wandering Christian warriors and is thus tantamount to the redemption of romance within an epic enterprise.[145] Indeed, at points in the narrative this emphasis appears to work, as when Erminia releases the reigns of her horse and wonders blindly into the dark forests surrounding Jerusalem. She also appears distinctly romantic when, in canto seven, she carves her sorrows into the trunks of trees, wishing that Tancred will find them and that pity will thus cause him to love her. But if her redemption in the narrative is prepared for by these moments, it is more so prepared by Clorinda's wounding and death. Not only does Clorinda's death make possible Erminia's deep wishes (which go unfulfilled), but also her death constitutes one of the *Liberata*'s many translations of epic into romantic material.

For Tancred, as we have seen, Clorinda's wounds, and ultimately her death, signified his negligence of his martial, heroic duties; and for Erminia, her love for Tancred similarly

[145] Kristen Olson Murtaugh, "Erminia Delivered: Notes on Tasso and Romance," *Quaderni d'italianistica* 3 (1982): 12–25. For an analysis and refutation of Murtaugh's argument, see Marilyn Migiel, "Tasso's Erminia: Telling an Alternate Story," *Italica* 64 (1987): 62–75. In brief, Migiel argues that to assess Erminia as such is to "ignore the ways in which Erminia resists being integrated into the epic enterprise," a resistance that Migiel discovers in "Erminia's living and telling of her own story in an ambiguous fashion" (62, 63). My reading of Erminia's healing of Tancred's wound opposes both Murtaugh's and Migiel's positions, arguing that the translation from romantic to epic states embodied in this scene demonstrates an opposite transformation to Clorinda's and therefore highlight's Tasso's exploration of epic and romance as one genre.

caused her neglect and her waywardness. It ought not surprise us then, that in canto nineteen, when the wandering Erminia (finally) discovers the wounded Tancred and attempts to heal him, Tasso stages the scene as a translation from the fantastic into the real, the romantic into the epic, thus reversing the translation he achieved by Clorinda's death. But like Clorinda's death, this passage fulfills the promises put forth by Erminia's dream visions in canto six. In those dreams, Erminia fantasized that Tancred called upon her to heal the wounds he received during his duel with Argant. In reality, however, Tancred was not so seriously wounded, and Erminia never found him, in any event. When Erminia does stumble upon his unconscious body, it appears as if she will become the victim of the same sort of deluded excess that characterized Tancred's interpretation of Clorinda's wound. Falling off her steed (her vehicle of romantic wandering), Erminia at first laments the death of her beloved:

> *Pietosa bocca che solevi in vita*
> *consolar il mio duol di tue parole,*
> *lecito sia ch'anzi la mia partita*
> *d'alcun tuo caro bacio io mi console;*
> *e forse allor, s'era a cercarlo ardita,*
> *quel davi tu ch'ora conven ch'invole.*
> *Lecito sia ch'ora ti stringa e poi*
> *versi lo spirto mio fra i labri tuoi.*
> *Raccogli tu l'anima mia seguace,*
> *drizzala tu dove la tua se 'n gio.—*
> *Cosí parla gemendo, e si disface*
> *quasi per gli occhi, e par conversa in rio.*
>
> [O gentle mouth! with speeches kinde and sweete,
> Thou didst relieue my griefe, my woe and paine,
> Ere my weake soule from this fraile bodie fleete,
> Ah, comfort me with one deare kisse and twaine,
> Perchance, if we aliue had hapt to meete,
> They had been giu'n which now are stolne, O vaine,
> O feeble life, betwixt his lips out flie,
> O let me kisse thee first, then let me die!
>
> Receiue my yielded spirit, and with thine
> Guide it to heau'n, where all true loue hath place:

This saide, she sigh'd, and tore her tresses fine,
And from her eies two streames powrde on his face]
(XIX.108–9)

At the moment that Erminia's tears fall on Tancred's face, the scene begins to diverge from her dream version of this meeting and from any similarity with Tancred's grief for Clorinda. This victim, after all, is not yet dead, and he revives enough, at this point, for Erminia's companion Vafrine to advise her with some sarcasm, "*curisi adunque prima, e poi si pianga*" [treat him first, and then weep] (XIX.111).[146] Of course, the chance to cure Tancred was precisely what made Erminia's dream in canto six so erotic. In that dream, Tancred's need for her, although based on her sense of herself as a surgeon, never called for any specific detailed treatment. It remained suitably vague and ambiguous. The real meeting is different entirely: Erminia's passions interfere with the practical assistance that Tancred needs, an obstruction highlighted by Fairfax's inclusion of the maxim "Med'cine is lifes chiefe friend; plaint her most foe" (XIX.111).[147] The result is that Erminia's treatment of Tancred's wounds forces her to revise her love for him. She moves away from plaintive contemplation of the wound and toward a more practical reaction to the wounded body.[148]

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[146] Fairfax handles the sarcastic weight of this line better: "cure him first, then complaine."
[147] Jane Tylus has pointed out how such a sentiment parallels Tasso's own sense of his poem as life-giving medicine (I.3). The fact, however, that these lines are Fairfax's addition rather than Tasso's own underlines the fallacy inherent in reading Erminia as a repository of Tasso's poetic and psychic instability rather than a potential antidote to his theoretical anxieties over the form and genre of his poem. See Jane Tylus, *Writing and Vulnerability in the Late Renaissance* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1993), 105–6.
[148] As highlighted by Murtaugh's and Migiel's assessments of Erminia above, this return to practicality has for some reason eluded many critics. Lynn Enterline's aforementioned account of how Erminia's tears allegorize Tasso's own "lachrymose" disposition towards his poetry similarly has ignored this recuperation, focusing entirely on Erminia's scene of writing and wishing in canto seven. "[Her] tears," writes Enterline about that episode, "collapse the distinction between inner and outer thoughts, between signifiers and signifieds" (*The Tears of Narcissus*, 140). I would argue precisely the opposite about Erminia's tears in the above passage: that here Erminia's tears do not collapse her inward emotions with her outward or external actions but rather show her suspending her inward desires (her romantic disposition) in favor of a more practical action. Above all, then, her tears revise their former

Erminia's ability to resist here the psychological excesses posed to her by Tancred's earlier flesh wounds underlines this change in attitude, as well as the poem's whole restoration of the wound as a particularly beautiful rather than grotesque image. And the details of her treatment of Tancred's wound dramatize this change and restoration, as they distinctly conflate the material and mental, the aesthetic, in other words, with the anesthetic:

> *Vede che 'l mal da la stanchezza nasce*
> *e da gli umori in troppa copia sparti.*
> *Ma non ha fuor ch'un velo onde gli fasce*
> *le sue ferite, in sí solinghe parti.*
> *Amor le trova inusitate fasce,*
> *e di pietà le insegna insolite arti:*
> *l'asciugò con le chiome e rilegolle*
> *pur con le chiome che troncar si volle* […]
>
> [From wearinesse and losse of blood she spide
> His greatest paines and anguish most proceede,
> Naught but her vaile amid those desarts wide
> She had to binde his wounds, in so great neede,
> But loue could other bands (though strange) prouide,
> And pitie wept for ioy to see that deed,
> For with her amber lockes cut off each wound
> She tide: O happie man, so cur'd, so bound!]
> (XIX.112)

Fairfax's translation almost obscures the remarkable sense of love conveyed in these lines. The octave's second line, for example—*"e da gli umori in troppa copia sparti*" [and his mood from such great loss was rent]—in the Italian, suggests something like a double weight: while these indeed are Tancred's pains, they are not, as Fairfax says, "his greatest pains." Tancred's physical pain, however, is Erminia's greatest pain, for it also is inseparable from

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beauty—"*belle lagrime*" (VII.19)—no longer beautiful in their expression of Erminia's "*doglia*" [sorrow] (VII.16) but rather beautiful because of their practical capacity to heal Tancred. As with Erminia's "wounding" of the trees in canto seven, which create, as Enterline points out, physical "sepulchers" of inward turmoil that must be liberated, the forest here is translated from a place that dramatizes the fallibility of the mind to a place in which that fallibility can be both spiritually and physically overcome. In this way, too, Erminia's healing of Tancred amends the fantastic and erotic aspects of Clorinda's death that threaten to destroy him. See Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus*, 139–45.

her love for him, a reading suggested by the dual connotations of verb *spartire* (to split, to share). His mood is not simply split here; it is also shared with Erminia. This dual sense of pain leads directly to the octave's most remarkable observation: that love can heal the wounds it causes, and also, of course, the wounds it does not. Tancred's "strange" bandages, in Fairfax's translation, are the spiritual forces impressed upon him by Erminia's love, and they underline the practical healing aspect of that love rather than its complicity in the erotic or sacred beauty of the wound. The result of this force is a similarly strange mixture of hair and blood far different from the "rubies set in flaming gold" of Clorinda's riveting, erotically-rendered flesh-wound in canto three. Here, Erminia's willingness to sacrifice her hair rather suggests an act akin to the ceremonial haircutting that marked a nun's renunciation of worldly passion. Elsewhere in the poem, a woman's hair is a mark not just of femininity but also of the dangerous passions that women can inspire. By cutting her hair, then, Erminia symbolically renounces any sort of affinity with this kind of passion.[149] Contemporary visual representations of the scene accent the almost sacred quality of Erminia's response to Tancred. Guercino's *Erminia e Tancredi* (1618), for example, depicts the moment as a lamentation. Erminia has her hands raised in the traditional gesture of Mary Magdalene over the body of Christ.[150] The maternal imagery is quite apposite in this

[149] Melinda Gough has likened Erminia's haircut to her pseudo-stripping, Tasso's revealing of her true self. Put in context of Armida's transformation from alluring romantic object (in which her hair plays a pivotal role) to Rinaldo's *ancilla* and his corollary refusal to strip to her to a wretched core, Tasso here has created parallel narratives, narratives which involved displaced or substituted unveilings such that, as Gough says, "beauty is not repudiated as false or dangerous" (Gough, "Tasso's Enchantress," 546). The sense in which Erminia's healing of Tancred's wounds translates the erotic potential of her earlier vision (and desires) is here intensified by her parallel figuration to Armida in general and Armida's transformation in particular.

[150] See Figure Four. On the maternal and spiritual imagery of Erminia's haircut, see Rensselaer Wright Lee, *Poetry Into Painting: Tasso and Art* (Middlebury: Middlebury College, 1970), 60. For a reading that resists Erminia's association with Mary Magdelan and, by process, Tancred's association with Christ, see Migiel, *Gender and Genealogy*, 72.

context, but its psychoanalytic dimensions are undercut by the translation of Erminia's fantasy into reality, a reality, moreover, in which she shows how the moment of aesthetic phenomenon, even if it verges on the pathological, can have decidedly anesthetic effects.

Erminia's conception of the wound appears to oppose the very fabric that has characterized wounding since one of Tancred's soldiers first struck Clorinda early on in canto three. Her vision of the wound in particular and love in general as inherently healing rather than damaging offers at least one instance in the poem when the sacred and erotic tendencies revealed by the wound do not afford a psychological impasse. To look ahead to Spenser, the point at issue here perhaps is not better expressed by anyone than Guyon, who responds to the horror of Amavia's suicide at the beginning of the Second Book of *The Faerie Queene* with a characteristic uncertainty about the value of passion:

> Then turning to his Palmer said, Old syre
> Behold the ymage of mortalitie,
> And feeble nature cloth'd with fleshly tyre
> When raging passion with fierce tyranny
> Robs reason of her dew regalitie,
> And makes it seruaunt to her basest part:
> The strong it weakens with infirmitie,
> And with bold furie armes the weakest hart;
> The strong through pleasure soonest falles, the weake through smart.
> (II.i.57)

Despite having Erminia's passion for Tancred changed for the better, Tasso leaves the conclusion of the episode tantalizingly uncertain, almost tacitly admitting to Guyon's estimations that love "[r]obs reason of her dew regalitie." It is tempting to view Erminia's healing of Tancred as a happy end to the unfortunate love triangle that indeed has threatened the sovereignty of reason for all parties involved. And Kristen Murtaugh, emphasizing her belief in Erminia's romantic status, has argued for this happy ending, suggesting that love in the poem is "now a positive, healing, unifying force, no longer a

principle of dispersion and disorientation."[151] Yet, it is equally possible that Erminia also has learned the folly of love and has given up her pursuit of Tancred. The poem simply does not give us much information, since it nearly abandons the Tancred and Erminia plot at this point. And, moreover, the fragments of information we do receive are themselves ambiguous. When Tancred regains consciousness and sees Erminia, for instance, she blushes and asks him to "*prepara il guiderdone*" [prepare my guerdon meete] (XIX.114). And though we have the sense that her reward will be his love, we never find out exactly what she intends it to be, nor does Tancred respond to her request.[152] She is firm in her intention to remain with the Christian army, and Vafrine finds a place where Erminia might seek shelter: "*Vafrino a la donzella, e non discosto, / ritrova albergo assai chiuso e secreto*" [Vafrine, not far off, finds for the maid a shelter, closed up and secret] (XIX. 119). Fairfax appears to mistranslate this line, extrapolating from "*assai chiuso*" [very closed] the epithet "neere his owne." The pun between "close" [*vicino*] and "closed" [*chiuso*], of course, is not supported by the Italian, though Fairfax appears to intentionally have mistranslated in order to retain the possibility that Erminia might be lodging nearby Tancred and hence also the possibility for future love for the couple. But this possibility vanishes before it even begins. At this point in the poem, the capture of Jerusalem overshadows all else.

Erminia and Tancred's story, however, does not need to come to a romantic closure. Its final scenes combine the spiritual conversion of a pagan maid with the healing of a wound. Both of these events accomplish what the death of Clorinda fails to do. Clorinda goes to heaven, but her conversion nonetheless is tragic. Erminia, by contrast, looks forward to a life as a Christian. Clorinda's wound not only is fatal to her but, as we have

[151] Murtaugh, "Erminia Delivered," 19.
[152] Caretti has likewise glossed this line: "*con allusione discrete e dissimulata all'amore*" [with a discrete and covert allusion to their love]. Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, 607.

seen, also afflicts Tancred (albeit metaphorically). Erminia's treatment of Tancred's physical wounds alerts us to the possibility that wounds can be healed as well as caused, and often the two can occur simultaneously. Given Tasso's emphasis on the dangers of fragmentation to the Christian endeavor as a whole, the possibility that love could heal wounds rather than cause them has far-reaching implications. In the context of the poem as a whole, the missing ending to Erminia and Tancred's story underlines the contingent and subsidiary role of the erotic body, for, by treating Tancred's wounds, Erminia has already amended the spiritually destructive aspect of eros that menaces the liberation of Jerusalem.

"*Di Pallor di Morte*": Tasso's "Hermaphrodites"

The *Liberata*, as we have seen, begins with an image of the wound incorrectly assessed and ends with a dramatic episode that rewrites the folly inherent in such misreading. On a bodily level, the poem subjugates its corporeal forms, indeed, often its epic forms, in order to transform the experience of being wounded from the battlefield to deep within the human body and mind. For all the generic markings, with its transcendent heroism and stoic ambivalence to pity, deep continuities emerge in the language of this poem between the heroic and the passionate, and nowhere are those continuities deeper or more expressive than in the two scenes of wounding that bookend the *Liberata*: Sophronia's and Olindo's near execution and Edward's and Gildippe's tragic deaths. Encouraged by the synthesis of heroic action and heroic love, these scenes dramatize in miniature Tasso's understanding of how romantic *materia* might come to express the epic and the heroic. The first of these appears early in canto two when Aladdine condemns Sophronia and Olindo, two Christians living within Jerusalem, to the stake. The scene is as good as any for highlighting the psychological lability (and erotic capacity) of a love-stricken heart, as Olindo imagines embracing the fiercely chaste Sophronia only moments before the two are to be cosigned to

the flames. It is only fitting, then, that Clorinda persuades Aladdine to spare these would-be lovers, offering the king her services in war in return for his release of the Christians.[153] The stanza that ensues shows how a similar transformation to the one Clorinda undergoes in canto twelve is also available to the poem's lesser bodies:

> *Cosí furon disciolti. Aventuroso*
> *ben veramente fu d'Olindo il fato,*
> *ch'atto poté mostrar che 'n generoso*
> *petto al fine ha d'amore amor destato.*
> *Va dal rogo a le nozze; ed è già sposo*
> *fatto di reo, non pur d'amante amato.*
> *Volse con lei morire: ella non schiva,*
> *poi che seco non muor, che seco viva.*
>
> [Thus were they loos'd, happiest of human kinde
> *Olindo*, blessed be this act of thine,
> True witnes of thy great and heau'nly minde,
> Where sunne, moone, stars, of loue, faith, vertue, shine.
> So foorth they went, and left pale death behinde,
> To ioy the blisse of marriage rites diuine,
> With her he would haue dide, with him content
> Was she to liue, that would with her haue brent.]
>
> (II.53)

Embedded into Tasso's verb use, again, is the key to the octave's synthesis. "*[D]isciolti*" [dissolved, melted], which Fairfax translates as "loos'd," suggests the sense of both separation and combination, so that here the lovers are microcosms for the Christian crusade as well as paradigmatic examples of Christian fortitude and perseverance. But their figuration as such is not quite as remarkable as their transformation, which unsurprisingly is brought upon them by the threat of death. Tasso describes Olindo's binding at the stake

[153] Naomi Yavneh has pointed out how Tasso's language here foreshadows Clorinda's eventual wounding and death, illuminating a parallel between Sophronia's command that Olindo look to heaven during his execution and the fact that on Clorinda's deathbed, her eyes are "*al cielo affisa.*" Though slight, this connection between Clorinda's death and Sophronia's aborted execution intensifies the sense in which wounding (or here the threat of wounding) conflates the sacred and the erotic, the epic and the romantic. See Naomi Yavneh, "'Dal rogo alle nozze': Tasso's Sofronia as Martyr Manqué" in *Renaissance Transactions*, 271–93.

with Sophronia as his transition from lover to beloved, from criminal to husband, from, finally, death to life, not only drawing attention to the mysterious powers of wounding but rendering them in such a way that the wound itself hardly appears as anything but a pale, beautiful impetus. "*Volse con lei morire*" [with her he would have died], writes Tasso, animating Olindo's dual woundedness, his tacit acceptance that dying with his (albeit unrequited) beloved would be better than living in a world in which that love remains static and unfulfilled. But as quickly as Tasso has mired Olindo in woundedness, he liberates him from the psychological and physical bounds of the stake: "*poi che seco non muor*" [he does not die with her]. At least, here, the probability of death is also the occasion for life, the occasion for love, the occasion for imbuing wounded hearts with a woundless future.

The lines, however, that Tasso himself chose to highlight are those commemorating the death of Edward and Gildippe, the husband and wife team who are slain by Solyman only moments before the poem ends. Rather than having them escape into the poem's safe romantic byways like Olindo and Sophronia, Tasso shows how Edward's and Gildippe's deaths afford them a life far beyond their lyric immortalizations:

> *Gildippe ed Odoardo, i casi vostri*
> *duri ed acerbi e i fatti onesti e degni*
> *(se tanto lice a miei toscani inchiostri)*
> *consacrerò fra' peregrini inegegni,*
> *sí ch'ogn'eta quasi ben nati mostri*
> *di virtute e d'amor v'additi e segni,*
> *e co 'l suo pianto alcun servo d'Amore*
> *la morte vostra e le mie rime onore.*
>
> [*Gildippes* faire, and *Edward* thy deare lord,
> Your noble death, sad end, and woefull fate
> (If so much powre our vulgar toong afford)
> To all strange wits, strange eares let me dilate,
> That ages all your loue, and sweete accord,
> Your vertue, prowesse, worth, may imitate,
> And some kind seruant of true loue (that heares)
> May grace your death, my verses, with some teares.]
> (XX.94)

These, perhaps, would not be the lines that most would choose, if asked to draw one octave from the romance that best described its relationship to that strange, unmanageable phenomenon of love. But these are the lines that Tasso has asked us to remember and for no better reason than their implicit invocation of death and woundedness as a boon to passion and the beautiful virtues that passion can afford. Elsewhere, perhaps in more savage or psychological episodes, the transformation of death into life is a much more freighted translation. But in such tales of wounding that have been storied as myth, the prospect that a bleeding body might cover an unharmed heart remains.

Edward's and Gildippe's deaths indeed create a lasting impression. But the poem's final vision of woundedness—Armida's suicide turned redemption—exceeds even that inimitable quality of love that the husband and wife team discover in their deaths. Having had her bow wrested from her hands by Rinaldo, Armida turns to see his face, herself in a fit of rage that quickly dissolves "*di pallor di morte*" into a beautiful lamentation (XX.127):

alzò le strida, e da l'amato viso
torse le luci disdegnosa e svenne.
Ella cadea, quasi fior mezzo inciso,
piegando il lento collo; ei la sostenne,
le fe' d'un braccio al bel fianco colonna
e 'ntanto al sen le rallentò la gonna,
e 'l bel volto e 'l bel seno a la meschina
bagnò d'alcuna lagrima pietosa.
Qual a pioggia d'argento e matutina
si rabbellisce scolorita rosa,
tal ella rivenendo alzò la china
faccia, del non suo pianto or lagrimosa.

[She shrikes, and twines away her sdeignfull eies
From his sweete face, she falles dead in a swoune,
Falles as a flower halfe cut, that bending lies:
He held her vp, and least she tumble downe,
Vnder her tender side his arme he plast,
His hand her girdle loos'd, her gowne vnlast;

And her faire face, faire bosome he bedewes
With teares, teares of remorse, of ruth, of sorrow.
As the pale Rose her colour lost renewes,
With the fresh drops falne from the siluer morrow;
So she reuiues, and cheekes empurpled shewes,
Moist with their owne teares, and with teares they borrow.]
(XX.128-9)

And this is the image of the wounded body and the wounded heart that Tasso leaves us with, an image of arrows, to borrow a phrase from Philip Larkin, "becoming rain."[154] The emphasis on fertility here, underlined by the transformation of death into life, is quite ripe. Fairfax (finally!) captures this sense: "As the pale Rose her colour lost renewes / […] So she reuiues, and cheekes empurpled shewes." The Spenserian "empurpled" is an addition to the Italian, translating Tasso's arcane "*rabbellisce*" [from *abbellire*, to make more attractive], for indeed, the flooding of Armida's breast with Rinaldo's tears has made her more attractive. But the eroticism in these lines is not akin to Armida's former sultriness; rather, it is more akin to the tempered, sacred images of eros we saw in Clorinda's death and Erminia's healing of Tancred's wounds. The parallels in this passage to those two instances of wounding are uncanny. Not only does Armida's overcoming of her "*pallor di morte*" recall Clorinda's similarly flower-shrouded death and ascension, but, and this is more important, Rinaldo's tears invoke and then rewrite Erminia's weeping. It is the warrior not the maiden who cries here, a warrior who just recently destroyed Armida's forest with a stoic indifference to emotion; but, in this scene, Rinaldo discovers his most powerful weapon is no longer his sword. It is his heart, his inability to resist, as Fairfax translates, "remorse, […] ruth, […] sorrow." And where Erminia's tears were powerful only to castigate her unchecked

[154] Philip Larkin, "The Whitsun Weddings," in *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, ed. Jahan Ramazani, Richard Ellmann, and Robert O'Claire (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 215.

appetency, to help her recover her practical skill, Rinaldo's tears literally effect the healing here, watering the bent flower and spreading an empurpled blush across Armida's face.

Armida's transformation from the poem's most erotic character to its most pitiable victim accords a reassessment of what her wounds are and what power her wounds have over those whom she meets.[155] Her final transformation, in fact, suggests the inadequacy of readings that prize the poem's representation of love as pathologically traumatic or even, more generically, those readings that interpret instances of neglect and deferral, or ire and rage, as singularly romantic or singularly epic.[156] Such readings, I hope to have shown, destroy the sense of epic-romance ushered into the poem by Tasso's understanding of the wounded heart as inordinately, almost blindingly beautiful. In such moments, as in moments like Edward's and Gildippe's deaths, Olindo's and Sophronia's liberation, and Armida's redemption, we seem rather to witness a shift from love at its most destructive to love at its most heroic, love as both edifying and enabling, both corporeal and metaphysical.

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[155] Armida's conflation of the sacred and the erotic here is apparent from her reference to the Virgin Mary's words at the annunciation. "*Ecco l'ancilla tua*" [behold, your handmaiden], she says to Rinaldo (XX.132). Jo Ann Cavallo has rightly pointed out that the epithet is merely a reference and not a direct quotation, as the line from Luke 1.38 in the Vulgate is "*Ecce ancilla Domini*" [behold, the Lord's handmaid]. See Jo Ann Cavallo, *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Pleasure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 209. The significance of this is that Armida retains both modes, the sacred and the erotic, rather than assuming a completely Christianized form of concupiscence.

[156] Colin Burrow has argued that the synthesis of epic and romance is born out of a writer's representation of pity, a strange, unavoidable emotion that retains both authorial power and emotional instability. His reading of the *Liberata*, which concludes with an assessment of Rinaldo's "bare, blank […] destruction" of Armida's forest, both juxtaposes and supports my reading of Rinaldo's now "*lagrima pietosa*" [pitying tear] above. Does Tasso suggest here, despite his former, Ariostan destruction of Armida's magical forest—"those things," as Burrow says, "that pity renders possible"—that erotic love and pity still play a vital and creative part in a Christianized environment that has pushed eros into the margins? Will Rinaldo, in other words, emerge from his lachrymose embrace of Armida feeling that he has born witness to the throes of an outmoded form of pity or the germination of new attitude towards love and eros? Tasso does not say for sure, but perhaps by recalling the former he makes the latter all the more desirable. See Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 77–99, at 98.

Does love truly, then, threaten the sovereignty of reason, or, more so, the practical importance of heroic action? The poem's final visions suggest that love does not.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE RENAISSANCE WOUND: "SOLUTIONS OF CONTINUITIE" AND THE MOURNING FOR SIDNEY

Il n'y a pas de remède inoffensif.
—Jacques Derrida, "La Pharmacie de Platon"[157]

In a letter to Philip Sidney, dated May 2nd, 1578, the French humanist and Protestant reformer Hubert Languet articulated a wider ideal than perhaps he realized when he associated traditional martial heroism with a nervous, almost Tassonian madness. "Most men of high birth," Languet wrote to Sidney, "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."[158] Positioned as it is a few lines after Languet admonishes Sidney for having "too much leisure" to write to him, the assertion feels slightly affected, as if Languet is reminding Sidney, albeit playfully, what he should do rather than what he does. But the prospect of playfulness disappears almost as soon as we detect it. "Ought not you," Languet wrote in the following sentence,

> blessed as you are by Providence with all those splendid gifts of the mind, to feel other wise than men feel, who are buried in the most profound shades of ignorance, and think that all human excellence consists in physical strength? And yet, let them be never so strong, in this respect they are inferior to many of the brutes. Make use, then, of that particle of the Divine Mind (as you beautifully express it) which you possess, for the preservation and not the destruction of men.

Eight years later, in 1586, Sidney would die from the sepsis of a gunshot wound he received while fighting for the Protestant cause in the Netherlands, leaving his great prose-romance

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[157] Jacques Derrida, *La Dissemination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 112.
[158] Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, ed. William A. Bradley (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2005), 164. See also the letter from October 22, 1578, in which a more critical Languet chastises Sidney's martial appetency: "You and your fellows, I mean men of noble birth, consider that nothing brings you more honour than wholesale slaughter" (156).

the *Arcadia* unfinished and all of his lyrical writings unpublished. Despite their suitability for a public audience, which Sidney must have been skeptical about during his lifetime, the literary remainders of his divine mind nevertheless delineate, with remarkable acuity, his ever-growing anxieties about cotemporary uncertainty toward wounded bodies. Perhaps in 1578, thirty-three years after the French surgeon Ambroise Paré famously demonstrated in his *Méthode de traicter les playes faictes par hacquebutes et aultres bastons à feu* (1545) that royal, patrician, and common bodies could languish and expire from the same types of wounds, Languet felt it incumbent to exhort Sidney to a life of letters, a life that might bring about man's salvation rather than man's destruction.[159] And as Sidney's most paternally and passionately devoted mentor, especially during the years of Sidney's travels on the Continent (1572–75), Languet must have sensed the possibility that the young, irascible Sidney would die in the manner that he finally did.

Whatever Languet's intentions, his admonishments highlight an association between internal desires and external consequences that pervades Sidney's fiction, especially in its representation of wounds. Apropos to Languet's warnings—his suitably wry assertion that in succumbing to his martial passions Sidney will become "inferior to many of the brutes"—is a rich but turbulent contemporary discourse on healing body wounds. The chapter that follows traces one of the circuits of this conversation in the Renaissance, one that was magnetized when Sidney died but that had previously, if uncannily, received a great deal of attention in Sidney's own writing. Predominantly vectored through incurable, putrefying wounds caused by gunshot and the deep moral suspicions that accompanied infection, these

[159] While Paré was most famous for disproving Giovanni da Vigo's widely accepted treatment of cauterizing wounds, his more disturbing discovery was to show that the stink of infected wounds "*estoient communes aux Princes, aux grands seigneurs, et aux pauvres soldats*" [were the same for Princes, for nobles, and for the poor soldiers]. See, Ambroise Paré, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: J. F. Malgainge, 1840), 141. All references to Paré are to this edition and all translations are my own.

early modern vulnerary discussions seem almost to have been designed as glosses for Sidney's death. And though there is no direct address in the Sidney corpus to these conversations, the remnant pieces of Sidney's literature, including the grand literary tradition that followed upon and was created by Sidney's death, nonetheless create intersections, if only allusively, to what was quickly becoming a preeminent medical conversation in early modern Europe.[160] In each of these arenas, this chapter argues, the desire to explain, mitigate, and make aesthetic use of an irreparably wounded body controls the task of writing about wounds in general and Sidney's wound in particular.[161]

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[160] Very little criticism has considered the relationship between early modern writings on wounding and Sidney's death, partly, I would assume, because Sidney's contemporaries and elegists often ignore the issue. Even scholarships that have taken the demystification of Sidney's aggrandized biography as their subject have paid little attention to the period's medical writings. And while the *Arcadias* have been mined for all conceivable contemporary discourses, interest in their relationship with early modern writings on wounding and their use as a prospective lens through which to reconsider Sidney's own wounding has been lacking. My argument begins by redressing this inattentiveness, specifically by proposing that contemporary interest in wounded bodies—as metaphors for self-division and political corruption; as testaments to the mortality and autonomy of the body in relation to the self—not only informs Sidney's meditations on desire in the *Arcadia* but also helps clarify the oblique but significant relationship between the *Arcadia* and what Gavin Alexander has called "[t]he most important event in the literary career of Sir Philip Sidney." See Gavin Alexander on the literary impact of Sidney's wounding and death, in *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), xix.

[161] It may seem odd to consider the circumstances of Sidney's death before his fiction, though it has never been possible to do otherwise. The *New Arcadia* was not published until after Sidney's death, such that to read the *New Arcadia*, since as early as 1593, has always been to do so with knowledge of Sidney's death or, at the very least, with some knowledge of how Sidney was elegized. To consider in hindsight the literary representations of woundedness in the *New Arcadia*, moreover, has always been to think in terms of their relationship to Sidney's own wound just as studying the political, medical, and social aspects of Sidney's wounding, since 1590, has always been to do so in light of Sidney's literary representations of the wounded body. It is only appropriate, then, to consider the nature and maturation of Sidney's wound, its personal, political, and social significations, and its assimilation and recapitulation in the elegies, before turning attention to the *New Arcadia*.

SECRET INTENTIONS: INFECTED WOUNDS AND SIDNEY'S DEATH

When, in 1514, the papal surgeon Giovanni da Vigo proposed that gunshot wounds were envenomed and therefore ought to be cauterized (burned with an oil mixture), he did so in a desperate attempt to convey to his audiences a palatable sense of purgation.[162] The idea that gunpowder might be poisoned, so da Vigo argued, provided a practical way to explain why gunshot wounds putrefied at such an alarming rate.[163] But in truth cautery was more popular than it was successful, and its location of infection as originating from outside the body eventually became the topic of a great Continental debate.[164] One such dissenter was the Swiss medical reformer Paracelsus, whose 1536 *Große Wundarznei* ("Great Wound Surgery") summarizes the attitude in which Renaissance vulnerary discussions were tending:

> Warily must the surgeon take heed not to remove or interfere with Nature's balsam but protect and defend it in its working and virtue. It is in the nature of flesh to possess, in itself, an innate balsam which healeth wounds. Every limb has its own healing in itself; nature has her own doctors in every limb; wherefore every surgeon should know that it is not he, but Nature, that heals. What do wounds need? Nothing. Inasmuch as the flesh grows from within outwards, and not from without inwards, so the surgery of a wound is a mere defensive, to prevent Nature from suffering any accident from without, so that she may proceed unchecked in her operations.[165]

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[162] Giovanni da Vigo's *Practica in arte chirurgica copiosa* (Rome, 1514) was immensely popular in the early Renaissance, accumulating more than fifty new editions (in English, French, German, and Spanish) before the turn of the seventeenth century. As with many early modern vulnerary texts, there is no modern edition of da Vigo's *Practica*, though see the 1543 English translation, *Joannes da Vigo: The most excellent workes of chirurgerye* (Amsterdam: Edwarde Whytechurch, 1543). The spiritual aspects of da Vigo's writings have been discussed most recently by Esther Cohen, *The Modulated Scream: Pain in Late Medieval Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 87–112.

[163] Since their inception in the thirteenth century, firearms were considered to be at odds with nature; da Vigo's proposal that gunshot wounds were poisoned (a function of the residue of gunpowder, he believed) merely made medical theory correspond with contemporary suspicions and fears. See Kelly Devries, "Military Surgical Practice and the Advent of Gunpowder Weaponry," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 7 (1990): 131–46.

[164] See Marie Boas Hall's *The Scientific Renaissance: 1450–1630* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1994), 90–165, for records of the popularity of and conflicts created by da Vigo's writings.

[165] Citation and translation are from Samuel David Gross, *A System of Surgery: Pathological, Diagnostic, Therapeutic, and Operative* (Philadelphia: Henry Lea, 1872), 361.

This reasoning, with its Galenic emphasis on aseptic methods of treatment, suggests that the particular error in da Vigo's theory lay in its dismissal of the human body as a natural medical instrument. This too might have seemed like a palatable position: that the body is innately capable of healing itself, that infection, if it does indeed come, happens as a result of external malpractice. As it turned out, however, Paracelsus's belief in natural process—on the prospect of "an innate balsam which healeth wounds"—gained very little currency on the early modern battlefield.[166] Instead, the vulnerary writer in the sixteenth century whose methods proved most effective (both in practice and in theory) was also the man who blamed putrefaction on humoral imbalance and, by extension, the body itself.

Though Ambroise Paré's criticisms of da Vigo were unsuccessful in invalidating the use of hot oil to treat gunshot wounds (the practice continued into the eighteenth century), his account of his experiences with infected wounds during the siege of Turin in 1536 nonetheless constitutes the most important redesigning of early modern vulnerary discussions. Unlike Paracelsus and da Vigo, Paré had no scholastic training in medicine, so his discovery that digestives (organic salves composed of egg yolks, rose petals, and turpentine) were more effective in curing gunshot wounds than cautery was met at first with skepticism. On the one hand, this lack of acceptance stemmed from the courageous, almost impudent disrespect for perceived orthodoxy that Paré demonstrated when he published his finding in 1545.[167] On the other hand, however, the disregard for Paré's writings—which were immediately condemned by Laurent Joubert, a physician at the University of

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[166] On Paracelsus's dissention from contemporary attitudes towards wound healing and for hypotheses as to why his writings were not more widely accepted, see Lilla Vekerdy, "Paracelsus's *Great Wound Surgery*," in *Textual Healing: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Healing*, ed. Elizabeth Lane Furdell (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 79–91, esp. 86–7.

[167] The "sociological discourse of power" created when Paré published his *Méthode* in 1545 is discussed in Gregory de Rocher, "The Renaissance Wound: The Discourse of Power in Sixteenth Century Medicine," *Romance Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1991): 131–37.

Montpellier, and by countless other Continental physicians in the half century after their publication—lay in their undesirable, inexplicable suggestion that infection occurs for reasons unrelated to gunpowder.[168] In his account of his discoveries, in which Paré responds to questions over excessive mortality posed to him by his king, Charles IX, Paré too seems puzzled by this possibility:

> *Il pleust un jour à vostre Maiesté* […] *me demander comme il advenoit qu'en ces dernieres guerres, la pluspart des Gentils-hommes et soldats blesses de coups d'harquebuses et autres instrumens, mouroient sans y pouvoir aucunement remedier, ou à bien grande peine relevoient de leur maladie, ores que les playes par eux recevés fussent de bien petite apparence: et que les Chirurgiens appelés pour leur guerison, y employassent tout leur devoir et scavoir.*
>
> [It pleased one day your majesty to ask me how it came about that in these recent wars the greater part of Gentlemen and soldiers wounded by harquebuses and other firearms died without any improvement, or with great difficultly recovered, despite their wounds being small in appearance and the surgeons called in to help them used all their knowledge and ability.][169]

Paré's response is a masterpiece of Galenic subtlety, focalizing contemporary anxieties about wounds by blaming the high mortality rate on something as unpredictable and unavoidable as the climate. In France, Paré argued, nature,

> *sembloit tant chargée d'humeurs vicieux dont s'ensuit que les corps navrés en leur substance charneuse estoient difficiles à guerir, consideré qu'il y avait en iceux perdition de substance, laquelle ayant besoin de regeneration de chair, n'en pouvoit venir à bout, fust par medicamens ou par artifice de Chirurgien, tante grande estoient sa cacochymie. Tout ainsi qu'en un hypdropique la chair ne se peut engendrer, pource que le sang y est trop froid est aqueuex: et qu'en un elephantique la chair et les autres parts du corps demeurent en leur putrefaction à cause du snag corrompu dont elles sont nourries: pareillement en playes des corps cacochymes ne se peut faire acquisition nouvelle, ny regeneration de bonne substance: pource que pour render une chair louable à la partie naurée, il est necessaire que le sang ne peche en qualité: mesme que la partie offensée soit en sa temperature naturelle. Toutes lesquelles choses defaillantes au temps de ces dernieres guerres, il ne se faut esbahir, si les naureures, tant fussent-elles petites et de peu de consequences, mesmes ès parties non nobles et principles, ont amené quant-et-soy tant d'accidens fascheux, et en fin à la mort.*
>
> [seemed so much charged with vicious humors, whence it followed that bodies injured to the quick had difficulty healing, considering that there was in these a loss of substance which, requiring a regeneration of flesh, could not be brought about, either by medicine or by surgical skill, so great was their ill-humor. Just as in a

[168] Ibid, 133.
[169] Paré, *Oeuvres*, 131.

> dropsical patient the flesh cannot grow because the patient's blood is too cold and watery, and as in a leper the flesh and other parts of the body remain in their putrefaction because of the corrupted blood on which they are nourished, so the wounds of ill-humored bodies cannot acquire nor regenerate good substance: because to make laudable flesh in the wounded part, the blood must not fail in quality nor quantity, even if the injured person is in their natural humor. All these things lacking in the time of these recent wars, one should not be surprised if wounds, no matter how small and inconsequential, even if they are in the extremities, lead as it may be to so many distressing accidents, and in the end to death.][170]

When Paré, in fact, first introduces the prospect that cautery might be an insufficient method of care, he does so by undermining his own discovery. His recommendation of a digestive, he suggests, ought to mean that gunshot wounds could be treated, "*si ce n'est qu'on en soit contraint, pout les accidens qui adviennent aux corps cacochymes, et pour la mauvaise disposition et malignité de l'air*" [if it were not that one were constrained, by the problems which occur to ill-humored bodies, and by the bad disposition and malignity of the air].[171] Running throughout Paré's answer to his king, then, even as he concerns himself with the medical aspects of putrefying wounds, is a reluctance to blame this excessive mortality on the instruments which have caused it. Paré, rather, blames nature and the human body.[172] The answer to this subtle criticism lies in his use of the word "*cacochymie*" [dyspeptic, ill-humored], which, while certainly referring to a body's imbalance, also referred to an individual's constitution and, by implication, morality.[173] The reason why wounded bodies were having difficulty healing, Paré suggests, was twofold: both the status of the nation—atmospherically and

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[170] Ibid, 141.
[171] Ibid, 131.
[172] Paré's writings, which went through three new editions (1552, 1564, and 1575) since their original publication in 1545, did appear during a time of chronic and savage civil war in France, such that proclaiming that nature was "charged with vicious humors" might actually have been a palatable way for Paré to mitigate the role Charles IX and his mother, Catherine de Medici, played in the French religious wars. But this answer is at least as unsettling as it is soothing; Paré's reluctance to blame new technologies (or at the very least consider the possibility) results in a subtle condemnation of both the state and the body.
[173] For the earliest English usage of "cacochymie" as "depraved," the *OED* cites Robert Copland's 1541 translation of Guy de Chauliac's *Questyonary Cyrurgyens*.

religiously—and the humoral imbalance that this distemperature had caused within the body was resulting in a sort of double-damnation. Not only were aristocrats and captains inexplicably falling victim to the sorts of grotesque pangs that contemporary thought suggested applied only to the corrupt or the common (Paré actually refers to the wounded as both the upper-class "*des Gentils-hommes*" and the lower-class "*soldats*"), but this excessive mortality emanated from a national and personal rather than external imbalance. As famous as Paré's writings were in the sixteenth century, this aspect of them has largely gone without comment: that the surgeon responsible for refuting cautery was also a man unwilling to admit that the body's destruction could, somehow, live outside of the body. But, alas, the medical as well as moral history that the Renaissance inherited from its medieval origins hardly made space for a vision of a putrefying body that went without reference to its interior, Galenic balance; Paré's response to his king, in other words, is recourse, an attempt to structure new knowledge (that gunshot wounds putrefy at an alarming rate) in terms that were not incommensurate with previous orthodoxy.

Despite Paré's insinuations, however, wounds were not immediately associated with corruption in the Renaissance, though the advent of gunpowder certainly challenged traditional determinations about wounded bodies and ushered into Renaissance Europe a medical as well as aesthetic crisis. On the one hand, failures of contemporary practices like da Vigo's and the undesirability of effective treatments like Paré's lie at the heart of Renaissance suspicions about wounded bodies. On the other hand, the grotesque physical lesions that gunshot wounds caused not only disfigured bodies but also threatened to destabilize political and martial hierarchies. This destabilization, as Paré noted, was especially acute in instances in which a lower class soldier or mercenary returned from war with an injury that, in past times, would have ennobled a captain. Indeed, the increasing use

of gunpowder in the Renaissance created a representational crisis, a crisis, moreover, that caused the individual importance of a soldier to be drastically reduced. This, in fact, is the primary thesis put forward by one of the most popular early modern handbooks on wound healing: Hans von Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundtartzney* (Strasbourg, 1517). According to Gersdorff, the fate of a wounded body (whether or not it would receive medical care) depended less on an individual's skill, rank, or station and more on an individual's ability to heal and return to battle.[174] The sixteenth-century battlefield, thus, presented men like Sidney with something like an aesthetic quagmire. There was still the prospect of gaining the glory of being a knight at arms, but there was no longer the promise that this glory could outshine the eviscerating ruptures of a new, interpretively indeterminate type of violence.[175]

With slight variation, English physicians and surgeons (especially those writing in the latter half of the sixteenth century) were also concerned with determining the causes of putrefaction, a concern that compelled them, like Paré, to look into rather than away from the body. Summarizing recent advancements in wound treatment, for example, Thomas Gale explains in his *Certaine Workes of Chirurgerie* how wounds themselves were thought of as having individual temperaments, temperaments, moreover, that corresponded to an individual victim's ontology and disposition.[176] Creating a dialogue between himself and two other Renaissance surgeons—John Yates and John Feildes—Gale repeatedly refers to wounds as "solutions of continuitie," an epithet originally developed by Avicenna but

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[174] See Hans von Gersdorff, *Feldtbuch der Wundtartzney* (Strasbourg: Schott, 1517). A discussion of Gersdorff's *Feldtbuch*, and what is probably the first instance in Western culture of triage, can be found in Leslie Clarkson, *Death, Disease, Famine in Pre-Industrial England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 120–33.

[175] For a more thorough discussion of how gunpowder adjusted Renaissance warfare, see John Rigby Hale, *Renaissance War Studies* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 389–420.

[176] Thomas Gale, *Certaine Workes of Chirurgerie, newly compiled and published by Thomas Gale, Maister of Chirurgerie* (London: Rouland Hall, 1563), 36. As with da Vigo's *Practica*, there is no modern edition of Gale's *Certaine Workes*. All citations are thus to the original text. Except for the long S, all spellings are exact reproductions of the original.

utilized frequently by Renaissance surgeons to suggest that proper binding of a wound could lead directly to its healing.[177] But for Gale the phrase was more dynamic. "A wound," explains Gale to his company, "is [a] solution of continuitie, [a] newlye made beynge voyde of accydentes or other affectes wyth it complycated and ioyned."[178] In these terms, a wound could not simply be defined by the "solutions" it created or by the body that it infected; according to Gale, a wound was rather an organic body itself, such that its intentions (whether it would heal or putrefy) could not easily be discerned.

Gale's emphasis on the process of wounding (its phenomenology, as it were) leads him to categorize the life of a wound into four distinct stages—tumor (swelling), wound, ulcer, and putrefaction—in which each stage advances the infection. When he begins to distinguish these categories from one another, however, it becomes apparent that the differences are subtle and not easily noticed at first glance: "for whan as putrefaction of matter doth folowe," writes Gale, "then it leuyth the name of a wounde and is called an vcler."[179] For Gale, then, the transition from wound to ulcer is fluid, such that a wound always illustrates the latent capacity for putrefaction. An ulcer, by comparison, manifests this putrefaction and has no ability to hide its secret inwardness, its previously unknowable potentiality to destroy the body. Once the conversation has turned to ulcers, in fact, John Yates wonders whether or not ulcers can be healed:

Yates: Which vlcers are hard to be cured?

Gale: All those vlcers whiche foloweth after sycknes.

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[177] "A wounde," wrote da Vigo, as one example, "as ancient and later doctors testify, is a solution continuitye, fresh and blodye, and without putrifaction, chiefli made in softe partes." For da Vigo, as for others, the idea that what a wound needed in order to heal was proper binding (to become contiguous again with the body's flesh and humors) offered a palatable way for surgeons to maintain their importance on the battlefield. See da Vigo, *The most excellent workes of chirurgerye*, 7.

[178] Gale, *Certaine Workes*, 36.

[179] Ibid, 35.

> Yates: Wherefore should those vlcers be so rebellious, and harde to receyue curation?
>
> Gale: Bycause nature doeth exonerate & unberthen herself of the dregges and reliquies of yll, and vicuous humours.[180]

If Paré's condemnation of the individual body was implicit in his rejection of cautery, then Gale's condemnation is more direct. The potential for putrefaction, according to Gale, is not related to the environmental conditions in which a wound occurs (as Galenic theory had suggested) but is contingent rather on the body's "reliquies of yll, and vicuous humours." In such instances, in fact, in which these "humours" encourage putrefaction—to read Gale as literally as possible—"nature doeth exonerate & unberthen herself," a construction, I would argue, that is designed, on the one hand, to suggest how putrefaction obstructs the body's natural ability to heal itself and, on the other, to blame something within the body, something untoward and morally askew, for this obstruction. In Gale's paradigm, in other words, an infected wound represents an instance in which a body fails on its own accord, as a result of its own distemperatures and deficiencies, especially—as seems implicit in the use of the morally charged verbs "exonerate" and "unberthen"—when the distemperatures and deficiencies are symptoms manifesting from an imbalance of the passions.

It was in this way that early modern surgeons began to theorize how the "continuitie" that a wound ruptured could be as humoral as it was physical (especially in instances in which a wound produced great pain) as well as consider the possibility that infection might be related to humoral imbalance. Thirteen years after Gale published his *Certaine Workes*, for example, another English surgeon hinted at the moral and social depravity suggested by putrefying wounds. John Banister's 1574 *Treatise of chyrurgerie*, in fact, exclusively studies infection and distinguishes what Gale had called "symple" wounds

[180] Ibid, 46. By "sycknes" Gale most likely means "infection."

(contusions without infection) from infected wounds by focusing on the degree of bodily corruption that the latter made visible. "That is to be called an Vlcer," wrote Banister, "where as there is corruption. And that a wound, where (as yet) there is no putrefaction."[181] Though this formulation does not immediately suggest a moral reading, the social and political consequences become clearer when Banister explains the causes of infection. Presenting himself as an interpreter and innovator of Galenic medicine (Banister refers to Galen and his descendents as "[t]hat latter sect of Chirurgians"), Banister divides the causes into two categories—the "antecedent" and the "coniunctiue"—though both, we soon learn, are equally as suggestive about a body's internal distemperature:

> The antecedent causes are these, viz. cutting, breaking, tearing, and suche like solution of continuitie, whiche cannot euen by & by stirre up Sanies, Pus, or Sordicies, which are iudged necessarily to associate the ulcers, although it may be done in time, & that in remouving the antecedent and corporall causes. Therefore the antecedent causes of ulcers is Cacochima, whiche is euill iuyce, and that is, when the humors haue onley defaulte in qualitie and not in quantitie.[182]

Though Banister, unlike Paré, was not constrained by having to make his explanations accommodate his audience, this formulation nevertheless seems designed to appear more innocuous than perhaps it is. If we follow Banister's implications, however, the portrait of infection that emerges is rather disturbing. Not only, for example, are the "antecedent" causes those developments in a wound that occur before infection is noticeable, but those antecedents are also in themselves not sufficient to indicating that infection will occur at all. That Banister goes on to label the prime antecedent cause as "Cacochima"—a defect in the quality of the humors—only intensifies how insidious and conspicuous he understands infected wounds to be.

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[181] John Banister, *A Needfvll, new, and necessarie treatise of chyrurgerie, briefy comprehending the generall and particuler curation of Vlcers* (London: Thomas Marshe, 1574), 2.
[182] Ibid, 5.

This aspect of infection—that it could develop without obvious cause or reason—both fascinated and perplexed Renaissance surgeons and focused attention in general on how unreadable internal corruption could be. But a wound, according to Banister, putrefying on account of "to muche aboundance of […] peruerse humors" would eventually betray its victim and not necessarily by producing "Sanies, Pus, or Sordicies."[183] In such instances, in fact, an infected wound was believed to influence an individual's complexion, such that an interrelationship between the health of a wound and one's appearance was formed. Banister refers to this interrelationship as the "coniunctiue cause" of infection, a significant formulation, I would argue, because it leaves open the possibility that humoral imbalance could both cause and be the result of infection. Indeed, Banister's explanation of the "coniunctiue causes" reads with a certain ambiguity:

> The coniunctiue causes is said to be that intemperature, which is called the malice of complexion in the wounded partes through the antecedent causes, or through the wounds and hurts themselves, or other tumors against nature, but especially through malignant ulcers, either broken, opened or stirred.[184]

This definition might at first seem unremarkable: an infected wound becomes recognizable by the "intemperature" that it displays, an "intemperature," moreover, that is visible "in the wounded partes through the antecedent causes." But when we consider that the "antecedent causes" could be both the physical and humoral "solution of continuitie" that a wound creates, then the "coniunctiue causes" of infection become more problematic. The "intemperature" that Banister speaks of, in these terms, is not necessarily something that a wound produces but rather something that a wound uncovers. Indeed, Banister goes on to identify this "intemperature" as "proceding of choller more grosse & thicke," but this, I

[183] Ibid, 5.
[184] Ibid, 6.

think, is an understated gloss in light of what Banister calls "the malice of complexion."[185] Not only, in this complicated formula, do wounds reveal secret or hidden distempers about the body, but in such instances of distemper the wound itself becomes a reflection of the moral imbalance of the individual, an aesthetic representation, in other words, of the "malice" rooted in the "complexion" of the corrupt.[186]

If we can take Banister's *Treatise of chyrurgerie* as an indication of the sorts of dilemmas that infected wounds presented early modern medicine, then we can get a clearer picture of why the phrase "solution of continuitie" was such an apt description of the experience. As much as a wound ruptured physical and humoral states of unity, it also required, as Galenic theory suggested, humoral "continuitie" in order to withstand infection. Part of the suspiciousness, in fact, of infection for early moderns was that a consistently effective method of treatment could not be determined. Banister's recommendation for curing infected wounds, for example, is largely Galenic; he proposes that a victim's diet ought to be adjusted (in order to induce vomiting and encourage evacuation), that the wound ought to be cleaned and bound, and that measures ought to be taken to mitigate the discomfort of the wounded (what Banister calls the "accidentes and dispositions ioyned with the Vlcer").[187]

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[185] Ibid, 6.

[186] I think the diction here enforces the moral reading. "Coniunctiue," for example, could suggest a symbiotic rather than semiotic relationship between "intemperature" and infection, and the phrase "malice of complexion"—though here qualifying the aesthetic appearance of an infected wound—certainly implies the defect in character that surgeons like Paré, Gale, and Banister believed to be at the heart of putrefaction.

[187] Ibid, 17–18. In early modern vulnerary terminology, an "accident" could designate any sort of unpleasant experience developing from a wound, though pain was considered the most intractable and dangerous of the lot. As Gale explains, Renaissance surgeons would use pain as a way to measure the degree of infection precisely because pain was believed to unbalance the humors beyond the imbalance that a wound originally created (Gale, *Certaine Workes*, 34). For this reason, the maintenance of pain was vital; in instances in which pain could not be abated, for example, pain not only indicated the degree of corruption in the humors but also was itself believed to be complicit in sustaining the infection.

But these procedures, Banister clarifies, can only be effective if the humoral "intemperature" originally causing the infection is resolved:

> If the Ulcer be ioyned with any other affect, curation ought not to be applied to the Ulcer, but first to cure the affect, & lastly the Ulcer. […] But if there be some strong intemperature (whiche is wont to bringe weakenes to the affected part) and be ioyned to the Ulcered fleshe, then, that is first to be cured. And when thou hast cured the intemperature, afterwarde thou shalt easely heale the affecte.[188]

One of the more troubling and conspicuous ironies of Banister's *Treatise* is that a methodology for curing "intemperature" is not given. Some recommendations for how a surgeon might "abate" the rate of infection are provided, but these recommendations are largely conventional (hot and dry wounds, for example, ought to be treated with substances that are cold and wet) and are not accompanied by any language that suggests such treatments might be able to cure infection.[189] Instead, Renaissance surgeons understood infection as something that needed to be prevented and in this way drew attention, in the process of writing about how wounds might be cured, to how little a surgeon could be of use in instances in which infection occurred on account of an "intemperature."

The recommendations, in fact, for withstanding ulcers are themselves rather telling. The way to resist ulceration, so Galenic theory suggested, was to keep the body properly nourished with the six non-naturals: air, motion and quiet, sleeping and waking, food and drink, repletion and inanition, and the passions. An imbalance in any could lead to a dangerous distemperature, but the consequences were particularly dire (and unsurprisingly so) in the case of the passions. As Thomas Gale explains, infection is most easily withstood by "persons of good complexions, whose bodies are nourished with good blode, and have no abundance of superfluous moistnes."[190] When asked by John Feildes for an example of a

[188] Banister, *Treatise of chyrurgerie*, 16.
[189] Ibid, 19–22, at 19.
[190] Gale, *Certaine Workes*, 41.

person at risk, Gale gives two: "persons hauynge dropsies, and women with childe. Where vlcers happen in such bodyes they, wil not cicatrize because of aboundance of superfluous moysture."[191] The consequences of this formulation were particularly dire for victims of gunshot wounds: not only were these wounds likely to putrefy, but also they occurred on the battlefield, a space that, even though no longer associated with traditional heroics, still very much played a part in the construction of male aristocratic identities. In fact, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, gunfire increasingly became a symbol of virility, curiously intertwined into the "language of sex" and male fantasies of "speed, violence, and accuracy."[192] A reconstruction of the defunct mores of heroism, this trend, coupled with the fact that putrefying wounds contained the same physiological deficiency ("superfluous moisture") that characterized the capricious passions of women, meant that gunshot wounds could be doubly emasculating; for the aggressor, gunfire offered a fresh imaging of masculinity, while infection, for the wounded, illustrated a defect in male temperament.[193]

When considered together, the writings of Paré, Gale, and Banister offer a disturbing portrait of the wounded body, one, in particular, in which a wound—especially an infected wound—functions a type of gloss for the moral, spiritual, and aesthetic qualities of an individual. What does all this mean, except that early moderns were especially suspicious of wounds and aware of the social frustrations and medical mysteries that attended them? For one, Paré's, Gale's, and Banister's concerns with putrefaction challenged the adequacy of the human body as an instrument of signification, or, more precisely, limited the wounded body's ability to signify to negative qualities alone. For victims of gunfire, like Sidney, the social and political difficulties created by these limitations were even more acute; not only,

[191] Ibid, 46.
[192] On this association, see Hale, *Renaissance War Studies*, 409–13, at 410.
[193] As a corollary to this, Gale encourages his readers, if they are wounded, to avoid sexual action, what he calls "the greatest pestilence that may be in this diseace" (*Certaine Workes*, 34).

for example, were gunshot wounds grotesque and more likely to putrefy than lacerated or contused wounds, but also gunpowder had rendered chivalric and heroic identity something of an outmoded anachronism.[194] This, coupled with the fact that wounds were associated with the humors and that a defect or imbalance in a particular humor was believed to encourage or even cause infection, virtually guaranteed that a wounded body would be considered with caution and an infected wound with suspicion.

If not typical, Sidney's wounding certainly was representative of these concerns and suspicions. But the difficulties for Sidney (in playing the role of captain, hero, and defender of the Protestant cause in the Low Countries) were also compounded by the environment in which he was wounded and the manner in which his wound putrefied. On the day Sidney was wounded—September 22, 1586—in fact, a dense mist had settled into Zutphen, so that when Sidney and his company attempted to interdict a passing supply convoy, the skirmish that ensued was chaotic at best.[195] In the confusion, Sidney was wounded by a gunshot bullet to the left thigh, breaking his thighbone, "three fingers above the knee."[196] At first, so the story goes, the wound seemed to be healing well. By the fifth day, Sidney was sleeping again through the night and, by the fourteenth day, was relatively free of pain. Somewhere

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[194] As Dominic Baker-Smith has written, Sidney "fell victim to the weapon which brutally exposed anachronism." See Dominic Baker-Smith, "'Great Expectation': Sidney's Death and the Poets" in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. Jan van Dorsten (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 87. On the decline of the mounted knight at arms in general, see Arthur Ferguson's still-seminal *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry: Studies in the Decline and Transformation of Chivalric Idealism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1960). For an extra-literary study, see John Rigby Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450–1620* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985), 46–-74.

[195] Sidney's modern biographer, Katherine Duncan-Jones, records an entry from the diary of an eyewitness, Thomas Digges, who was present in Zutphen. "In the morning the 22 of September fell a great and thick mist," wrote Digges, "such that you might hardly discern a man ten paces off." See Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 294.

[196] Leicester to Burghley, September 1586, *Calendar of State Papers*, XXI, II: 165, as cited in John Buxton, "The Mourning for Sidney," *Renaissance Studies* 3 (1989): 46–56, at 46 n.1.

between the sixteenth day and the eighteenth day after he was wounded, however, events took a serious turn. The wound began to emit a noxious odor and the sutures had to be removed. A week later (twenty-five days after he was wounded), Sidney was dead.[197]

Though no extended medical commentary on it exists, Sidney's wounding might well have served as an anecdote appended to the writings of Paré, Banister, or Gale. Not only, for example, did Sidney's wound putrefy, but the manner in which it putrefied—by appearing at first to heal properly—illustrated one of the tendencies of gunshot wounds that made them so intractable for early modern surgeons. As modern ballistic studies have confirmed, this type of delayed maturation is not uncommon for wounds that are the products of slow-moving and dense projectiles. According to Thomas Bowen and Ronald Bellamy, for example, the crux in determining the relationship between the potential of a wound to infect and the bullet that caused the wound has less to do with the velocity of the bullet and more to do with the "interaction of projectile and tissue."[198] The proof for this relatively self-evident statement, however, turns out to be rather complex. When a projectile breaks skin and passes through a body's tissues, two distinct areas of trauma are formed: a "permanent cavity" immediately surrounding the track of the bullet and a "temporary cavity" of stretched and traumatized cells adjacent to the permanent cavity.[199] Higher velocity weapons are more likely to produce greater temporary cavities whereas the reverse is true for lower velocity weapons.[200] It also follows that the temporary cavities produced by low velocity weapons will heal at a faster rate, given that the surface area is comparatively smaller and that there is virtually no interaction between the projectile and the temporary cavity.

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[197] Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 279–303.
[198] *Emergency War Surgery*, ed. Thomas E. Bowen and Ronald F. Bellamy (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 1988), 33.
[199] Ibid, 17.
[200] Ibid, 26.

In Sidney's case, a bullet from either a harquebus or a musket fired from a relatively short distance would have produced both a large entry wound and an extremely large permanent cavity.[201] But the conventional method of treating a gunshot wound would not have accounted for how the size of the bullet and the speed and distance at which it was fired contributed to the maturation of the wound. The average weight, for example, of a harquebus bullet in the period was between fifteen and twenty grams, while a musket was capable of firing at a slightly higher velocity a projectile weighing as much as eighty grams.[202] Compared to modern artillery—which generally fires projectiles between three and five grams—a shot from either of these weapons would have resulted in a greater "interaction of projectile and tissue" and thus would be far more likely to putrefy, especially, as was the case with Sidney, if the projectile became lodged deep within the tissue of the wound. In such instances, a wound needs to be properly debrided in order to withstand infection, a process that entails not only careful cleaning but also "surgical removal of nonviable tissue and foreign matter, evacuation of hematoma, and the provision of adequate drainage."[203] And while Renaissance surgeons certainly understood the importance of cleaning, of removing the bullet from the wound, and of resupplying the wound with new blood, even the best of them, as I have said, insisted that proper binding was of paramount importance to a wound's overall ability to heal. If a bullet could not be recovered (and the bullet that struck Sidney

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[201] Peter Krenn, Paul Kalaus, and Bert Hall, "Material Culture and Military History: Test Firing Early Modern Small Arms" *Material Culture Review* 42 (1995): 101–9, at 103. Sidney also could have been struck by a wheel lock pistol during a caracole, though, as we will see, the extent of his wound and the rate at which it became infected suggest a weapon with a larger bullet. In any event, Duncan-Jones, citing both from Thomas Digges's eyewitness account of the skirmish and from John Stow's 1592 *Annales*, approximates that the Albanian forces facing Sidney at Zutphen numbered "2,200 musketeers and 800 foot soldiers" (Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 295).

[202] Krenn, Kalaus, and Bert, "Early Modern Small Arms," 104.

[203] B. D. Ragsdale, "Gunshot Wounds: A Historical Perspective," *Military Medicine* 149 (1984): 301–15, at 309.

never was) then conventional practice called for cleaning or "mundification," application of diverse sorts of antiseptic and antimicrobial unguents, and then some type of primary closure (either binding or bandaging, depending on the extent of the wound). In this way, a wound created by either a harquebus or a musket shot could easily appear to be healing well; not only would the temporary cavity created be slight (thus reducing the bruising, swelling, and general inflammation that surrounds the wound), but also, once the wound was bound, the flesh immediately surrounding the sutures would be far cleaner and more viable than the tissue inside the wound. The problems, of course, develop when the bullet or fragments of the bullet cannot be extracted from the wound. Not only, in these cases, would enclosing an unclean abscess keep the tissue in contact with the contaminant, but also it would encourage the production of anaerobic bacteria, leading to a greater overall chance of infection.

By modern standards, the wound that Sidney died from would have been considered complex and grotesque but also curable;[204] in the Renaissance, however, wounds that surreptitiously putrefied in this manner had become something of a conventional metaphor for corruption and maladjustment, an aesthetic representation, in other words, of a body's own internal and incorrigible "solution of continuitie." Even Sidney himself, in lines that are famous for other reasons, appeals to this belief:

> The right vse of Comedy will (I thinke) by no body be blamed, and much lesse of the high and excellent Tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and sheweth forth the Vlcers that are couered with Tissue.[205]

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[204] Wounds with compound fractures, nevertheless, are quite serious. As late as World War I, Ragsdale notes, one out of every four American soldiers with a compound fracture caused by gunshot died. See Ragsdale, "Gunshot Wounds," 309.

[205] Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defense of Poesy*, ed. Jan van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 45. For a summary of the lines prospective relationship to the doctrine of catharsis and a reconsideration of their Elizabethan conventionality, see D. W. Robertson, "Sidney's Metaphor of the Ulcer," *Modern Language Notes* 56 (1941): 56–61.

Another example with a bit more directness is a passage from Thomas Hughes's *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587):

> I never yet saw heart so smoothly heal'd,
> But that the scar bewray'd the former wound:
> Yea, where the salve did soonest close the skin,
> The sore was oft'ner covered up than cur'd:
> Which festering deep and fill'd within, at last
> With sudden breach grew greater than at first.
> What then for minds which have revenging moods,
> And ne'er forget the cross they forced bear?
> Whereto if reconcilement come, it makes
> The t' one secure, while t' other works his will.
> Atonement seld defeats, but oft defers
> Revenge: beware a reconciled foe.[206]

Somewhat surprisingly, this phenomenon is not given much attention in the vulnerary treatises of the period, perhaps on account of the fact that, in such instances, Renaissance surgeons understood that very little could be done to cure or even assuage the discomfort of the wounded. John Banister's description of these types of ulcers—which he labels after Galen "cacoëthes," or ill-disposed ulcers—certainly suggests as much.[207] According to Banister, such ulcers are intractable and dangerous "because in the ulcered or affected parte, some maligne & pernitious matter, lieth hidde to us unknowen." William Clowes's quite-popular compendium of gunshot anecdotes (1588, r.1596) also addresses the deceptiveness of some wounds—he refers to a wound's potential to putrefy as its "secret intention"—though, unlike Paré, Gale, and Banister, his treatment of infection does not clearly associate the malady with a defect in the constitutional or moral quality of an individual.[208] A more telling indication of the suspiciousness of Sidney's case concerns the length of time that

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[206] Thomas Hughes, *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (London: Septimus Prowett, 1828), 44.
[207] Banister,*Treatise of chyrurgerie*, 11.
[208] For a few anecdotes describing instances in which a gunshot wound putrefied in this manner, see William Clowes, *A profitable and necessarie booke of obseruations, for all those that are burned with the flame of gun powder, &c. and also for curing of wounds made with musket and caliuer shot, and other weapons of warre* (London: Edmund Bollifant, 1596), 38–40, 44–52, and 92–99.

Renaissance surgeons expected to pass before a wound could be considered beyond the threat of infection. Clowes, for example, frequently designates the *terminus ad quem* for infection as five days, while John Browne, a seventeenth-century surgeon, suggests that "wounds are not past danger until the 7th day be over, neither are they void of accidents until the matter be well digested."[209] Working back from these statements, we can reasonably assume that, in Sidney's case, the sixteen days during which his wound appeared to be healing were particularly excessive and the revelation, in fact, that he had been dying all along would have come as more of a shock.

Despite this, the mythologizing of Sidney's wounding occurred immediately, perhaps, as some readers have suggested, in an effort to mitigate or deflect attention from the true circumstances of Sidney's decline.[210] Duncan-Jones, for example, records a series of Leicester's correspondences between the 23rd of September and the 6th of October, letters that not only give favorable impressions of his nephew's injury but also praise Sidney's valor in general and his fortitude during his suffering in particular.[211] But in none of the accounts of Sidney's stay in Arnhem, either in these letters or in the two writings that Sidney himself

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[209] Clowes, *A profitable and necessarie booke*, 13, 45, and 61. See also John Browne, *A Compleat Discourse of Wounds, both in General and Particular* (London: William Jacob, 1678), 22.

[210] An indicative but insufficient list of works that have considered the inaccuracies and propagandas of Sidney's biography (especially in relation to his wounding and death) include Alan Hagar, "The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney's Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader," *English Literary History* 48 (1981): 1–16, and *Dazzling Images: The Masks of Sir Philip Sidney* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991); Edward Berry, *The Making of Sir Philip Sidney* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Alan Stewart, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001); and Jan van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1986).

[211] See, in particular, the letter from Leicester to Walsingham on 6 October 1586, which concludes with the following commendation: "Lastly, and that will not like you the least, your son and mine is well amending as ever man hath done for so short a time. He feeleth no grief now but the long lying, which he must suffer. His wife is with him, and I tomorrow am going to him for a start. But for his hurt, that Thursday may run amongst any of our Thursdays, for there was never a more valiant service this 10 years by so few men against so many" (Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 295–97).

composed on his deathbed—a codicil and a letter to the Dutch physician Johann Weyer—is any information given as to the specific course of Sidney's treatment.[212] In fact, in the mass of texts published about Sidney's death before 1590—a mass that includes four collections of university verse (two from Oxford, one from Cambridge, and one from Leiden); a write-up in *Holinshed's Chronicles* by Edmund Monyleux (1587); ballads by George Whetstone (1587), John Phillip (1587), and Angel Day (1587); a long epitaph by Thomas Churchyard (1586); and two funeral songs by William Byrd (1588)—Sidney's wound is described only in terms of its brutality and incurability rather than in terms of its deceptive putrefaction.[213]

Most of this writing, as Gavin Alexander has explained, is "formulaic," designed to lament Sidney's death in a nearly obsequious capacity.[214] The publication of Thomas Moffet's *Nobilis* (1593) provides the earliest detailing of Sidney's care, though even in that text—which recounts how Sidney braved the pain and "commanded" a surgeon from Bergen to "probe more deeply" and "pull […] apart" the "stitched edges of the muscles"—

[212] Leicester's correspondences provide the clearest focusing of Sidney's twenty-five-day languish. See *The Correspondence of Robert Dudley*, ed. John Bruce (New York: AMS Press, 1968), especially Leicester's correspondences to Sir Thomas Heneage (414–15) and Walsingham (422, 429–30). Other possible writings emerging from Sidney's time at Arnhem are considered by Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 295–303. For a reproduction of the brief letter from Sidney to Weyer (dated 16 October 1586), see Philip Sidney, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Roger Kuin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1318.

[213] The ballads by Whetstone ("Sir Phillip Sidney, his honorable Life, his valiant Death, and True Vertues"), Philip ("The Life and Death of Sir Phillip Sidney"), and Day ("Upon the Life and Death of Sir Phillip Sidney") are all reproduced in facsimile in *Elegies for Sir Philip Sidney (1587)*, ed. A. J. Colaianne and W. J. Godshalk (Delmar: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1980). See Raphael Holinshed, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (London: Raphael Holinshed, 1587), 1554–56, for Monyleux's 1587 entry on Sidney, and William Byrd, "Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs of Sadnes and Pietie" in *English Madrigal Verse 1588–1632*, ed. E. H. Fellowes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 27–68, at 49. Other possible entries into the stationer's register about Sidney's death before 1590 are considered in Dennis Kay, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 69, n.9.

[214] Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, 57.

the desire to praise Sidney's fortitude eclipses the presentation of medical data concerning the infection.[215] Nevertheless, Moffet still implies some concern:

> Let us be ashamed that nature and medicine brought no health to [Sidney], *the transgressions of whose adolescence* seemed not altogether to have merited being punished by such a thunderbolt, the virtues of whose youth were worthiest of an eternal life on earth. For the rest, Sidney hung in the irresolute hands of the surgeons, who now would promise health from a digestion of the pus, now, in turn, despaired of life from the virulence of it.[216]

The only other hint at Sidney's particular treatment is in Greville's 1625 biography, *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney*, and while the passage is another masterpiece of subtle propaganda, it will seem from our current perspective equally as revealing. "Now after the sixteenth day was past," wrote Greville of Sidney's sickness,

> and the very shoulder-bones of this delicate patient worn through his skin with constant and obedient posturing of his body to their art, he, judiciously observing the pangs his wound stang him with by fits, together with many other symptoms of decay, few or none of recovery, he began rather to submit his body to these artists than any further to believe in them. During which suspense he one morning, lifting up the clothes for change and ease of his body, smelt some extraordinary noisome savour about him, differing from oils and salves, as he conceived, and either out of natural delicacy, or at least care not to offend others, grew a little troubled with it; which they that sat by perceiving, besought him to let them know what sudden indisposition he felt. Sir Philip ingenuously told it, and desired them as ingenuously to confess whether they felt it such noisome thing or no. They all protested against it, upon their credits, whence Sir Philip presently gave this severe doom upon himself, that it was inward mortification, and a welcome messenger of death.[217]

Despite their decorations and personal intentions, both Moffet (a physician) and Greville seem to have gotten the medical facts correct. Early modern surgeons, especially in

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[215] Thomas Moffet, *Nobilis, or A View of the Life and Death of a Sidney and "Lessus Lugubris,"* ed. Virgil B. Heltzel and Hoyt H. Hudson (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1940), 90. In their introduction, Heltzel and Hudson make note that historical accuracy in *Nobilis* has often been subjugated to "exempla and moralizing" and that "no biography of Sidney written in the sixteenth or seventeenth century" contains "a considerable amount of factual material" (xix). The most likely source for Moffet's information on Sidney's death, as Heltzel and Hudson speculate, is Monyleux's 1587 *Holinshed* entry on Henry Sidney.

[216] Moffet, *Nobilis*, 90. My emphasis.

[217] Fulke Greville, *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brook*, ed. John Gouws (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 79–80.

the case of gunshot wounds, understood themselves as secondary to the healing process; Thomas Gale, for example, responding to John Yates's statement that "health is defined to be an effect according to nature, apt to perform the actio[n]s of the same," replies in kind that the surgeon is "natures friend, & minister."[218] For ulcerous wounds like Sidney's, in fact, this relationship was even more vexed, as Renaissance surgeons saw themselves as having the power both to aid the natural process of healing as well as disturb it. Though it is unknown, it is likely that Sidney's coterie of surgeons, after having failed to retrieve the bullet from his thigh, would have attempted to suppurate Sidney's wound, to encourage via the addition of organic compounds the production of pus that might, so they thought, purge the area of its imbalance of humors.[219] But this was a foolish and a dangerous process and one that would have only expedited the rate of decay. In such instances, in fact, Renaissance surgeons believed, following the medieval Galenist Henri de Mondeville's comment that "nature discharges herself [from infection] by suppuration," that a wound that continued to decay after suppuration did so on account of a preexisting and inalterable condition.[220]

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[218] Gale, *Certaine Workes*, 19.

[219] Greek in origin, the concept of suppuration (or "coction") was popularized by Galen who, as an obsessive pharmacologist, recommended dozens of topical agents that were believed to help a wound fester and produce what the Romans would later call "*pus bonum et laudabile"* [good and commendable pus]. According to Galen, this type of secondary treatment was favorable to primary closure (especially for complex abscesses) because the purulence, so he thought, provided a conduit whereby the unhealthy or imbalanced humor causing the infection could be discharged. See Galen, *Method of Medicine, Volume One*, trans. Ian Johnston and G. H. R. Horsley (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 2011), IV.5, esp. 424–427. The practice has since been described as one of the worst medical fallacies in history and some debate has been given as to how fastidiously Galen himself (known for his practical empiricism) adhered to the method.

[220] Henri de Mondeville's "Chirurgie" (c. 1320), as cited in *A Sourcebook of Medieval Science*, ed. Edward Grant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 803–5, at 804. See also the discussion of Guy de Chauliac (who was infamous for his faith in suppuration and whose published works were far more popular than Mondeville's) in Leo Zimmerman and Ilza Veith, *Great Ideas in the History of Surgery* (San Francisco: Norman Publishing, 1993), 149–57.

At least one of Sidney's contemporaries was assured of the relationship between Sidney's impetuosity and his wounding, even if his earliest biographers and elegists seem to be taken by the gallantry that Sidney's wounding revealed.[221] In his verse translations of the psalms, which Duncan-Jones suspects Sidney was working on while in the Netherlands, Sidney nearly considers the possibility himself.[222] Whether or not the following were translated before or during Sidney's stay at Arnhem, we can never know, but its prospective candidacy for the "song which [Sidney] had titled *La Cuisse Rompue*" [the broken thigh] certainly offers a glimpse at the troubled psychology of a dying romantic:[223]

> 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.[224]

Another candidate, a lyric that is attributed to Sidney in a manuscript belonging to a Fellow of All Souls called Robert Dow, is more direct in its association:

> Oh Lord, how vain are all our frail delights;
> How mix'd with sour the sweet of our desire,
> How subject oft to Fortune's subtle sleights,
> How soon consum'd, like snow against the fire.
> Sith in this life our pleasures all be vain,

[221] Jean Hotman, a French-born secretary of Leicester's and a friend of Sidney's from Oxford, apparently corresponded to Leicester from France after Sidney's death that, "[e]veryone here regrets that he threw his life away as he did." See *Francisci et Joannis Hotomannorum epistolae* (Amsterdam, 1695), 267, as quoted in Buxton, "The Mourning for Sidney," 47.
[222] Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 276.
[223] Greville, *Prose Works*, 82.
[224] The beginning of Sidney's translation of *Psalm XIII: Usque quo Domine*, as reproduced in Sidney, *The Major Works*, 275.

O Lord, grant me that I may them disdain.[225]

Whatever the song that Sidney had composed and listened to during his sickness, it is almost certainly to have been one that expressed his regrets and uncertainties at having his life end in such a manner. Sidney's wound was the worst type of wound and, he might have sensed, also the most damnable. In normal circumstances, in the circumstances that caused British and Continental physicians to explore the humoral suggestiveness inherent in calling a wound a "solution of continutie," wounds were considered to be at odds with nature. But just as it fell outside the bounds of heroic action, Sidney's wound, too, in its comparative rarity of length of putrefaction and deception, would have struck Sidney (as seems apparent from these lamentations) as well as his companions, contemporaries, and later biographers, that his infection was a matter of providence not circumstance, as something that, perhaps, had been deep festering in his body for a very long time.

Contemporary interest in Sidney's wounding was widespread after his death, though concern and skepticism, whether medical or moral, about the development and putrefaction of his wound were not immediate; Whetstone's 1587 ballad, for example, a lyric that relies heavily on the image of Sidney's wound, repeatedly "compares, his wound, with patient paine," while the Latin lamentation *Lessus Lugurbris*, which Thomas Moffet appends to *Nobilis*, blazons Sidney's physical members—head, breast, hands, and feet—in an effort to enforce their almost-Christological associations.[226] Both texts certainly suggest the intensity of interest in Sidney's atomized, wounded body, but neither one considers the aesthetic or moral consequences of Sidney's putrefaction, despite the fact that *Nobilis* nearly creates a bridge between the "lubricity of Sidney's adolescence" and his wounding, and the *Lessus*

[225] For an explanation and reproduction of this manuscript, see William Ringler, "The Text of *The Poems of Sidney* Twenty-five Years After," in *Sir Philip Sidney's Achievements*, ed. M. J. B. Allen, Dominic Baker-Smith, and Arthur F. Kinney (New York: AMS Press, 1990), 129–44.
[226] Whetstone, "Sir Phillip Sidney," in *Elegies for Sir Philip Sidney (1587)*, B2v.

wonders whether Sidney was wounded "because he was in a hurry, [… and] had not troubled about the armor on his left thigh."[227] But besides these atypical slips, we have to wait for the second generation of Sidney encomia before his contemporaries' concern with the manner in which he died finally returns unpalatable, indeed, contemptible discoveries.[228]

ASTROPHEL'S WONDROUS WOUND: SPENSER AND THE SPECIOUSNESS OF ELEGY

"Silence augmenteth griefe": so begins the anonymously written poem that concludes the first of two published miscellanies in the 1590s commemorating Sidney. The original collection of elegies, titled *The Phoenix Nest* (1593), included writings by Thomas Lodge, Edward Dyer, Walter Raleigh, and Nicolas Burton, though its editor, believed to be Richard Stapleton (one "R. S. of the Inner Temple Gentlemen"), remains unknown. Two years later, in 1595, Spenser published a second collection of elegies alongside his *Colin Clouts Come home againe*, a collection that included a reprinting of three elegies from *The Phoenix Nest* but added one elegy by Spenser (*Astrophel*), a "Doleful Lay of Clorinda" written by either Spenser or Mary Herbert, and two poems by Sidney's friend Lodowyck Bryskett, one of which, as a dialogue between Colin (Spenser) and Lycon (Bryskett), may have been co-

[227] Moffet, *Nobilis*, 90, 102. On these uncharacteristic moments in *Nobilis* and *Lessus*, and on the dissimulation of Sidney's sexual appetites in his biographies and accounts of his death, see Alan Hager, "The Exemplary Mirage," 1–16.

[228] There is one other potentially telling story recorded in John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* about Sidney's stay in Arnhem, but it is not substantiated by any of the accounts of Sidney's decline and death written before 1593 and its exact provenance remains uncertain. Here is the passage in full: "[Sidney] married the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, Principall Secretary of Estate (I thinke his only child) whom he loved very well: in so much that having received some shott or wound in the Warres in the Lowe-countreys (where he had command of the Ramikins, I thinke) he would not (contrary to the injunction of his Physitians and chirurgions) forbeare his carnall knowledge of her which cost him his life: upon which occasion there were some roguish verses made." See the entry on Sir Philip Sidney in John Aubrey, *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Dick (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1999), 278–80, at 280.

written by Spenser.[229] In the case of Spenser, who was likely responsible for the presentation of the collection, the nine years of silence seemed to augment much more than grief. The years, in fact, seemed to have helped him overcome the difficulties of writing after Sidney (which he laments in his dedication to the Countess of Pembroke in *The Ruines of Time*, published with the *Complaints* in 1591) by allowing him a suitable distance from which to criticize Sidney.[230] Spenser's *Astrophel, A pastorall elegie vpon the death of the most noble and valorous Knight, Sir Philip Sidney*, for example, presents Sidney (aptly allegorized as Astrophel) as a pseudo-Adonis character and in a manner strikingly different from his vision of the wounded Philisides in *The Ruines of Time*. In 1591, Spenser renders Sidney's death in terms of its apotheotic qualities:

> Still as I gazed, I beheld where stood
> A Knight all arm'd, upon a winged steed,
> The same that was bred of *Medusaes* blood,
> On which *Dan Perseus* borne of heavenly seed,
> The faire *Andromeda* from perill freed:
> Full mortally this Knight ywounded was,
> That streames of blood foorth flowed on the gras.
>
> Yet was he deckt (small joy to him alas)
> With manie garlands for his victories,
> And with rich spoyles, which late he did purchas

[229] The two elegies by Bryskett are "The mourning muse of Thestylis" and "A pastorall Aeglogue upon the Death of Sir Philip Sidney." Though the three elegies in *The Phoenix Nest* are printed anonymously, the authors of each are believed to be Matthew Roydon ("An Elegie, or Friends Passion, for his Astrophill"), Walter Raleigh, and Fulke Greville (both poems titled as "An Epitaph"). See the introduction of the first modern edition of *The Phoenix Nest*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), IX–X.

[230] Spenser's excuse to the Countess in his dedication for not having yet mourned Sidney publically, from our current vantage point, seems to waver between the facetious and the downright insincere. The reason for his failure to "shewe[] any thankefull remembrance towards [Sidney]" apparently has to do with Spenser's "late cumming into England," an insufficient excuse at best. His immortalization of Sidney in *Ruines*, moreover, seems to be as much a result of his desire to placate his critics—"[w]home cheiflie to satisfie" in the dedication refers to Spenser's critics not Sidney or Mary Herbert—as of his desire to mourn Sidney. For references that show writers urging an apparently reluctant Spenser to commemorate Sidney, see Katherine Duncan-Jones's entry "Astrophel" in Hamilton, *The Spenser Encyclopaedia*, 74–6.

> Through brave atcheivements from his enemies:
> Fainting at last through long infirmities,
> He smote his steed, that straight to heaven him bore,
> And left me here his losse to deplore.[231]
> (645–58)

This is the penultimate vision of the dying Sidney (riding heavenward on a winged horse) in a list that also includes the ascent into the sky of a swan, a harp, a coffer, a bridal bed, and a golden ark, all transcendentally plucked from their earthly environments. Mark David Rasmussen, commenting on the exquisite poise of these lines, notes that "each image is a discrete 'signe' (601, 615) that may easily be 'red' (633), irrespective of the will of its creator," and that, "as elegiac substitutions, [the images] constitute the true eternizing of Sidney promised in the poem's dedication."[232] This is certainly correct, though it is also curious. As the images of Sidney's material life are transformed into eternal constellations, they also (if only implicitly) demarcate the spatial and the spiritual distance between speaker and object, between, in other words, Spenser and Sidney. The lines are not, in fact, we realize upon rereading them, about Sidney at all but about Spenser's difficulties in learning how to mourn Sidney correctly. And as a master of poetic persona and verbal affectation, Spenser is able to balance the plaintiveness that is expected of him with the types of emotions that this project potentially elicits. As Sidney, in other words, becomes the risen hero in the heavens, Spenser, with his feet still in Ireland, remains depraved, unrewarded by Queen Elizabeth, and, most importantly, not in a fit station to be remembered in this

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[231] Spenser, "*The Ruines of Time*," in *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, ed. William Oram et al (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 260. All references to Spenser's poetry other than *The Faerie Queene* are to this edition and will hereafter be cited parenthetically.

[232] Mark David Rasmussen, "*Complaints* and *Daphnaïda* (1591)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. Richard McCabe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 218–36, at 224. See also Rebecca Helfer's comment that the "images translate memory from earth to heaven, where memory finds a final resting place in 'heavenly signes.'" Rebecca Helfer, *Spenser's Ruins and the Art of Recollection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 165.

capacity. The potential double-entendres on "deplore" and "losse" in the lines quoted above as well as the characteristically litotic statement that concludes the vision of the ascending ark—"And I for dole was almost like to die" (673)—would seem to substantiate this reading, allowing Spenser a way to be at least as wry about the expectations of writing about Sidney after Sidney's death as he is grieved by having to do so.

Whatever Spenser thought he deserved, his first attempt at mourning the death of Sidney certainly came with some doubleness. As with *Astrophel*, which likens Sidney to Adonis, the Sidney/Perseus analogue (which, to an early modern, would have smacked of hubris) does not exactly deflect attention from the impudence that plighted Sidney's bids for royal favor and affection throughout his life. And, if the vision of a Sidney/Perseus riding heavenward were not hyperbolic enough to suggest some level of disingenuousness, then the description of the wounded Sidney in the second stanza both delighting in and disdaining his martial conquests certainly exposes enough reality to deflect the hyperbole. Outside of the not-so-serious arena of Elizabethan tournament, Sidney did not in his life ever receive "manie garlands" for his "brave atcheivements" nor did he "faint[] at last through long infirmities," unless, of course, this is a reference to his painfully-protracted death and the harsh truth that remembering his death in this way recalls: namely, how many of Sidney's social and political desires went unfulfilled. In these terms, even this type of transcendent vision seems somewhat underhanded, a possibility further indicated by the faint sense of competitive sarcasm brooding over the parenthetical half line "small joy to him alas."

The final lines of *The Ruines of Time*—an injunction for Mary Herbert to direct her sights to heaven "[a]nd loathe this drosse of sinfull worlds desire" (686)—come across, in the terms which I am presenting, as a last condemnation of Sidney's appetency, a condemnation that, if latent here, is manifest when Spenser revises his lament into the

pastoral elegy *Astrophel*.[233] Rather than allegorizing Sidney as an antique hero, Spenser's second elegy on Sidney follows along traditional pastoral forms, though Spenser, by making Adonis the principal shepherd of the pastoral, suggests in pure design some of the libidinal and martial excesses that blighted Sidney's reputation while he lived.[234] The elegy, however, is not generally read in terms of its potential mythography but instead in terms of Spenser's own Adonian mythography: namely, the ability of the myth to become "a promise [to] lovers and poets such as Sidney [that they] will not lose in death their connection with an immortal beauty."[235] But this (now-stereotypical) reading requires, as I hope to prove in the remainder of this chapter, a certain negligence to both the allegorical possibilities of the elegy (which we ought to expect from Spenser) as well as the implicit but clear referencing of the concerns and suspicions that attended incurable wounds in the period. Actively revising the assertion announced by the title that Sidney was a "most Noble and Valorous Knight," *Astrophel* in fact offers us a Sidney whose retreat into the pastoral fields of Penshurst has not, as Languet

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[233] The lines traditionally have been interpreted as a positive proscription of earthly desire. In addition to Rasmussen, who reads the Sidney visions in *The Ruines of Time* as Spenser learning to be neither "egotistical nor self-effacing" (225), see Margaret Ferguson, ""The Afflatus of Ruin': Meditations on Rome by Du Bellay, Spenser, and Stevens," in *Roman Images: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. Annabel Patterson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 23–50.

[234] It is also possible that a particularly keen reader would have made an association between the framing of the Adonis myth in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (narrated by a newly-widowed Orpheus since enjoying the pleasures of Thracian boys) and Sidney's own delight in the company of men. Certainly the conventional plot of the myth—a man disdaining the affections of a woman to pursue combat—would have held some resonance. However, aside from two passages that could be read far more chastely—"That all mens hearts with secret ravishment / He stole away, and weetingly beguyld" (21–2) and "The shepheards all which loved him full deare: / And sure full deare of all he loved was" (200–1)—there is little else in the poem to encourage this association. Nevertheless, see Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 240, on Sidney's potentially amorous relationships with men.

[235] Jon Quitslund, *Spenser's Supreme Fiction: Platonic Natural Philosophy and "The Faerie Queene"* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 222. See also Alexander, *Writing After Sidney*, 70, and Duncan-Jones, "Astrophel," 74–6. According to Duncan-Jones, many of the difficulties created by memorializing Sidney as Adonis can be explained when we accept that Spenser "is celebrating Sidney as a love poet, not as a soldier" (76).

would have hoped, helped him overcome the rashness of his desires for bloodshed. Rather, 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 beasts 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 mischievous might,
> That it both bone and muscles ryved quight.
> (115–20)[236]

Criticism of "Astrophel," as Patrick Cheney explains, has been much "maligned."[237] Not only was there no commentary on the poem between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, but recent considerations of the poem have followed along typically allegorical patterns. Astrophel, as Sidney, lives the career of a young knight in his Adonis-like pursuit of "salvage beasts" that live on "forreine soyle" (83, 92). He combines both physical and moral beauty—"He grew up fast in goodnesse and in grace, / And doubly faire wox both in mynd and face" (17–18)—with military prowess and poetic virtuosity: "For both in deeds and words he nourtred was, / Both wise and hardie" (71–2). His inclusion in a pastoral setting, which emphasizes both the deftness of his wit and his identification as a lover, begins his Virgilian progress to an epic battle with a boar. The progress works neatly and simply, so that, as Cheney explains, "Astrophel moves […] from the pastoral world of 'Shepheard[s]' (1) to a world of epic hunting, the final battle at Zutphen. Spenser presents Sidney as a poet-soldier who gave his life on 'forreine soyle' (the Netherlands) to defend his country from the 'brutish nation' of Spain."[238]

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[236] Spenser, "Astrophel," in *The Yale Edition*, 574.
[237] Patrick Cheney, "*Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, Astrophel,* and *The Doleful Lay of Clorinda* (1595)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*," 237–55, at 246.
[238] Ibid, 249.

In telling this story in this manner, Spenser has not simply presented Sidney as Adonis but rather exacerbated the terms of Adonis's desires beyond their conventional registers. Spenser's source text, Bion's *Lament for Adonis* via Ronsard's *L'Adonis*, offers Spenser, as Raphael Falco notes, a "model for the Renaissance pastoral elegy," but not the apparently ineluctable association between "[f]ull greed[]" (122), wounding, and pathetic death that Spenser offers Sidney.[239] In fact, unlike Ronsard, who rehearses the conventional myth by having Adonis pursue a wild boar far and wide, Spenser deliberately deemphasizes this aspect of the myth, having Astrophel display his prowess in hunting not by combat but by slaying animals that he has captured with "welwoven toyles and subtil traines" (97). As both a shepherd/poet and lover and as an allegorical figure of Sidney's military endeavors in general and his defense of the Protestant cause in particular, then, Astrophel's remarkable quality is a type of deception, one, moreover, bolstered by a desire for "his owne fame to raise" (88). The location of these deceptions, I think, is also important in terms Spenser's potential criticisms. Astrophel, for example, lays his "welwoven toyles and subtil traines" in a "brutish nation" (98), a curious adjective given the likelihood that Spenser's audience would have recognized the typographical pun on "brutish" and "British." Is Spenser suggesting, then, in a sly way, that the image of Sidney cultivated after his death corresponds to a series of affectations and deceptions executed by Sidney during his lifetime? Or is the desire to "entrap" (100) and "slaughter" (105) simply presented as an exacerbation and perversion of the need to "hunt[] such felicitie" (79)? The poem does not support either position over the other but in fact sets its own deceptions as well, subtly but cleverly suggesting that Sidney's (and thus Leicester's) campaign in the Low Countries has come in

[239] Raphael Falco, *Conceived Presences: Literary Genealogy in Renaissance England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 59.

lieu of more important civic and state duties at home: "What needeth perill to be sought abroad, / Since round about us it doth make aboad" (89–90).[240]

The suspiciousness of these allegorical possibilities is substantiated by the problems that emerge when one considers the relationship of Spenser's representation of Sidney/Astrophel/Adonis in the elegy to Spenser's representations of Adonis elsewhere in his poetry. *Astrophel*, in fact, constitutes Spenser's last poetic contemplation of the myth, so it is important that Spenser's ultimate mythography, even as it illustrates his greatest perversion of the story, still performs the work of mourning.[241] I would argue, however, that the wound that Astrophel receives in the elegy undoes the work of mourning that Spenser, in the Garden of Adonis, represented as infinitely regenerative, as vital to the world's understanding of the purpose of love and the value inherent in death. Spenser, in contrast to his reticence to address the wound outright in *The Faerie Queene*, makes note of its overt grisliness and mortality in *Astrophel*: "it both bone and muscles ryved quight. / So deadly was the dint and deep the wound, / And so huge streames of blood thereout did flow" (120–22).[242] And rather than being, as Adonis is in the Garden, "[l]apped in flowres and pretious

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[240] In *Astrophel*, then, it makes very little difference where the protagonist travels, given that the "brutish nation" is contrasted with "famous *Ardeyn*" and "fowle *Arlo*" (96). If Astrophel were to remain at home, a place where "[n]o beast" or "[n]o chace" is "so salvage" or "so hard" (82–3) as to be unconquerable, then he would fail to capitalize on his potential as a soldier and defender of his "mistresse['s]" (88) interests (in the conventional Petrarchan metaphor, Stella, as Cynthia, can always double for Elizabeth). But since both "*Arcady*" (1) and the "brutish nation" could potentially be Britain, then Astrophel either neglects what he ought to do to pursue his own desires or, in the process of doing so, deceives with "toyles" and "traines" the very individuals that afforded him the original opportunity.

[241] For an attempt to read the Garden of Adonis as a Sidneian elegy, see Jon Quitslund, "The Work of Mourning in Spenser's Garden of Adonis," in *Renaissance Papers*, ed. Trevor Howard Hill and Philip Rollinson (Columbia: Camden House, 1997), 23–31.

[242] The tapestry depicting Venus and Adonis in the Castle Joyous, while overtly sexualizing Adonis, subtly avoids describing his wound in physical terms. Britomart sees only Venus cleaning the wound, discovering that this is futile, and transforming Adonis into a flower (III.i.38). Spenser, moreover, gives no physical description of the wound in the Garden of Adonis. The closest approximation to a physical wound in the Garden is the catalogue of

spycery" (III.vi.46), Astrophel is first left to wallow in his own gore (129–50), to watch his beloved Stella mutilate her own body (151–69), and then undergo an Ovidian metamorphosis and its pathetic emphasis on pity:

> The God which all things see, this same beheld,
> And pittying this paire of lovers trew:
> Transformed them there lying on the field,
> Into one flowre that is both red and blew.
> (181–84)

If, in *The Faerie Queene*, the Garden of Adonis represents a suspension of mortality or the prospect of immortality—the beast that causes Adonis's wound is "emprisoned for ay / […] In a strong rocky Caue" (III.vi.48)—then the representation of Adonis in *Astrophel* constitutes its opposite: the physicality and fixity, not the mutability and eternity, of death.

Spenser chooses here, in a manner quite unlike the myth's conventional symbolism, to intensify Adonis's/Astrophel's woundedness rather than the perpetuity which that wound could potentially lead to. As a proto-Miltonist, Spenser achieves this intensification by displacing Astrophel from the company of his friends, companions, and, curiously, from those (like Languet) who might have been able to save him. Having wandered so far away from home to pursue his cupidity, neither Venus's nymphs nor her medicinal flowers are around to aid Astrophel when he is wounded:

> Ah where were ye this while his shepheard peares,
> To whom alive was nought so deare as hee:
> And ye faire Mayds the matches of his yeares,
> Which in his grace did boast you most to bee?
> Ah where were ye, when he of you had need,
> To stop his wound that wondrously did bleed?
> (127–32)

Was Spenser somehow aware, seven years on, of the fantastic decay and sickness that plagued Sidney's final days? Or is this simply an artistic decision, to have Astrophel's

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"sad louers" transformed into flowers (III.i.44). See my discussion of woundedness in the Garden at the end of Chapter Four.

Adonian wound bleed wondrously, without cause, reason, or cure? In literary terms, Spenser's representation of an incurable Astrophel demonstrates a redesigning of the (well-under-way) mythopoeia; for example, in "An Elegie, or Friends Passion, for His Astrophill," published alongside *Astrophel*, Matthew Roydon depicts Sidney/Astrophill as being wounded when Mars (made jealous by Astrophill's beauty) strikes him with an "iron cane, wherein he put / The thunder that in clouds do breede" (176–77).[243] What follows in Roydon's elegy, the simple assertion that "so our Astrophill was slain" (178) and a litany of pathetic fallacies (181–223), is indicative of a tendency in the other Sidney elegies to dismiss or pass over the long and cruel nature of Sidney's suffering. For Roydon, there is no suffering, no possible corruption, no languishing; Mars's harquebus-like "iron can" leads directly, and without any hesitation, to "Natures inward" mourning (182).

By depicting Sidney's wound as mortal by virtue of its extent rather than its corruption, Sidney's elegists (excluding Spenser) attempted to relocate the cause for Sidney's anguish to something perhaps more acceptable than "wondrous[] bleed[ing]" and festering flesh. But Spenser's resistance to propaganda and myth making, unlike his compeers, does not seem to have been shaken by time and silence. In the moment of displacing the dying Sidney from those who could aid him or, at the very least, substantiate his own sense of his death, Spenser offers a more accurate representation of Sidney's death by exposing it as a consequence of his cupidity. Not only, in this reading, is Astrophel wounded on account of a certain overzealousness (his faith in his ability to win "fame" abroad for himself and his "mistresse"), but the "wondrous[] bleed[ing]" of his mortal wound also mirrors the

[243] Edmund Spenser, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. D. Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 709–10.

incontinence of his conquest.[244] And where, in the other elegies, the blood from Sidney's wound is craftily manipulated into a Christological symbol,[245] the final image of Sidney's body that Spenser offers in *Astrophel* is one that actively refutes the possibility that Sidney's wound could be interpreted as either physically or spiritually gorgeous. Having been found by some wandering shepherds (though, of course, too late), the dying Astrophel is brought home to Stella, who sees her lover,

> in such a plight
> With crudled blood and filthie gore deformed:
> That wont to be with flowers and gyrlonds dight,
> And her deare favours dearly well adorned,
> Her face, the fairest face, that eye mote see,
> She likewise did deforme like him to bee.
> (151–56)

Elsewhere in the elegies, Sidney's body retains its aesthetic beauty, not simply by being enshrouded with flowers but by mirroring the regeneration of the floral cycle. For example, in Bryskett's "The Mourning Muse of Thestylis," included in the *Astrophel* volume directly after the "Doleful Lay," Bryskett imagines Sidney's death in the classical terms of cut flowers: "[Astrohel's] lips waxt pale and wan, like damaske roses bud / Cast from the stalke, or like in field to purple flowre, / Which languisheth being shred by culter as it past" (73–5).[246] The delicate discoloration might suggest some sort of languish, as Bryskett certainly

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[244] Medically, a wound that profusely bled was believed to indicate an imbalance of yellow bile, the humor responsible for choler, intrepidness, and insolence. Spenser, however, could also be making a reference here to menstrual blood, a not impossible reading given the sexualized nature of Adonis's wound and Spenser's penchant for pairing bleeding wounds and generative wombs elsewhere in his poetry (ie. Britomart, Amoret). On the social stigmas of bleeding in general and menstruation in particular—including an excellent account of how, in early modernity, "bleeding [was] construed as an issue of bodily voluntarity and self-control […] thoroughly traversed by questions of purposiveness and agency, power and gender"—see Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 64–112, at 78.

[245] See, for example, Bryskett's "The Mourning Muse of Thestylis": "I hope now to be plast / In th'everlasting blis, which with thy precious blood / Thou purchase did for us" (69–71). Spenser, *Complete Poetical Works*, 704.

[246] Ibid, 704.

notes, though the invocation of beauty in the moment of loss constitutes a radical revision of the true nature of Sidney's death. In Spenser's rendering, Astrophel's body is depicted as being deformed "[w]ith curdled blood and filthie gore […] / That wont to be with flowers and gyrlonds dight," but alas, according to Spenser, both the obsequies and general aesthetics are not suitable for this type of death. And even unlike Sidney himself, who died in the company of surgeons, servants, and friends, Spenser's Astrophel dies because no one is around to cure his bleeding wound or to kiss his lips "like faded leaves of rose" (138). Not even Stella can perform this type of valediction; she sees Astrophel as Venus sees the wounded Adonis in Golding's 1567 translation of Ovid's myth: "weltring in his Gore."[247] In both Ovid's myth and Spenser's rendition, the beloveds mutilate their bodies in order to mirror the aesthetic destruction of their lovers, to, as Spenser writes, "prove that death their hearts cannot divide" (178). But these are deaths impelled by opposing forces of passion: Stella's love for Astrophel and Astrophel's love for the hunt. The emphasis on aesthetic destruction, then, and its almost Miltonic, metacommentary on the forced production of this type of poetry, has the effect of calling into question both the beauty of languishing bodies and the subsequent literary beauty created by the elegy that follows.

In these terms, when Spenser finally offers Astrophel immortalization by floral metamorphosis, it is with something more akin to obeisance than plaintiveness. Not only has the blood streaming from Astrophel's wound sullied the possibility of a heavenly ascent, but also the Adonian contexts of the elegy have sexualized the bleeding wound. Spenser, in fact, represents Astrophel's bloodlust as his coming into sexual knowledge, almost, oddly, as his acceptance (forced upon him by fate) that he is the object of other men's—and women's—sexual desires. At the outset of the elegy, for example, Spenser describes

[247] Ovid, *The xv Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis, translated oute of Latin into English meeter, by Arthur Golding Gentlemen* (London: Willyam Seres, 1567), X.720.

Astrophel's "joyance" as being "innocent, / Sweet without sowre, and honny without gall" (25–6), an amazing feat considering that he is also "the pride of shepheards praise," the love of "rusticke lasses," and, as previously cited, the seducer of "all mens hearts" (7–8, 21). But, as with the poem's destabilization of heroic contexts, Spenser revises the floral and poetic commemoration of Sidney's body, translating the "[g]ay chapelets of flowers and gyrlonds trim" (42), which Astrophel's "Mayden's" promise to "dight for him" (41), into the "crudled blood" that covers his body. Significantly, the vision of Astrophel's "crudled blood" comes from Stella, who sees her lover as languishing, and the metamorphosis that follows, presumably, is made possible because of Stella's approximation of Astrophel's pain, a reading suggested by the fact that the gods only pity the "paire of lovers trew" (182).

Spenser's elegy, then, and quite unlike the other elegies, depends on the vantage of its characters and its audience. Men and women see Astrophel as a dual poet-hero, while Astrophel considers them as irrelevant distractions to his pursuits: both erotic and martial. His wound, as with Tasso's conception of the image, combines these categories, though, unlike Tasso, the physical appearance of Astrophel's wound is not beautiful; its beauty derives only from its metamorphosis, from the partially comforting possibility that it might be pitiable. In the "Doleful Lay," which is suffixed to Spenser's elegy and which was likely written by Spenser himself,[248] Sidney's death is imagined in much more favorable terms, which is to say, his laudability and prospects for earthly transcendence are not made contingent on the discriminating views of those around him. The "Doleful Lay," in fact,

[248] The authorship of the "Lay"—and the possibility that female voices could be discerned out of complex literary texts—has been discussed by Danielle Clarke, "'In sort as she it sung': Spenser's 'Doleful Lay' and the Constructions of Female Authorship," *Criticism* 42, no. 4 (2000): 451–68. For a more textual approach, see Mary Sidney, *The Collected Works of Mary Sidney Herbert*, ed. Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon, and Michael G. Brennan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 12—32.

emphasizes precisely those spiritual elements of mourning that *Astrophel* lacks. "Ay me," writes the incredulous speaker of the "Lay,"

> can so divine a thing be dead?
>
> Ah no: it is not dead, ne can it die,
> But lives for aie, in blisfull Paradise:
> Where like a new-borne babe it soft doth lie,
> In bed of lilies wrapt in tender wise.
> And compast all about with roses sweet,
> And daintie violets from head to feet.
> (66–72)[249]

Whether or not Spenser authored, as the poetry suggests, the "Lay," the abrupt change in corporeal figuration—from a deformed Astrophel to a deified Sidney—feels forced and unsatisfying. For this reason, the "Lay" has been interpreted as a correction to Stella's form of mourning in *Astrophel*, an attempt to provide, as Pamela Coren suggests, "a womanish burst of feeling [in] an orthodox otherworldly direction."[250] I would like to propose, however, that the change—from corporeal to exalted, physical to spiritual—simply intensifies the condemnation of Sidney by situating him as the object of his mourner's all-too-incontinent sadness. The effect, then, is a kind of dual criticism on both Sidney and the other elegists whom Spenser, as Raphael Falco first noted, by publishing the *Colin Clouts* volume, "maneuvered […] into a position of posteriority and dependency."[251] Spenser, indeed, by inventing one myth and ventriloquizing another (the "Lay" is in the voice of Mary Herbert) managed to overgo his compeers' attempts at elegy. Not only in publication are the elegies by Bryskett, Roydon, Raleigh, and Greville presented as being subordinate to *Astrophel* and the "Lay," but also the striking incongruities between Spenser's narrative

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[249] "The Doleful Lay of Clorinda" in Spenser, *The Yale Edition*, 580.
[250] Pamela Coren, "Edmund Spenser, Mary Sidney, and the Doleful Lay," *Studies in English Literature* 42 (2002): 25–41.
[251] Raphael Falco, "Spenser's 'Astrophel' and the Formation of Elizabethan Literary Genealogy," *Modern Philology* 91 (1993): 1–25, at 9.

pastoral and the other formulaic lyrics give the sense that, during the nine years between 1586 and 1595, Spenser had been experimenting with how best to mourn Sidney both as a friend and as a rival poet. The double document of *Astrophel* and the "Lay" satisfies both requirements. In 1595, Spenser presents himself as England's poet-laureate, as the man most equipped to write an elegy for Sidney, though the juxtaposition in tone, mood, and intention in *Astrophel* and the "Lay" also demands a reconsideration of what that elegy ought to entail.[252] Printed together, the tandem of poems can have far greater effect, both in terms of Spenser's genealogical maneuverings and in terms of his dissimulation of what he believes to be true (*Astrophel*) from what he knows is expected (the "Lay"). If, then, to quote one particular complaint, some of the lines of the "Lay" seem "too careless or strained" and hardly carry "Spenser's standard of competence," the reason, I would argue, is because the "Lay" is designed to offer an affected version of poetic excellence outfitted with a socially acceptable representation of grief.[253]

Indeed, the other elegies, unlike the "Lay," allegorize Sidney as Adonis in order to divert attention away from the true nature of Sidney's death. The "Lay," however, is more traditional, which is to say it stages Sidney's death as a simultaneous impasse for poets and as

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[252] This type of active censorship of rival laureates, as Richard Helgerson has explained, is fundamental to the task of laureate self-fashioning. See Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 10. Falco, "Spenser's 'Astrophel,'" 7, likewise argues that Spenser's execution of Stella and general censorship of Astrophel is representative of Spenser's "strong will to fashion his own poetic identity." I would note that the "strong will" also is apparent in the transition from *Astrophel* to the "Lay," a transition that, in my reading, is designed by Spenser to demonstrate the flaws inherent in literary genealogy in general and the blindness associated with the act of mourning in particular. Laureate self-fashioning indeed demands the exorcism of certain antecedents, but Spenser's vision in the *Colin Clouts* volume is one of panoramic condemnation (against the court, against England, and against the synecdochical Sidney) that leaves only Spenser and Spenser's voice as suitable to the task of mourning.

[253] The phrases quoted here are from Gary Waller, *Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke: A Critical Study of Her Writings and Literary Milieu* (Salzburg: Salzburg University Press, 1979), 94.

an opportunity for them to attempt a theodicy. Even this theodicy, though, seems to come at the sly hands of Spenser:

> There liveth he in everlasting blis,
> Sweet spirit never fearing more to die:
> Ne dreading harme from any foes of his,
> Ne fearing salvage beasts more crueltie.
> Whilest we here wretches waile his private lack,
> And with vaine vowes do often call him back.
> (85–90)

The "vaine vowes" of the "Lay" recall the "verses vain" (*Astrophel*, 68) of Astrophel's erotic pursuits, as well as the "vaine verses" from Book Three of *The Faerie Queene*, in which Paridell attempts to woo and then rapes Hellenore (III.x.8). In each of these instances, what is in "vaine" is poetry and, more specifically, poetry's capacity to capitalize on the nature of its creator's desires. *Astrophel*, for example, depicts Astrophel's bloodlust as resulting from a disillusionment with poetry—"Ne her with ydle words alone he wowed" (67)—while the "Lay" suggests that the process of mourning (as dramatized by Stella) might have similarly destructive effects. Not only is mourning Sidney in "vaine" (as both ineffectual and a supreme act of vanity) but to do so, the speaker of the "Lay" suggests, would be to beckon Sidney back into a world controlled by skewed desires. By placing, in other words, Sidney in heaven, out of reach of the "harme from any foes," Spenser effectively places Sidney, like a parent cloistering an insolent child, into an environment in which Sidney's appetency cannot lead directly to his destruction. And this, finally, is what Spenser offers in the transition from *Astrophel* to the "Lay": a condemnation of Sidney's desires and an assertion of the inaccuracy of the other elegies. If the purpose, as I have suggested, of the other elegiac representations of Sidney was to situate him as the object of a certain type of desire, then Spenser's *Astrophel*, by emphasizing the corruption of Sidney's wound, condemns Sidney for developing and then harboring the wrong desires, especially insofar as those desires entailed

Sidney laying down his literary aspirations. As a correction, the "Lay" glosses over the brutality of Sidney's wound, as well as the destruction that it creates, in order to intensify the social and political fallibility of a "womanish" outburst to this type of death. Not only are such outbursts incorrect, but also the incontinence from which they emanate is parallel in nature to the desires that precipitated Sidney's own death.

By a metonymy fundamental to the task of elegy, Sidney, after his death, became not only part and parcel to his works but also indistinguishable from his wounding. If Sidney's wound was to come to define Sidney, as well as his fiction (as Spenser sensed), then the nature of Sidney's other identifying qualities—his gentility, his Protestantism, his masculinity, and his love for the heroic narrative—would have to be modified to accommodate the increasing ambiguity over the social, political, and aesthetic function of wounds. For Sidney's other elegists, this accommodation was circumvented by rote immortalization, or, as Raleigh proposed, the "long fame" that proceeded after Sidney's wounding.[254] As social productions, these elegies encourage their readers to look past or look away from what Spenser shows us with *Astrophel* is one of literature's most disturbing but also most unique and collectively experienced images. By refocusing attention on the aesthetic, literary, and social nature of Sidney's wound, even as such a focus criticized Sidney's appetency, Spenser asked his contemporaries to remember Sidney in a much more rich, variable, and, of course, intelligible context than the apotheoses that are used to memorialize Sidney elsewhere. In one sense, then, Sidney's pagan metamorphosis into an unidentifiable, bifurcated flower allows for the continually changing sense of Sidney's wound to live on (as if wounding, like

[254] "Backe to the campe by thee that day was brought / First thy owne death, and after thy long fame" (37–38), so asserts Raleigh in "An epitaph upon the right honourable Sir Philip Sidney." See Spenser, *Complete Poetical Works*, 713.

gender, sexuality, and masculinity, were more of a discursive rather than a static phenomenon), to be, in other words, "eterne" in the variable interpretations available to it.

But while this would accord with Spenser's archetypal translation of chaos into ordered change—his belief, as it were, in the "endlesse date" of elegy (III.vi.45)—it would not strictly be the truth. In the dedication of Mary Herbert's 1599 edition of the Psalms, the Countess seems to capture the reality of Sidney's death with much more candor:

> Oh, had that soule which honour brought to rest
> too soone not left and reft the world of all
> what man could showe, which wee perfection call,
> This half maim'd peece had sorted with the best.
> Deep wounds enlarg'd, long festred in their gall,
> fresh bleeding smart: not eie but heart-teares fall.
> Ah memorie what needs this new arrest?[255]

These are staggering verses, even thirteen years removed from Sidney's death, especially amongst a poem that Louise Schleiner describes as the discovery "that there can be sweetness in grief through the creativity it brings."[256] But Mary Herbert seems also to know here what Spenser himself divined in *Astrophel*: that there is some truth in speaking of her brother metonymically, as a "half maim'd peece," not necessarily indistinguishable from his literature (though certainly the ambiguity in this stanza renders this a possibility) but as fractured, un-finished, "long festred in […] gall." Her desire, even, to proclaim her brother as that "which wee perfection call" seems to have been circumvented by the fact that his "deepe wound[] enlarg'd," its own "fresh bleeding" an analogue for the task she faced in finishing the Psalter. On the one hand, then, what she offers here is merely the fullest of possible engagements with Sidney and his literature after his death; but, on the other, her transmutation of Sidney's wound into the orifice by which his writings will be completed

[255] Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney, *The Sidney Psalter: The Psalms of Sir Philip and Mary Sidney*, ed. Hannibel Hamlin et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 8–11.
[256] Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 77.

suggests a far more intimate connection between man, wound, and memory.[257] Through Sidney's wound, we could say, the Countess asked her contemporaries to remember her brother, and it is by his wound—that abject, corrupt, irredeemable conduit of an endless metaphoricity—that we too ought to remember Sidney and then reconsider his fiction.

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[257] The dedication's penultimate stanza seems to further enforce this point: "To which theise dearest offrings of my hart, / dissolv'd to Inke, while penns impressions move / the bleeding veines of never dying love: / I render here: these wounding lynes of smart."

CHAPTER THREE

"REMEDILESS WOUNDS": MAKING AND UNMAKING THE HEROIC AESTHETIC IN SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S *NEW ARCADIA*[258]

Desire itself is movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being.
—T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"

In Book Three of the *New Arcadia*, in the vanguard of the Arcadian loyalists' defense against Amphialus's rebellion, a young warrior named Agenor is wounded when Amphialus's lance shatters upward into Agenor's unguarded face, which Sidney describes as being "fitter for the combats of Venus" (III.468).[259] Indeed, Agenor is strikingly beautiful—"of all that Army the most beautiful" (III.467)—though his beauty is also Adonian. Like Astrophel, Agenor knows "no limits of hope nor […] why to fear" (III.467), and his impetuosity, which leads him to disdain his command and pursue single combat with Amphialus, also becomes the reason for his disfigurement: "the pitiless lance of Amphialus […] giv[es] not

[258] All references to the *New Arcadia* are to the 1590 edition, the first publication of the revised text and the only extant version that contains no additions, emendations, or omissions by a third party. The 1590 version was superseded in 1593 when Mary Herbert, whether to meet public demand or to assert her claim to her bother's fiction, produced a hybrid text, combining the material of the revised *Arcadia* with the ending from the *Old Arcadia*. William Alexander made a further addition in 1621, to smooth over the lacunas caused by Mary Herbert's resumption of the old plot. The text of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)* printed today generally is to William Dugard's 1655 edition, an edition that includes both Mary Herbert's and William Alexander's emendations. However, for a thesis that studies wounds, it is more suitable to restrict ourselves to the text that is entirely from Sidney's own hand, a text, moreover, that breaks off in a manner very near to that of Sidney's life: in midsentence and amongst an ensuing battle.

[259] Citations are to Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Maurice Evans (London: Penguin, 1987) and will be hereafter be designated by book and page number.

only a sudden, but a foul death, leaving scarcely any tokens of his former beauty" (III.468). The scene, which dramatizes in miniature many of the traditional elements of the Adonis myth—the death of beauty, the destructive effects of narcissism, the creation of and consequences to sexual knowledge (Sidney describes Agenor, at III.467, as having "lately grown a lover")—goes curiously without any reference to Agenor as a source of productive generation. What the episode results in, rather, is the realization that this type of masculine beauty, which both was in vogue in the Renaissance and had often been used to describe Sidney, can neither protect nor ensure the longevity of those who possess it. In fact, in the clamor that follows Agenor's death, both beautiful and ugly bodies, both common and patrician, are shown as vulnerable to the disfiguring power of wounds:

> The clashing of armour, the crushing of staves, the jostling of bodies, the resounding of blows, was the first part of that ill-agreeing music which was beautified with the grisliness of wounds, the rising of dust, the hideous falls and groans of the dying. The very horses, angry in their masters' anger, with love and obedience brought forth the effects of hate and resistance, and with minds of servitude did as if they affected glory. Some lay dead under their dead masters, whom unknightly wounds had unjustly punished for a faithful duty. Some lay upon their lords by like accidents, and in death had the honour to be borne by them, whom in life they had borne. Some, having lost their commanding burdens, ran scattered about the field, abashed with the madness of mankind. The earth itself (wont to be a burial of men) was now, as it were, buried with men; so was the face thereof hidden with dead bodies, to whom death had come masked in divers manners. 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 all over so close, were now with deadly violence opened: in others, fouler deaths had uglily displayed their trailing guts. There lay arms, whose fingers yet moved as if they would feel for him that made them feel; and legs, which contrary to common reason, by being discharged of their burden, were grown heavier.
>
> (III.469)

This is a fitting episode with which to begin our inquiry into Sidney's representation of wounds and wounded bodies in the *New Arcadia*. Not only does the passage exemplify Sidney's understanding of wounds as cosmetically destructive (and thus both politically and socially suspicious), but also the passage incorporates Tasso's attitudes toward wounds and

woundedness and then advances beyond them. In the *Liberata*, a text similarly wounded by war, the wounds that the heroes and heroines sustain result in beatific visions and redemptive apotheoses, and their physical beauty, on the outside of the body, mirrors and intensifies the spiritual beauty within. Tasso's wounds, moreover, act as harbingers of this conversion, challenging both the shrewdness of their observers and the integrity of their victims. In the passage above, however, Sidney offers a vision of bodily destruction that, rather than adumbrating a spiritual experience, creates what the narrator calls an "ill-agreeing music […] beautified [by] the grisliness of wounds." Despite its irony, this is not a comforting assertion nor in any way one that suggests that Tasso's redemptive aesthetics might be available to a wounded body in Arcadia. In fact, in Arcadia, unlike the environs surrounding Tasso's Jerusalem, the body is always vulnerable to the disfiguring power of wounds and, as we will see, to the possibility that a wound will be interpreted as "unknightly," as, in the worst of scenarios, indicative of an inner corruption.

To whatever extent Sidney's own wound revealed his corruption, his depiction of scenes of indiscriminate destruction might constitute one possible challenge to belief that all infected and mortal wounds derive from corrupt desires. Indeed, episodes in the *New Arcadia* in which wounds disfigure are multiple and their predominance, I would argue, suggests that Sidney, in the early 1580s, was beginning to experience a certain skepticism about the symbolic function of wounds: their ability, in both literature and in life, to mark either the goodness or wickedness of their victims. At their very core, however, physical wounds, like Agenor's, could be eviscerating, an experience that dismantled rather than manifested the matter of the body to its desires. But the grotesque nature of such wounds, even as they "dispossese [the body] of its natural seignories," could still seem politically or morally suspicious. Unsurprisingly, then, Sidney reserves his most complex representations

of wounds—and his most thorough exploration of their ability to mark virtue or vice—for the heroes and heroines of his prose-romance, characters in whom unrestrained appetency and base sexual desire are as prevalent (and perhaps as contemptible) as Languet felt Sidney's own martial aspirations to be. But the stories of Pyrocles, Musidorus, Amphialus, Pamela, and Philoclea—stories that are dominated by both physical and metaphorical instances of wounding—do not simply attest to how deeply affected Sidney must have been by the growing uncertainties toward wounding in the late sixteenth century; these narratives, I argue, also attempt to create a context in which a wound does not condemn the victim for his or her faults, especially those wounds, like Tancred's or Armida's, that are incurred as the consequence of an amorous or erotic passion. In fact, it seems that Sidney's revision from the *Old* to the *New Arcadia* in part was motivated by the desire to represent such wounds, as the dominant change made to the text (the inclusion of Amphialus's and Cecropia's rebellion) hinges on the addition of two overlapping Tassonian love triangles—one between Amphialus, Philoclea, and Pyrocles, and another between Amphialus, Philoclea, and Helen—and the remarkable wounds that they create.[260]

As an aspiring knight and courtier, however, Sidney, if he indeed had experience with the *Liberata*, must have found Tasso's unquestioning aesthecization of a wound an inadequate response to his own anxieties about the status of the heroic body in the rapidly changing realities of sixteenth-century warfare. We see, for example, in the Agenor episode above, that classical and early modern definitions of heroism—honor and glory, beauty and

[260] A few critics have considered the possibility that the *Liberata* might have influenced the revision of the *Arcadia*. See, most notably, Barbara Brumbaugh, "*Jerusalem Delivered* and the Allegory of Sidney's Revised *Arcadia*," *Modern Philology* 101, no. 3 (2004): 337–70. On the possibility that Sidney might have read the *Liberata*, see Fairfax, *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, 27; Charles Peter Brand, *Torquato Tasso: A Study of the Poet and of His Contribution to English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 24–5; and James Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney, 1572–1577* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 386.

chivalry, and a burgeoning sense of masculinity—are exposed as poor defenses against the blunt realities of violence. And while the *Arcadia* was composed and largely revised before Sidney had ever served in a single military campaign, Sidney, by relying so heavily in his revision on scenes of indiscriminate destruction and depictions of physically disfiguring wounds, nevertheless subjected his characters to the same representational crises caused by wounding that haunted Sidney at Zutphen.[261] But these eviscerating visions juxtapose the prose-romance's more symbolically enriched representations of wounded characters: namely, the princes, the princesses, and Argalus and Parthenia. In both cases, however, Sidney emphasizes the volatile and precarious nature of wounding as a fundamental condition of personhood, as if, in other words, engagement with physical disfigurement and psychic turmoil was part and parcel to shaping the experiences of one's life.

While the circumstances of Sidney's own wounding were very bleak, his representations of wounds and wounding in the *New Arcadia* paint a different picture. Where, for example, Sidney himself struggled through a long and painful twenty-five day languish, his narratives of both physical and psychic fracture in the *New Arcadia* bear witness to the multiple ways in which wounds could be utilized in the formation and maintenance of social and political identities, especially heroic identities. But Sidney does not achieve this reconstruction of the image without some concessions. His experimentation with how infected, corrupted, and incurable wounds could be memorialized and rendered in empowering terms, as a few readers have noted, required him to conjure up a cultural narrative in which suffering could be interpreted as a more desirable form of heroism than

[261] Duncan-Jones speculates that Sidney could "not have been working on the *Arcadia*" while on service in the Netherlands. See Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 276.

active military prowess.[262] Having been dismissed himself from court by an uncompromising Queen Elizabeth and living firmly in a time when traditional aristocratic values were becoming more and more defunct, Sidney might well have felt that the generic and, as we will see, gendered conventions of heroic attainment were in dire need of redesign. His *New Arcadia*, which, as Arthur Kinney once said, dismisses "the primary distinctions between life and art" to the point that "fiction making and factual understanding become invisible acts," offers just that: an extended experiment in recreating an aristocratic idealness that Sidney saw himself as capable of assuming.[263]

The relationship of this argument to recent criticism follows along the lines of my argument in Chapter One: specifically, how Tasso's elaborate aestheticizations of wounds oppose scholarships that study erotic appetites as an unregenerate form of weakness or damnation. The concupiscent, to be sure, is no less prevalent or destructive in Arcadia, though the power that it holds over its victims, in the revised text, appears to be as contingent on outward display and performance as on inward feeling and belief. As such, the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus, as prime examples, are able to outsource their concupiscent tendencies by clothing their bodies in garb that both disfigures their true identities (and, for Pyrocles, gender) and inhibits their heroic presentations.[264] Unlike

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[262] The hagiographic qualities of the *New Arcadia* have been considered by Margaret Hannay, "'Faining Notable Images of Vertue': Sidney's New Arcadia as *Legenda Sanctorum*," *University of Hartford Studies in Literature* 16 (1984): 80–92, and Melissa Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 31–55.
[263] Arthur Kinney, "Imitations of Mortality: Sidney's Journey to Flushing and Zutphen," in *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, 125–48, at 126.
[264] The dislocation of the princes' concupiscence has longed marked scholarship concerning the differences between the *Old Arcadia* and the *New Arcadia*. Margaret Hannay, for example, suggests that the most significant change from the *Old Arcadia* is the "displacement of lust" from the Pyrocles and Musidorus to Amphialus. Nancy Lindheim, likewise, observers that the princes' "potential weaknesses" seem almost to "have been externalized and projected" onto Amphialus. See Margaret Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 75, and Nancy Lindheim, *The Structure of Sidney's "Arcadia"* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982): 83.

Tasso's characters, then, whose armored (or, for Erminia, robed) appearances correspond to both their political station and their personal identities, Sidney's characters are circumscribed by no such ontological semiotics. In fact, scholars who have read the *New Arcadia* through the lens of queer theory have noted how the romance's scenes of cross-dressing and flirtation with same-sex desire undermine older readings that assume any essential identity. Such work has largely been informed by Judith Butler's argument that gender is not a type of permanent identity but rather a series of provisional iterations, an argument that Catherine Bates has recently suggested "at the very least qualif[ies] any claim [the *New Arcadia*] may have to straightforwardly heroic masculinity."[265] Indeed, the ease with which Arcadian characters slip into roles that contradict their biological sex or normative expectations suggests that Sidney imagines the political, as well as personal and sexual relationships between his characters, to borrow a phrase slightly out of context from Kathryn Schwarz, as "a contract among roles."[266]

This formulation, which is obvious from the princes' disguises, is also applicable to the romance's representation of wounded bodies, representations, I argue, that redesign straightforwardly masculine heroics into "a contract among roles" by allowing for the possibility that a wound could be actively sought (as a type of performance) rather than passively incurred. In fact, if we expand readings of the performative nature of identity in Arcadia to encompass Sidney's understanding of the significance of wounding, we will find that striking congruities are created between Sidney's own death and his representations of incurable wounds in the *New Arcadia*. Sidney's contemporaries, for example, were forced after Sidney's death to discover mechanisms for writing about and memorializing wounds

[265] Catherine Bates, *Masculinity, Gender, and Identity in the English Renaissance Lyric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 89.
[266] Kathryn Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 182.

that overlooked (or even, as in some cases, glorified) the seemingly indisputable knowledge that infection created. In his revised version of the *Arcadia*, Sidney too was experimenting with such mechanisms, specifically by considering how a wound could be as constructive as it is obliterative, as malleable to performance as it is damning, as, in other words, one of the most valuable "instrument[s] of the self" available to the aspiring poet, lover, courtier, and knight.[267] In each of these arenas, a wound becomes a type of challenge to self-fashioning, and the desire to manipulate how a wound is interpreted—to dislocate, as it were, the incurability of a wound from any type of moral or spiritual suggestiveness—governs the task of writing (about wounds, about wounded selves) on all levels.

This is not to propose, however, that Sidney's elaborations on wounded bodies are intended to create a neural or utopic space beyond generically gendered heroics. Sidney's utilization of wounded bodies as instruments to redesign early modern heroism, I would argue, rather exposes the undesirability of straightforwardly masculine heroic paradigms. And even if Sidney's personal heroism relied on these social constructions after his death, his great prose-romance experiments with the possibility that an ungendered semiotics of wounding could be made to account for both emasculated, disguised males as well as woebegone, concupiscent lovers. Rather than maintaining traditional ascriptions of heroic action, which would perpetuate the obstacles inherent in his disguised but still libidinous princes' quests for virtue, Sidney cultivates in the *New Arcadia* what Mary Beth Rose calls the

[267] This phrase is adapted from Susanne Scholz's study of the performative nature of *sprezzatura* in early modern literature. According to Scholz, *sprezzatura* "introduced [to early modernity] a notion of contingency that theoretically enabled a strategic remodeling of the self based on the impossibility of verifying the coherence between inner virtue and outer behavior." The utilization of this paradigm in *Astrophil and Stella* has been well documented, though I would like to suggest that its relevance to Sidney extends beyond Astrophil's rhetorical uses of pain, uses which at that point very clearly upset arguments that pain or wounding categorically disables a body's capacity for dissimulation. See Susanne Scholz, *Body Narratives: Writing the Nation and Fashioning the Subject in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 44.

"heroism of endurance."[268] If Sidney's designs in depicting wounded bodies were indeed like Tasso's—to create, in other words, a context in which the manifestation of erotic passion as a wound does not impede a character's ability to assume a heroic status—then his utilization of a discursive gendered paradigm to redesign heroism certainly provides an innovation to Tasso's aesthetics. Not only, for example, is gender in the *New Arcadia* opened to a discursive constructedness, but Sidney's representations of his primary characters' quests toward heroic action (and erotic fulfillment) are similarly discursive, a fact evidenced by Sidney's depiction of wounds as a parallel form of disfigurement to the princes' disguises, less contingent on identity or action and more on an abstract, textual structure.[269] And because the source of Sidney's primary characters' engagement with wounds is erotic, a discursive approach to representing woundedness and heroic action offered Sidney a viable way to demystify the public anxieties that typified early modern responses to wounded bodies, especially bodies wounded in the pursuit of sexual fulfillment.

Given that depictions of wounded bodies that disfigure and emasculate are so prominent in the *New Arcadia*, it is surprising that scholars who have studied the social and political implications of gender in this romance have said very little about these scenes. Over a half century of scholarship, in fact, has explored the "perverse" and "offensive" nature of Pyrocles's disguise, resulting in both historicist criticisms that pit Sidney as a spokesperson for the masculine pieties of his humanist culture and more sentimental portraits of Sidney as

[268] According to Rose, this type of heroism "is not so clearly gendered as the heroics of action, and includes both sexes among its protagonists." See Mary Beth Rose, *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), xv.
[269] Reading Pyrocles's hybridized disguise as a precocious representation of the instability and plasticity of gender and sexual categories has earmarked many recent criticisms of the *New Arcadia*. I want to suggest that the disguised Pyrocles functions rather as one example among many of disguised and disfigured bodies attempting to redefine the association between wounded bodies and "straightforwardly masculine" heroics, to test the conceptual and experiential boundaries of how one culture projects its heroic idealizations, creates meaning, and determines heroic value.

a feminist *avant a lettre*.[270] Typically, however, analyses of the romance's heterodox penumbra have limited their focus to Pyrocles's courtship of Philoclea and the admittedly suggestive kissing scene between the princesses.[271] Only recently, in fact, has the episode involving Argalus and Parthenia, an episode defined by woundedness, been made to bear the weight of Sidney's gender paradigms, and this despite Clare Kinney's now eighteen-year-old comment that Argalus and Parthenia "constitute a standard against which the behavior of all the other lovers and questers in Arcadia must be measured."[272] I want to offer that the standard that they constitute derives, on the one hand, from their unprecedented dismissal of the phenomenology of desire—the narrator describes them as making "a double life one; where desire never wanted satisfaction, nor satisfaction ever bred satiety" (III.501)—and, on the other, from the subsequent manifestation of this reciprocal heroism in the wounds to which they ultimately fall victim. But for Arcadia's other characters, wounds still eviscerate; they

[270] These terms are both from Mark Rose, "Sidney's Womanish Man," *Review of English Studies* 15 (1964): 353–63. For new-historicist criticisms, see Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Blair Worden, *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney's "Arcadia" and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 127–294; and Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 80–94, 143–214. Two notable works on misogyny in Sidney's fiction are Margaret Mary Sullivan, "Getting Pamela Out of the House: Gendering Genealogy in the *New Arcadia*," *Sidney Newsletter* 9, no. 2 (1989): 3–18, and Bi-qi Beatrice Lei, "Relational Antifeminism in Sidney's *Arcadia*," *Studies in English Language* 41 (2001): 21–48. For Sidney's pro-feminist tendencies, see Katherine Roberts, *Fair Ladies: Sir Philip Sidney's Female Characters* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 87–110.

[271] See Steven Mentz, "The Thigh and the Sword: Gender, Genre, and Sexy Dressing in Sidney's *New Arcadia*," in *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities in England, 1570-1640*, ed. Constance Relihan and Goran Stanivukovic (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 78–90; Richard Levine, "What? How? Female-Female Desire in Sidney's *New Arcadia*," *Criticism* 39, no. 4 (1997): 463–79; Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 78–82; David Cressy, "Gender Trouble and Cross Dressing in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 35 (1996): 438–65; and Casey Charles, "Heroes as Lovers: Erotic Attraction between Men in Sidney's *New Arcadia*," *Criticism* 34 (1992): 467–96.

[272] Clare Kinney, "Chivalry Unmasked: Courtly Spectacle and the Abuses of Romance in Sidney's *New Arcadia*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 35 (1995): 35–52, at 37. The work that I refer to here is Melissa Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 32–56.

not only expose latent desires but also oftentimes obliterate the relationship between the body and the self and reopen one's reputation, authority, and heroism to the all-too-fallible assessments of those around them. Before Argalus and Parthenia's narrative redesigns the essence of wounding in Arcadia, Sidney subjects his primary characters (whose bodies all are innately aristocratic) to wounds that threaten their presentation as such, questioning along the way the validity of the performances they enact to maintain these statuses. What emerges from their stories, however, is an intricate link between suffering and empowerment self-consciously designed by Sidney, I argue, to oppose the possibility that a wounded body—especially one that is beyond cure—illuminates the social and political corruption of intemperate or concupiscent desires.

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UNMAKING THE BODY: "NOTABLE WOUNDS" AND THE POLITICS OF SUFFERING

For a chapter that presumes to study the constructive and discursive nature of wounding in the *New Arcadia*, one can hardly do better than begin with an analysis of the famous shipwreck scene, a scene that not only commences the action of the *New Arcadia* but also presents the central dilemmas that wounds will pose in the narrative. As added material to the *Old Arcadia*, the shipwreck scene firmly reestablishes the literary evolution of the *Arcadia*'s generic mode, such that when the text returns to its youthful, romantic tropes later in Book One, it does so through the lens of the more heroic and more morally and artistically mature passage that opens the *New Arcadia*. Sidney's depictions of wounds provide a similar lens, dramatizing in their earliest appearance in the text the original representational threat that wounds posed to the heroic body. Since, as we have seen, wounds were openings that ruptured the boundaries between personal identity and social identification, Sidney's treatment of them at the outset of his prose-romance followed along lines of negation, which is to say that Sidney presented bodies as unwounded in order to draw attention to their social and political significance. A wounded body, then, for Sidney, sat on a threshold between heroic ascendancy and moral depravity, but the fact that this threshold was hardly sturdy, it seems, caused Sidney to be wary of the paradigm in general.

The opening passage of the *New Arcadia*, in which Musidorus, along with the Citherian shepherds Claius and Strephon, searches for Pyrocles in the rubble of a shipwreck, certainly suggests this skepticism, or, what Sidney labels, "strangeness" (I.66). This scene, indeed, when juxtaposed to the text's later instances of wounding, clarifies that the "strangeness" overriding the search for Pyrocles is the fact that his princely body cannot be distinguished easily from the remains of what appears to be "a ship, or rather the carcase of

[a] ship, or rather some few bones of the carcase hulling there, part broken, part burned, part drowned" (I.66). The ship, however, is only one of many carcasses in the area:

> About [the ship] floated great store of very rich things and many chests which might promise no less. And 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 the 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 shipwreck without storm or ill-footing, and a waste of fire in the midst of water.
>
> (I.66)

This haunting and famous passage traditionally has been read in terms of its implication into a larger debate, which runs throughout the *New Arcadia*, over the merits between reason and faith when it comes to interpreting catastrophe.[273] In a world where identity (at this point) depends on one's physical presentation, this indeed is a catastrophic vision for both Musidorus and the shepherds, though the differences in their opinions, as well as the narrator's unabashed candor, focalizes the scene of indiscriminate destruction before them. In the standard reading, Musidorus errs on the side of reason, the ability to judge or, at the very least, to reject false interpretations; the shepherds—who upon seeing the wreckage, encourage Musidorus to "ma[ke …] prayers" (I. 67)—display the faith necessary to persist when reasonable interpretations return inadequate answers. But the catastrophe here, which is all encompassing, challenges both reason and faith. No context, for instance, precedes this destruction, a point emphasized by the increasing revelation of the destruction in the passage above. As Musidorus and the shepherds draw nearer to the wreckage, the narrator describes the bodies floating in the water in terms suitable to the ship itself: as, on account of some "grisly wounds," becoming less whole, less human. In fact, the passage creates a

[273] See Stephen Mentz, *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: The Rise of Prose Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 81–2. See also Claire Jowitt, *The Culture of Piracy, 1580-1630: English Literature and Seaborn Crime* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 99–100.

remarkable juxtaposition between personal perspective, which dehumanizes the wounded bodies, and nature, which is represented here, via the pathetic fallacy, to be more human than the dead carcasses and their pathetic signification of "human inhumanity." This oxymoron, which was still relatively fresh in the sixteenth century, supports Sidney's larger rhetorical move of representing humans as both hollow repositories of violence and impersonal purveyors of random cruelty.

Neither the narrator's unabashed candor nor the shepherds' paganism proves to be an effective response to this type of violence, though by posing the interpretive enigma at this point in the narrative and by pitting Pyrocles as the potential object of this enigma, Sidney highlights the representational crisis that wounds pose in Arcadia as well as emphasizes the ideological import that a body's physical presentation will carry in the narrative. In their earliest occurrence in the revised text, then, depictions of "grisly wounds" set in motion a paradigm in which physical presentation is the basis of social status and in which one's distance from such wounds can become a marker of class in general and heroic virtue in particular. Indeed, in Arcadia, Pyrocles's and Musidorus's potential heroism, like Sidney's own, is shaped by the possibility of a grotesque and unsavory death, a possibility, as we will see, that Sidney uses in the *New Arcadia* both to interrogate the social validity of class structures and to offer the opportunity for class status to be performative. In this way, Sidney's elaborations on wounds in the *New Arcadia* become part of what Mary Ellen Lamb called the romance's "narrative transactions."[274] According to Lamb, Sidney's "skillful manipulation of narrative material successfully divides his audience according to their own

[274] Mary Ellen Lamb, "Exhibiting Class and Displaying the Body in Sidney's *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 37 (1997): 55–72, at 55. See also Thelma Greenfield, *The Eye of Judgment: Reading the "New Arcadia"* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1982), 50–68. Greenfield considers the early seventeenth-century reception of the *New Arcadia* as a style manual signaling aristocratic status through linguistic display.

location in class," a manipulation that she finds particularly evident in the long narratives that the princes use to reveal their true identities (and emotions) to Pamela and Philoclea.[275]

I would argue that Sidney's depictions of wounds, especially in Books One and Two of the *New Arcadia*, provide a similar division of class identity, though one not as easily defined by personal agency and, therefore, more direly in need of a performative or discursive reconstruction. Unlike the princes' "narrative transactions," which certainly constitute a "deferral of heroic action" and thus a "critique [… of] writing and reading in Arcadia as an enactment of an aristocratic idleness," their engagements with "grisly wounds" stress the immediacy of heroic presentation, lest their bodies come to be judged with the same unsympathetic candor that characterized the narrator's dehumanization of the wounded body in the shipwreck scene.[276] To put it a different way: if Pyrocles's and Musidorus's narratives in Book Two allow them to recreate their own identities and thus enable class identification through a sort of linguistic play, then their confrontations with wounds throughout the *New Arcadia* essentially create similar transactions in which negotiation with the prospect of disfigurement and inglorious death becomes an inevitable corollary in the devolvement of the parts of their heroic identities that they cannot so easily self-fashion. An analysis of the way that they respond to wounds throughout Books One and Two (except for Pyrocles's encounter with the lion, neither are wounded until Book Three) will reveal that the class distinctions in which they participate rely as much on their responses to moments of wounding and woundedness as they do on the "narrative transactions" that they utilize to mark the boundaries between their physical appearances and their actual, inner selves.

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[275] Lamb, "Exhibiting Class," 56.
[276] Ibid, 57.

The shipwreck scene—which with its emphasis on unjustified violence and uninterpretable causes might be said to provide a retroactive allegory for Sidney's own death—marks the earliest occurrence in the *New Arcadia* of this transaction. The princes' tutelage provides another example. As a conventional metaphor, the relationship between the body of a prince or a monarch and the wellbeing of the state has particular resonance in Arcadia, a point exemplified by Sidney's portrayal of Euarchus, the King of Macedonia and Pyrocles's father. According to the narrator, Euarchus is the idle ruler because "he with his people made all but one politic body whereof himself was the head" and "even so cared for them as he would for his own limbs" (II.256). If in Arcadia, then, the state is a body, it seems only natural that wounds would be metaphors for political division and disintegration. In passages, however, in which wounds threaten but do not violate the body of authoritative figures (as in the shipwreck scene), Sidney considers the possibility that bodily suffering could be viewed as politically valuable. Engagements with physical pain, so this line of thinking goes, can not only testify to a ruler's ability to manage internal disruptions (whether those disruptions occur on the boundary of the state or the body of the ruler) but also allow a ruler to display an aspect of shared humanity with his people. Pyrocles's and Musidorus's education, in fact, relies on this politically advantageous experience with pain:

> For almost before [the princes] could perfectly speak, they began to receive conceits not unworthy of the best speakers, excellent devices being used, to make even their sports profitable: images of battles and fortifications being then delivered to their memory, which after, their stronger judgments might dispense; the delight of tales being converted to the knowledge of all the stories of worthy princes, both to move them to do nobly and teach them how to do nobly; the beauty of virtue still being set before their eyes, and that taught them with far more diligent care than grammatical rules; 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 the further from tyranny.
>
> (II.258–9)

In his description of the princes' victory over the king of Pontus, Sidney even goes so far as to depict bodily suffering as a type of nourishment, as though it replaces a mother's milk:

> as high honour is not only gotten and born by pain and danger, but must be nursed by the like or else vanisheth as soon as it appears to the world, so the natural hunger thereof which was in Pyrocles suffered him not to account a resting seat of that which ever either riseth or falleth, but still to make one occasion beget another, whereby his doings might send his praise to others' mouths to rebound again true contentment to his spirit.
>
> (II.274)

These passages respond with a tradition of associating the body to the state that predates Sidney by two millennia; throughout the Tudor period, and especially in Elizabethan England, this analogy helped writers forge a new sense of nationhood by conjoining the monarch's body with it.[277] But this analogy, as Sidney shows, would not have rendered a monarch's body any less vulnerable to physical incursions. On the one hand, then, we could say that the prince's education seeks to acclimate the princes to the cruel and arbitrary nature of violence displayed by the romance's opening scene and its flattening of social hierarchies. On the other hand, however, these exercises are also what substantiate their authority and temper the excesses that might make them tyrannous. As public figures, of course, the princes' bodies are never entirely their own. Part of the "high honour" that renders them both royal and magnanimous, then, is their ability to display the vestiges "gotten and born by pain and danger." The fact, however, that Sidney represents this "suffering" as part of a normal process of aristocratic education suggests that, for those lucky enough to have the opportunity, the experience of wounding could be "naturalized" and thus transformed into an occasion to perform the "high honour" that marks the difference between the wounded body of a prince and the wounded body of a commoner.

[277] On the conventional uses of the metaphor, see Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1–19.

This political and ideological aspect of suffering and wounding is put on full display during the peasants' rebellion in Book Two, an episode that is revised by generally retained material from the *Old Arcadia*. When commoners, for example, become the subjects of wounds, Sidney stages those wounds as comically grotesque:

> among the rebels there was a dapper fellow, a tailor by occupation who, fetching his courage […] began to bow his knees, and very fencer-like to draw near to Zelmane. But as he came within her distance, turning his sword 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.380)

Though the details of this passage certainly are parodic and intended to criticize the ridiculous passions animating popular rebellion,[278] they are also quite revealing about the aesthetics of wounded bodies in Arcadia. It is not surprising that the body of the tailor, as a rebel, is disfigured; the nature of his disfiguration, however—that he presumes to enter into a "fencer-like" combat with Pyrocles only to be slain by a casual "side blow"—asserts both the ridiculousness of his participation in this combat and his intellectual and corporeal distance from the bodies and minds of the more noble characters with whom he wars. His foolish mixing of professions (tailor, seamster, knight), moreover, gives credence to his grotesque wounding, as his ignorant belief that his nose could be "fresh put to" parallels both his presumption in rebelling against Basilius and his hope that his outward appearance could somehow enhance his personal shortcomings. In other words, the tailor's vanity, stupidity, and inexperience—which are all here evident from his blunders—represent an

[278] Such are the arguments of Stephen Greenblatt and Richard Berrong, who both register the rebellion as a dramatization of the peasants' exclusion from "high honour." See Stephen Greenblatt, "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and the Representation of Rebellion," *Representations* 1 (1983): 1–29, and Richard Berrong, "Changing Depictions of Popular Revolt in Sixteenth-Century England: The Case of Sidney's Two *Arcadias*," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19 (1989): 15–33.

attempt on the part of Sidney to oppose the possibility that common bodies can have access to the same aesthetic qualities that elsewhere accompany the Arcadian elite.

From its very inception, in fact—at the behest of Basilius's politically ambitious sister, Cecropia—the peasants' rebellion lacks a central political, martial, or aesthetic intelligibility, a fact that Sidney substantiates with his depiction of the ill-fated painter who observes the rebellion in hopes that he will "see some notable wounds, [and] be able the more lively to express them" (II.381). Like the tailor, however, the painter is in error; his belief that the rebellion could produce "notable wounds" requires either that a noble be wounded (thereby suggesting that the rebellion poses a real threat) or, alternatively, that a peasant become the victim of a wound capable of such interpretation. Because neither are real possibilities, the painter's presence in the rebellion is as futile as the tailor's, though the painter does not suffer the same fate. Rather than being decapitated to reveal an irreparable seam, the artist has his hands cut off by Musidorus, so that, as the narrator recounts, he "returned [to his painting] well skilled in wounds, but [with no] hand[s] to perform his skill" (II.381). The artist, like the tailor, has no claim to "notable wounds," and it is at least as appropriate as it is ironic that the wound that he incurs both disfigures him physically and disables him professionally. But by disabling the painter, Musidorus also disables the possibility that any wounds could be "counterfeit[ed]" (II.381) as "notable." As we have seen with Sidney's own biography, this type of artistry might be dishonest but it nonetheless is effective in making what is "grisly" or "unknightly" appear as honorable and ennobling. Musidorus's "doing," then, in this respect, illuminates a paradox of heroic presentation in Arcadia, a paradox first voiced by Pyrocles in the verse eclogues that conclude Book One of

the *Old Arcadia*: "None can speak of wound with skill, if he have not a wound felt."[279] It is part of the challenge that Sidney, with the *New Arcadia*, poses to traditional heroics that both Musidorus and Pyrocles are made to wrestle with this paradox, to discover and actualize circumstances in which "high honour" and "notable wounds" can be gained in ways that not only avoid disfiguration and dismemberment but also combine the "doing and suffering" that constitute heroic action in Arcadia.

When, however, Sidney's depictions of wounds turn inward, Sidney's emphasis on wounding as a potential marker of class and status appears to break off. Rather than providing an avenue for self-fashioning, an internal wound in Arcadia appears, at least at first, as a challenge to both the body's and the mind's coherence. But, like Tasso, Sidney's understanding of the desiring heart as a wounded appendage also renders internal wounds, in Arcadia, as fundamentally more indicative of one's notability—to borrow from the painter's designation—than physical wounds. Amphialus's rebellion, for example, which occurs among the Arcadian elite rather than across social hierarchies, is defined by the blind destruction that it creates in pursuit of Amphailus's love for Philoclea:

> 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 pencels 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.473)

The vision on offer here opposes, in a powerful way, what we learn about Amphialus early on in the *New Arcadia*. Basilius, in fact, recounting words said to him by Helen, Queen of

[279] Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*, ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 105. Significantly, this assertion is made as a rejoinder during an argument about the virtuousness of erotic love that Musidorus and Pyrocles (disguised as Cleophila) wage throughout Book One of the *Old Arcadia*.

Corinth, describes Amphialus as one "whose mind can be painted by nothing but by the true shape of virtue" and for whom "[n]othing was so hard but his valour overcame" (I.123). However, in the haunting and famous passage above—which mirrors in style the description of the shipwreck in Book One—Sidney creates an increasingly precise description of Amphialus's decline from courtesy, a decline that is both precipitated and perpetuated by his love for Philoclea. What was a truly beautiful picture—Amphialus's rebels at arms, their swords glistening in the aftermath of their conquest—gives way, as reality settles, at first to horror and then to the "truly-affected" mind of a warrior capable of ignoring it. Not only does Amphialus's love for Philoclea justify the horror that his sword begets—horror, as we have seen, that results in the pathos-ridden destruction of a young knight such as Agenor—but it is even potent to "paint it over" with the beauty of his beloved.

Despite the proximity of the above passage to Agenor's death—the passage concludes the violence that ensues after Amphialus slays Agenor—the connection between Agenor's beauty and Philoclea's blinding love is more germane than it might at first seem. The details of Amphialus's encounter with Agenor, in fact, imply that physical beauty holds some level of social and political import in Arcadia. When, for example, Amphialus first confronts Agenor, the narrator describes Amphialus as "perceiving [Agenor's] youth and beauty" and so becoming overwhelmed by a "compassion" that causes him to "spare[] that fair nakedness" (III.468). But amidst a war waged partially on account of Amphialus's love for Philoclea, his desire to "let his staff fall to Agenor's vamplate" and have the combat end "hurtlessly" is not to be (III.468). Instead, Amphialus's lance shatters upwards into Agenor's face, the result, according to the narrator, of "an unlucky counterbluff" (III.468). The incident, however, is also presented as being inevitable, a reading bolstered by Sidney's description of Amphialus's lance as acting independently from Amphialus's intentions not to

harm Agenor: "the pitiless lance of Amphialus (angry with being broken) […], full of unsparing splinters, lighted upon that face" (III.468). In these terms, Agenor's death becomes part of the collateral destruction that, as we have seen, is symptomatic for individuals who pursue martial combat on account of erotic desire, destruction, moreover, that is potent to destroy both beauty and the sense of "compassion" (III.468) or pity that beauty could presumably beget.

By staging Agenor's death as the consequence of Amphialus's desire not to harm him, Sidney illustrates how Amphialus's passion for Philoclea perverts his nobility and goodness.[280] We see, however, in a following passage, when Agenor's brother, Philanax, wounds the similarly beautiful Ismenus that the consequences of Amphialus's love-blindness extend far beyond the merely collateral. Unlike Agenor's wound, Ismenus's wound is not immediately fatal, and Philanax has the opportunity to interpret Ismenus's countenance before Ismenus dies. Despite his attempt to "blot[] all figures of pity out of his mind" (III.472), Philanax still sees the dying Ismenus in terms eerily similar to how, in a different context, Rinaldo viewed Armida in the *Liberata*'s final moments: with a sorrow, ruth, and regret exacerbated by beauty. At the moment, in fact, that Philanax thrust his sword through Ismenus's chest, the narrator describes Ismenus as being "fierce though beautiful, and beautiful though dying […] like a fair apple which some uncourteous body, breaking his bough, should throw down before it were ripe" (III.472). These lines, which recall Raleigh's memorialization of Sidney in "The Mourning Muse of Thestylis," stress that Ismenus's death

[280] Sidney also emphasizes this point by having Amphialus fall in love with Philoclea when he spies her bathing in the forest with Pyrocles (disguised as Zelmane) and Mopsa. In a clever scene, where one voyeur (Pyrocles) catches and then wounds another (Amphialus) for his folly, Sidney describes Amphialus's physical wound as subservient to his heart-wound: "and so [Amphialus] departed […], faster bleeding in his heart than at his wound, which, being bound up by the sheets wherewith Philoclea had been wrapped, made him thank the wound and bless the sword for that favour" (II.295).

makes him more beautiful and that, by slaying him, Philanax commits a crime that cannot be overlooked, even when one realizes that Philanax has simply avenged his brother's similarly untimely death. By describing the death of Ismenus in these terms, and by linking by proximity his death to Agenor's death, Sidney emphasizes the potential that all the Arcadians possess (of love, of beauty, of honor, of some categorical goodness) but that the wounds given by Amphialus's rebellion both actively and accidentally destroy.

Disguising the Body: Performing Woundedness in Arcadia

The disruption that Amphialus's rebellion poses to the heroic, virtuous body largely concerns the body's social and political function. By offering such passages as the opening shipwreck, the description of the princes' education, the peasants' rebellion, and the deaths of Agenor and Ismenus, Sidney illustrated the importance that wounds could play in exhibiting and maintaining the class or status of a particular body. But each of those individual episodes also suggested some of the potential that wounds possess to threaten the body's integrity and representational qualities. In the *New Arcadia*, Amphialus is the best example of a character marred by wounding in this manner, and we will see that his physical wounds not only are grotesque and incurable but also that they correlate to the pathology of his internal wounds. Sidney's representation of how internal wounds can influence the physical body, however, also extends to Pyrocles and Musidorus; among all the characters in the *New Arcadia*, the princes actively debase their own bodies in order to obtain love and to substantiate to themselves the significance of their internal desires. When Pyrocles, for example, first admits that he is in love with Philoclea, Musidorus, who has not yet fallen for Pamela, chides against his passion, a passion that the still unwounded Musidorus sees as self-abuse and a potential fissure to the princes' friendship:

> 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)

This might seem like a relatively innocuous condition. Indeed, in the verse eclogues that interpose the narrative chapters, Sidney treats the metaphor rather unexceptionally. But for Pyrocles, the metaphor could not be truer or more literal, especially considering that his "deep wound" causes him not only to disguise his identity but also obscure his gender. His disguise as the Amazonian warrior Zelmane, for example, offers the most extreme manifestation in the *New Arcadia* of the painter's paradox, as, in other words, in instance in which wounding both indoctrinates and disables. Pyrocles's own particular paradox is put on display when he is made to stand by and witness other individuals in Arcadia demonstrate the sense of himself that, on account of his disguise, he no longer can. One such episode occurs when the Pyrocles has to watch another knight named Phebilus display Philoclea's picture during an Arcadian tournament (I.163). The sight is so anathema to Pyrocles that he fantasizes Phebilus's death, though fantasy is all Pyrocles is capable of obtaining at this point in the narrative. By believing, however, that internal wounds can have physical, even violent consequences, Pyrocles both limits his ability to act as one of Arcadia's heroes and, in the process, calls that action into question.[281]

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[281] On how Pyrocles's transvestial performance provides a palatable reformulation of early modern heroism, see Lisa Celvosky, "Pyrocles' Warlike Peace: Sir Philip Sidney and Androgyny," in *Gender Rhetorics: Postures of Dominance and Submission in History*, ed. R. C. Trexler (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts, 1994), 235–44; Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 220–42; and Mentz, *Romance for Sale*, 91–103. Readers who stress the offensive, transgressive, or ambiguous nature of Pyrocles's costume include Rose, "Sidney's Womanish Man," 354; Cressy, "Gender Trouble," 439; and Charles, "Heroes as Lovers," 480.

Musidorus, who does not fall in love with Pamela as rashly as Pyrocles does with Philoclea, provides a better example of how Sidney uses internal wounds to question heroic, virtuous action in the romance. Disguised as the unquestionably base shepherd Dorus, Musidorus must first learn how to traverse the social incompatibility created by his costume, in particular by proving to Pamela that, despite his outward appearance and false provenance, he is capable of playing the part of chivalrous knight. This stunt, which involves Musidorus displaying his horse-riding talents against the uncoordinated Dametas (II.247–8), causes Pamela to question Musidorus's true virtue, even as she begins to realize that the Dorus who courts her in fact is the Musidorus whom she has heard heralded throughout her life. She poses the essential question to her sister:

> can I without the detestable stain of ungratefulness abstain from loving him who […] is content so to abase himself as to become Dametas' servant for my sake? You will say, but how know I him to be Musidorus, since the handmaid of wisdom is slow of belief? That consideration did not want in me, for the nature of desire itself is no easier to receive belief than it is hard to ground belief. For as desire is glad to embrace the first show of comfort, so is desire desirous of perfect assurance: and that have I had of him, not only by necessary arguments to any of common sense, but by sufficient demonstrations.
>
> (II.247)

In Pamela's estimation, Musidorus's greatest asset is also his greatest weakness; his disguise—which has been neither as impenetrable nor as transparent as he desired—both flatters and disturbs his beloved. And while his ability to "dance[] the matachin dance in armour" (II.249) certainly is effective in confusing Pamela, it does not do very much to help him reclaim the body that he so easily abandoned. This seems to be a paradox that Musidorus understands, having already confided to Pyrocles his frustration with Pamela's indifference: "howsoever I show I am no base body, all I do is but to beat a rock and get foam" (II.234). Although he probably uses "body" here to mean "person," his anxiety is rooted nonetheless in his physical body, which he has had to degrade in order to obtain a

love that, in other circumstances, ought to reinforce his status as a prince. But in the twisted environment of the *New Arcadia*, both his body and his desires are made to stand at odds with one another. What he desires to show is that his body, even as it is wounded in this capacity, is still intrinsically noble. Despite this, however, Pamela insists that Musidorus continue to court her across the artificial medium of wooing Mopsa, the daughter of one of Basilius's stewards and the social equivalent of Musidorus's alter ego. In this sense, both Musidorus's and Pyrocles's erotic wounds are far more complicated than their Petrarchan equivalents; not only do they carry the pain associated with unrequited love, but also they disfigure the bodies of their victims, implicating both Pyrocles and Musidorus in the seemingly interminable anguish of having to inhabit bodies at once compatible and incompatible with their desires. The particular paradox of the princes, then, is not that their passions have rendered them incapable of recreating or incurring heroic wounds, but that the wounds that they manage to create eventually become anathema to their wills.

By subjugating the princes' bodies to artificial costumes, and by then depicting the princes as desirous but incapable of reclaiming their former significations, Sidney upsets the traditional paradigms that construct the body as a site of social and political significance and thus, accordingly, the ways in which wounds can come to redefine bodily display (as virtuous, heroic, masculine or feminine). In fact, by divorcing one's desires from one's corporeal figuration, the princes' disguises intensify the inequalities created when a physical wound is assessed as a marker of inward condition. But if this outsourcing of identity is harmful for the princes' heroic presentations, it is enabling for the Pamela and Philoclea, both of whom, during the mock-execution scenes, engage with wounds in ways that question the validity of any semiotic paradigm for wounding. In a sadistic but crafty concealing of bodies, for example, Cecropia forces Philoclea to watch who Philoclea believes

to be her sister receive an altogether humiliating and disfiguring execution.[282] The first stroke of the executioner's sword is ineffective, and he requires "another blow to divorce the fair marriage of the head and body" (III.558). But Philoclea's response—which stands to oppose somewhat her meek disposition elsewhere in the narrative—does not come with the terror that Cecropia had hoped:

> "Alas," said [Philoclea], "unkind women, since you have given me so many deaths, torment me not now with life: for God's sake let me go, and excuse your hands of more blood. Let me follow my Pamela whom ever I sought to follow. Alas, Pamela, they will not let me come to thee. But if they keep promise I shall tread thine own steps after thee. For to what am I born, miserable soul, but to be most unhappy in myself, and yet more unhappy in others? But O that a thousand more miseries had chanced unto me, so thou hadst not died: Pamela, my sister Pamela."
> (III.559)

Despite her anguish early on in captivity (she is originally overcome by paroxysms of despair), Philoclea here possesses what Neda Jeny has called a "humble and pliant temperament [that] proves to be […] better defense than Pamela's firmness and resolution, for it makes [Philoclea] smart under humiliation less and bear up under grief better."[283] This is true, though I would offer that Philoclea's edification throughout her captivity depends also on her learning that physical wounds do not as obviously or directly correspond to a social or political system of identification as she at first might have thought. The vision of her beautiful, stalwart, heroic, and virtuous sister languishing between the blows of the executioner's sword, for example, does not codify to her that these wounds hold any special

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[282] The true victim is Artesia, the ignoble mistress of Phalantus. It seems appropriate, given Sidney's misgivings with equating a body wound to the nobility or goodness of a particular body, that the virtuous Pamela would be duplicated in this way.

[283] Neda Jeny, *Notable Images of Virtues and Vices: Character Types in Sir Philip Sidney's "New Arcadia"* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 51. The captivity episodes have also been read in terms of their antifeminism, as allegories, in other words, for Sidney's misogynistic enjoyment of female vulnerability. See, for example, Lei, "Relational Antifeminism," 40; Sullivan, "Getting Pamela Out of the House," 14; Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*, 176; and Anne Shaver, "Woman's Place in the *New Arcadia*," *Sidney Newsletter* 10, no. 2 (1990): 3–15.

import, for, if they did, they would act on her as Cecropia intended: as maddening, terrifying, and pathologically dividing. Rather, the prospect of Pamela's death at once robs Philoclea of all hope and yet impossibly fills her with the greatest hope imaginable: that resistance is not just possible but a direct result of Cecropia's tyranny.

Philoclea's resistance of Cecropia's tyrannical designs, a resistance that entails her dismissal of the body as a reliable signifier, revises the paradox that plagued the princes' own attempts at self-fashioning. Where, for example, Pyrocles and Musidorus desired (but often failed) to control the display of their bodies, both Pamela and Philoclea discover in captivity not only that they are incapable of such control but also that the wounds that they do sustain (both literal and pretend) are not in any way indicative of their own sense of themselves. In one of the torture passages that precedes the mock executions, for example, the stalwart Pamela quite intentionally submits her body to the abuse, knowing full well by this point that its signifying capacity only extends as far as Cecropia's tyranny. The narrator, in fact, describes the torture scene explicitly in these terms:

> if ever the beams of perfection shined through the clouds of affliction, if ever virtue took a body to show his else-unconceivable beauty, it was in Pamela. For when reason taught her there was no resistance—for to just resistance first her heart was inclined—then with so heavenly a quietness and so graceful a calmness did she suffer the divers kinds of torments they used to her, that while they vexed her fair body, it seemed that she rather directed than obeyed the vexation. And when Cecropia ended and asked whether her heart would yield, she a little smiled, but such a smiling as showed no love and yet could not but be lovely.
>
> And then, "Beastly woman," said she, "follow on, do what thou wilt and canst upon me: for I know thy power is not unlimited. Thou mayest well wreck this silly body, but me thou canst never overthrow. For my part, I will not do thee the pleasure to desire death of thee: but assure thy self, both my life and death shall triumph with honour, laying shame upon thy detestable tyranny."[284]
>
> (III. 553–4)

[284] Melissa Sanchez has importantly likened the language in these lines to John Foxe's Protestant martyrology, *The Acts and Monuments*. See Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 50.

This is a remarkable passage, and its representation of suffering as empowering is thus far unprecedented in the *New Arcadia*. Not only does Pamela displace her embodiment of honor (and her display of virtue in general) from the matter of her body, but she also translates the abuses that she receives from Cecropia into devices of resistance, "conquering," as Sidney writes, "[Cecropia's] doing with her suffering" (III.554). Under the weight of Cecropia's torments, then, Pamela's body becomes part of the general destruction caused by tyranny, one not terribly different from the indistinguishably wounded bodies that float in the bloodstained ocean after the shipwreck. But this does not render the "divers kinds of torments" that Cecropia "wreck[s]" on Pamela's "silly body" any less symbolic. In fact, by taking pleasure in her own pain (the narrator describes Pamela as being "content with trial in herself what virtue could do"), Pamela begins to display some of the performative attributes available to all "wreck[ed]" bodies in Arcadia. In the verse eclogues that follow Book Two, Musidorus had already anticipated this ability of his beloved, calling Pamela one "whose wounds are salves, [and] whose yokes please more than pleasure doth" (II.410). And though Musidorus clearly means this metaphorically, it is part of the symbolic resonance (and play with the malleability of the image of woudedness) that Sidney cultivates in the *New Arcadia* that the most powerful manifestation of this statement occurs in a literal context in which the markings of the flesh are intended to be penal.

Pamela's capacity to transform her victimization and abuse into an occasion for both edification and resistance requires, unsurprisingly, that she herself first be wounded. A testament to the continuing relevance of Musidorus's statement in the *Old Arcadia* that "[n]one can speak of wound with skill, if he have not a wound felt," Pamela's experience in Cecropia's chambers illustrates that, indeed, the painter's paradox is not a categorical truth in Arcadia, that, in other words, it is possible to be wounded, to be vexed, wrecked, and abused

and still maintain the skill necessary to make productive use of the experience. But as an individual who debases her body in order to make her pain both personally and politically relevant, Pamela provides a powerful emendation to the semiotic codes suggested by Sidney's depictions of "unknightly," "grisly," and "notable" wounds elsewhere. Her experience with both the physically disfiguring and psychologically dividing power of wounds yields neither result, principally, I think because she challenges the fantasy that the material of her body has an extended relevance beyond the agency that she herself attaches to it. In this way, the spell she spends in captivity with her sister involves a kind of performance, one, I would like to think, that parallels the active debasement of the body that the princes are made to undergo on account of their own erotic passions. At the very least, Sidney describes the princesses suffering as an exercise they have learned how to master:

> But, as in labour, the more one doth exercise it, the more by the doing one is enabled to do, strength growing upon the work, so as what at first would have seemed impossible, after grows easy; so these princesses, second to none and far from any second, only to be matched by themselves, with the use of suffering their minds got the habit of suffering, so as all fears and terrors were to them but summons to a battle whereof they knew beforehand they should be victorious; and which in the suffering was painful, being suffered, was a trophy to itself.
> (III.555)

Between Two Bodies: The Pathology of Amphialus's Wounds

By forfeiting the signifying qualities of their bodies, and by conditioning themselves to the nature of their abjections, the princesses effectively undermine Cecropia's attempts to "win either of them for her son" (III.554). But the error is also Cecropia's. Her belief in the power of physical pain to create psychic results is the inverse of what has proved potent elsewhere in Arcadia. And even though she herself appears to know this—she remarks, for example, in a conversation with Amphialus that "love commonly is the instrument of subjection" (III.447)—she is incapable of harnessing this power against her captives in any

productive manner. The only person, in fact, whom she manages to wound in a truly harmful capacity is her son, Amphialus. As a member of Arcadia's aristocracy, Amphialus has a foremost claim to Arcadia's heroic ideals. But because, unlike Pyrocles and Musidorus, his body is never disguised, he is also subject to the representational crisis presented by "unknightly" and "grisly" wounds. For Amphialus, however, this crisis is more complicated, especially considering that the two physical wounds he sustains in the *New Arcadia* aggravate, to an incapacitating extent, his internal wound: his love for Philoclea. His first wound (from Pyrocles), for example, which Sidney symbolically places on his thigh but which poses him no physical threat, prevents him from questioning or even knowing about his mother's abduction of Pyrocles and the princesses. The second, however, which comes during the rebellion proper and from the hands of Musidorus (now disguised as the forsaken knight), is more concerning physically, though its truly incising power is psychological:

> And as for Amphialus, his body had such wounds, and he gave such wounds to his mind as easily it could not be determined whether death or he made the greater haste one to the other. For when the diligent care of cunning surgeons had brought life to the possession of his own right, Sorrow and Shame (like two corrupted servants) came waiting of it, persuading nothing but the giving over of itself to destruction. They laid before his eyes his present case, painting every piece of it in most ugly colours: they showed him his love wrapped in despair, his fame blotted by overthrow; so that if before he languished because he could not obtain his desiring, he now lamented because he durst not desire the obtaining.
>
> (III.545)

When Amphialus realizes that this incapacitation has allowed his mother to torture and then stage the mock executions of the princesses, his pathology intensifies, and he attempts to take his own life. His sword, however, fails him—Sidney describes the sword as being "more merciful than he to himself" (III.574)—so he uses instead the only other device on his person capable of such a task: the knives that his mother had confiscated from Philoclea during her abduction (III.444) and that he has since stowed in his crest and referred to as his "forced favour" (III.535). As objects invested with a power beyond their materiality, the

knives both symbolically and literally reopen Amphialus's wounds. This time, however, Amphialus's suffering is as much a political and social occurrence as it is personal; inside his chambers, his servants find him

> swimming in his own blood, giving a pitiful spectacle, where the conquest was the conqueror's overthrow, and self-ruin the only triumph of a battle fought between him and himself. The time full of danger, the person full of worthiness, the manner full of horror, did greatly astonish all the beholders: so as by and by, all the town was full of it, and then of all ages came running up to see the beloved body; everybody thinking their safety bled in his wounds and their honour died in his destruction. (III.575)

It would be hard to understand the seriousness of these two passages without first understanding the social and political centrality of wounds (as signifiers) in early modern culture. Because Amphialus is a political figure, his body, like those of the princes, is never entirely his own, such that his wounds, whether they are inscribed upon his heart or his body, always participate in the correlative body of his people. Sidney's syntactical dexterity in the above passage emphasizes this duality; the passage reads away from Amphialus's internal condition so that, by the end, his wounds carry meaning only for the Arcadians, Arcadians who are tasked with the impossibility of making Amphialus's internal and external bodies cohere. For them, Amphialus's physical wounds are all they can see, despite the fact that those wounds are the results of an internal condition. This condition, however, does not make Amphialus tyrannical like his mother, nor is it comparable to Sidney's other examples in the *New Arcadia* of private passion functioning as an impediment to the health of a state. Instead, Amphialus's wounds divide his true sense of himself (as both a lover and a warrior) from the political performance that he is fated to complete, a performance, moreover, that demands that he becomes the embodiment of his state's heroic ideals.[285]

[285] In this way, Amphialus reminds me of Coriolanus, especially considering that, in each instance, the personal desires of the wounded contrast the political demands that the people make on the signifying power of the wounds. Like Amphialus, Coriolanus's wounds are

In Sidney's imagination, then, Amphialus's suicide illustrates the end toward which an individual could go for love, though Sidney carefully stages this response as the unfortunate result of Amphialus's inability to reconcile his passions with his sense of heroic virtue. The negative presentation of his bleeding body—which signifies the turmoil of the state in general and the threat that wounds pose to the heroic body in particular—confirms that in Arcadia the outside of the body is the most important (but also least stable) signifier, a point, of course, that the princes' own disguises substantiate. What separates Pyrocles and Musidorus from Amphialus, however, is the nature of those disguises; by dislocating their persons from their physical appearances, as we have seen, the princes defend themselves against the possibility that the wounds they incur could be interpreted as representative of their inner selves or personal desires. Their disguises indeed disfigure their bodies but in symbolically powerful ways, as they are made to reclaim the desires that their disguises prohibit. Amphialus's wounds, by contrast, literally disguise his desires, rendering his body powerless to stand for the principles of love and affection. Not only, as we see here, are wounds a powerful symbol of love's violence, but the readable nature of physical wounds acts as correlative participants in that violence, actively rending the corporeal makeup of a wounded body from the truths that such bodies contain. And this is Amphialus's error: that he believes that the wounds on the outside of his body—wounds, moreover, that he knows are symbolically powerful in a public or political context—could somehow be made

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never entirely his own, and while he manages to make them politically marketable—he uses his wounds to win the popular vote (II.iii.49ff)—his reluctance to display his wounds to the rabble issues from his belief that his wounds hold truths and memories interpretable to him alone. His sense, moreover, that his wounds are violable—that the people might "put [their] tongues into [his] wounds and speak for them" (II.iii.5–6)—represents an anxiety between personal desire and public display that Amphialus similarly is incapable of reconciling. But where Coriolanus, up until the point of his death, continues to believe that his wounds hold a semiotic power (albeit, one intended for his own pleasure), Amphialus, by wounding himself, consecrates his body's implication into a political discourse, subjecting both himself and his wounds to the tongues of the masses.

personally or spiritually efficacious. Indeed, in the moments before he begins to wound himself with Philoclea's knives, he muses on this possibility. "Ah Philoclea," he says, "I would yet thou knewest how I love thee. Unworthy I am, unhappy I am, false I am; but to thee, alas, I am not false" (III.574–5). His hope, however, that she will not find him false, or that she will comprehend the depth of his affection that wounding himself suggests, depends on her ability to put her tongue in his wounds and speak out the truth that they represent. Not only does Sidney never allow this to happen, but his representation of Amphialus's desires as incompatible with his wounded appearance suggests that the process of interpreting wounds—especially heart-wounds—essentially is subject to error.

Rather than Philoclea, who is never given the opportunity to interpret Amphialus's wounds, Sidney exposes the consequences of this type of misreading with Helen, a character for whom the conflict between private passion and public virtue has already had some political and social impact.[286] When Helen confronts the blood-drenched body of her beloved, however, Sidney, again, describes the scene in terms of its psychological impact:

> In which piteous plight when she saw him, though 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 swoon upon him, as if she could not choose but die of his wounds.
>
> (III. 577)

If love first wounded Helen's heart, then here her grief has broken it, principally by jarring her "former apprehensions" from the reality that confronts her, a reality that is far worse than she could have imagined. But the gross, physical reality is as disturbing as the passage's implicit revelation: that Amphialus's wounded condition, even as it marks the destructive

[286] See, for example, the story of Philoxenus and his foster-father Timotheus, both of whom are killed on account of Helen's love for Amphialus (I.120–7). Helen herself, in fact, in a conversation with Palladius, admits that the passion is an "absence and folly" that the Corinthians simply tolerate (I.121).

pathology of his love for Philoclea, simultaneously increases Helen's love for him. Helen knows this. "Woe is me," she cries after recovering from her swoon, "that thy noble heart could love who hated thee, and hate who loved thee" (III.577). For Helen, this is a clarifying revelation, one made possible by the extremity of Amphialus's condition. Not only is she incapable of healing Amphialus (either physically and metaphorically), but also the curative capacity that she possesses—her ability to remember Amphialus as having a "noble heart"—at once is her greatest strength and her worst nightmare. She must speak for Amphialus's wounds, though Sidney never allows this to happen in public. Rather, in the privacy of Amphialus's chambers, Helen wails with a combative spirit indicative of the combination of emotional responsiveness and aggressive action that the *New Arcadia* increasingly is revealing as a heroic ideal. At first, she condemns Amphialus's foolhardiness in loving Philoclea—"alas thou disdainedst [my love], to serve them by whom thy incomparable self wert disdained"—only to then criticize Philoclea herself: "your want of pity, where the fault only was infiniteness of desert, cannot be excused" (III.577). Her words suggest an attempt on her part not simply to mitigate but retranslate the vice inherent in Amphialus's wounds, to see them as mortal but powerful in their mortality to criticize the wastefulness of this type of love. The image of her lover that she desires to see—his wounded body bespeaking his bravery in battle and his endurance in the face of this type of pain—however, might not be available to those with this sort of privileged knowledge, but, at the very least, her response can adumbrate the antidote that in other circumstances might have proved effective.

We cannot know how this romance ends,[287] but we can begin to make a number of predications about the fate that Sidney might have been imagining for these bodies. Almost without exception, the *New Arcadia* stages each notable example of erotic love as eliciting from one person's experience with another's physically wounded appearance. Both Gynecia and Basilius, for example, have their love for Pyrocles (disguised as Zelmane) intensified when he is wounded by the lion in Book One (I.176–8). Pyrocles himself admits that his love for Philoclea was primed by his witnessing the death of the real Zelmane, an event, as he says, that "made my heart as apt to receive the wound, as the power of [Philoclea's] beauty with unresistible force to pierce" (II.367).[288] And Philoclea, moreover, recognizes the extent of her love for Pyrocles, somewhat masochistically, by standing by and watching him mourn her contrived death (III.566–8). What distinguishes these instances of erotic love from Amphialus's and Helen's, however, is the precise semiotic makeup of those attractions, the fact, in other words, that the bodies that both incite and pursue those desires are hidden behind the façade of a misleading garb.[289] The princes, for example, might have sought to court the princesses across an artificial medium of social and political inequity, but their disguises also protect them from the physical destruction and psychic pathology that Amphialus and Helen suffer from in their undisguised amorous pursuits. We ought not be surprised, then, that it is Amphialus and Helen, both aggrieved but still attempting to project via their bodies the depth and honesty of their selves, who ultimately fall victim to the ways in which bleeding and irreparable wounds can be inadequately and incorrectly interpreted.

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[287] Greville, in his 1625 biography of Sidney, suggests that Amphialus and Helen were to be married. See Greville, *The Prose Works*, 10.

[288] As Melissa Sanchez argues, "Philoclea's likeness to the figure of Zelmane reminds Pyrocles of the last time that he was pierced, a projection of past onto future that equates the effects of suffering with those of beauty" (Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 47).

[289] Hence, Kathryn Schwarz's succinct observation that, in Arcadia, desire relies on "the limited relevance of empirical facts" (Schwarz, *Tough Love*, 181).

At least for Amphialus, we are encouraged to assume, the semiotic codes of wounding—which elsewhere impel his martial pursuits—lead directly to his destruction because, unlike the princes, he has been unable to dislocate them. His decision to remain free to act as himself is part of the irony that highlights how Sidney has manipulated heroic ideals in the *New Arcadia*; it is, in other words, the individuals who relinquish their claims to "straightforwardly heroic masculinity" that manage to resist the "unknightly wounds" that a pursuit of that type of heroism might entail.[290] For those, however, who embed themselves in the fantasy that the outside of the body can become a significant qualifier of their inward states, a wound is a potentially disastrous occurrence; not only can it debunk that which was sought—either an expression in the highest degree of a knight's self or a testament to the extent or truth of an emotional condition within—but also its capacity to be physically and psychically disruptive can extend beyond the body of its victim, especially for individuals, like Amphialus, whose bodies do not entirely belong to themselves. Indeed, in his description of the scene that follows Amphialus's suicide attempt, Sidney affords Amphialus's wounds this power, the power not only to destroy himself and his desires but to maim his state as well:

> They [Amphialus's companions] were afraid even to cry, though they were ready to cry for fear; but, because that they might do, everybody forced, even with harming themselves, to do honour to [Amphialus]: some throwing themselves upon the ground, some tearing their clothes and casting dust upon their heads, and some even wounding themselves, and sprinkling their own blood in the air.
>
> (III.579)

[290] Thus Clare Kinney's argument that Amphialus's error is his reliance on "the anachronistically feudal ideals of romance" (Kinney, "Chivalry Unmasked," 38). See also Martin Raitiére, "Amphialus' Rebellion: Sidney's Use of History in *New Arcadia*," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 12 (1982): 113–31.

"UNAFFECTED LANGUISHING": THE WOUNDS OF ARGALUS AND PARTHENIA

This vision of Amphialus, his wounded body and his divided desires, stands at odds with the chivalrous, faultlessly courteous and elegant Amphialus who tourneys outside of the castle walls. There, where romantic hope still lives, and where Amphialus can perform heroic feats for the lady whose affections he could still win, the logic of Sidney's representations of wounded bodies plays itself out in the tragedy of Argalus and Parthenia. Among all the lover's in Sidney's *New Arcadia*, Argalus and Parthenia manage to confront the disfiguring power of wounds (both physically and metaphorically) and emerge from the experience without having their representation of heroic virtue sullied, though, like Tasso's Edward and Gildippe, their confrontation with multiple forms of wounding does lead to their deaths. But in Arcadia, a world besieged in every way by the corruptibility of incontinent passion, this is hardly a stain on their embodiment of the heroic qualities that the princes struggle with and that Amphialus lacks. Instead, their deaths heighten their presentation as Sidney's lone example in the *New Arcadia* of how heroic love and erotic passion might cohere, a coherence, I will show, that is encouraged rather than challenged by the wounds that they sustain. Not only, for example, does Argalus remain faithful to Parthenia when she is temporarily disfigured, but his commitment to her, which includes no requisites, counters and revises the more standardized narratives (like Amphialus's) in which identity (as passion) is defined by the body's physical presentations.[291]

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[291] Some background might be helpful. As a maid, the virtuous Parthenia is contracted by her mother in marriage to Demagoras, a man whom the narrator describes as being "mighty in riches and power and proud thereof, stubbornly stout, loving nobody but himself" (I.88). Obedient to her mother's wishes, Parthenia consents. An unexpected meeting with Argalus, however, immediately persuades Parthenia to reject Demagoras. Angered by her rejection, Demagoras retaliates, smearing poison on Parthenia's face, "the effect whereof was such that never leper looked more ugly than she did" (I.90). Left scarred by this vicious personal

As a synecdoche for Sidney's whole presentation of the wounded body in the *New Arcadia*, however, Argalus and Parthenia at first are made to conform to the overt heroic superficiality that governs Amphialus's narrative and that, in part, impels the princes into their disguises. In fact, Argalus's and Parthenia's description as heroes recalls the princes' own upbringing, an upbringing in which the princes' capacity for authority depended on their experiences with pain. For Argalus and Parthenia, however, it is not authority but passion that their experiences with pain mutually augments. According to Kalander's steward, for example, referring in particular to the couple's navigation of Parthenia's contractual marriage to Demagoras, "it was hard to judge whether he in doing or she in suffering shewed greater constancy of affection" (I.89). Argalus and Parthenia's marriage thus is cast as the combination of the two terms by which heroism is defined throughout the *New Arcadia*: of action on the one hand and pain on the other. The mutuality of this love, however, eventually leads to their disdain for these markers. Basilius, for example, suggests as much when he relates one of the couple's myths to Pyrocles (as Zelmane) during Phalantus's tournament in Book One:

> Basilius could not abstain from praising Parthenia […], telling withal Zelmane how he had understood that when in the court of Laconia her picture, maintained by a certain Sycionian knight, was lost through want rather of valour than justice, her husband, the famous Argalus, would in a chafe have gone and redeemed it with a new trial. But she, more sporting than sorrowing for her underserved champion, told her husband she desired to be beautiful in nobody's eyes but his, and that she would rather mar her face as evil as ever it was than that it should be a cause to make Argalus put on armour.

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attack, Parthenia unselfishly gives up her pursuit of Argalus's love, pleading with him to find a bride as "may be fit both to [his] honour and satisfaction" (I.92). Parthenia's selflessness, up until her final moments as Argalus's grief-stricken widow, sets her apart from all other women in Arcadia, though, at this point in the narrative, her selflessness also relies on her belief in the importance of her physical appearance. The wounds that she receives at the hands of Amphialus in Book Three challenge her reliance on the exterior of the body as an adequate marker of her love, of her ability, moreover, to perform the description that Basilius uses to describe her in Book One: as "the perfect picture of a womanly virtue and wifely faithfulness" (I.160).

(I.160)

But this is not merely a disdain for combat or a wife seeking to protect her husband from pain. Parthenia's words rather reject the adequacy of objective social evaluations to describe either herself or her husband; the reciprocity of their beauty, virtue, and honor depends instead on their own subjective perceptions, a point that Sidney emphasizes by having Argalus pursue Parthenia after she has been physically disfigured by Demagoras. His ability to ignore her exhortation to find a bride as "may be fit both to [his] honour and satisfaction" stems from his belief that neither his honor nor hers, in any way, is related to the physical presentation of their bodies (I.92). When Basilius, finally, commands Argalus to join the resistance and take arms against Amphialus, it is Parthenia who now registers his actions as unsuitable to their love's internalization of honor: "Then was it time for you to follow those adventures when you adventured nobody but yourself, and were nobody's but your own" (III.502). But as she criticizes the social production of honor that has created the conflict she also stakes her claim in the combat. "Parthenia shall be in the battle of your fight," she tells him before he leaves, "Parthenia shall smart in your pain, and your blood must be bled by Parthenia" (III. 502–3). As it turns out, this is as much prophecy as it is metaphor.

Parthenia's intransigence in this matter brings us to the interpretive difficulties of this narrative, as her agency—which directly opposes that of her husband—threatens the mutually edifying idealness of their marriage.[292] But this, I think, is not a blotch on what Joan Rees has called the couple's "unimpugnable excellence," only part of what Parthenia's

[292] This line of reasoning, which has become more popular in the past ten years, suggests that the episode reifies rather than challenges patriarchic sentiment, as if in opposing Argalus's will (and then subsequently dying) Parthenia not only severs the ideal heroism of their relationship but also validates Argalus's masculine pieties. For such readings, see Stephanie Chamberlain, "Wife and Widow in Arcadia: Re-envisioning the Ideal," *College Literature* 29, no. 2 (2002): 80–97; Lisa Hopkins, "Passion and Reason in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*," in *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities*, 61–76; and Wendy Olmsted, *The Imperfect Friend: Emotion and Rhetoric in Sidney, Milton, and Their Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 76–104.

(and, by extension, Sidney's) precocious redesigning of "the perfect picture of womanly virtue and wifely faithfulness" entails.[293] Unsurprisingly, both Parthenia's wounds and her husband's wounds are also part of this redesign, and their overt aesthetic qualities, as I will show, oppose readings that stress Parthenia's agency an affront to "a social institution valorizing, if not demanding, female silence" and submission.[294] In the first instance, in fact, when Argalus and Amphialus battle, Sidney presents the conflict as a danger to the ideals of heroic virtue itself, as if the parameters of the combat demand the presence of a new type of heroic action. When, for example, Argalus is wounded mortally, and Parthenia dashes out onto the field to save him, the narrator wonders whether Amphialus's consternation might conform to some virtue. Having pushed Parthenia out of his way, Amphialus

> not only conjured by that which held the monarchy of his mind, but even in his noble heart melting with compassion at so passionate a sight, desired [Argalus] to withhold his hands, for that he should strike one who sought his favour, and would not make resistance. 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 over-live dishonour. (III.507)

The circumstances of this combat intensify its wastefulness, its inherent unsuitably to heroic interpretation; neither Argalus, who fights as a condition of his duty and against the will of his wife, nor Amphialus, who is mired in a violent quandary, desire to be in battle with one another.[295] Argalus, in fact, prior to the combat, attempts to persuade Amphialus to end his rebellion, release the princesses, and submit to the authority of Basilius (III.501–3); but having come so far already, Amphialus is incapable of understanding how his internal

[293] Rees, *Sir Philip Sidney*, 52.
[294] Chamberlain, "Wife and Widow," 86.
[295] John Carey, for example, has labeled the paradoxical nature of these lines as an "epitome of Sidney's major theme [in the *New Arcadia*]. Victory turns to defeat […] dead foe to dead friend, [and] all in the instant." See John Carey, "Structure and Rhetoric in Sidney's Arcadia," in *Sir Philip Sidney: An Anthology of Modern Criticism*, ed. Dennis Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 245–64, at 246.

wounds have destroyed the potency of external wounds to symbolize honor and virtue. But Amphialus lives under the delusion that this, still, might be possible. "I will therefore attend your appearance," he writes in a letter to Argalus, "carrying this advantage with me, that as it shall be a singular honour if I get the victory, so there can be no dishonour in being overcome by Argalus" (III.504). As it turns out, neither result would ennoble, even as the narrator muses on the possibility. As we have seen, Amphialus's misidentification of physical wounds as markers of his inward condition and his relentless belief in their power to bring him what he desires puts him at such odds with Argalus's and Parthenia's understanding of the image: as a cruel, unnecessary byproduct of incontinence (both sexual and martial) and as altogether irrelevant to their own, mutual embodiment of virtue.

Argalus's confrontation with Amphialus has often been assessed as an example of the dangers in Arcadia of what the narrator calls the "tyranny of honour" (III.503), the couple's distorted reliance on the throes of an outmoded heroic institution.[296] Certainly Argalus's death substantiates this point, both asserting the couple's moral distance from Amphialus and illustrating the impotence of their mutual passion to overcome the violence of Amphialus's erotic pathology. But the particulars of Argalus's wounds—which are beyond cure—might suggest otherwise. In a subtle revision of contemporary vulnerary theory, Sidney does not, in either his description of Argalus's wounds or the course of his care, emphasize the potential medical dangers of Argalus's thralldom to the "tyranny of honor" or dramatize the mortality of Argalus's wounds as deriving from the extent of their infection and corruption. Rather, it seems, Argalus's inability to heal and Parthenia's

[296] To be sure, Argalus's commitment to honor is ambiguously pitched between political fidelity and personal glory, an ambiguity that only deepens when we remember, as Claire Preston has pointed out, that the name Argalus is cognate with the Italian *orgoglioso* (adj: haughty, prideful). See Claire Preston, "Sidney's Arcadian Poetics: A Medicine of Cherries and the Philosophy of Cavaliers," in *English Renaissance Prose: History, Language, and Politics,* ed. Neil Rhodes (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts, 1997), 91–108, at 105.

subsequent impotence to help stem from the antithetical relationship between virtuous passion and heroic action that accompanies many of Sidney's representations of wounds in the *New Arcadia*. The manner of Parthenia's failure, for example, accentuates this antithesis:

> Parthenia laid [Argalus's] head in her lap, tearing off her linen sleeves and partlet to serve about his wounds; to bind which she took off her hairlace, and would have cut off her fair hair herself, but that the squires and judges came in with fitter things for that purpose: while she bewailed herself with so lamentable sweetness as was enough to have taught sorrow to the gladdest thoughts, and have engraved it in the minds of hardest metal.
>
> (III.507–8)

This is a scene with which we are familiar, having already witnessed Erminia's ceremonial bandaging of Tancred's wounds with her hair in the *Liberata*. In that instance, Erminia's passion for Tancred (despite his inability to either know or accept her love) proved restorative rather than destructive and, most importantly, not opposed to the Christian goals of that text. In Arcadia, however, Parthenia's attempts are in vain, despite her belief that passion might be potent enough to heal a body wounded by the "tyranny of honour." But she, in any event, is never given the chance to explore this possibility, principally because the wounds from which Argalus suffers do not expose, as Tancred's did, some spiritually or personally destructive eroticism that needs to be amended. The fact that Sidney presents Argalus's wounds as untreatable, rather, only emphasizes the futility of this combat in general, a futility that also extends to Amphialus's romantic pursuit of honor in a tournament-like combat with Argalus. But even that hope is illusory, reliant as it is on a steady coexistence of personal desire and outward performance that seems impossible in this environment. The fact, moreover, that Parthenia's attempt at cure is subordinated to "squires and judges" who have more medical knowledge and that Argalus dies for want of Parthenia's passionate bandages, illustrates just how opposed the social, political, and medical codes that dominate Arcadia are to Argalus's and Parthenia's version of passionate,

virtuous love. The inability of their bodies to conform to these semiotic codes, fueled by their conception of the wounded body as inherently unproductive, as opposed to their own pursuits of heroic virtue, constitutes the only example in the *New Arcadia* of wounded bodies that are neither grotesque nor corrupt and yet, still, without cure.

Indeed, the "remediless" nature of Parthenia's wounds is their most salient feature, rivaled only in the text by the raptures that they create. Having returned to the combat disguised as the "Knight of the Tomb" and bearing a banner that reads "no way to be rid from death, but by death" (III.526), Parthenia poses no match for Amphialus, though her intentions all along are suicidal. But unlike Amphialus's suicide attempt, which exposes the pathology of his internal wounding, Parthenia's wounds shine brightly, their beauty indicative of her heroic stature:

> 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 roundy sweetly swelling lips a little trembling, as though they kissed their neighbour 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 lustre to the other; with the sweet countenance, God knows, full of an unaffected languishing.
>
> (III.528)

This passage has the force of a Petrarchan blazon, a sacrificial dismembering of the beloved body, in which the spectator watches, tempting towards the edge of voyeurism. But it also begins to redefine the boundaries outlining the creation of heroism as Sidney has thus far defined it: as perceivable through the wound of the victim. Finally, though tragically, Sidney arrives at a vision of a wounded body whose blood and gore intensifies rather than diminishes its heroic beauty. It is an odd thought—that Parthenia's wound has made her "nothing short of perfection"—though the details of this vision certainly suggest the possibility. The delicate balance between reds and whites in the passage recall the reciprocal,

mutually ennobling nature of Argalus and Parthenia's relationship, as Parthenia's blood and her unwounded flesh combine to "give […] luster to the other." This enhanced reciprocity is visible in her countenance as well, upon which the white pallor of death contrasts the "rosiness" of Parthenia's natural vivacity, a vivacity that she cannot help but display at her death. She is, after all, "unaffected," her wounds neither physically disfiguring nor at odds with her spirit. Instead, and unprecedentedly, they mark the synthesis of erotic passion and heroic virtue that she embodied while living. In these terms, her wounded body counterbalances both the performative and the cupidinous desires that have made wounding so personally and politically threatening in Arcadia. She experiences, in other words, the brutality of man's avarice, only to find—if she had been made ugly before—that now her wounding reveals a beauty that transcends even death.

The elegant beauty of Parthenia's wounded body attempts to defuse the horror and the futility of the situation, as the "dainty" blood gathers upon her "alabaster" neck. Set in such artistic terms, Parthenia's beautiful death, we might be tempted to conclude, represents an attempt on Sidney's part to resurrect the ornament and spectacle of the early modern tournament or, at the very least, to acknowledge an inherent beauty in combat.[297] Neither interpretation, however, seems suitable to explain the unprecedented beauty of this vision, a beauty that Sidney himself understood as contingent on interpretation. For this reason, he concludes his description of Parthenia's wounded body with a defense:

> though these things to a grossly conceiving sense might seem disgraces, yet indeed were they but apparelling beauty in a new fashion which, all-looked-upon through the spectacles of pity, did even increase the lines of her natural fairness.
> (III.528)

[297] Richard McCoy has argued for both possibilities. See Richard McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 71–2.

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. Indeed, here the cruel marks of Parthenia's wounds might shock a "grossly conceiving sense," though to the discerning esthete, there is something beautiful, something novel, about Parthenia having died in this manner. This point needs to be explicit: that not everyone will be able to see Parthenia in this light. The passage's diction supports this esotericism, as Sidney almost certainly means to play off the double entendres with "grossly" (as unsophisticated and material) and "new" (as unique and unprecedented).[298] The point of view appealed to here, thus, is limited, on the one hand, by social class and, on the other, by personal and spiritual purity, a fact that Sidney emphasizes by giving no indication that Amphialus has been affected by Parthenia's beautiful pallor. For him, the tragedy has very little to do with her, but signifies again the error (albeit one he cannot discern) in pursuing erotic passion with a straightforwardly masculine sense of heroic action: "so Amphialus was astonished with grief […], and shame, detesting his fortune that made him unfortunate in victory" (III.528).

The semiotic codes of wounding that Parthenia's death transmogrifies, moreover, could be clarified further by comparing her death with Sidney's own. Indeed, the two are strikingly similar. Parthenia's wounding, like Sidney's, does not affect the course of events or heal the political body of Arcadia. It does not provide aid to the resistance or demoralize the rebels, nor is it even powerful to adjust the gross foulness of gangrenous, putrefying

[298] Both of these connotations were particularly in vogue in the early Renaissance. The *OED* lists the earliest usage of "gross" as "lacking the delicacy of perception" with William Bond (1526) and as "materially rather than spiritually" with John Calvin (1585).

wounds like the ones Amphialus himself incurs in his combat with Musidorus. The value of Parthenia's wounds, as figurative icons of heroic suffering, rather, is self-contained, available only to those who have both the moral wherewithal and the intellectual acumen to see it. This would have been precisely the value that Sidney would have desired for himself, if, as it proved to be, his knightly body became the victim of some very "unknightly wounds."

Parthenia's spilt blood is a wound on the Arcadian state, though its ability to function as a marker of her heroic love, as a reflection of Argalus's valor and bravery in combat and constancy and honesty in love, depends on her manipulation of her appearance, though this disfigurement—like the princes'—only adds to her ability to become part of Sidney's new heroic ideals. Her tortuous journey through Arcadia progresses from passive resistance to active revenge, a change that Sidney underscores by having her disguise herself as a male. The fact that she dies clothed as a male, for example, mirrors the symbolism of the delicate color palate that melds reds and whites across her beautiful, languishing face. In one sense, her masculine persona—as the Knight of the Tomb—foretells her destruction while simultaneously criticizing the bloodlust to which she will become the victim. But when her disguise finally has been broken, her blood-drenched pallor reveals her most authentic identification yet: as someone whose willingness to forego her reputation and her claims to her gender's ideals and to be wounded, even humiliated on behalf of her love revalues what a heroic, masculine spirit might be in Arcadia. The whole ordeal itself, in fact, set in the language of a Petrarchan love song, summons up a narrative in which suffering becomes desirable insofar as it is a sign of both virtue and power. Parthenia's death, in other words, is instantiating; it marks the only instance in the *New Arcadia* in which physical and metaphorical wounds combine in a manner that is without remedy yet not indicative of some deep corruption. Rather, the wounds that Parthenia sustains at Amphialus's hands signify

only the emphatic oneness outlined by her love for Argalus. When she does die, Sidney does not even allow the reader to witness the act; it happens somewhere in the past, as "her gentlewomen […] labour[] to staunch the remediless wounds," which are "able to divide the soul, but not the beauty from that body" (III.529). This is an unprecedented vision in the *New Arcadia*, a languishing, "remediless" body that does not discolor, not personally, socially, or politically. Unlike the wondrously bleeding body of Astrophel, or the grotesquely reopened wounds of Amphialus, Parthenia's wounds are incapable of being healed precisely because the desire that they expose is incorruptible and therefore at odds with the desires that animate the other characters of the *New Arcadia* into action.

Our reading of the *Liberata* ended with a question about the potency of erotic passion to oppose the sovereignty of reason, both intellectually and spiritually. For Sidney, like Tasso, the symbolically rich imagery of wounds was a fitting language for navigating this discussion, but his conception of the wounded body extended beyond Tasso's sacred eroticisms. On a more political level, the image of woundedness could be applied no less fervently to the wasted, disfigured body of the soldier or the tourneying knight. For Sidney, however, the image also could be utilized as a paradoxically optimistic metaphor with profoundly heroic implications. By offering characters like Argalus and Parthenia, for example, Sidney, I would argue, sought to open himself to the curative artistic possibilities of wounding, the capacity of the image to be transformed into a form suitable to its victim's desires. In a world, as we have seen, in which his biographical and literary identifications stood at cross points with one another, Sidney, in the early 1580s, must have been searching for a way to redesign the analogic relationship between wounding and the political or social value of the heroic body; his complex and vivid depictions of wounds as artistic constructs suggests one possible redesign.

We, of course, can never know the precise fate that Sidney was imagining for the wounded body, even if we can assert that, in sum, the *New Arcadia* valorizes the combination of heroic virtue and erotic love lost by the deaths of Argalus and Parthenia, perhaps, even, proleptically providing a defense against its own more darkened images of destruction and mutilation. Breaking off precisely at the moment in which such wounds begin to express themselves as active retaliations, Sidney's great prose-romance nevertheless challenges the possibly that wounds that are without cure are the embodiments of corrupt desires, especially those wounds that live inside the heart.

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CHAPTER FOUR

"HALFE DEAD, HALFE QUICK": LIMINAL WOUNDS IN EDMUND SPENSER'S 1590 *FAERIE QUEENE*

> In every landscape, the point of astonishment is the meeting of the sky and the earth.
> —Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

Like the epic-romances of Tasso and Sidney, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* ponders the intricate relationship between heroic virtue and erotic desire through images of the wounded body. But whereas Tasso and Sidney seem confident in the ability of the wounded subject to effect heroic reform, to valorize erotic weaknesses, and to set up a mutually constitutive relationship between bodily suffering and virtuous display, Spenser seems less optimistic. In Spenser's estimation, characters who lose control of their desires (like Amphialus and Tancred) or those whose desires demonize and corrupt (like Cecropia and Armida) are merely human, their negotiations with the prospect of interpreting and sustaining wounds indicative of a grand vision that acknowledges that the battle with strange and estranging desires marks a fundamental aspect of human experience. In fact, in Faerie Land, it is often impossible to distinguish between innocent and depraved desire, between blissful harmony and self-destructive ecstasy, between, as it were, the life-giving fecundity of Adonis's Garden and the life-draining sterility of Acrasia's Bower. And because, within the inscapes of Faerie Land's architectural spaces, Spenser's heroes and heroines never comprehend fully their own sexual impulses, their ability to explain the virtues of these passions hardly appears in the text with any clarity. Accordingly, the woundedness that Tasso and Sidney saw as forms of personal, spiritual, and political empowerment gives way, in Spenser's fantastic imagination, to more amorphous images of abjection. By exploring the possibility, however, that one's engagements with wounds could complicate personal

motives and obscure the relationship between external action and internal desire, Spenser tests the limits of epic-romance paradigms, like Tasso's and Sidney's, that conflate the martial with the erotic, the spiritual with the carnal, in efforts to exonerate the metaphysical body from its suspicious physicality.

In the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, the elusiveness of virtuous action wed incorruptibly to erotic passion is closely tied to a wound's liminality: its representation in the text on the threshold of the body, at once in between inner and outer realities, both initiating and concluding quests and providing literal and metaphorical obstacles that must be traversed, penetrated, or avoided. Following Lucretius—who famously defined the wound as both a literal and a figurative point of exchange—Spenser projects wounds in *The Faerie Queene* as icons of hermeneutic dilemmas, icons whose outward significations do not so much, as in Tasso and Sidney, delineate inward selves as they highlight the "ticle […] termes of mortall state" (III.iv.28), the inherent confusion or confusability of both the significance and the fate of wounded bodies.[299] As Angus Fletcher has argued, a poetics of liminality helped early modern writers respond to these hermeneutic problems of mortality by offering them a way to "control […] the passingness of things," specifically by "never [losing] the desire to form moving constancy into aesthetic shapes."[300] Like Tasso and Sidney, Spenser

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[299] See Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, Book Four, 1048–51: "*idque petit corpus, mens unde est saucia amore. / namque omnes plerumque cadunt in vulnus et illam / emicat in partem sanguis, unde icimur ictu, / et si comminus est, hostem ruber occupat umor*" [And the body seeks that object, when the mind is pierced by love, for now each man falls toward his wound, and our blood spurts out in the direction from whence we are struck by the blow, and if the enemy is nearby, the red jet reaches him].

[300] Angus Fletcher, *Colors of the Mind: Conjectures on Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 65. Though Fletcher does not refer specifically to Spenser here, he continues with an observation that seems distinctly Spenserian: "Shakespeare's contemporaries studied the liminal conditions of living and perception. Their fixations were stages of controlled passage. The movement of living had to be a crossing, through phases of never-ending initiations" (67). Versions of this comment have influenced Fletcher's writings on allegory in *The Faerie Queene*. See, for example, *The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on*

offers the wound as a version of this model for "moving constancy," but his reliance on the threshold (of poetry, of thought, of being) to control mutability never quite creates the stability that readers, for ages, have desired. In Faerie Land, perhaps as in life, a wound rather marks a point of transitional perpetuity, a brief moment of pause within a larger movement toward romantic discovery and transformation. In this context, as with almost all wounded bodies we have thus far encountered, stasis is merely the perception of inertia, the liminal experience itself "the moment of prophetic vision in which [one] sees life from the joint perspective of passing and immutability."[301] For Tasso and Sidney, wounding certainly embodied this dichotomous essence, offering aesthetic visions in which erotic passion and heroic virtue were able to be combined; but in the paradigmatic examples of those combinations—in Clorinda's repentant but mutilated body, for example, or in Parthenia's inexplicably vibrant pallor—the "prophetic vision" on display was only relevant as a corrective to what Sidney termed the "gross […] conceiving sense" (*New Arcadia*, III.528) in which wounded bodies are seen and assessed negatively. In *The Faerie Queene*, by contrast, a text whose irruptions are always part and parcel to its immense flux, wounding is not just a dichotomous essence but also a process, a movement, a valuation of both physical matter and the transitions created when that matter is fractured.

Because of its lack of definition, the liminal (traditionally, an area between culturally invested categories) has been considered a place of great power, as "the nay to all positive structural assertions, but in some sense the source of them all […], as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise."[302] In the *New*

Spenser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 131, and "The Cantos of Mutability and the Spenserian Myth of Complexity," *Literary Imaginations* 6 (2004): 1–22, at 10.

[301] Fletcher, *Colors of the Mind*, 124.

[302] Victor Turner, *Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 97.

Arcadia, in fact, especially in the multi-gendered, love-wounded Pyrocles, this anomalous space of characterization comprised part of Sidney's exploration of the link between erotic passion and heroic virtue. But such anomalies are more ubiquitous in Faerie Land, as almost all examples of stasis in Spenser's epic-romance involve a certain motion, many of them, as we will see, in an endless transition as a result of their wounding. Rather than as icons of power, liminal bodies are defined in *The Faerie Queene* more as challenges to codified norms of virtue, whose own desires, and whose representations of those desires on their wounded bodies, break and re-form their self-imaginings, eliding distinctions between good and evil and relying on their indeterminacy as the central tenet of their meaning. Thus, in Victor Turner's still-seminal formulation,

> Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.[303]

It ought to be obvious by now that wounded bodies might easily have been included in this list, their inherently "ambiguous and indeterminate attributes" the most salient feature of their presence in early modern epic-romance. For Spenser, his characters' engagements with the "indeterminate attributes" of physical disfiguration—engagements that thrust them into both psychological and, often, literal states of otherness—are constitutive with his reluctance to accept that aesthetic representation can render suffering as politically, socially, or even personally empowering. To be wounded in Faerie Land, rather, is to be in transition, often, as we will see, to be between probity and depravity, incontinence and temperance, chaste love and erotic excess, life and death, to be, as it were, like the poem

[303] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 95.

itself, "thrusteth into the middest, […] and there recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and diuining of thinges to come."[304] As a work that seeks to effect a *translatio*, a historical rite of transition, *The Faerie Queene* does indeed present wounding as a condition of heroic passage (from one social, sexual, religious, or psychological status to another), though its blurring of fixed categories and identities is not the palatable redesign of a gendered heroic paradigm as in Sidney or the interlacing of erotic desire and sacred redemption as in Tasso. *The Faerie Queene*'s fashioning of sexual desire as a necessary component of chastity—what the speaker of the poem calls "[t]he fayrest vertue, far aboue the rest" (III.Proem.1)—as one indicative example, rather seems to try to register the density, the ambiguities, and the paradoxes inherent in its representation of that virtue. What emerges from these ambiguous and paradoxical treatments of virtue is the suggestion that erotic passion and heroic action are not opposites that need fantastic, aesthetic visions to conflate them but instead are categories on a continuum bookended by sanctification and depravity, holiness and inconstancy. By investing its exploration of this continuum in the figure of the wound, however, *The Faerie Queene*, I will argue, derives its own theory about how the interrelationship between personal agony, erotic affect, and heroic virtue can manifest a potential for personal empowerment and intellectual growth.

In particular, the 1590 *Faerie Queene* examines the proposition that physical and psychological confusion—which often is the result of psychosexual pains—is the most reliable index of inner worth. As questing toward an understanding of sexual action as virtuous rather than simply as opposed to the vices that its mismanagement produces, Britomart is a perfect case study for this index, and the *limens* that her engagements with erotic wounds produce, I think, can provide a locus around which to juxtapose (and begin to

[304] From Spenser's Letter to Raleigh. See Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 716.

judge) the other instances in Spenser's epic-romance in which physical and psychological confusion is paired with bodily fracture and erotic desire. In purely reductive terms, for example, Britomart encounters wounded bodies and sustains wounds of her own in an effort to learn that her virtue has relevance only when she is able to comprehend it as being both physical and intellectual (or spiritual). But her paradigmatic representation of the power of the threshold is also bound up in her ontology. Both nubile and knightly, woman disguised as man, Britomart is the one character in the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* who approximates the combination of innate morality and depth of intellectual thought—what Lauren Silberman has termed her "learned ignorance"—that could be said to typify heroic action in Faerie Land.[305] Part of her inherent power, part of what has made her such a complex object of cultural and gender criticisms, I would like to argue, arises from Spenser's treatment of the wounds that she gives, receives, and experiences deep within her "bowells" (III.ii.39) as rites of passage.[306]

This is most obvious in her two physical wounds, wounds that, despite being slight, act upon Britomart in a manner very near to her love for Artegall: as uncontrollable assaults on her independence and integrity, as challenges to the mandatory reining of her personal impulses with a moral self-consciousness.[307] We could say also that these violations challenge her to accept her own hybridity, her capacity to receive and to give, a point that is

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[305] Lauren Silberman, *Transforming Desire: Erotic Knowledge in Books III and IV of "The Faerie Queene"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 21.

[306] Britomart's liminality generally has been considered in terms of her armor. See Judith Anderson, *Translating Investments: Metaphor and the Dynamic of Cultural Change* (New York: Fordham Press, 2005), 112–128; James Nohrnberg, *The Analogy of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 455–57; and Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New York: Norton, 1968), 91–2.

[307] Britomart is wounded twice in Book Three by perversions of erotic affect (Gardante and Busyrane). On how these two wounds adumbrate the pathology of her love for Artegall, see Mihoko Suzuki, *Metamorphoses of Helen: Authority, Difference, and the Epic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 157–9.

more obviously enforced by the telos of her quest. Indeed, the search for Artegall is merely an interstice, as Merlin explains, a transition from one type of wound to another:

> Long time ye both in armes shall beare great sway,
> Till thy wombes burden thee from them do call,
> And his last fate him from thee take away,
> Too rathe cut off by practise criminall,
> Of secrete foes, that him shall make in mischiefe fall.
> (III.iii.28)

Artegall's death, however, is not Britomart's terminus but simply the point in the future in which all of her wounds will be aligned. Britomart, even, seems to know this subconsciously, when, in the preceding canto, The Red Crosse Knight praises her prospective husband:

> The royall Maid woxe inly wondrous glad,
> To heare her Loue so highly magnifyde,
> And ioyd that euer she affixed had,
> Her hart on knight so goodly glorifyde,
> How euer finely she it faind to hyde:
> The louing mother, that nine monethes did beare,
> *In the deare closett of her painefull syde*,
> Her tender babe, it seeing safe appeare,
> Doth not so much reioyce, as she reioyced theare.
> (III.ii.11, my emphasis)

There is a kind of seriocomic tenor built into this analogy, made all the more so when considered in terms of Merlin's prophesy. The image of childbirth, for example, functions here as a way to emphasize the transitional and painful aspects of eros, its repetitive processing of the human psyche.[308] But too excited by the prospect of Artegall, Britomart is unable to recognize the elision that her comparison effects, its dramatic streamlining of her quest as beginning and ending in the "deare closett of her painefull syde." Her future pregnancy, which is the final sign that her wounds are integral to her heroic conquest, rather,

[308] As with Sidney's "great with child to speak" (*Astrophil and Stella*, 1), the image of pregnancy as that which has been cloistered inside further elides Britomart's two wounds: her womb and her love for Artegall. See Sidney, *The Major Works*, 153.

is evidence that "[t]he hard beginne" (III.iii.21) that Merlin admonishes her from fearing is a far wider obstacle than the flames that surround Busyrane's home.[309] The more difficult challenge that faces the Knight of Chastity is learning to accept what she witnesses once inside the House of Busyrane: that her virtue is wedded to pain and that erotic pursuits quest uncontrollably toward destruction and death. As the heroine of chastity, Britomart is burdened with having to transform these terminals into points of reconstitution, to learn how to be, in other words, not "too bold" as to assume that the primacy of her intellect or the "eternall prouidence" (III.iii.24) that first birthed her passion will protect her from the "consuming paine" (III.xii.21) of her future. The poem does not show us this moment. But it does not have to. By transforming the "armes" and wounds of her knight errantry into the "wombes" of her maternity, *The Faerie Queene* nonetheless demonstrates how important acknowledging the equation of desire and violence is to obtaining a future that might preclude it.

From her threshold characterization, then, Britomart incurs both physical and erotic wounds as challenges to her intuitive perceptions, not simply her innate belief in her chastity but also her conviction that physical violence, if it is properly ordained and directed, can protect that virtue.[310] The physiological pain set upon her by her "fantastick sight" (III.ii.29) of Artegall—what Glauce calls the "Monster of [Britomart's] minde" (III.ii.40)—is particularly potent in disabusing the Knight of Chastity from thinking about wounds as material insurances of self-protection and autonomy (as, perhaps, Guyon perceives them).

[309] Following Hamilton, the phrase "[t]he hard beginne" has generally been read as a reference to the flames that encircle Busryane's home (III.xi.22). For Hamilton's gloss, see Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 314.

[310] The elision of her wound and "womb" could thus be said to represent a divine admonishment of her election to be "trained vp in warlike stowre, / To tossen speare and shield, and to affrap / The warlike ryder to his most mishap" (III.ii.6), an election, significantly, that originally derived from Britomart's disdain for "Ladies [who] wont, in pleasures wanton lap, / To finger the fine needle and nyce thread" (III.ii.6).

Her "loue-sicke hart" (III.ii.48) has been interpreted as a proactive exercise with the physical pains that maternity will level against her body, but it might more fundamentally be said to represent her coming into knowledge that a wound, especially an internal wound, sets the body in a state between.[311] Spenser certainly suggests as much with his description of Britomart's melancholic psyche:

> A thousand thoughts she fashiond in her mind,
> And in her feigning fancie did pourtray
> [Artegall as] such, as fittest she for loue could find,
> Wise, warlike, personable, courteous, and kind.
>
> With such selfe-pleasing thoughts her wound she fedd,
> And thought so to beguile her grieuous smart;
> But so her smart was much more grieuous bredd,
> And the deepe wound more deep engord her hart,
> That nought but death her dolour mote depart.
> (III.iv.5-6)

To resist this infection and suspend the interminable movement from fantasy and anguish, to determine, in other words, how to translate her "deepe wound" into the "wombe[]" of her future, Britomart must succeed in learning that her physical pain is indistinguishable from her passion, a point as true within her body as without.

The liminal arc of Britomart's narrative offers what I think is the briefest and the clearest of commentaries that Spenser puts forward on the ways in which wounds can become revelatory in *The Faerie Queene*, and I have considered it here in the introduction of this chapter (in lieu of longer reading later) because it models the process of learning that the poem's other wounded lovers, in their subordinations to psychic and physical calamity, can only approximate. Indeed, Britomart's "grieuous smart" seems only a slight malady when compared to the degree of abjection and mutilation of an Amavia or a Timias, and the virtue

[311] See Susanne Wofford, "Gendering Allegory: Spenser's Bold Reader and the Emergence of Character in *The Faerie Queene III*," *Criticism* 30 (1988): 1–21, at 9; and Wells, *The Secret Wound*, 334, n.20.

of the Knight of Chastity is often clarified by her juxtaposition to these more self-destructive lovers. The multiplicity, however, of erotic unions that are disturbing in the 1590 *Faerie Queene* suggests Spenser's own fascination with creating analogic relationships between eros and anguish that stress their liminality, their capacity to challenge and reconstruct Spenser's own (hyperbolic and hopeful) suggestion that erotic love is the "roote" "of honor and all vertue" (IV.Proem.2). Considered in terms both of Britomart's hybridity and the liminality of her narrative, then, this chapter examines whether these other representations of erotic woundedness could be considered as similarly liminal, as revelatory moments of learning and consciousness, as threshold experiences that allow characters (and readers) simultaneous participation in the psychic and the physical, the imaginative and the real, the past and the present, or the present and the future.

The synthesis of dichotomous terms, which Britomart herself never quite seems to draw conscious power from, is elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene* a secondary result of a character's internalization of the ambiguities of pain as being constitutive to his or her intellectual, moral, and spiritual edification. Certainly this is true in the epistemological Legend of Holiness, a book in which The Red Crosse Knight's comprehension of faith requires both an intellectual and a physical readiness to experience Christ's pain, even when the reasons for such physical torment are incomprehensible.[312] In the Books of Temperance and Chastity, by contrast, the intersection between intelligence, morality, and the body's desires for sexual union exacerbates the dangers associated with a weak conscience. As such, the potential for a wound to assimilate alterity into the fabric of a character's constitution is that much greater and that much more disruptive. By using the wound, however, as the

[312] For example, what is written in Fidelia's book—"A booke that was both signd and seald with blood, / Wherin darke things were writt, hard to be vnderstood" (I.x.13)—The Red Crosse Knight can comprehend only by first spilling his own blood.

impetus for this engagement with the *limen*—the stimulus that, as we have seen, forces unlike any other an individual to determine the dimensions of their selves—Spenser leaves open the possibility that an experience with physical or mental mutilation could expand and, like Britomart's narrative, redefine the boundaries of human cognition.

Wounds, therefore, in *The Faerie Queene,* are more naturally detailed than they are in either the *Liberata* or the *New Arcadia*, texts that we might broadly say valorized and emboldened the wounded body even when it came at the expense of the common sense boundaries of human reason. Rather, and because a wound had already been defined (generically, culturally) as dichotomous because of its combination of traits (erotic and heroic, physical and psychological) from categories on either side of a binary opposition, Spenser prizes its ambiguity as a source of both resolution and conflict, a double state that forces readers to determine to what degree (and to what ends) marginality and ambiguity are endemic to the quest for pure, heroic affection. Indeed, virtue must be encouraged by consciousness, and consciousness must be thrust to the boundary in order to be complete.[313] As peripheral images belying their symbolic centrality, then, the wounds of Spenser's 1590 *Faerie Queene* provide us with perhaps their most natural function: as mechanisms by which humans become conscious of themselves, their boundaries, their dichotomies, and, finally, their mortality, and as conduits that simultaneously gesture beyond these reference points toward the unqualified mysteries and sublime revelations of "[t]he ticle […] termes of mortall state."

[313] On the association between boundaries and genius, or liminality and the sublime, see Eric Wilson, *Against Happiness: In Praise of Melancholy* (New York: Sarah Crichton, 2008), 69–108, esp. 74. Variations of this association can also be found in Fletcher, *Colors of the Mind*, 166–8, and Harold Bloom, *The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 19.

My argument will proceed by readings of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*'s most inscrutably wounded characters: Amavia, Marinell, Timias, Amoret, and, of course, Venus and Adonis. In each of these instances, a wound functions as a liminal entity, not simply as an imbrication of psychic and physical states but also as an occasion for an individual to engage with a heightened perception of truth. In this way, I argue, attentiveness to a wound's liminality can help us reconsider why many of *The Faerie Queene*'s most influential critics have interpreted the presence of a wound as a blight on the body, or, as Timias remarks about his own wound, as sin.[314] For Amavia, I suggest that her destructive passion functions as a foil to the prohibitive stoicism and discursive reasoning of Guyon and as such constitutes a preliminary exploration in *The Faerie Queene* of how physical pain can mediate and empower rather than obstruct the development of mental acuity. For Marinell and Timias, I consider how the arc of their narratives creates psychological allegories for the difficulties in interpreting the meaning of wounds (especially wounds that are simultaneously literal and figurative) and subsequently argue that their negotiations with these experiences function as rituals designed to reconstruct their perceptions of reality. Busyrane's torture of Amoret is *The Faerie Queene*'s, and perhaps Western literature's, most disturbing episode of wounding, and I explore how an attentiveness to its multiple liminal features (Amoret's extracted heart, for example) can help explain the ambiguities inherent in Spenser's representation of her chastity as being indistinguishable from her vice: her fear of its violation. Finally, I consider how the woundlessness of Adonis's body in the Garden of Adonis provides both a foil and a corrective to Amoret's suffering and argue that the Garden's displacement of the wound from its terminal position on the body subordinates even the most damaging of injuries into its "realm[s] of pure possibility."

[314] See III.v.35.

"INWARD PAINE": AMAVIA, GUYON, AND THE INTER-SUBJECTIVITY OF WOUNDING

The Legend of Temperance explores the liminal intersections between the heart and the body that are the result of erotic passion, but on different terms than we have previously encountered in this thesis. Elsewhere, virtue is a by-product of innate, unspoken processes (as the ever-virtuous Elizabeth is in the *Amoretti*, or Una is in the Legend of Holiness). But in Book Two of *The Faerie Queene*, virtue is undeniably bound up with the physical matter of one's body. As Michael Schoenfeldt has argued, the Legend of Temperance "creates an intimate link between ethics and aesthetics, between the individual's capacity to order a physiological self and the inner and outer beauty of that self."[315] Wounds, which as we know are frequently the site of aestheticization in epic-romance, play an important role in this linking, though their immediately discernable negativity has often had the effect of rendering conversations about them static and predictable. Indeed, Book Two's opening episode—Guyon's meeting with the wounded Amavia—is one such episode that has struggled to escape from its original interpretation: as an allegory demonstrating the importance of an insistently Christian type of temperance.

According to Alastair Fowler, for example, Amavia's husband, Mortdant, represents man's constitutionally sinful "flesh [that] doth frayltie breed" (II.i.52), while his wife, who commits suicide as a result of her failure to save him, is the "inner man."[316] Neatly dichotomized into a Christian schema, such an interpretation surely feels at home among the Book of Temperance's other polar visions. Mortdant is all flesh and, though dead, still beautiful: "Now in his freshest flowre of lusty hed, / Fitt to inflame faire Lady with loues

[315] Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves*, 41.
[316] Alastair Fowler, "The Image of Mortality: *The Faerie Queene*, II.i-ii," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1961): 99–110, at 104. For similar positions, see A. C. Hamilton, "A Theological Reading of *The Faerie Queene,* Book II," *English Literary History* 25 (1958): 155–62, esp. 156, and Harold Weatherby, "Two Images of Mortalitie: Spenser and Original Sin," *Studies in Philology* 85, no. 3 (1988): 321–52.

rage" (II.i.41). Amavia is all soul, emotion, and intuition, a point, I will argue, that her wounding stands to invalidate. By depicting, in other words, in detail the consequence of Amavia's intemperate response to Mortdant's death as a wound, Spenser suggests that her body functions more dynamically than as an allegorical imprint for moral and spiritual sententia. As an image qualified elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene* as one of movement and synthesis (between life and death, between creating and destroying, between the body and the soul), the wound transitions between the "inner man" and the "flesh [that] doth frayltie breed," externalizing a consciousness struggling to apprehend the median between flesh and passion that Spenser's Legend of Temperance, in the end, fails to qualify.

Amavia's suicide is ripe with these interstitial registers. Like the speaker of the *Amoretti*, who languishes in a "double malady" that renders his "harts wound" indistinguishable from his "bodies griefe," Amavia finds that her experience with erotic passion has suspended her in a place between;[317] it has pushed her to the boundary of her faithfulness and forced her, as we learn in stanza fifty-three, to make an impossible choice: "So deare thee babe I bought, / Yet nought too dear I deemd, while so my deare [Mortdant] I sought" (II.i.53). Her decision to undertake the risky search for Mortdant might be inexcusable and intemperate but it is also part of the fabric of her being. We can decode, for example, the cryptic but eponymous reference to Amavia in Acrasia's spell—"*her that loues to liue*" (II.i.55)—as "her that loves passionately in order to live." And while ontology does not exonerate, it may certainly help clarify Amavia's shamelessness, offering a foil to Guyon's pursuit of self-control as a means to legitimate desire. In the opening canto, legitimate desire is excessive (if also destructive) and purposefully designed so in order to identify the

[317] *Amoretti* 50, in Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems*, 630.

powerful, indistinguishable imbrication of psychology and physiology that passion, especially erotic passion, produces.

The link between Amavia's "inner man" and her outward appearance, then, is hardly as dichotomous, or as neatly interpretable, as a focus on her purely incontinent passion would suggest. In fact, what emerges when we step back from focusing on Amavia's allegorical embodiment of incontinent erotic excess is a number of details about her wounding that suggest the opposite. None of these details stand to oppose her culpability, but all of them suggest the possibility that erotic passion need not be so forcefully excised from the discussion of temperance. Instead, and acting as the conceptual subject matter for the entirety of the Legend of Temperance, Amavia's wounding effects a physical and mental crossover that momentarily offers her clarity. In the moment of her pain, her perspective is unconfined, not the singular, prohibitive prudence of the Palmer or the stoic anti-eroticism of Guyon. Rather, her wounding offers her a nearly sub*liminal* conscience that transitions her beyond the somatic borders of temperance, subtly though importantly exposing the deficiencies of the intrinsically paradoxical ethic system that condemns her faults.

We are first, however, made to experience the event in all its inexplicable horror, when Guyon pursues a "rueful voice" into the wood only to find the body of Amavia,

> halfe dead, halfe quick,
> In whose white alabaster brest did stick
> A cruell knife, that made a griesly wownd,
> From which forth gusht a stream of goreblood thick,
> That all her goodly garments staind arownd,
> And into a deepe sanguine dide the grassy grownd.
> (II.i.39)

Elsewhere in *The Faerie Queene*, this is a debilitating experience, as one expects physical anguish to be. But Amavia's interstitial state rewrites the failings that categorized the weakness and immobility of Book One's wounded protagonists: The Red Crosse Knight and

Fradubio.[318] As brought upon her by her own hand, Amavia's wound, of course, is distinct in kind from The Red Crosse Knight's and Fradubio's, though the distinction is germane. Where doubt and mistrust enfeeble and wound in Book One, trust and fidelity are the causes of Amavia's wounding in Book Two. And rather than misinterpretation—both The Red Crosse Knight's and Fradubio's susceptibility to Duessa's deception leds them into "[t]h'eternall bale of heauie wounded harts"—Amavia clearly sees the mistakes of her lover and inexorably follows him in his plight, a resoluteness that seems mirrored in her perfectly rhythmic death plea: "Come then, come soone, come sweetest death to me" (II.i.36). Rather unlike her male counterparts, Amavia's indulgence here is distinctly noncorporeal, which is to say that, in Spenser's estimation, her intemperance is a function of the degree of her grief. By actualizing the physical terms of this grief, however, Amavia removes herself from the purely sexual realm of bodily affect whose destruction Stephen Greenblatt has labeled the preeminent definition of Spenser's primordial promise in writing *The Faerie Queene*: "to fashion of gentleman."[319] As such, and as the victim of an affective experience for which the Bower of Bliss has only an oblique relationship and that *The Faerie Queene* by and large struggles to define, she deserves to be judged on other terms.

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[318] The comparison between Amavia, Fradubio, and The Red Crosse Knight was first made by A. C. Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory in "The Faerie Queene"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 94.

[319] In perhaps Book Two's most paradigmatic reading, "To Fashion a Gentleman: Spenser and the Destruction of the Bower of Bliss," Stephen Greenblatt argues that Spenser's Bower is symptomatic of a damaging pathological repression of the erotic at the core of Western culture. Its destruction, which functions, Greenblatt tells us, in collusion with Spenser's defense of colonial suppression, highlights Spenserian self-fashioning by debasing personal desire and artistic affect to a social and political ideology whose ruthlessness is so undeniably seductive that is beyond investigation and criticism. Greenblatt does not consider Book Two's opening cantos, however, and thus, in my opinion, fails to differentiate between the book's more vexed representations of intemperance (like Amavia's) and his own presuppositions about the pathologies that accompany erotic excess. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 157–92.

It is to these other terms, in fact, that Guyon reaches when he puts his faith in Amavia's lucidity and encourages her to "tell the secrete of [her] mortall smart," to bear witness to her consuming pain and translate its irrationality into a narrative of "present helpe" (II.i.46). Not only can Amavia oblige, but also her perceptions of this sickness are so acute that she instantly divines Mortdant's error (which is also the error of The Red Crosse Knight and Fradubio) and calmly balances herself in relation to it:

> Heare then, [Guyon], the sorrowes that vneath
> My tong can tell, so far all sence they pas:
> Loe this dead corpse, that lies here vnderneath,
> The gentlest knight, that euer on greene gras
> Gay steed with spurs did pricke, the good Sir *Mortdant* was.
>
> Was, (ay the while, that he is not so now)
> My Lord my loue; my deare Lord, my deare loue
> (II.i.49-50)

The parenthetical phrase "he is not so now," which grammatically qualifies Mortdant both as "[t]he gentlest knight" and as Amavia's "lord" and "loue," explains the dynamism of Amavia's enhanced perception, a perception that, as a cause of her wounding, allows her to think beyond the constrained terms of equating bodily intemperance with excessive emotion. It is Mortdant rather than Amavia, for example, whose capitulation to erotic desire destroys both body and self, both vocation and passion, though it is Amavia who is able to categorize erotic passion as affecting each, a fact that causes her own wounding to function in nearly the same manner as The Red Crosse Knight's penitential mortification in the House of Holiness. But where The Red Crosse Knight learns to transmute his doubts and resignations into the techniques of faith and thereby to suppress the bodily desires that first led him to the "anguish of his sinnes" (I.x.21), Amavia stands for the proposition that mortification is only part of the equation that will save the self from despair. In fact, and significantly, the virtues that Medieval and Renaissance Christian allegories often associated

with temperance—purity, chastity, sobriety, self-denial—are all not just retained but also enforced by Amavia's self-immolation, and yet even this mortification cannot outlast the pangs of her despair.[320] In reductive terms, what she lacks and what The Red Crosse Knight is privy to is grace, the assistance of a host of allegorized helpers whose "salues and med'cines" restore both body and soul (I.x.24). But without this aid, and with only the hands of Guyon to bind her wounds and elicit words from her mouth, Amavia ascends to *Contemplation*'s doorstep not through the allegorized architecture of the House of Holiness but by spilling her own blood and thus consolidating her own agency as a corrective to future excess. Though it precedes it in the poetry, her address to Ruddymane, and her commission for him to "[l]iue […] and to thy mother dead attest, / That cleare she dide from blemish criminall" (II.i.37), constitutes her telling "the secret of [her] mortall smart," for, by translating her anguish into a narrative that her son can live out, Amavia directs the episode's representations of intemperance beyond her own emotional excess. "[T]he secret of [her] mortall smart," in other words, is her fantastic testament to the fact that suppressing erotic desire, or any desire, cannot save the soul from intemperance.

The episode, then, calls for another level of contextualization, primarily because the intemperance that Amavia demonstrates is not comparable to that of Book Two's other antagonists—the brothers Pyrochles and Cymochles, Mammon, Maleger, and Acrasia—and, moreover, because it has the curious effect of making Guyon act in a way that contradicts his critical reception. Like Amavia herself, who has never quite been freed in scholarship from her placement as the mother of "bloodguiltinesse" (II.ii.4), Guyon has struggled to be

[320] On the dynamics of temperance in both Medieval and Renaissance culture, see Helen North, "Temperance (*Sophrosyne*) and the Canon of the Cardinal Virtues," in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, ed. Philip Wiener (New York: Scribner, 1973), 365–78, at 370.

treated more dynamically than the terms first laid out for him by Harry Berger, as a morally superior, somewhat apathetic autocrat.[321] Many other readers have followed suit, praising Guyon's "rigour pittilesse" (II.xii.83) and resolute quest towards a "just moral order," labeling the knight an icon "of excellence that all good men can stand by."[322] Even those critics who have been more chary with Guyon's supremacy insist that we treat him with reverence in order to avoid becoming like the book's hermeneuts ourselves, too "blunt or bace" (II.Proem.4).[323] In all of these approaches, however, Guyon's confrontation with Amavia, if it is even addressed, enforces his "[r]oman, stoical anti-eroticism" by acquainting him with the "congenital frailty of flesh."[324] Indeed, the episode stages erotic excess as both an inborn and a chronic disease, but the "secret filth" that indelibly stains Ruddymane's hands extends no farther than the "great contagion" produced by Acrasia's charm (II.ii.4) and thus has very little to do with Guyon's own constitution, or Amavia's for that matter. As participants in the complex transaction between witness and wounded, Guyon and Amavia are rather representative of a non-erotic emotionality, one whose relationship to erotic intemperance—or intemperance in general—the scene both suggests and denies.

Faced with the blood-drenched body of Amavia, for example, and a vision of her son playing out his "cruell sport" (II.i.40) in a pool of her blood, Guyon finds that his

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[321] Harry Berger Jr., *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's "Faerie Queene"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 1–37.
[322] The quotations are from Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory*, 96, and Paul Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 256. To these could be added Maurice Evans, "The Fall of Guyon," in *Spenser: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Harry Berger (Englewood Cliffs: PrenticeHall, 1968), 88–96; Bart van Es, *Spenser's Forms of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21–48; and Teskey, *Allegory and Violence*, 22–3.
[323] As one example, see Lauren Silberman, "*The Faerie Queene*, Book II and the Limitations of Temperance," *Modern Language Studies* 17, no. 4 (1987): 9–22; see also Syrithe Pugh on the "cognitive deficienc[ies]" of Guyon's stoicism. Syrithe Pugh, *Spenser and Ovid* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 77–118, at 77.
[324] Pugh, *Spenser and Ovid*, 161, and Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves*, 44, respectively.

insensibilities go only so far. And though the experience leads directly to *The Faerie Queene*'s most univocal representation of heroic action, the destruction of the Bower of Bliss, it does not at first enhance Guyon's understanding of the *media via*; rather, his decision to pursue Amavia's "ruefull voice" results in a display of the impulsive, excessive emotionality that we assume he ought to proscribe:

> His hart gan wexe as starke, as marble stone,
> And his fresh blood did frieze with fearefull cold,
> That all his sences seemd berefte attone:
> At last his mighty ghost gan deepe to grone,
> As Lion grudging in his great disdaine,
> Mournes inwardly, and makes to him selfe mone,
> Til ruth and fraile affection did constraine,
> His stout courage to stoupe, and shew his inward paine.
> (II.i.42)

Destruction, as we know, can be constructive, but here the nature of that construction is first made to bear the weight of a compassion that comes uncomfortably close to the effusive. The proximity is so close, in fact, that Spenser has Guyon genuinely take compassion to its etymological roots (L. *com-patior*, to suffer with), a reading supported by the verbal echoes between Guyon's reaction above and the description of Amavia's own wounding. Not only, for example, does the "marble stone" of Guyon's paralysis recall Amavia's "alabaster brest," but the "deepe […] grone" of his spirit, which the passage likens to a lion wakening into consciousness, replays and reverses the "grone so deepe and low" (II.i.38) of Amavia's dying breaths.[325] Perhaps the most striking feature of his reaction, however, is the remarkable air of harmony intimated in the stanza's fourth line: "That all his sences seemd berefte attone." Hamilton, for example, glosses "attone" as "together, at

[325] Kasey Evans notes these affinities and argues that they are intended to reveal Guyon as being "transported from his cognitive faculties" and thrust into "an affective stupor induced by experiences that exceed intellectual comprehension." In what follows, however, I argue that Guyon's "stupor" is in fact productive, a cerebral process that instinctively disabuses apathy and stoicism. See Kasey Evans, "How Temperance Becomes 'Blood Guiltie' in *The Faerie Queene*," *Studies in English Literature* 49 (2009): 35–66, at 45.

once," though this could be expanded to include "in agreement" or "in an act of reconciliation," definitions that both avail Guyon to Amavia's pain and proactively revise the singularity of his pitiless pursuit of the Bower's destruction. Whereas at that moment Guyon comes uncomfortably close to "embrac[ing]" the "secret pleasaunce" of "[h]is stubborne brest" (II.xii.65), his compassion for Amavia here suggests that some level of emotional excess is required, if only intellectually, in order to keep temperance from lapsing over into stoic asceticism.[326] His compassion, in other words, is part of his emotive balance, his desire to redress "[t]he bitter pangs, that doth [Amavia's] heart infest […] / That I may cast to compas your reliefe, / Or die with you in sorrow, and partake your griefe" (II.i.48).

We could categorize the emotion that Guyon experiences when he first views the mutilated body of Amavia as shock or fear, as the poetry suggests, but these are too static to express the emotions induced by a vision that "pas[ses]" "all sence" (II.i.49). His response to Amavia's wounding rather is one more akin to how Tasso and Sidney described their narrators' visions of Clorinda's and Parthenia's wounded, dying bodies: as marvels. Unlike those two, however, Amavia is not beautiful, not made beautiful by her mutilation, though her capacity to produce affect, in Spenser's estimation, is that much more potent.[327] Indeed, simply witnessing physical pain speaks into all of Guyon's senses, as the entire fabric of his psychic, somatic, and perceptual states of being are engaged and bent on approximating as nearly as possible Amavia's own "impatient smart." He is not just "attone[d]" of the insufficiencies of his own cognitive registers but effectively attuned to and transfixed by the extremity of Amavia's condition, experiencing her wounds as empathetically as possible and

[326] In making this argument, I join Pugh, *Spenser and Ovid*, 77–118, and David Mikics, *The Limits of Moralizing: Pathos and Subjectivity in Spenser and Milton* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994), 64–85, in their explorations of the emotional inadequacies of Guyon's stoicism.
[327] See Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 161–80, who suggests that if experiencing pain is eviscerating and, as she writes, "world-destroying," witnessing it can be essentially imaginative, a learning to envisage that which has not before been experienced.

thus extending his virtue beyond its rational (or prudential) limitations. If, as Michael Schoenfeldt has written, Spenser is "ambivalent" about "whether extremity in defense of a virtue is a vice," then certainly Guyon's excessive emotionality here functions as a parallel moment of that ambivalence, designed, much like his destruction of the Bower, to temper the intemperance of Amavia's passion.[328] That he effects this redressing of Amavia's anguish by having her translate her pain into narrative, and that he offers, in an effort to normalize the occasion, to "partake [in her] griefe," speaks volumes to the appropriative capacity of an event that seems distinctly non-appropriative.[329] The "present helpe" that Amavia offers, therefore, is not confined to her own therapeutic narrative; it is rather the ground work of a non-erotic affective engagement that underlines the moral insufficiencies of personal autocracy and the myopic desires that stand to legitimate its violent defense.

We can also sense the necessity of this cautious attitude toward self-sufficiency in the burial scene, when Guyon and the Palmer inter the corpses of Amavia and Mortdant, opening "[t]he great earthes wombe" (II.i.60) as they do so. I may add more weight to this than Spenser intends, though it seems significant, as with the verbal echoes between Guyon's reaction and Amavia's anguish, that the final image of this aggrieved character is one of liminality, as the "honorable toombe" (II.i.58) in which the two are buried transitions into the "earthes wombe" where they will "sleepe in euerlasting peace" (II.i.60). Kasey Evans has offered that this paradoxical pairing of "wombe" and "toombe" functions as an indicator that Guyon's susceptibility to paralyzing affect will return again in Book Two, namely in his discovery in Mammon's Cave that a rigorous, non-affective conception of

[328] Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves*, 44.
[329] See Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 166, on how witnessing another's pain can function as a "self-transforming objectification," as a moment in which an "acute bodily sensation [can be] experienced as something other than one's own body."

temperance can cause rather than prevent his suffering.[330] While this may be true (and certainly the repetition of "wombe," "wound," and "tombe" in successive lines at II.vii.17 suggests this possibility), my sense is that the rhyme functions more locally, as a revision of the insufficiencies of Amavia's maternal desires, her belief, as aforementioned, that Ruddymane is "[y]et nought too dear" (II.i.53). Earlier in the canto the rhyme would have indeed been far more morbid, a "pitifull spectacle" of the congenital nature of sin or, as it functions in Mammon's vocabulary in canto seven, as a testament to the ubiquity of avarice and cupidity as fundamental aspects of humanity. But appearing as it does at the episode's end, after Amavia's careful and steady explanations of her plight and after Guyon's compassionate rather than disapproving reaction, the rhyme seems to suggest a more hopeful outlook, not simply the recirculation of life into death but also the possibility that amid horrors "present helpe" might come as pain restores and enhances subjectivity and "[t]he ticle […] termes of mortall state" transition into narrative and testimony.

But these truths can hardly be sustained in the economic structure of Book Two. In fact, almost as immediately as the Legend of Temperance suggests these ambivalences as profitable probabilities, it begins to stage their undoing, in particular, in the woefully inadequate assessments that Guyon and the Palmer offer before the burial:

> Then turning to his Palmer said, Old syre
> Behold the ymage of mortalitie,
> And feeble nature cloth'd with fleshly tyre
> When raging passion with fierce tyranny
> Robs reason of her dew regalitie,
> And makes it seruaunt to her basest part:
> The strong it weakens with infirmitie,
> And with bold furie armes the weakest hart;
> The strong through pleasure soonest falles, the weake through smart.
>
> But temperaunce (said he) with golden squire
> Betwixt them both can measure out a meane,

[330] Evans, "How Temperance Becomes 'Blood Guiltie,'" 58.

Nether to melt in pleasures whott desyre,
Nor frye in hartlesse griefe and dolefull tene.
Thrise happy man, who fares them both atweene.
But sith this wretched woman ouercome
Of anguish, rather then of crime hath bene,
Reserue her cause to her eternall doome,
And in the meane vouchsafe her honorable toombe.
(II.i.57–8)

Guyon, as has been suggested, might simply be insisting on the burial in order to further distance himself from the affect.[331] But once again the passage offers us sufficient evidence to resist this reading, most notably by detailing polar responses, neither of which seems suitable to the task of describing the affair. While the Palmer argues for prudence, Aristotle, and God's judgment, Guyon argues for pity, fortune, and "seeing good" (II.i.56). Perhaps the inconsistencies here testify to how complex and visceral the process of equating affective engagement with temperate control can be, as neither the Palmer nor Guyon wants to appear too incontinent or too hermetic in their evaluations. Almost as a matter of course, in fact, they both agree on Amavia's innocence (II.ii.10), and, inexplicably, the Palmer does not protest when Guyon "cutt[s] a lock of all their heare" (II.i.61) in a symbolic gesture that further shortens the distance between Guyon's affective sympathies and Amavia's passion. And while the seeds of his disavowal with sympathy begin in these stanzas—as pity turns to confusion, confusion to anger, and anger to the disgust for the "secret filth" that cannot be washed from Ruddymane's hands—the swiftness of the transition and the flatness of the assessments feels unsatisfying, especially considering that the need for two interpretations amid a text that only in the rarest of occasions moralizes its own allegories ought to render each interpretation suspect. The discrepancy, in fact, reveals what finally is important about Guyon's interpretation: that he too has been affected by the unconscionable experience of

[331] Ibid, 47. Traditionally, however, Guyon's insistence is considered a consequence of his desire to suspend judgment to God alone.

witnessing wounds and is struggling with the difficulties associated with learning to translate that which is beyond cognition into a narrative of temperate control. If neither fortune nor ontology can explain how or why "raging passion with fierce tyranny / Robs reason of her dew regalitie," perhaps the error lies in the reductive vocabulary that has defined "reason" in this episode. Like the burial itself, which Hamilton glosses as being "too deeply felt to yield to reason," so too are the wounds that stain the bodies of lovers and the incomprehensible emotions that those wounds elicit from their witnesses.[332]

All this stands for the proposition that the primary moment of lucid analysis in the opening canto of the Legend of Temperance occurs when Amavia decrypts her own plight, rather than when the emotionally affected Guyon or the uncompromisingly prudent Palmer suggest its meaning. Their interpretations, which lay to blame "anguish," "weak […] hart[s]," and "infirmitie" for Amavia's irascible passion, overlook the important aspect of having the Knight of Temperance witness a love that admits no requisites. I think, in fact, that the qualifiers here are more redolent of the abstract "implacable fyre" and "deadly woundes" (II.vi.44, 50) that Furor ignites in the liver of Book Two's most irascible lover, Pyrochles, a character whom nature indeed "[r]eserue[s]" for "eternall doome." But thanks to Stephen Greenblatt, it is very difficult to read the Legend of Temperance in this way: as anything other than a literary witness to Spenser's obsession with self-controlled power. Guyon's quest, as I have shown, bears witness to other powers as well, as its conceptual impetus complicates its epic movement toward a stoic self-sufficiency. Deeper within the fabric of *The Faerie Queene*, as Helen Cooper has written, are fissures that thwart "the attempt to combine the romance drive toward perfectibility with […] the processes of history."[333] Certainly one of these fissures must be the capacity for absorption (a combination of wonder

[332] Spenser, *The Faerie Queene,* 169.
[333] Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, 8.

and horror) that attends wounded bodies, their threshold space and significations. It would be prudent, in fact, to remember why Guyon determines to destroy the Bower of Bliss in the first place: not because erotic desire is beyond maintenance, but because that which "droue" him "into great amaz'ment" (II.ii.3) cannot be explained.

Rather than wondering, then, in what ways Amavia becomes the progenitor of original sin in the Legend of Temperance, we may be able to pose a better question, and one more suitable to what Paul Suttie has called the "neither-here-nor-there status" of *The Faerie Queene*'s erotic-wounds: Is inexplicable affection sin or weakness?[334] Spenser seems to offer an answer later in Book Two, in what may be a conscious restructuring or explaining of Guyon's initial propensity for effusion. After his mining in the earth, for example, in which Guyon finds a Ruddymane-like Pontius Pilate attempting to wash his sinful hands (II.vii.61), the Knight of Temperance faints and is returned to the surface, where an angel attends to him until the Palmer reappears at his side. However, in the moment before prudence and its discursive "slow pace" (II.i.7) are restored, Spenser ponders the insufficiencies ingrained in Guyon's rational, economic thought:

> And is there care in heauen? and is there loue
> In heauenly spirits to these creatures bace,
> That may *compassion* of their euilles moue?
> There is: else much more wretched were the cace
> Of men then beasts. But O th'exceeding grace
> Of highest God, that loues his creatures so,

[334] Paul Suttie, *Self-Interpretation in "The Faerie Queene"* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 37. Though his comment is directed to the shiftiness of wounding that proliferates in Book Three, I find Suttie's argument that "such incidents [of erotic-wounding] are challenging to interpret allegorically because it is challenging even to be clear what is happening in them literally" perfectly suitable for Amavia's plight. Suttie concludes that we must "attend[] closely to the […] question of what really happens" (38) in order to comprehend *The Faerie Queene*'s allegories, though I would argue, here as elsewhere in this chapter and thesis, that the task is not to divide out the literal from the figurative or vice versa but to note why, in instances like Amavia's, an internal wound is indecipherable from an external wound: because, as in all the texts we have studied, the one seems unintelligible without the other.

And all his workes with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed Angels, he sends to and fro,
To serue to wicked man, to serue his wicked foe.

How oft do they, their siluer bowers leaue,
To come to succour vs, that succour want,
How oft do they with golden pineons, cleaue
The flitting skyes, like flying Pursuiuant,
Against fowle feendes to ayd vs militant?
They for vs fight, they watch and dewly ward,
And their bright Squadrons round about vs plant,
And all for loue, and nothing for reward:
O why should heuenly God to men haue such regard?
(II.viii.1-2, my emphasis)

This question has no answer, even in the logical vocabulary that has come to categorize the Knight of Temperance. But with their flattening of moral hierarchies—the "blessed Angels" serve both "wicked man" and "his wicked foe"—these stanzas demarcate the failings of a worldview that limits "compassion," "exceeding grace," "care," "succour," and "seru[ice]" in favor of personal autonomy and control. In such close proximity to Guyon's encounter with Pilate, a man doomed by misjudgment and a lack of sympathy, this metanarrative, indeed, corrects the strict definitions of Guyon's temperance, especially temperance that legitimates violence in its defense. But that corrective, Spenser suggests, is unavailable to the human who requires bodily as well as moral balance in order to be virtuous. And while Guyon's *katabasis* into Mammon's underworld does indeed testify to his ability to resist material desires, it nonetheless fashions his embodiment of his virtue as a commodity, sustained by its disavowal of passion and, curiously, of grace.

"To cross the threshold," wrote Arnold van Gennep, the French anthropologist who first popularized modern theorems of liminality, "is to unite oneself with a new world."[335] Indeed, the farther we travel from Book Two's originating episode, the more and more it

[335] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, ed. S. T. Kimball, trans. M. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 20.

begins to appear as another world, as an anomalous outburst of affection among a string of controlled, sustained, and patient actions, designed, as Kasey Evans has written, to liberate the heroic self from the "ethical burdens of inter-subjectivity."[336] In our reading of Book Two, we have no doubt slighted many moments of wounding that may seem impactful to *The Faerie Queene*'s larger ethical and moral designs, but neither in Arthur's battles with Maleger or the brothers Pyrochles and Cymochles nor in Guyon's Odysseus-like journey to the Bower's center do the heroes of Book Two confront anything like the "burdens of inter-subjectivity," especially as it relates to erotic desire. And while an aside, however rare, to the necessity of divine grace in the maintenance of human faculties does not recast Guyon's experience with Amavia as extraordinary or transcendent, it nonetheless reminds us that those moments of inter-subjectivity, moments in which we glimpse the human heart attempting to act "all for loue, and nothing for reward," are more necessary to the fabric of human interaction than sequential ordering, ratiocination, and deliberative process.

It is the outlines of this truth that permeate the narrative of Spenser's next chronicle, the Legend of Chastity, a book that seems to undo the promises made to human cognition by the rational standards and natural processes of Guyon's adventure. Far away from the epic, Aristotelian space of the Legend of Temperance and the "long wayes" (III.i.1) that it engendered, Britomart's adventure provides us with what C. S. Lewis called "the most watery part of *The Faerie Queene*," a statement that might, in addition to its topographical accuracy, also qualify the book's disdain for the material forces that threaten the integrity of Guyon's virtue.[337] Written under the auspices of providence and the designs of epic-romance, the Legend of Chastity—which is riddled with references to woundedness, both

[336] Evans, "How Temperance Becomes 'Blood Guiltie,'" 60.
[337] C. S. Lewis, *Spenser's Images of Life*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 126.

physical and metaphorical—rather reincorporates those aspects of heroic virtue (subjectivity, affect) in an effort to restore what was lost in Guyon's destruction of the Bower: namely, the possibility that sexual desire can act as mode of healing and regeneration, even if it is bent on destruction.

"Double Sences": Reading the Wounds of Marinell and Timias

As considered in the introduction to this chapter, the translation of Britomart's wounds to the "wombes" of her prospective future undoubtedly constitutes Book Three's fullest exploration of how erotic affect becomes salutary and regenerative. But her narrative occurs in light of Book Three's more complicated and disturbing episodes of erotic engagement and wounding, episodes that—like Guyon's confrontation with Amavia—dilate on the emotional states produced when erotic passion leads to physical fracture.
There is, however, no parallel representation of inter-subjectivity as such in the Legend of Chastity. Rather, the pattern of erotic engagement that the book follows is framed by the book's governing myth—the story of Venus and Adonis—and the inverse relationship that it creates between erotic passion and unrequitedness, a literal severing of the prospect of inter-subjectivity. Yet this design has its own revelations, especially insofar as it allows Spenser to focus more intently on the psychology of the wounded and to create more intricate visions of what happens when erotic wounds wrestle outward or physical wounds move inward. In particular, the narratives of Marinell and Timias function as literal demonstrations of what has occurred metaphorically throughout the entirety of this thesis: the voicing of erotic passion as physical pain or the experience of physical pain as an indication of the depth or truthfulness of erotic passion. Amavia's suicide hints at the possibility that both can happen at once. We cannot read, for example, the description of her "bleeding hart" (II.i.40) as either literal or figurative, and the poem, I would argue,

encourages us to distinguish that image from, say, Arthur's "fresh bleeding wound" (I.ix.7) or Britomart's "ronning sore" (III.ii.39), both metaphors that are embodied in order to intensify their effects rather than suggest their literalness. But how are we supposed to register the purpose or impact of a literary image when what is happening at the level of narrative is indecipherable from what that image means figuratively?

Allegory seems to be the obvious answer; it is certainly the one that has often been invoked to make sense of Spenser's most elusive images. In addition to the political and mythic allegories outlined by their adventures (Timias is generally considered a double for Raleigh, Marinell a type of updated Achilles), Timias and Marinell, I argue, also offer psychological allegories for the interpretative conflicts that attend wounds, how simply or seamlessly, in other words, one wound becomes another. We could even say that the arcs of their narratives, both of which seek to pinpoint the dangers inherent in this interchangeability, provide retroactive contexts for what might have gone wrong in Amavia's conscience when she determined to take her own life. But with Marinell and Timias we get to witness the development of the image's "double sences" (III.iv.28), not merely stumble upon a heart that bleeds literally because of its figurative brokenness. As such, their narratives initiate Spenser's examination of wounding as a type of ritual, a ritual, moreover, that extends beyond the local moment of wounding to reveal how an engagement with a wound (as a *limen*) can operate to invert one's perception of reality. In this ritualized process of inversion, I argue, lies Spenser's deepest exploration of how the ambiguities created by wounding can be interpreted as empowering, for, strictly speaking, both Marinell and Timias incur physical wounds in order to learn that the literal image (or event) can never be divorced from its figurative multiplicity.

The interpretative difficulties of comprehending the suggestiveness of wounding, however, are first proffered to the reader in the originating episode of both these narratives: Britomart's wounding of Marinell.[338] The physicality, for example, of the stanza that details Marinell's treatment after his wounding exposes the failures inherent in his mother's misinterpretation of Proteus's prophecy: that "of a woman [Marinell] should haue much ill" (III.iv.25). Having been wounded in the "left side" by Britomart's "wicked steele" (III.iv.16), this has indeed become the case, but not in the way that Cymoent foresaw. Her injunction for Marinell "not to entertaine" "[t]he loue of women" (III.iv.26), nevertheless, is subjected to a poetic violation, when a team of sea-nymphs attends his wounded body:

> Thus when they all had sorowed their fill,
> They softly gan to search his griesly wownd:
> And that they might him handle more at will,
> They him disarmd, and spredding on the grownd
> Their watchet mantles frindgd with siluer rownd,
> They softly wipt away the gelly blood
> From th'orifice; which hauing well vpbownd,
> They pourd in soueraine balme, and Nectar good,
> Good both for erthly med'cine, and for heuenly food.
> (III.iv.40)

As a scene of cure, the language here—with its emphasis on undressing, "handl[ing] […] at will," and "soft[]" touches—is disconcertingly erotic, a literal unmaking of Marinell's understanding of chastity as being maintained by the construction of physical boundaries. Under the care of the "lilly handed *Liagore*" (III.iv.41), whose Petrarchan purity seems to contrast the sensuality of the healing act, Marinell rather experiences the potentially regenerative possibilities of interaction with the opposite sex, even as they approximate the

[338] Marinell's wounding is what spurs Florimell's flight and, consequently, Timias's pursuit of the Fosters. As I consider below, the loose narrative relationship between the two is counterbalanced by the thematic chiasmus that their confrontations with wounds create.

type of erotic engagement that his mother taught him to foreswear.[339] But neither Marinell nor the nymphs who treat him appear to notice this sensuality, which is instead a facet of the language with which Spenser frames this type of action. We are, in Spenser's progressive and fluctuating allegory, thus made like *The Faerie Queene*'s own characters: spectators of bodies and actions and as prone to misinterpret the physical as the metaphorical and vice versa. In the slippery world of Book Three, in fact, all modes of transition (bodily, cognitive) are frequently dramatic and linguistic and all forms of conviction (alas, even our own!) frequently exposed as constituting the first step in a process toward disillusionment.

As an image resisting classification as either literal or figurative, a body wound is often the focal point in *The Faerie Queene* of such poetic suggestiveness, an occasion, as above, in which the mere act of description thwarts the attempt to distinguish the licit from the illicit. But its linguistic suggestiveness is merely a secondary result of how powerfully Spenser represents the wound as being unexplainable in discursive terms. This is precisely what C. S. Lewis meant to suggest when he wrote that "Marinell's life [is] based on a false premise."[340] The problem, however, is not just the incorrectness of the premise; Cymoent's postulation of a physiological answer in defense of a metaphorical problem would certainly have had traction in the Legend of Temperance. The problem is rather that Marinell is following derivative knowledge to begin with. A wound, so Cymoent herself learns, fundamentally destroys this type of thinking:

> This was that woman, this that deadly wownd,
> That *Proteus* prophecide should him dismay,
> The which his mother vainely did expownd,
> To be hart-wownding loue, which should assay

[339] There is even a sort of eroticism in *Liagore*'s purity, as the narrator describes her medical skill as having come from her liaison with Apollo, in which "whilome vpon high *Pindus* hill, / He loued, and at last her wombe did fill / With heuenly seed" (III.iv.41). The repetition of "softly," as well, might be said to intensify the sensuality of this engagement.
[340] Lewis, *Spenser's Images*, 122.

To bring her sonne vnto his last decay.
So ticle be the termes of mortall state,
And full of subtile sophismes, which doe play
With double sences, and with false debate,
T'approue the vnknowen purpose of eternall fate.
(III.iv.28)

Outside the walls of Castle Joyous, Malecasta's boisterous, Italianate courtiers force Britomart and The Red Crosse Knight to "approue" "by dint of sword" that their beloveds are "fairer, then our fairest Dame" (III.i.27), their overt emphasis on the physical dimensions of "approue" indicative of the perversion of erotic love that permeates their lodgings. But in less precisely allegorical environments, proof is merely the acceptance of misinterpretation and uncertainty or, as it is used here, a frail discursive process insufficient to the task of explaining the "ticle […] termes of mortall state." Marinell, indeed, attempted to "approue" in his engagement with Britomart the primacy of his chastity, but his belief (and his mother's) that physical prowess can defend against metaphoric illness simply adjusts rather than corrects the errors of Malecasta's debauchery. In both instances, proof is a mode of physical and tactile defense, hardly connected to the "subtile sophismes" and "double sences" that "[]approue the vnknowen purpose of eternall fate." In these terms, Cymoent's chagrin is unsatisfactory, eliciting from the throes of grief and placing blame on those aspects of human experience that cannot be comprehended; but her disbelief is also indicative of the problems that seem to trouble all wounded bodies in Faerie Land and those, like her, who have to interpret their meanings: that wounds are neither physical nor metaphorical, neither corporeal nor internal, but are rather, like the language that describes them, "double sences," proofs of the body's inadequacy to "approue" itself as inviolable to the forces that threaten its integrity.

As a victim, then, of interpretive blindness—the failure to acknowledge the duplicity inherent in her own formulation, "hart-wownding loue"—Cymoent is only able to protect

Marinell from one side of the threshold of wounding: the opening of his inner self to the outside world. But his actual wound opens his body rather than his heart, subjecting it to both a tactile and a visionary sort of voyeurism, itself designed to reprimand the foolishness of his erotic foreswearing. Timias's adventure, which leads from his skirmish with the Fosters to his languish in Belphoebe's care, inverts Marinell's plight; rather, for example, than having a mass of nymphs intimate the inwardness that he physiologically rejected, Timias is made to experience the metaphorical indeterminacy that follows rather than precedes wounding. The "ticle […] termes of [his] mortall state," in other words, are less about a hermeneutic crisis and more about the mobility of a wound in general, as Timias's wounding makes visible the desires that Cymoent was able to sequester in Marinell. His adventure in Book Three, in fact, begins where Marinell's adventure (momentarily) ends: with a physical wound, though now a poor icon of the turmoil ensuing beneath:

> O foolish physick, and vnfruitfull paine,
> That heales vp one and makes another wound:
> She his hurt thigh to him recurd againe,
> But hurt his hart, the which before was sound
> (III.v.42)

The physicality of the second wound is as painful as its antecedent, for Belphoebe is constitutionally incapable of recognizing Timias's affect: "Litle shee weend, that loue he close conceald" (III.v.49). Transposing the resoluteness that led to Marinell's downfall, Belphoebe's unflinching practicality reveals the dangers associated with the threshold's other side: visions of wounds that look no further than their material manifestations. Timias, as well, seems guilty of this nearsightedness, having pursued, Adonis-like, the Fosters in an act that conflated the erotic with the martial (or, more specifically, offered violence in defense of Arthur's eroticism), a miscalculation that might imbue the narrator's exclamation, "O foolish physick," with more meaning. Not only, for example, are Belphoebe's physical treatments

powerless to offer the "soueraine salue" (III.v.50) that Timias so desperately needs, but, more fundamentally, the belief that "physick" can cure wounds and protect or substantiate desire is untenable in Faerie Land. In the poem's strict allegory, Timias's two wounds memorialize his ignorance to the psychic and erotic subtleties of physical fracture and implicate him into the (seemingly interminable) cycle between violence and desire that is implicit in speaking of love as a type of wound.

Spenser never frees Timias from this "endlesse duraunce / Of sorrow and despeyre" (III.v.42), as he elects in the 1596 edition of *The Faerie Queene* to intensify rather than diminish the squire's concupiscence. To have done so, however, would have been to undermine the manner in which Timias's narrative utilized his two wounds as the fundamental markers of his new self, not simply as designations of his entanglement with lust (which the 1596 *Faerie Queene* expressly allegorizes) but more generally as the mediums by which he begins to understand who he is. Spenser's revision of the Ariostan source text of this episode begins to clarify how this might be the case. Not only, for example, does Spenser reverse the genders in this tale of inverted wounds (it is Angelica, not Medoro, who is heart-wounded in the *Orlando furioso*), but also Spenser elects to prolong rather than satisfy what in Ariosto moves quickly toward resolution (as both Medoro's physical misery and Angelica's emotional languish are cured). Couple this with the fact that Timias is the victim of both physical and psychological wounds—rather than in Ariosto, in which Angelica's love-wound grows as Medoro's physical wound heals—and Spenser's emphasis is firmly on how Timias's wounds polarize rather than synthesize.[341] He even attempts, upon awakening

[341] Spenser's revisions of Ariosto generally are interpreted as a necessary consequence of his allegory, that, as Spenser explains in the Letter to Raleigh, Belphoebe is intended to ensample Elizabeth. She could not therefore be represented as a capitulating Angelica. For a consideration of how Spenser replays Ariosto in this episode, see David Quint, "Archimago and Amoret: The Poem and Its Doubles," in *Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early*

from his "deadly swownd" (III.v.29), to explain this to himself, to determine, in other words, how he could have become dependent both physically and erotically on someone not just inviolable to eroticism but also ontologically different from himself:

> But foolish boy, what bootes thy seruice bace
> To her, to whom the heuens doe serue and sew?
> Thou a meane Squyre, of meeke and lowly place,
> She heuenly borne, and of celestiall hew.
> How then? of all loue taketh equall vew
> (III.v.47)

It seems to be both one of the salient features of wounding and, as we see here, one of its most disastrous consequences that the experience clarifies the desires of the body, even if and when those desires are abjectly in contrast.

As a rupture, then, which has opened his body and consequently made manifest his latent yearnings, Timias's physical wound functions more clearly than Marinell's as a *limen*, both as a borderline and, perhaps more important, as an experience that implicates the squire into both physiological and psychological states of extremity. Unlike Marinell's wound, which merely actualizes itself, Timias's wound opens both his heart and body, confronting the squire with a psychosomatic infection. But in yet another moment of doubling, Timias's plight also becomes an occasion for Spenser to explore the mitigating effects of aesthetic phenomena of which Tasso and Sidney were so fond. Transformed, for example, into a vulnerable "heauy sight" (III.v.30), Belphoebe's vision of the wounded Timias seems proleptically to provide a context for interpreting the squire's imminent erotic decline:

> Shortly she came, whereas that woefull Squire
> With blood deformed, lay in deadly swownd:
> In whose faire eyes, like lamps of quenched fire,
> The Christall humor stood congealed rownd;
> His locks, like faded leaues fallen to the grownd,
> Knotted with blood, in bounches rudely ran,

Modern Age, ed. Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 32–44.

> And his sweete lips, on which before that stownd
> The bud of youth to blossome faire began,
> Spoild of their rosy red, were woxen pale and wan.
> (III.v.29)

Though beauty is invoked here only to be dismissed, the total effect of the passage is no less seductive, especially as this vision of Timias seems to align him with the mutilated but beautiful bodies of Clorinda and Parthenia. There is also a faint allusion to Britomart's own terminal love-sickness, an allusion that, if it is intended, tempers in advance the incontinence of Timias's lovesickness by aligning it with Book Three's most controlled lover.[342] But what is most suggestive about the passage is how it opposes readings of Timias as a character whose capacity for heroism and chivalry is reconstituted (during his skirmish with the Fosters) into vulnerability, shame, and lust. Timias's bleeding in "so great store" (III.v.26), in these readings, evidences not his martial virility but rather his lack of self-control.[343] By translating Timias's wound into that highly wrought piece of art that is elsewhere in early modern epic-romance an indication of heroic action, however, Spenser offers an especially provocative instance of wounding in which Timias's chivalric pursuit of the Fosters does not singularly indicate his violability or his entanglement with lust. In fact, insofar as the passage outlines how human interaction that focalizes around a wound in certain circumstances can be licit, it constitutes a momentary vision of Timias that both confirms his "renowne" (III.v.26) and simultaneously suggests the haplessness of his situation: how, as Belphoebe herself wonders, his infection might be the product of the "empoysned" "wicked steele"

[342] The "faded leaues" of Timias's knotted locks recall the terminal simile of Britomart's own statement of lovesickness, how her heart-wound causes her to "languish as the leafe faln from the tree, / Till death make one end of [her] daies and miseree" (III.ii.39).
[343] As Gail Kern Paster has written about the symbolism of blood in early modernity in general, "[a] bleeding body signifies as a shameful token of uncontrol, as a failure of physical self-mastery" (Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 92).

(III.v.49) rather than a function of some latent libidinal energy.[344] The 1596 *Faerie Queene*, of course, renders this reading untenable, but the squire's initial aestheticization nonetheless enforces the sense in which Spenser might be revealing Timias's later despair as the consequence of being doubly wounded, as part of the strict psychological instability that follows the literal feeling of being struck by "an vnwary dart" (III.v.42).[345]

Taken together, the episodes detailing the wounding of Marinell and Timias create a type of criticism of the metaphor that they misunderstand, calling attention to the sheer ambiguity that attends wounded bodies and wounded hearts and the ease with which one becomes the other. Though, respectively, their plights emanate from and end in a metaphorical indeterminacy, the passages that define them remain palpably corporeal, locating perception at the extremity of the body, a space, as we now well know, that insufficiently defines their interiors. The constitutional differences between the two (one forswears erotic love while the other pursues its defense), in fact, only go to show how in Faerie Land wounding indiscriminately ruptures physical and metaphorical boundaries. As allegories, Marinell's and Timias's stories exemplify many of the fundamental features of what it meant to be wounded in the Renaissance: to be implicated into an experience in

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[344] Belphoebe's suspicion is quite in tune with the prevailing vulnerary ideologies of the period. The particular use of the Spenserian "empoysned" in this context, for example, recalls Giovanni da Vigo's postulation that gunshot wounds were apt to putrefy because they were "envenomed." In both instances, infection arises as a product of the contamination of the weapon rather than as a function of the condition of the body.

[345] Insofar as Timias is presented in *The Faerie Queene* as a figural manifestation of Arthur's incompletable search for Gloriana and the erotic disillusionments that it presents, then his wounds would necessarily need to mediate between the potentially heroic and the morally suspect. As Christopher Bond writes, "Timias acts as a warning to Arthur against the state to which his obsessive and apparently hopeless quest could lead him," but we could revise this to say that he experiences physically what Arthur understands only metaphorically: a "fresh bleeding wound." Timias's heroic stature, therefore, is both invoked and dismissed in a sort of sharpening of the bodily and epistemic crises that foreground Arthur's chase. See Christopher Bond, *Spenser, Milton, and the Redemption of the Epic Hero* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 160.

which progress and regression happen simultaneously, in which the body is made to inhabit the boundary between materiality and psychology, actual and envisioned identity, reality and hyperreality. Like Fradubio's dual wounds, wounds that make him both a man and a tree (I.ii.34), Marinell's and Timias's wounds beg questions about their human natures, situating them "at the border of [their] condition[s] as living being[s]" and causing that which they thought to be imperative (their beliefs in derivative knowledge and mimetic action, respectively) to crumble around and within their bodies.[346]

This brings us to questions of allegory that *The Faerie Queene*, surely by design, cannot answer. Marinell, overgoing Belphoebe's liminal nature (which has merely excised erotic desire from her conscience), is "halfe mortall" (IV.xii.4), the offspring of one of *The Faerie Queene*'s many liaisons between humans and immortals.[347] Timias is simply human, usually considered as a double for Raleigh, offering up praises to a too gracious but still unresponsive Elizabeth/Belphoebe. But both experience their wounding as a simultaneous challenge to and substantiation of these identities, an awakening, if you will, in which they are reminded of the mutability of human nature in general and the plasticity of their bodies in particular. Marinell, for example, becomes the recipient of a slippage between human and divine natures when Liagore's sea-nymphs tend to his body, filing his wound with a "Nectar good / […] both for erthly med'cine, and for heuenly food." Timias, by contrast, is made to struggle with what degrees affection is a mandatory component of heroic virtue, a struggle that pits him "long time against his will" (III.v.48) and that causes him to deliberately perform an act of self-positioning. In each episode, in other words, the distinction between

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[346] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 3. Lauren Silberman's comment that Timias's plight illustrates the "peril of treating ideals as a simple model of how to behave" could certainly be expanded to include Marinell as well. See Silberman, *Transforming Desire*, 38.
[347] Marinell's birth, from Cymoent and the mortal Dumarin, is recounted in III.iv.19.

"I" and "not I" becomes blurred, as wounding renders unclear the boundaries of these knights' ontologies.[348] For Marinell, these distinctions ultimately prove fruitful, for as a "halfe mortall" he is capable of experiencing and then reconstituting the passions that hold Timias in "endlesse duraunce." Marinell's quest, which leads from an ascetic naïveté, to physical wounding, to love-wounding, in fact, mirrors the three phases of liminal transition first postulated by van Gennep—initiation, transformation, and reintegration—in which Marinell's physical wounding initiates a process of self-reflection bent on determining the similarities of physical and psychological violence embodied in the metaphor.[349] At the near depths of his own melancholia, in fact, Marinell becomes a type of Petrarchan auto-reflector, full of the "sad pensivenesse" and "carefull comfortlesse" (*Amoretti,* 34) that characterized the equanimity of Spenser's sonneteer:

> Being returned to his mothers bowre,
> In solitary silence far from wight,
> He gan record the lamentable stowre,
> In which his wretched loue lay day and night,
> For his deare sake, that ill deseru'd that plight
> (IV.xii.19)

His acceptance of Florimell's passion, when it finally arrives, is even revealed as a type of reconstitution: "Then gan [Marinell] tread his steps anew, / And learne to loue, by learning louers paines to rew" (IV.xii.13).

Timias's fate is less hopeful, as the wounds he sustains throughout *The Faerie Queene*—from Duessa (I.vii.12–16), the Fosters, and, finally, the Blatant Beast and the brothers Despetto, Decetto, and Deffeto (VI.v.12–20)—continuously demonstrate his susceptibility to love's perversions, though his progress in the poem is no less interstitial or

[348] The determining of physiological and psychological borders is one of the foundational principles of liminal development. See Edmund Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse," in *New Directions in the Study of Language*, ed. Eric Lenneberg (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 23–63, esp. 37–9.
[349] On the phases of liminal transition, see Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 65.

initiatory. In many ways, his wounds usher in a wider and more intractable crisis of identity than Marinell's, for as Arthur's squire, and thus doubling as one of Elizabeth's/Gloriana's courtiers, Timias struggles to comprehend the relationship not only between bodies that are ontologically distinct (his and Belphoebe's) but also between those of different sociopolitical stations, stations, significantly, that *The Faerie Queene* defines as much by agency, action, and virtue as it does by birth. The problem, in fact, that Timias finally must solve is not one of erotic desire in general or its mismanagement in particular. As his tutelage at the hands of the Hermit in Book Six reveals, it is rather one of self-definition:

> For in your selfe your onely helpe doth lie,
> To heale your sel[fe], and must proceed alone
> From your owne will, to cure your maladie.
> Who can him cure, that will be cur'd of none?
> If therefore health ye seeke, obserue this one.
> First learne your outward sences to refraine
> From things, that stirre vp fraile affection;
> Your eies, your eares, your tongue, your talk restraine
> From that they most affect, and in due termes containe.
> (VI.vi.7)

In the wake of the "happie blisse" (VI.v.12) that attends his return to Belphoebe's favor, it would make sense that the wound that Timias received from the Blatant Beast would require this sort of cure. Certainly if Timias had been able to maintain this knowledge throughout his journey he might have managed to protect himself from the suggestive entanglements with the Fosters and later with Lust itself. I would like to think that his story, in fact, has less to do with the removal of sexual desire from virtuous human relations and more to do with the dangers of such desire when personal identity, autonomy, and agency are still yet to be defined. His wounds, which consistently challenge his cognitive self-perceptions and expose his body to external interpretations, however ironically, are also the occasions by which he reclaims his role as Arthur's squire and learns to accept the positioning that his vocation and actions have forced upon him: "But shedding few soft teares from tender eyne,

/ His deare affect with silence did restraine, / And shut vp all his plaint in priuy paine" (VI.v.24). This certainly is not optimal, but it is nonetheless illustrative of a man who has learned that in his own self his "onely helpe doth lie."[350]

AMORET'S "PERFECT HOLE": AMBIGUITY AND MOVEMENT IN III.XI–XII

As Angus Fletcher has written, "the key to understanding how allegory works is to focus on its mode of agency," and this may help to explain the thematic usage of wounding throughout *The Faerie Queene*.[351] With the wound, the borderlines of what we can and cannot assume about Spenserian bodies are made permeable, as an insensate materiality—the capacity of the wound to be envisioned—clashes violently with *The Faerie Queene*'s primary experience whereby desires are (irresolubly!) determined and denied. For Marinell and Timias, this tension is transformational, resulting in their initiations into the "double"—indeed endless—"sences" of human engagement and the subsequent invitation that those engagements entail for them to reconsider the flatness of their original perceptions of bodily and erotic fracture. The disturbing episode that concludes the Legend of Chastity—Busyrane's captivity and wounding of Belphoebe's twin sister, Amoret—however, poses more troubling questions about the ability of a wound to clarify the body's desires, as perhaps, at that point, there is no more pressing concern than determining whether or not the wound that Amoret receives from Busyrane is or is not a part of her body. In fact, the limitations placed on the exterior as an adequate marker of desire rely, in Busyrane's architectural spaces, on the same interpretive folly that allowed Belphoebe to view the "gore" of Timias's wound with a soft Petrarchan artfulness: that as a boundary and as living

[350] Significantly, this passage rewrites Timias's total divestiture of personal agency in Book Four, when he is made to plea with Belphoebe for forgiveness, despite the fact that her vision of Timias's treating Amoret's wound was misguided (IV.viii.17).
[351] Angus Fletcher, "Allegory without Ideas," in *Thinking Allegory Otherwise*, ed. Brenda Machosky (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2010), 9–36, at 9.

on the boundary, wounds are easily appropriated for purposes that exceed the degree of signification that a particular body makes available. In Busyrane's sadistic spaces, however, the nature of this appropriation is what comes under great question, whether or not, like Timias and Amavia, Amoret's wound exposes a materiality that is indicative of her inner desires or can be in any way envisioned as such.

The dominant critical response to this question has been a resounding yes, that, indeed, the physical materials of Amoret's wound encourage her complicity in her own plight, by, to cite a few now well-entrenched assumptions, that Amoret possesses an "inhibition that prevents her" from uniting "freely and pleasurably in sexual relations," that she is, in another critic's words, "afraid of the physical surrender that her marriage to Scudamour must entail."[352] This critical trend—which either blamed Amoret for her dread of sexual union with Scudamour or saw her as being chastised for the magnitude of her own sexual desires—continued for some thirty years following the 1960s and went through different permutations of qualifying her wound as the physical evidence for her moral deficiency.[353] In the past twenty years, and with the rise of more feminist approaches to the episode, it has become possible to give readings of Busyrane that focus on his predatory sadism rather than Amoret's culpability. These approaches—which have been defined by expanding the episode's mythological and allegorical possibilities to other instances of metatextual or intertextual misogyny and rape—have curiously avoided placing blame on the

[352] Respectively, Hamilton, *The Structure of Allegory*, 157, and Thomas P. Roche Jr., "The Challenge to Chastity: Britomart at the House of Busyrane," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 76 (1961), 340–44, at 340. Updated versions of this argument generally suggest that Busyrane's violence is a mandatory component of love-wounding, that, as Dorothy Stephens has written, with Busyrane, "Spenser elaborately schematizes the violent potential of sexual desire." See Dorothy Stephens, *The Limits of Eroticism in Post-Petrarchan Narrative: Conditional Pleasure from Spenser to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 28.
[353] For useful surveys of these positions, see Helen Gardner, "Some Reflections on the House of Busyrane," *Review of English Studies* 34 (1983), 403–13, and Silberman, *Transforming Desire*, 156, n.29, n.35.

torturer himself, gesturing to Scudamour's own sexual beastliness (that he treats Amoret as a type of spoil) or to failures of Elizabethan repression of sexual desire in general, its "disfigured […] system of signs that repudiates bodily integrity."[354] Even readings that have condemned Busyrane as a sadist, a rapist, an allegorical dramatization of the "the male imagination trying busily to dominate and posses woman's will," have struggled to explain why the enchanter directs this violent objectification against Amoret, who Spenser repeatedly and decidedly praises as "th'ensample of true loue alone, / And Lodestarre of all chaste affection" (III.vi.52).[355] The thread that has held almost every critical position together, however, is the underlying belief that Busyrane tortures Amoret in an effort "to conceiue" "[l]oue […] in her disdainfull brest" (III.xi.17), in other words, as an anti-Petrarchan lover literalizing the wound of his heart upon the body of his beloved. This is a sensible assumption, especially considering that, in addition to Scudamour's comment, both the narrator and Spenser, in the Letter to Raleigh, corroborate this position.[356]

The reality of this statement, if its repetition asserts its primacy rather than its speciousness, ushers in the massive interpretative difficulties posed by Amoret's wound, for,

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[354] Silberman, *Transforming Desire*, 66. For readings that outsource Amoret's plight to Scudamour's sexual failings, see Sheila Cavanagh, *Wanton Eyes and Chaste Desires: Female Sexuality in "The Faerie Queene"* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 75–108.
[355] Harry Berger Jr., "Busirane and the War between the Sexes: An Interpretation of *The Faerie Queene*, III:xi–xii," *English Literary Renaissance* 1 (1971): 99–121, at 100. See also Maureen Quilligan, *Milton's Spenser: The Politics of Reading* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 198, and Susan Frye, "Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane," *Signs* 20 (1994): 49–78, both of whom consider the episode as an allegory for a masculine poetic assault, as, in other words, an exposure of the psychic anxieties and tensions that an embittered Spenser harbored against Queen Elizabeth.
[356] In addition to III.xi.17, the narrator describes the "straunge characters" that Busyrane creates out of Amoret's blood as being intended "to make her him to loue" (III.xii.31), and Spenser explains in the Letter to Raleigh that Busyrane tortures the cloistered Amoret "because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body" (*The Faerie Queene*, 718). As an explanatory document, however, the Letter to Raleigh never fully explains, and thus its interpretations ought to emphasize rather than clarify the poem's quite obvious dubiety.

strictly speaking, her wound does not belong to her in the same way that Timias's, Marinell's, Amavia's, or Britomart's wounds belong to them. Its aesthetics, even, encourage this distancing, as our first vision of the wounded Amoret in the Masque of Cupid (a pageant, significantly, that is defined by visual inter-subjectivity) is one of movement:

> 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 blood yet steeming fresh embayd.
> (III.xii.21)

For all its rich symbolism, the wound here is only a vehicle, the threshold space that Amoret's heart must pass through in order to become distinct from her body; it is her heart, in other words, not the "wide orifice" that this episode imbues with metaphoric meaning, as Busyrane attempts to gain control of both her consciousness and her passions.[357] The truth, of course, is that Amoret cannot be controlled or persuaded by either physical or aesthetic violence—"A thousand charmes he formerly did proue; / Yet thousand charmes could not her stedfast hart remoue" (III.xii.31), writes Spenser—nor does Busyrane give the indication that if and when these charms fail, he will even further literalize the process and become Lust itself, enjoying her body with a violent disdain: "Ne care [Lust] had, ne pittie of the pray" (IV.vii.8). But Spenser, I think, has been careful here, in the poetry if not in the Letter to Raleigh. What Busyrane desires is Amoret's love—"to conceiue" "[l]oue […] in her disdainfull brest"—not simply or perhaps not at all "the pleasure of her body."[358] By wounding Amoret in an attempt to bend her love, however, Busyrane mirrors Sidney's misguided Cecropia, who believes passionately in the power of physical violence to influence

[357] Alastair Fowler discusses the conventional symbolism of an extracted heart in *Renaissance Realism: Narrative Images in Literature and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 85–6.
[358] The unreliability of the Letter to Raleigh in general is discussed in Gordon Teskey, "Positioning Spenser's 'Letter to Raleigh,'" in *Craft and Tradition: Essays in Honor of William Blissett*, ed. H. B. de Groot and Alexander Leggatt (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1990), 35–46.

the heart, a point that Sidney opposes by having the princesses' experiences with their own wounds—and their witnessing of the false wounding of their beloveds—transform into the occasions for their personal edification and resistance. In both instances, however, the failure goes beyond the simple belief in the power of violence to coerce. It is, here as in the *New Arcadia*, a confusion over the difference between consent and coercion that plagues these anti-Petrarchan torturers, a misbelief, in other words, that coercion can somehow lead to a stable and palatable instance of willful consent.

The whole affair with Amoret, in fact, replays a familiar scene: the reversal of gender hierarchies so endemic to the discourse of Petrarchanism, in which—whether it be Astrophil or Spenser himself—the unyielding of the beloved becomes the occasion by which masculine pieties toward courtly love unravel.[359] It is in this dynamic that Busyrane extracts Amoret's heart, with the misguided belief that vision and art can persuade what has been previously codified: not just Amoret's love for Scudamour but also her understanding of that love's violent origins. Such is why Amoret's extracted heart appears as having already been "[q]uite through transfixed with a deadly dart," with clear emphasis on "transfixed" as both wounded and immovable (incoercible). Her passion for Scudamour, as Book Four increasingly reveals, is tantamount to her ability to endure abjection on his behalf (even, of course, abjection that comes by his own hands) and thus the distinctions that we assume Book Three's titular virtue will clarify—as Katherine Eggert has demonstrated, between rape and ravishment, but also between abjection and obedience, personal agency and coerced action—are instead, with Amoret, made somewhat indistinguishable.[360] In other words, the

[359] See, for example, the revision of the hunt metaphor in Spenser's *Amoretti*, 67, in which the sonnet speaker appears to realize the discrepancies between coerced (or "chased") love and that which arises from free consent: "Strange thing me seemd to see a beast so wyld, / so goodly wonne with her owne will beguyld" (*The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems*, 641).
[360] Eggert, "Spenser's Ravishment," 1–26, esp. 11–15.

question that the episode pushes far more forward than any other is how Amoret's narrative function as an abducted, tortured lover comes to bear the weight of her more important allegorical role as the poem's overriding example of chaste sexual desire.

Positions like Katherine Eggert's—which assess the "rauishment" (III.xii.45) of Amoret's 1590 hermaphroditic elision with Scudamour as a threat to or an undoing of the rapine violence that Busryane enacts on her body—seem to overlook the ontological information about Amoret's love that the revised *Faerie Queene* forces us, in retrospect, to explain: that, from its inception, Amoret has experienced the physical dangers of the metaphor as a testament to her sincerity and fidelity.[361] The originating language of this affair, even, proleptically enforces this point, as, having chosen Scudamour out of a throng of knights in Gloriana's court, Amoret,

> for his dearest sake endured sore,
> Sore trouble of an hainous enimy,
> Who her would forced haue to haue forlore
> Her former loue, and stedfast loyalty.
> (III.vi.53)

Unlike any number of *The Faerie Queene*'s lovers whose bodies are wounded as a consequence of their hearts, Amoret is distinct in her fixed (or "transfixed") woundedness, neither pursued like Florimell nor pursuing like Timias, The Red Crosse Knight, and Britomart, to name only a few examples. Perhaps this is why she is slated for torture, as an example to those characters whose clarity and certainty of mind oppose the fluid, watery, and romantic

[361] I would offer, on this point, that the language that qualifies Amoret's enjoyment of the hermaphrodite—that she "did in pleasure melt, / And in sweete rauishment pourd out her spright"—recalls some of the more troubled instances of sexual pleasure that *The Faerie Queene* unequivocally denounces: most notably The Red Crosse Knight's capitulation to Duessa (I.vii.7). Set in such terms, it seems no wonder that Spenser elected to reanimate Scudamour and Amoret's romance; not only did their sexual fulfillment deny the poem's previous posturing of the dangers of erotic sensibility, but also its replacement of suffering with "rauishment" robbed the metaphor of woundedness of both its productive vitality and its damaging vicissitudes.

world of the Book of Chastity. But in the lines above, which use the subjunctive case as a way to deflect later interpretations that dismiss Amoret's virtue—the fact that neither "[h]er former loue, [nor her] stedfast loyalty" could be altered or removed—her torment appears to occur at the enhancement rather than the diminishment of her erotic passion.

In its dynamic production, then, Amoret's narrative both discourages and encourages us to answer its paradigmatic question, a question posed in the precise moment when passionate seduction and grotesque violence appear to seamlessly collide: "Ah who can loue the worker of her smart?" (III.xii.31). On the one hand, the answer is clearly "nobody," insofar as the question refers to Busyrane himself. But on the other hand, and the answer that seems to reopen this disturbing episode to a reading that might explain how its narrative and allegorical functions combine, is "everyone," especially insofar as Amoret's abjection at the hands of Busyrane augments her fidelity or becomes illustrative of the degree of that fidelity. Her wound both literalizes and memorializes this fidelity, exposing her unique suffering not simply as the central feature of her passion but also as the violent foundation of erotic engagement in general. She may, indeed, suffer at the hands of Busyrane, as many of *The Faerie Queene*'s most influential readers have argued, as a consequence of her psychosexual fear of what violence intercourse with Scudamour will entail. But this position must be sanctioned in terms of the production of her suffering, not only because the 1590 *Faerie Queene* omits the information we need to make this argument but also, and more importantly, because the details of her suffering suggest that as much as she might fear the literalization of the metaphor in consummation, she also relies on it to qualify her ontology: as *Amoretta*, "goodly womanhed," the incorruptible synthesis of chaste desire and erotic affect. As a site of both bodily and metaphoric expression, her wound becomes the occasion for both this tension and its dramatic synthesis.

We can first glimpse how abjection and fidelity are combined in Amoret's wound by considering the dynamic levels of subjectivity created by the Masque of Cupid, in which Amoret is made to both witness and experience (both see and feel) her wounding simultaneously. As an active as well as innate virtue, chastity ought indeed function in this manner, ought to be envisioned as much as it is demonstrated. Accordingly, the power dynamics of Busyrane's torturous seductions, which both "figur[e]" "Deathes own ymage […] in [Amoret's] face" and "[y]et in that horror sh[ow] a seemely grace" (III.xii.19), alternate between images of abjection and beauty, intentionally designed by Spenser, I would argue, to balance the aesthetic and grotesque probabilities inherent in wounding. In order, however, to "make her him to loue," Busyrane needs Amoret to see herself in this way, though the poetry only allows us to see him taking pleasure in this alternation:

> Her brest all naked, as nett yuory,
> Without adorne of gold or siluer bright,
> Wherewith the Craftesman wonts it beautify,
> Of her dew honour was despoyled quight,
> And a wide wound therein (O ruefull sight)
> Entrenched deep with knyfe 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.20)

These hard combinations (of ruth and grisliness, of "snowy cleene" and "sanguine red") depend on the dynamic but contrasting layers of inter-subjectivity created when an individual is wounded and then forced to assess or envision the purpose of the wounding. At such moments, as here, abjection (which is objectless) contrasts with the appropriated meaning of the wound, so that Amoret—unlike the reader, Britomart, and Busyrane, all of whom merely see Amoret's body—experiences both the pain of her wound and its potentially aesthetic representation, a possibility the poetry renders by phrasing the action of the stanza in the passive: "was to be seene." The ambiguity in this dynamic space of vision, at least

momentarily, makes it possible that Amoret is both seen and seeing, both the performer and the playgoer in a drama in which her sense of her own abjection (her vision of herself as wounded) is counterbalanced by the chastity that her mutilated body is seen as displaying.

By making Amoret a witness in her own destruction, Busyrane both imagines wounding at its most violent and yet seems to believe (almost laughably) that the aesthetic qualities of wounding could still elicit the sympathy necessary to produce pity and grace. He puts his faith, in other words, in the probability that the mind will combat horror with pity, that the wound will be translated into an aesthetic experience capable of piercing the heart. This, indeed, seems to be the intention of the Ovidian "Tapets" adorning the walls of Busyrane's outer chambers, and this also might explain why Britomart, who was puzzled by the tapestry depicting Venus and Adonis in the Castle Joyous, is "no whit […] discouraged" (III.xi.50) by this new art. As conspicuously absent in Busyrane's chambers, the myth of Venus and Adonis takes as its fundamental principle the translation of physical pain into aesthetic and, ultimately, in the Garden, regenerative pleasure. And as the governing mythological moral in the Legend of Chastity, this translation is what Britomart's quest depends upon. But it is fundamentally anathema to Busyrane, who needs wounding to become the occasion for a type of masochistic eroticism. Consider, for example, Busyrane's rendition of Leda and the Swan:

> Then was [Jove] turnd into a snowy Swan,
> To win faire *Leda* to his louely trade:
> O wondrous skill, and sweet wit of the man,
> That her in daffadillies sleeping made,
> From scorching heat her daintie limbes to shade:
> Whiles the proud Bird ruffing his fethers wyde,
> And brushing his faire brest, did her inuade;
> Shee slept, yet twixt her eielids closely spyde,
> How towards her he rusht, and smiled at his pryde.
> (III.xi.32)

The salient feature of this stanza, as has been pointed out, is its grammatical ambivalence over who exactly is "smil[ing] at [Jove's] pryde," an ambivalence that causes us to consider the possibility that Leda (astonishingly) is finding pleasure in her own ravishment.[362] The more disturbing observation, however, is not that Leda enjoys her plight but that she does so at the enhancement of Jove's enterprise, substantiating her subservient position and, also, requalifying it by taking pleasure in that which ought to cause her pain. But as a scene of subjection, the language here does not reach to Yeats's rendition of the myth, in which Leda "put[s] on [Jove's] knowledge with [Jove's] power."[363] In Busyrane's home, subjection rather occurs as a revelation of bodily power, and the alexandrine seems to mirror this revelation, disassociating the act of rape ("[h]ow towards her he rusht") from its subjective interpretation ("smiled at his pryde"). In this encounter, like Amoret's with Busyrane, Leda is both object and voyeur, "her eyelids closely spy[ing]" the rapine pageant that she herself is a part of. And from this objectified distance she both sees and takes pleasure in seeing the body of a god rapaciously substantiating his world at the expense of her own.

Leda's vision of Jove viewing her viewing him, after all, is what Busyrane delights in—visioning Amoret's chastity, "[h]er brest all naked, as nett yuory," and envisioning her awareness to its rupture—a recognition that surely will help us explain what Spenser must have meant by "the pleasure of her body." Here as elsewhere in Book Three, this pleasure is aesthetic, but for Busyrane, it is also disjunctive, which is to say that Busyrane and Amoret

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[362] Eggert, "Spenser's Ravishment," 12. See also Kimberly Anne Coles, "'Perfect Hole': Elizabeth I, Spenser, and Chaste Productions," *English Literary Renaissance* 32 (2002), 31–61. Coles points out that Spenser's revision of Ovid in Busyrane's tapestries "describes the oppression of humanity by the gods in strictly female terms" (50). I suggest here that the oppression depends on a conflicting combination of visual awareness and physical anguish.
[363] W. B. Yeats, "Leda and the Swan," in *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, 118.

do not so much share a moment of inter-subjectivity as they experience a dislocation of this possibility. As Elaine Scarry explains, this is a fundamental feature of torture:

> 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 is in its fraudulent as in its legitimate forms always based on distance from the body.[364]

In Busyrane's sadistic exercise, there is no question, but the inverse relationship between meaninglessness (for the victim) and appropriated meaning (for the torturer) is nonetheless germane. Busyrane, for example, shares with this paradigm his objectification of Amoret, an objectification in which he tries, against Amoret's will, to turn her into Astrophil's Stella or Spenser's Elizabeth. The problem, indeed, with this objectification is interpretable as its own Petrarchan failure: that, in other words, by leveling torments (his art, his "bloody lynes") against Amoret's body, Busyrane inverts and enlarges his own fantasies at the expense of her will and her identity, very nearly in the manner that Laura herself becomes elided in the *Rime* with *l'oro*, *l'aura*, and *lauro*. Set in these terms, which seem to disembody Amoret from the physical matter of the House of Busyrane, we may more properly interpret her wound: specifically, as a precarious space of representation, like chastity itself, in which what is able to be determined by vision or action has only the faintest of affinities to what is actually the case of the self in question.

If this phenomenology of torture is on display in the "Tapets" and their perpetuation of Busyrane's inverted sexual hierarchy (which cavorts here under the heading of "*Cupids*

[364] Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 46.

power and great effort"), then the Statute of Cupid that stands alone in the upper corner of the room both inheres in and defects from this process, its spatial proximity and visual difference an indication of its duplicity:

> Blyndfold he was, and in his cruell fist
> A mortall bow and arrowes 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 dartes behold)
> A wounded Dragon vnder him did ly,
> Whose hideous tayle his lefte 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)

With little variation, this has been taken as an emblem of Busyrane's rapine fantasies, his "fowle Idolatree" (III.xi.49) of the defiling powers of passion.[365] But it may more properly be assessed as the allegorical activation in this narrative of the truth that is everywhere expressed in images of wounded hearts: how desire functions as a type of bodily torture, enlarging the desire itself (here Cupid) at the expense of reason. The success of Busyrane's enterprise depends on this conflation of bodily pain and desire, as if his victims will experience their abjection as a clarification of the tyranny of erotic love in general and thus leave off their virginal vigilance or, as it is dramatized here, have it irrevocably wounded.[366] But as anathema as virginity's guardian might be to Busyrane's "fowle" fantasies, so too is it anathema to Amoret, whose task it is to translate the physical torments of erotic love into the spiritual pleasures of married chastity. Their irrevocable wounds have thus been connected, and, indeed, the iconography again seems direct here: incurable wounds are

[365] Fowler, *Renaissance Realism*, 89, explains the conventional iconography.
[366] The wounded dragon has been identified as that from Alciati's 22nd emblem, as first discussed by C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 164–6.

suspicious, especially in erotic terms.[367] But Amoret's wounded heart shares very little with the dragon's wounded eyes. The success of her erotic engagement depends on the probability that her heart is not irrevocably pierced as here: as a testament to desire's tyranny and violence, its inversion of meaning and meaninglessness. Her wound rather is incurable because it examples the iterable and everlasting transition between her body and her heart, her pain and her spiritual enlightenment, that underlines her mastery of the virtue of chastity.

The tension, then, that is everywhere present in Busyrane's House is between the appropriated and actual meaning of Amoret's wound. The Altar's "fowle Idolatree" surely suggests this possibility, especially insofar as idolatry (from the Greek *eidos* "physical appearance") entails an act of misinterpretation. Busyrane both idolizes and misinterprets the passions that underline his enterprise, creating images that blur, like the "Tapets," pleasure and pain, or, like the Altar, tyrant and liberator, master and husband. These interpretive obfuscations are exacerbated by the presentation of Amoret in the Masque, for, as we have seen, at that point she both is and is not herself. The boundaries of interpretation appear once again to have been violated. Her wound, for example, is described as having been "entrenched deep" with a suitably phallic "knyfe accursed keene," though, as Alastair Fowler explains, her "trembling hart," which is sacrificially placed in a "siluer basin," enforces her purity.[368] Her "wide wound," moreover, has been taken as maternal, and the "freshly bleeding" blood which elicits from it a mimetic demonstration of either hymeneal penetration or perhaps menstruation in general, both positions that combine

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[367] See *The Faerie Queene*, 396, for Hamilton's gloss: "Now serving Cupid and blinded by his arrows, [the dragon] no longer guards chastity. Its tail placed over Cupid's left foot marks their collusion. Its incurable wound suggests that Amoret's wound through love of '*Cupids* man' (IV x 54.7) will never be healed."

[368] Fowler, *Renaissance Realism*, 92–4. "Spenser," writes Fowler, "leaves one in no doubt as to whether Amoret is lustful. For he tells how her heart is not only wounded and exposed, but laid in a 'silver basin' [that] alludes to familiar emblems of purity" (93).

the violence of her torture with her allegorical function.[369] She is, after all, *The Faerie Queene*'s paradigmatic example of chaste sexual desire, the tyranny of which is the loss of self that sexual engagement, especially wedded sexual engagement, entails. And perhaps this is the meaning to be derived from the liminal zone of the Masque in which her wound and heart are placed and, subsequently, taken away from her. We are not to see, allegorically and thematically, her "wide wound" and "trembling hart" as distinct from one another, lest we parse out the eroticism of the episode from how that eroticism also constructs part of her fidelity. But the drama of the Masque forces us to perform this task in any event: to see the apprehension of her heart by Busyrane as only causally related to the suggestiveness of her wounded body. Perhaps emphasis might better be put on the transition, how, in this visual space, cruelty becomes the occasion for fidelity, abjection the marker of erotic devotion, the suggestiveness, as it were, of her "wide wound" reduced to the less metaphorical "orifice" by which her already "transfixed heart" emerges.

The most salient feature of a liminal experience, as Victor Turner explains, is the making visible of cultural classifications and definitions that previously were merely conditioned or, in some cases, too axiomatic to be qualified or understood.[370] In her abduction and abjection at the hands of Busyrane, Amoret shares with the other wounded characters studied in this chapter an awakening to the conditioned (unquestioned) nature of her virtue, which is to say to the ambiguities ingrained in "trew feminitee" and "goodly

[369] Respectively, Eggert, "Spenser's Ravishment," 12, and Elizabeth Bellamy, "Waiting for Hymen: Literary History as 'Symptom' in Spenser and Milton," *English Literary History* 64, no. 2 (1997): 391–414, at 408.

[370] "The subject of passage ritual," writes Turner, "is, in the liminal period, structurally, if not physically, invisible. As members of society, most of us see only what we expect to see, and what we expect to see is what we are conditioned to see when we have learned the definitions and classifications of our culture." See Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites of Passage*," in *Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*, ed. Louise Carus Mahdi, Stephen Foster, and Meredith Little (Lasalle: Open Court, 1998), 3–19, at 5.

womanhead." The final, paradoxical image of her wound—the oxymoronic "perfect hole" (III.xii.38) to which it is restored—manifests its continual combination of terms on opposite ends of a binary. Among all the challenging decorations and dramas in Busyrane's house, this image might be the most inscrutable but certainly the most likely to give insight to the concept of "true loue" that Amoret is supposed to "ensample."[371] As a marker of her desire, Amoret's "perfect[ly] hole" wound can be nothing more than ambiguous, both her and not her, both whole and hole, both physical and spiritual, tyrannical and liberating, for the truth that it exposes elicits from the most incomplete and incomprehensible of emotions. Her positioning in the Masque underscores this ambivalence, as she is situated in the midst of a continuum of unsavory sexual emotions that range from "Fansy" (III.xii.7) to the unqualified and perhaps unqualifiable "phantasies / In wauering wemens witt" (III.xii.26). Her wound and extracted heart, however, are not distinct from these figures, and this imposes on the reader a twofold methodological task: we are forced to assess them, on the one hand, as flat allegories and, on the other, as members of a comprehensive parade of subjective sexual positions, a parade in which a "wounded hart" is merely part of a larger transitional process leading from "Fansy" to "phantas[y]." The repair of Amoret's "wide wound" and "trembling hart" into a "perfect hole," in these terms, acknowledges the ambiguities that attend both the production and reparation of wounded hearts, for, strictly speaking, by leaving Busyrane's home, Amoret escapes none of the subjective elements of erotic desire put on display during the Masque of Cupid.

[371] Hamilton's gloss reviews the traditional criticism, which considers the possibility of a naughty pun on "hole" as either vaginal or hymeneal (*The Faerie Queene*, 404). See also Bellamy, "Waiting for Hymen," 408, who is more conscientious to the ambiguities in play here; for her, the image "serves as a vivid demonstration that the concept of married chastity is itself a kind of 'perfect hole.'"

Ambiguity, of course, is not clarity, but it may be power, especially in the Legend of Chastity, a book in which assuredness is generally the indication of a fault. And there is, if we have uncovered anything here, more ambiguity in speaking of a wound as being perfectly healed, as if the experience was not in itself a potent remainder of the mortality and dubiety of human existence. The revision of the original ending of the 1590 *Faerie Queene*, in which Amoret and Scudamour meld into each other seamlessly, nudges further how powerfully speaking of "true loue" as a wound complicates the binaries that it might presume to clarify.[372] Not only does Spenser, in his revision, resist what we might otherwise have taken as his foremost "pourtraict" (III.Proem.1) of the virtue of chastity, but in resisting the "faire *Hermaphrodite*" (III.xii.46*) he also forces us to reconsider Amoret's virtue in terms of its original production. We cannot, in other words, assess Scudamour's original abduction of Amoret (recounted at IV.x.48–58) without sanctioning that abduction in terms of Amoret's subsequent fidelity and loyalty to him. In the House of Busyrane, then, these features of Amoret's passion become corollary rather than antithetical; violence, in other words, is revealed not just as a component of sexual desire but as the very medium by which one can become the chaste ensample of such urgings. The particular brutality of Busyrane's enterprise, however, and the troubling dichotomy that is everywhere a component of wounds in the thesis, is that those assaults are both literal and fictional, that splaying open the body is also subjecting its integrity to Turner's liminal "realm of pure possibility." In Amoret's captivity by Busyrane—a captivity that incorporates all the difficulties implicit in wounding—her chastity indeed is opened to this imaginative realm, its ambiguities both a

[372] Lauren Silberman has given a more positive reading of their embrace, suggesting that Amoret's body is "metamorphosed […] to an instrument of mutual pleasure," though I would argue that the pleasure has to be limited by our awareness to how insensate this fusion is: "like two senceles stocks" (III.xii.45*). *Amoretti*, 43 and 54, respectively, speak of the "stupid stock" and "sencelesse stone" that threaten to accompany love's mutuality. See Silberman, *Transforming Desire*, 70.

source of resolution and conflict, for the chastity that Busyrane "pen[s]" is as much an imagination of the borderlines of Amoret's sexuality as it is a penetration of them.

Kimberly Ann Coles is certainly right, then, to have extended the image of Amoret's extracted heart to Spenser's "pourtraict" of Elizabeth's own virtue, though the ambiguity of the image itself, I think, goes further than a "critique [of] the fear of political and personal domination that was the basis of Elizabeth's virginity."[373] It more precisely, by imagining fictional penetration as tantamount to personal virtue, reveals those fears as their undoing. Perhaps this is the meaning to be derived from the episode's ambiguous representation of Amoret's wound: that its "perfect hole[ness]" is its metaphoric dynamism, its function as both a repository that can be "cruelly pen[ned]" as the writer sees fit and yet also a sign that asserts its intense, complete individuality. But as stasis is merely the sense of movement in repose, so too is the "perfect hole[ness]" of Amoret's wound a still perception of its continual need for "pen[ning]" and re-"pen[ning]." The poem's most enduring image of "pen[ning]"—that of Adonis in the Garden—corrects this cycle of reconstitution by displacing the wound from its liminal position on the body. In this threshold space, the wound is merely an allusive and prosodic aporia:

> And all about grew euery sort of flowre,
> To which sad louers were transformde of yore;
> Fresh *Hyacinthus*, *Phœbus* paramoure,
> And dearest loue,
> Foolish *Narcisse*, that likes the watry shore,
> Sad *Amaranthus*, made a flowre but late,
> Sad *Amaranthus*, in whose purple gore
> Me seemes I see *Amintas* wretched fate,
> To whom sweet Poets verse hath giuen endlesse date.
> (III.vi.45)

[373] Coles, "Perfect Hole,'" 60. See also David Lee Miller, *The Poems Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 "Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 150.

Composed in light of the version of the myth depicted in Malecasta's tapestry—a version that enforces how easily and deceptively violence can be "cruelly pen[ned]" as attractive and thus provoke rather than reproach erotic excess—the displacement of Adonis's mortal wound into the highly allusive flowers of his garden suggests that, as much as wounds subject the integrity of the body to false interpretations, they might also be considered quintessentially transformative.[374] There is, indeed, an expansiveness to this stanza quite unlike the insatiable emptiness of Amoret's "perfect hole," not simply in its openness of sound but also in its famous, truncated fourth line, a line that traditionally has been taken as a prosodic mirroring of life ending too soon.[375] In the company of these flowers, however, life strictly does not end; it lives on in a contradiction between finality and the "endlesse date" of its "pen[ning]," stasis, once again, merely the perception of movement momentarily stilled. Adonis is even maintained here in a kind of medicinal eternity, perpetually receiving treatment for a wound that no longer affects his body:

> There wont fayre *Venus* often to enioy
> Her deare *Adonis* ioyous company,
> And reape sweet pleasure of the wanton boy:
> There yet, some say, in secret he does ly,
> Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery,
> By her hid from the world, and from the skill
> Of *Stygian* Gods, which doe her loue enuy
> (III.vi.46)

Amoret's and Adonis's wounds could not be any more different. One seems to be the manifestation (if not the consequence) of fear, the other, the result of insolence and

[374] The flowers that encase Adonis's body all reference a type of wounding. See Quitslund, *Spenser's Supreme Fiction*, 221–4.
[375] Ibid, 224. See also Kenneth Gross, "Shapes of Time: On the Spenserian Stanza," *Spenser Studies* 19 (2004): 27–35, on enlarging and enclosing time in the Spenserian stanza. Many prosodic features of enlargement are on display here—the alliteratively drawn out "seemes" and "see," the combination of anaphora and enjambment in lines 6–8, and the openness of its predominant rhyme—all designed, I think, to mirror the stanza's floral representations of wounds, as enclosures at once expressive of an endless and (here ineffable) possibility.

intrepidity. And yet they are connected by the poem's visions of the perpetuity of woundedness, how in each instance the wound asserts itself as an endless repository of impactful meaning, an emblematic device not simply facilitating the dual perceptions of past and present (like a scar), death, mourning, and imagination (like the floral allusions), or even as a mere bodily experience indicative of the human disposition made apparent by the Legend of Chastity in general and the Garden of Adonis in particular: the both destructive and regenerative eternity of mutability. As allusively enfolding the vaginal "stately Mount" (III.vi.43) upon which Adonis's unwounded body perpetually rests, the wound more aptly combines these binaries with the imaginative possibilities that, in the absence of wounds, would be unavailable. Grotesque and beautiful, mournful and regenerative, both wombs and tombs, wounds are the most individual and yet collectively experienced images in all of *The Faerie Queene*, and as readers we look both to them and away from them simultaneously for evidence of the desires that the bodies they affect conceal.[376] They are, like the Garden, fully threshold spaces, where imagination and reality meet, cross, and separate, and interpretative rigor demands to be met, as Jon Quitslund has written about accepting the Garden's binaries, with acts "of faith."[377] To Britomart, the heroine of chastity, falls this task, for her particular virtue must learn to reconcile the generative, imaginative, and cosmic fecundity

[376] Readers have often acknowledged this complex mixture of engagement and detachment taken on by the narrator as he nears the "pleasaunt Arber" where Adonis lies (itself a looking forward to Britomart's bemusement and "halfe enuying" of the "*Hermaphrodite*"). The language is quintessentially similar, as the narrator's invocation for a communal or coterie audience to substantiate Amoret and Scudamour's embrace—"Had ye them seene, ye would haue surely thought, / That they had beene that faire *Hermaphrodite*" (III.xii.46)—echoes the exhortation to collectively accept the Garden's mythopoeia: "There yet, some say, in secret he does ly" (vi.46); "And sooth it seemes they say" (vi.47); "For him the Father of all formes they call" (vi.47). In both occasions, the poetry invites and distances vision simultaneously. See Silberman, *Transforming Desire*, 70, and Quitslund, *Spenser's Supreme Fiction*, 223.
[377] Ibid, 223.

that elicits from her "bleeding bowells" (III.ii.39) with the repulsive and soul-opening violence that her wounding entails.

In its bewildering depiction of the wound as allusively present, both static and dynamic, "eterne" in its metaphorical indeterminacy, the Garden of Adonis might well serve as a model for imagining the relationship between all the moments of wounding depicted in Spenser's 1590 *Faerie Queene*. More than mere attention to the ubiquity of change as a fundamental principle of human existence, the Garden marks the moment in Spenserian thought in which rupture becomes a conduit for perceiving a reality that stretches far beyond its conventional physical or metaphoric designations. Indeed, in the Garden, the wound is no longer a bodily trauma, the generator of its violence having been sequestered "[i]n a strong rocky Caue" (III.vi.48). Nor is it a psychosomatic ill, as the elimination of the former allows for "sweet loue his malice mote auoyd" (III.vi.48). The three other instances of wounding considered in this chapter gesture toward this knowledge but also accept what is implicit in the name of Spenser's Eden: that it is the Garden of *Adonis*, that its figurative possibilities are only made available after an experience that sets the body and mind "betwixt and between all fixed points of classification."[378] Spenser's emblematizing of the wound as the primary icon of his epic-romance, in fact, leaves us, as readers, on this threshold, without happy endings, without closure or definite boundaries; its wounds, like its fantastic visions, thus are analogues in the grand Spenserian myth that subordinates reality to the realm of romantic possibility, a realm of simultaneous instantiation and erasure, obfuscation and disambiguation, in which the discipline of reading encourages not the repetitive sculpting of the self to the matter of its "noble" or "gentle" virtues but toward a cognitive process that envisions the mind in liminality. That perspective—an essential receptivity to the energy of

[378] Victor Turner, *Drama, Fields, and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 232.

change—was Spenser's gift to early modernism in general and epic-romance in particular, and it became the lasting contribution, as Angus Fletcher has explained, to the creative imagination responsible for British Romanticism.[379] But in its innate manifestation, it was also the knowledge that could be derived from one of humankind's most natural experiences and the sense of bodily and psychic extremity that it created. Successive, "consuming," not ephemeral; ambiguous, dynamic "hole[ness]"; the mythic and the quotidian, the transgressive and the redemptive, the illusory and the real, the liminal and the sublime: herein lie the true character and energy of Spenser's terminal visions.

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[379] Fletcher, "The Cantos of Mutability," 1.

CODA

THE LONG MARKE

posse nocere animis carminis omne genus.
Non tamen idcirco crimen liber omnis habebit:
nil prodest, quod non laedere possit idem.
—Ovid, "Tristia," II.264–66[380]

In the final canto of *The Faerie Queene*'s most strictly allegorical book, the Legend of Justice, Britomart's fiancée and the champion of that virtue Artegall finds himself enmeshed in a skirmish with "two old ill fauour'd Hags," *Enuie* and *Detraction* (V.xii.32). It is a ridiculous affair, and Artegall—who has just defeated the tyrant monster Grantorto and "reforme[d] th[e] ragged common-weale" (V.xii.26) of an Ireland-like island—is barely affected by the onslaught. And why should he be? In the mechanical world of the Legend of the Justice, a world in which physical violence creates the basis for moral allegory and in which the body is utterly and reductively objectified, the "bitter wordes" (V.xii.42) of *Enuie* and *Detraction* and the "barke[s] and bay[s]" (V.xii.41) of their companion, the *Blatant Beast*, are powerless to stir or corrupt Artegall's self. But in a subtle subversion of the power of penal violence to administer a form of readable justice, Spenser has Artegall become the victim of perhaps Book Five's most interpretively opaque wound, a wound sustained, as it were, from a figure whose allegory we might be able to extend to the melancholic and pathologic effects of wounding studied elsewhere in this thesis. Indeed, *Enuie*'s self-mastication is more than the bottomless pit of inward destruction suggested by her name, her ability to wound Artegall more than the vulnerability of justice to scandalmongers and detractors. She wounds Artegall, for example, by first wounding herself:

[380] Ovid, *Tristia. Ex Ponto.* Loeb Classical Library, ed. G. P. Gould and A. L. Wheeler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924). [The mind can be harmed by any sort of poem. Yet every book is not guilty because of it: nothing is useful, that cannot also wound.]

Then from her mouth the gobbet she does take,
The which whyleare she was so greedily
Deuouring, euen that halfe-gnawen snake,
And at him throwes it most despightfully.
The cursed Serpent, though she hungrily
Earst chawd thereon, yet was not all so dead,
But that some life remayned secretly,
And as he past afore withouten dread,
Bit him behind, that long the marke was to be read.
(V.xii.39)

Our study of woundedness began by considering Torquato Tasso's fantastic visions of the fractured body as capable of synthesizing sacred and erotic affects, as capable, moreover, of illuminating aspects of the heroic self that otherwise and in other contexts could not be gleaned. It ends with Spenser, who in the 1596 *Faerie Queene* infuses his own sense of the powers of woundedness with a heretofore unprecedented emphasis on the singularity of a wound's outward appearance, an emphasis that produces, as a result, a lasting image of a wound that is "long […] to be read" but with no clear sense of what that reading ought to entail. The tendency, in most historicist accounts of the ending of Book Five, has been to explain the long mark that disfigures the Knight of Justice by referencing the susceptibility of justice to verbal attack or, more simply, as an acknowledgment on Spenser's part of "the reality of words in terms that are fully material," readings bolstered by the fact that Artegall in this episode almost unequivocally allegorizes Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton.[381] More recently, and in readings that stress Book Five's moral rather than historical allegory, the wound has been interpreted as symbolic, as an indication that Artegall's "identity" as the

[381] Judith Anderson, "Weighing Words with Spenser's Giant," in *Soundings of Things Done: Essays in Early Modern Literature in Honor of S. K. Heninger, Jr.*, ed. Peter E. Medine and Joseph Anthony Wittreich (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997), 70–92, at 84. On the historical allegory of the episode, and on the prospect that it substantiates rather than detracts from Book Five's moral allegory, see Richard McCabe, "The Fate of Irena: Spenser and Political Violence," in *Spenser and Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Patricia Coughlin (Cork: Cork University Press, 1989), 109–25. On how Artegall's wound suggests how justice can be rocked by perception and hearsay, see Lowell Gallagher, *Medusa's Gaze: Casuistry and Conscience in the Renaissance* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1991), 200.

Knight of Justice "is vulnerable in a way that his physical person is not."[382] Indeed, in *The Faerie Queene*—as in all the literatures studied here—the wound has carried this interiorizing capacity, even if and even when, as here, the subjective interpretation is not obviously or allegorically clear. In such instances, in fact, the ability of a poem and its allegory to slip into unanticipated, counterintuitive, even heterodox realms of meaning is part of the reason why the wound, as I have argued throughout this thesis, was so intently held in view in early modern literature. The case of Artegall's long mark is no different, and the challenge that it poses to reading a wound as part of a nexus between body and self (never mind, as I have argued, a nexus that creates power out of its own radical instability) provides an appropriate place from which to both summarize and conclude this work.

In terms of the wound itself, Spenser tells us very little, and I would like to think that the understatement in general and the emphasis on time rather than degree, appearance, or effect in particular ought to render Artegall's wound somewhat conspicuous. Certainly the fact that Artegall is wounded by *Enuie*'s "halfe-gnawen snake" is suspicious, not only because in the period serpent bites connoted treachery and "unmanly guile" (V.xii.40) but also because the source of Artegall's wound is as liminal and as indeterminate as the wound itself. Consider how the narrator describes *Enuie*'s serpent: as "halfe-gnawen," as being "not all so dead" but with "some life remayn[ing] secretly." If the other details we learn about *Enuie* in the preceding stanzas confirm the conventional allegory—of Envy as one who "grieue[s], and grudge[s] at all" (V.xii.31) and whose glance and bite are invidious and intended to both indicate and create the tendency for calumny in others—then the partially masticated and

[382] Jennifer Feather, *Writing Combat and the Self in Early Modern English Literature: The Pen and the Sword* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 178.

half-living snake both inheres in and advances beyond these allegories.[383] In particular, by having Artegall's wound disrupt rather than affirm the system of signs that Artegall himself has used to maintain his status as Gloriana's Knight of Justice (he literally is marked as indeterminate by the very device that elsewhere has legitimized his violence as determinant), Spenser transmits the both "this" and "that" condition of the snake to Artegall, a transmission that effectively suspends the Knight of Justice's belief in the singular legibility of marks to both create and sustain sovereign authority.[384] In fact, if we read Artegall's long mark with awareness to the dynamics of wounding explored throughout this thesis, then we can be well equipped to see how the singular lesion on Artegall's "behind" becomes an indication of an inner palimpsestic abscess that is part not only of the nexus between body and self but also between bodies and selves and the discursive and ideological powers that define them. Artegall's wound, in other words, is "long […] to be read" both on account of its indelibility and because it bespeaks an internal condition of uncertainty about what the function of wounds is, whether or not, in other words, "the right way" (V.xii.27) to administer justice (or sovereign power in general) entails a subjection of the body to the physical powers of pain. Certainly a repudiation of this ideology was put on display in the powerfully ambiguous images of Amavia's, Timias's, Marinell's, and Amoret's wounds, and though it is far more subtle, Artegall's long mark also constitutes an instance in Spenser's romantic imagination when the instability of a sign or a metaphor creates a desirable space of

[383] To be sure, Renaissance iconographies of Envy (from the Latin *invidia*, "to look upon") depict the hag with either a medusa-like crown of snakes or, as in Geoffrey Whitney's 1586 *Emblemes*, with the serpent protruding from her mouth. In general, Envy ingests the serpent's venom as an indication of her own interminable self-poisoning. For Whitney, see Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes* (Leiden: Francis Raphelengius, 1586), 94.
[384] Here I follow the account of how Artegall's snake bite "illustrates the elusive discursive function" of the political and historical allegory in Book Five given by Gallagher, *Medusa's Gaze*, 169–214, at 199.

equivocation, desirable especially because its "long […] read[ing]" allows for the proliferation of a multiplicity of possible interpretations.

This thesis has been a study of one aspect of the multiplicity created by the long reading of long marks, specifically how out of this space of equivocation and indeterminacy these writers translated the imagery of wounding into the powerful trope of woundedness, a translation, as we have seen, that required an awareness to a wound not only as a somatization of doubt, of disability, and inward turmoil and depravity but also—and concomitantly—of desire. My analysis has been driven by the deceptively simple question: what happens to our understanding of early modern epic-romance in general and the literary genealogy of wounds in particular if we take seriously the interconnection of doubt and desire that in this literature a wound metaphorized and, in the process, provided a means for reconciliation? I began by hypothesizing that Tasso's, Sidney's, and Spenser's consciousness of desire's material dimensions—its Galenic, inward physiology—significantly shaped their perceptions of how a wound might become an empowering experience in both life and art. By implicating both its victims and its witnesses into moments in which disbelief and belief, suspicion and revelation, could occur simultaneously, a wound for these writers dramatized the epistemic problem of desire, how it yearns for that which it cannot have, how it is essentially insatiable, and how it is molded in both material and psychic ways by the forces of cultural, political, and religious authority. But the sheer inexhaustibility of desire and the ungovernability of the wound as its primary sign also allowed these writers to generate fantasies about how physical fracture and psychic abjection could enable the wounded self to accumulate levels of knowledge and consciousness, of sacred authority and political power, unavailable to the unwounded. Certainly we could assess Artegall's long mark in this way, especially considering that Spenser brands him with the inscrutable but legible sign precisely

at the moment when he begins his reabsorption into the larger political body of Gloriana's court (V.xii.27). He must carry this wound with him not simply because as the Knight of Justice he needs an indication of his "native immunity to the contaminated discourse of his adversaries" but more specifically because without the indelible scar—without at least the faintest of physiological affinities with the plights of characters ranging from Una, to Amoret, to Irena—he could not evince his own suffering, his own conditioning with and resistance of the insidious sovereignty of desire.[385] It is far more important, in other words, that the wound is "long […] to be read," that it can be read, as the passive indicates, by Artegall himself, and that it derives, if only allegorically, from the struggle with "impotent desire" (V.xii.1) that elsewhere in Book Five renders the self corrupt and corruptible.

Because associations between all the terms I have used in this work—doubt, desire, wound, pain, suffering, heroic love, heroic action—are so conventional, scholars who have considered the generically heterodox nature of these texts or simply the dynamics of their allegories have paid little attention to how seriously these three writers sought to upset these conventional associations, as if, to quote from a study not terribly different from my own, "the status of being conventional would make a discursive construct or a sentiment any less

[385] Ibid, 200. At this point, Gallagher also suggests two other possible readings: "Does the mark […] announce the breakdown of the polarized vision that imagines conditions of immunity and contamination to be stable and unrelated states [or does] it announce a break in the seamless envelope that surrounds the idealized corpus of instruments—conscience, equity—of the discourse of power." By indicating, however, Artegall's struggle with the assaults on his conscience and his capacity for equity made by his desires and then revealing the knight as having left those assaults "behind," Spenser more accurately announces how important one's own experiences with physical and psychic abjection are to "the idealized corpus […] of the discourse of power." Artegall may, in other words, return to Faerie Court with a representation of how "word[s] may work, imperceptibly, like a venomous agent on the body of a culture's sacred myths" (Ibid, 201), but the "long […] read[ing]" of those words as being ever affixed to the "behind" of the Knight of Justice also opens the possibility that the "sacred myth" that Artegall's wound contaminates is that of the desirability of the inviolable and unwounded figure of authority.

thick with significance."[386] I hope to have shown in this work just how "thick with significance" conceptualizations of wounds and wounding really were in sixteenth-century literature, especially in epic-romance, a genre born out of the possibility that something like a "wounded hart" could become synonymous with heroic virtue. Certainly in the texts studied here wounds are imagined as the paradigmatic generators of romantic wonder, but by redressing the lack of a thoroughgoing treatment of the image and metaphor I hope also to have demonstrated just how important the metaphoric dimensions of wounding were to these writers' reconceptualizations of their genre. Strictly speaking, I have argued that the elaborations on wounding and woundedness in the epic-romances of Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser compel us to rethink what the purpose of the developing genre might have been in sixteenth-century Europe, in particular by demonstrating how each of these authors perceived something like epic-romance (conquest and love, political and personal bodies, public and private perfection, winning and losing, justice and clemency) as a natural and necessary representation of their own lived experiences. In fact, by striving so intently to imagine the wound as fundamental to the task of writing epic-romance, and by revealing that fundament to be a wound's variable metaphoricity and capacity to synthesize the sacred and the erotic, the amorous and the martial, the private the public, the abject and the heroic, Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser, I would argue here at the end, attempted to define their genre in terms of phenomenology rather than ontology, in terms, in other words, of woundedness, as subject to "long" and renewed methods of reading only made available when the object under scrutiny is left open. It is therefore fitting that none of these writers finish their epic-romances but that each dies amid the process of revision, leaving their final representations

[386] Rambuss, *Closet Devotions*, 2.

(or suspicions) about the powers of woundedness incomplete.[387] Like the hearts of their wounded heroes and heroines, however, their literary bodies, to quote from the epigram of this work, have "heal[ed] to wear / That which disfigure[d]" them, and as both readers and critics we return to these texts in acts of homage to their continually living woundedness.

While the structure of this thesis might appear to tell a singular, chronological story—that is to say, a glimpse of what three authors writing roughly at the same moment were able to achieve by manipulating a conventional metaphor—I would hope that my individual readings construct a narrative that is far more malleable and nostalgic. Indeed, woundedness is in no way limited in early modernity to Tasso, Sidney, and Spenser, even if their particular texts sustain scenes of wounding in order to force out of the image all that it will yield. In truth, in early modern literature, recourse to scenarios of erotic wounding that are productive and powerful is persistent and part of how individual writers, in discourses as divergent as Petrarchan verse and Protestant hagiography, testified to the authenticity of their selves and their desires. I hope, on the one hand, to have born witness in this work to this remarkable durability but also, on the other, to have opened a space for reconsiderations of exactly what the presence of a wound might designate in other literatures in the period. What I have argued here—that a wound metaphorized appetency and in this way provided an aesthetic means for its reconstitution—will not hold up for all representations of wounds in early modern literature, but its potentiality, that fact that all wounds (as scars) are "long […] to be read," might complicate some of the ways that we conceptualize associations between political power, erotic affect, and suffering. In particular, recalling scenes such as

[387] This, strictly speaking, is not true for Tasso, who died in Rome on April 25, 1595. At that point, however, both the *Liberata* and the *Conquistata* were available in Italy and the harsh juxtaposition between the two texts gives the sense that, even if the poet was erring toward the side of historical and religious accuracy, he never could quite perfect his own comprehension of epic theory given in the revised *Discorsi del poema eroico* (1593).

Olindo's and Sophronia's near execution, Pamela's and Philoclea's torture, and Amoret's abjection—scenes in which the presence of a wound indicates the tyranny of the torturer and, concomitantly, the integrity of the victim—might help us rethink what sorts of power dynamics are involved in English Petrarchan lyrics, a genre built on the principle that devotion to one's wounds augments fidelity and perpetuates the inviolability of the beloved. And while I think that this work has only begun to scratch the surface of how the aesthetics of wounding participated in the period's manipulations of gender stereotypes and theorizations of sexuality in general, a fuller treatment of that possibility could be achieved by extending the analyses and close readings given here to include, in the first instance, Lady Mary Wroth's *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, a text that frequently uses scenes of wounding, torture, and abjection to question the political and social power dynamics (or ambivalences!) at play when women are wounded as a consequence of their erotic desires.[388]

Finally, though not lastly, I have sought in this thesis to add to the extensive literature on the emergence in the sixteenth century of something like modern selfhood, in particular by joining the list of scholars who find more evidence of the origins of consciousness in texts, passages, and linguistic phrases that mediate between body and self rather than in those that prize the development of Cartesian epistemologies of the mind. Many of the phrases that have come to hallmark early modern interiority and constitute the

[388] I have in mind here the famous episode in which Philargus tortures his wife, Limena, on behalf of her love for Perissus. At this point, Limena's wounds in particular become the physical tokens of the degree of her affect for Perissus and the mechanisms by which she undermines her subjugation to both her husband's and her father's wills. See Mary Wroth, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Binghampton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1995), esp. 80–83. On how Limena's torture and eventual death at Philargus's hands distinguish her true love from the cruelty of her arranged marriage, see Helen Hackett, "The Torture of Limena: Sex and Violence in Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*," in *Voicing Women: Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Writing*, ed. Kate Chedgzoy, Melanie Hansen, and Suzanne Trill (Keele: Keele University Press, 1996), 93–110. For a reading of the episode as masochistic, see Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects*, 130–31.

liberal, humanistic self—separateness, mysteriousness, a pulsing and oscillating sense of familiarity and alienation—can themselves be witnessed in the ways that early modern writers describe wounds and represent the psychic effects (and gains) afforded by the experience. A central premise of this work, in fact, has been that if we read certain metaphors in early modern literature as being embodied, as allowing for the emergence of what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have called "a philosophy close to the bone," then we can get a clearer picture of how an author renders inscrutable experiences and inexplicable phenomena intelligible and accessible.[389] For the world of sacred affect, this intelligibility and accessibility was undeniably sensate and real, as Andrew Wear explains, for both Protestants and Catholics.[390] But for erotic pathology, for desire in general, other analogues needed to be imagined that could allow the self to see and feel the processes and torments of appetite and in this way cause the relationship between soma and psyche to be emphasized rather than challenged. By defining this analogue as the wound, the writers studied in this thesis not only sought to demonstrate the importance that one experience and one metaphor could have in reconstituting this relationship but also to show how engagements with these *limens*, to quote Paul Ricoeur, could "shatter and increase our sense of reality by shattering and increasing our language."[391]

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[389] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Book, 1999), 8.

[390] According to Wear, "the use of medical and physical metaphors to explain the inexplicable or the supernatural was part of the Catholic and Protestant preachers' general use of language whereby more familiar things of this world help to make understandable those of the spiritual or miraculous world." See Andrew Wear, "Religious Beliefs and Medicine in Early Modern England," in *The Task of Healing: Medicine, Religion, and Gender in England and the Netherlands 1450–1800*, ed. Hilary Marland and Margaret Pelling (Rotterdam: Erasmus Publishing, 1996), 145–69, at 165.

[391] Paul Ricoeur, "Creativity in Language: Word, Polysemy, Metaphor," in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work*, ed. Charles Reagan and David Steward (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 120–33, at 132.

Perhaps in life as much as literature, there is no experience as valuable as wounding for demonstrating how powerfully the body *matters* to the self. There certainly is no better metaphor in early modern literature—perhaps in all literature—for suturing the significance of this relationship to the psyche. And yet a wound as a constructive experience and a stable signifier remains too counterintuitive, too impractical for us to believe in with any conviction. In a recent work, for example, that explores how modern advances of neurobiology are destabilizing Cartesian and psychoanalytic conceptualizations of the self, Catherine Malabou has written that "[w]e live in the epoch of the end of transference."[392] Her model for making this claim is built around the proposition that there are modes of wounding (in particular, brain lesions, Alzheimer's) that resist being classified in traumatic or psychoanalytic terms, wounds that are radically severed from the past, that leave their victims "deserted, disaffected," with "indifferent psyche[s]" no longer capable of communicating the depth or sense of their infirmities. We cannot share this reality with early modernity, but we may be able to draw from that period a hint of the curative effects that emerge when a wound constitutes the very essence of transference and overindulgence in its metaphoricity leads to new horizons of human interaction. At the very least, we can recall the verve with which the writers studied in this work strained to translate the seemingly debilitating imagery of wounding into narratives of healing, power, reconstitution, and redemption, narratives fundamentally shaped by the prospect that these revelations were transferable not just from body to body but also, of course, from body to self.

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[392] Malabou, *The New Wounded*, 214.

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE ONE: GUSTAVE COURBET, *L'HOMME BLESSÉ* (1844)



FIGURE TWO: GUSTAVE COURBET, *L'HOMME BLESSÉ* (1854)



FIGURE THREE: EUGÈNE DELACROIX, *SAINT SEBASTIAN* (1836)



FIGURE FOUR: GIOVANNI BARBIERI (GUERCINO), *ERMINIA E TANCREDI* (1618)



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